

The Printing Museum

Whare Taonga Perehitanga

&

The New Zealand Centre
for Book Arts



ALPHAbET 26

ART DIRECTOR AND DESIGN LEGEND BRADBURY THOMPSON (1911-1991) WAS A MASTERFUL TYPOGRAPHER. HE EXPANDED OUR NOTIONS OF THE PRINTED PAGE, INSPIRING HIS COLLEAGUES, HIS STUDENTS, AND DESIGNERS THEREAFTER. HE CONCEIVED OF A TYPOGRAPHICAL EXPERIMENT HE CALLED ALPHABET 26.

26

a B C D e F

IDENTICAL UPPER- & LOWERCASE

ALPHABET 26 SOUGHT TO OPTIMIZE READING FLUIDITY BY SIMPLIFYING THE ROMAN ALPHABET. IN THE TRADITIONAL ALPHABET, 7 OF THE 26 LETTERS HAVE "MATCHING" UPPER- AND LOWERCASE SYMBOLS (C-O-S-V-W-X-Z). ALPHABET 26 STARTED WITH THE UPPERCASE FORMS OF THESE 7 LETTERS.

G H I

J K L

THOMPSON THEN CONSIDERED THE 19 LETTERS THAT HAVE DIFFERENT UPPER- AND LOWERCASE SYMBOLS. OF THESE, 13 LOWERCASE LETTERS HAVE ASCENDERS (B-D-F-H-I-K-L-T) OR DESCENDERS (G-J-P-Q-T). THEIR UPPERCASE SYMBOLS WERE USED TO ACHIEVE A UNIFORM BASELINE AND CAP-HEIGHT.

UPPERCASE CHARACTERS

m n O P Q

CAP-HEIGHT LOWERCASE

WHEN THOMPSON CONSIDERED THE 6 REMAINING LETTERS (A-E-M-N-K-U), HE DECIDED THAT THE FIRST FOUR OF THESE HAD HARMONIOUS LOWERCASE SYMBOLS, BUT THAT THE LOWERCASE "U" WOULD CREATE BAWKYWARD LETTERSPACING. LASTLY, HE SELECTED THE UPPERCASE "U" FOR ITS SIMPLICITY.

R S T

U V W X Y Z

Lettra™
CRANE LETTERPRESS PAPER

THIS BROCHURE WAS PRINTED BY ONE HEART PRESS ON LETTRA, CRANE LETTERPRESS PAPER, FERAL WHITE, 90# GSM (110#).
WWW.CRANELETTRA.COM | 888.441.4367 | TYPEFACES: GARAMOND 1201PCL & GILL 1201 | DESIGN: MICHAEL OSBORNE DESIGN

THE PRINTING MUSEUM



The Printing Museum (Inc.) began life over 30 years ago when a group of enthusiasts and professional printers began collecting items of historical and industrial interest. This was at a time when the era of letterpress, the method of printing by mechanical impression that Johannes Gutenberg had perfected in the fifteenth century, was coming to an end. Had it not been for their foresight, many of these wonderful machines - some of which are now listed items of historical interest - would have been lost for ever.

Fast forward thirty years and The Printing Museum has entered a new phase. Despite digital domination, there has been a huge revival of interest in letterpress, particularly in the United States and Britain. Letterpress Museums and Book Arts Centres have sprung up in major cities around the world. While attracting enthusiasts of all ages, the new wave of letterpress and book arts devotees are often young designers and artists curious of the origins of typography and seeking artistic relief from the ubiquity of flat print.

The combination of working printing museum, book arts centre, community workshop, specialised printery and type foundry will be an asset for Wellington as well as a national and international attraction. It will also be a fitting home for these national taonga - fortuitously collected and painstakingly restored over so many years.

Yours sincerely

John
John Nixon

President

THE PRINTING MUSEUM

The Museum

The Printing Museum will not be a traditional museum of exhibits. It will be more a hands-on experience where everything is in working order and can be used for education and book arts purposes.

The Museum has one of the finest collections of printing machinery from the 1852 Harrild “Albion” that printed the first edition of The Evening Post in 1865 to what’s believed to be the largest collection of typewriters in the country.

There are important items from the Government Printing Office casting, printing and binding departments, along with two of the last four famous Cossar newspaper presses remaining worldwide.

Four working heritage machines are registered as Protected Objects. There is an extensive collection of books, videos and CDs along with a huge type and matrix library.





Book Arts

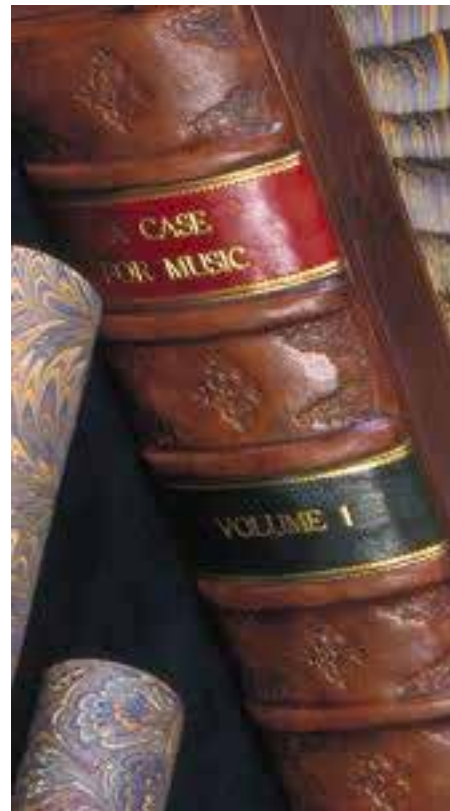
The New Zealand Centre for Books Arts, modelled on successful operations in San Francisco, Minnesota and London, will be both the key to financial sustainability and the key point of difference to a traditional museum. In this model the “exhibits” become the training equipment on which the fee-paying classes are based.

The Museum has recently started offering introductory letterpress classes in Wellington at a private printery. The first classes sold out and there is a waiting list for more as well as strong interest in a number of ancillary courses.

Through tuition, exhibitions or by simply offering a meeting place, it is intended that the Museum becomes the centre of community for all groups with an interest in printing, poetry and the book arts.

PRINTING MUSEUM CLASSES

- ❖ Introduction to Letterpress
- ❖ Advanced Platen Press
- ❖ Press Specific Classes
- ❖ Business Card Printing
- ❖ Intensive Woodtype
- ❖ Typography
- ❖ Platemaking
- ❖ Lino Cuts
- ❖ Woodcuts
- ❖ Lithography
- ❖ Paper Marbling
- ❖ Paper Making
- ❖ Fine Printmaking
- ❖ Silkscreen/Screen Printing
- ❖ Book Binding
- ❖ Book Repair
- ❖ Artist Books
- ❖ Origami
- ❖ Calligraphy
- ❖ Lettering
- ❖ Batik
- ❖ Tapa





The Workshop

The transfer of traditional skills to a new generation is an important task of the Museum, but of equal importance is offering a workspace for printers and artists, once suitably trained, to be able to access the printing and type collections for their own projects.

Local institutions such as Massey University see this as a valuable adjunct for their students.

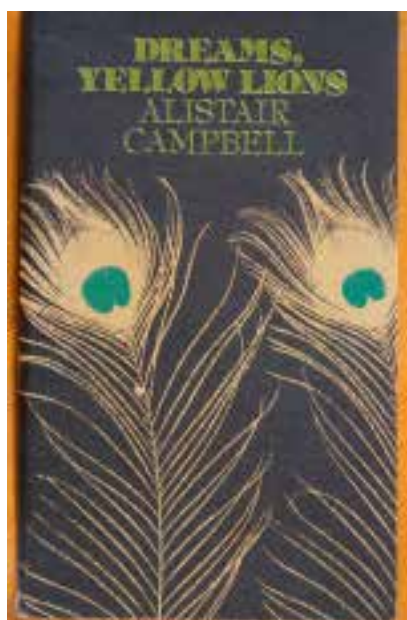
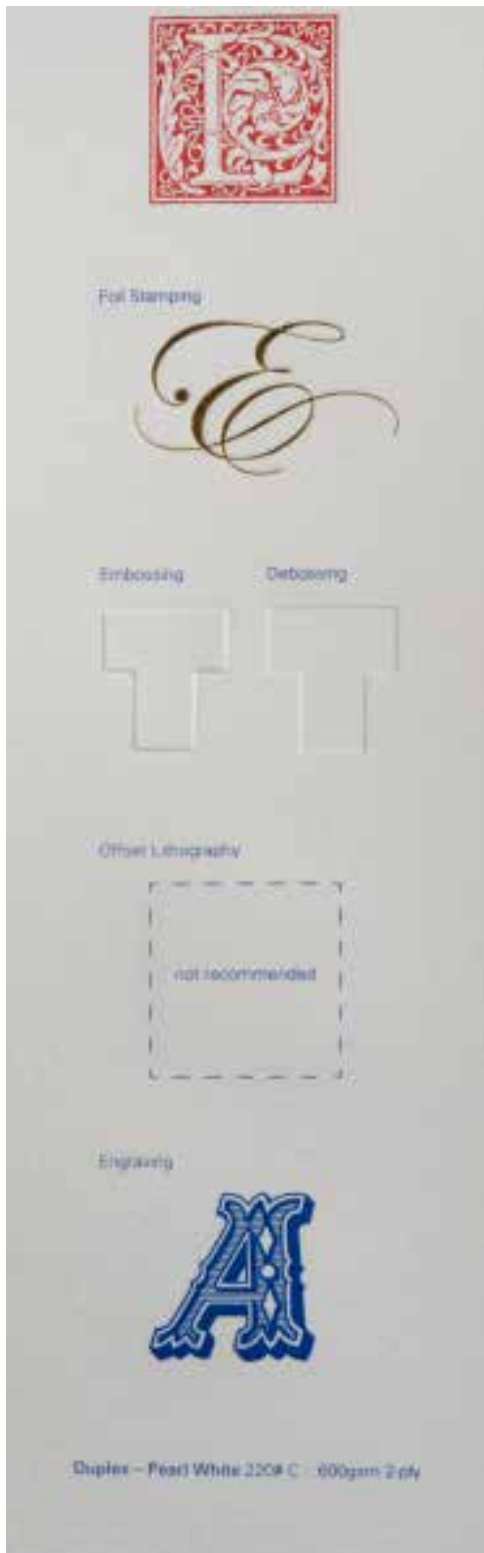




The Printshop

A printshop within the Museum offers an additional revenue stream, utilising the extraordinary accumulation of knowledge and experience of its members.

This is put to use in printing fine editions of prose, poetry and special projects.





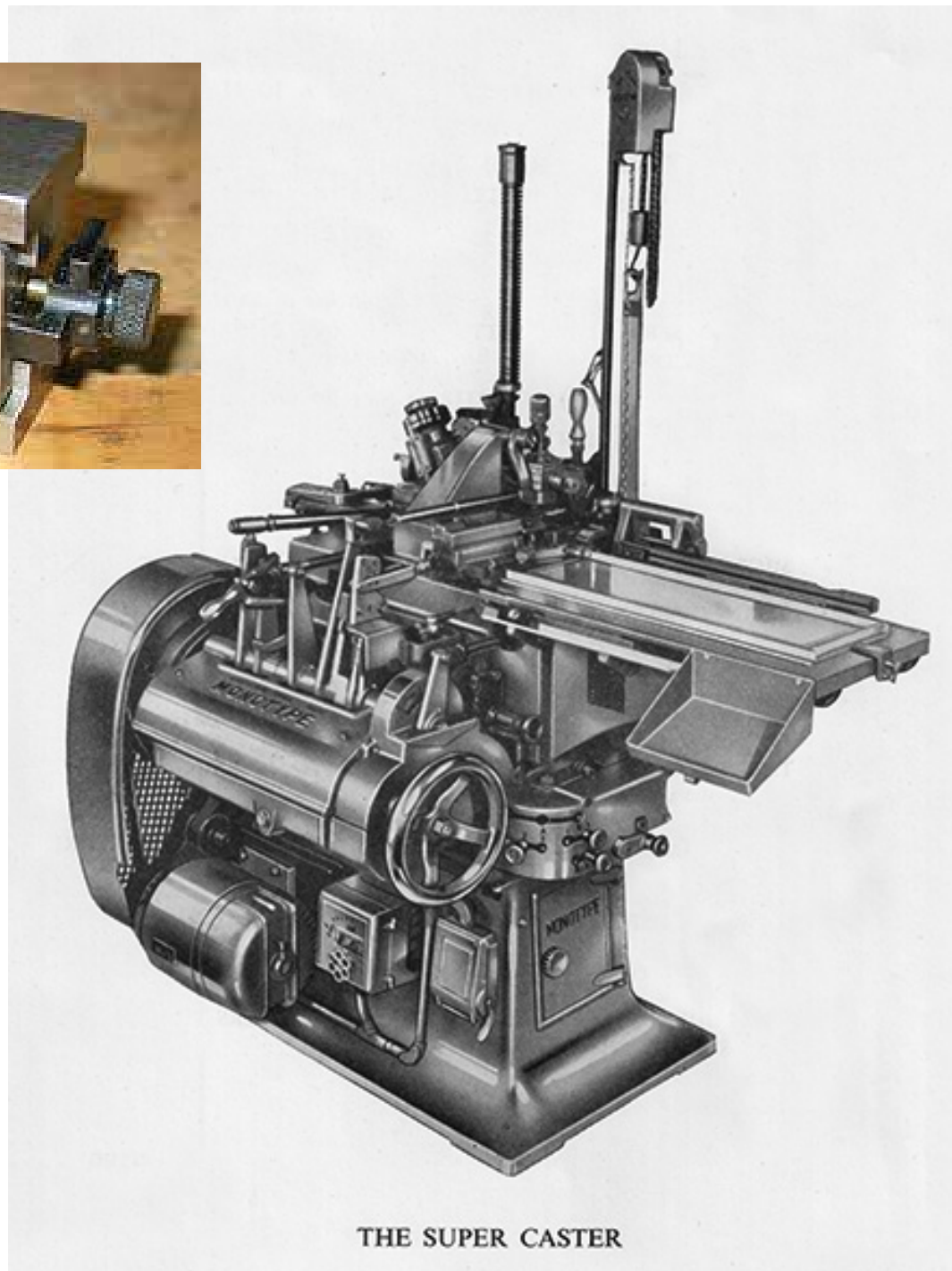
The Foundry

Monotype Supercaster

Once a week a core group of Printing Museum members gather in the old army storage shed behind Upper Hutt to manufacture lead type on a restored Monotype Supercaster. The type is packaged and sold to printers and institutions in New Zealand, Australia and beyond. This is the only operating foundry of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, but it needs a permanent home. The foundry is one of the most important activities for the Museum. It not only manufactures useful material for letterpress printers, but in so doing, generates the Museum's principal income. The Museum is also evaluating the manufacture of wood type to become the only foundry in the world to offer both lead and wood type.

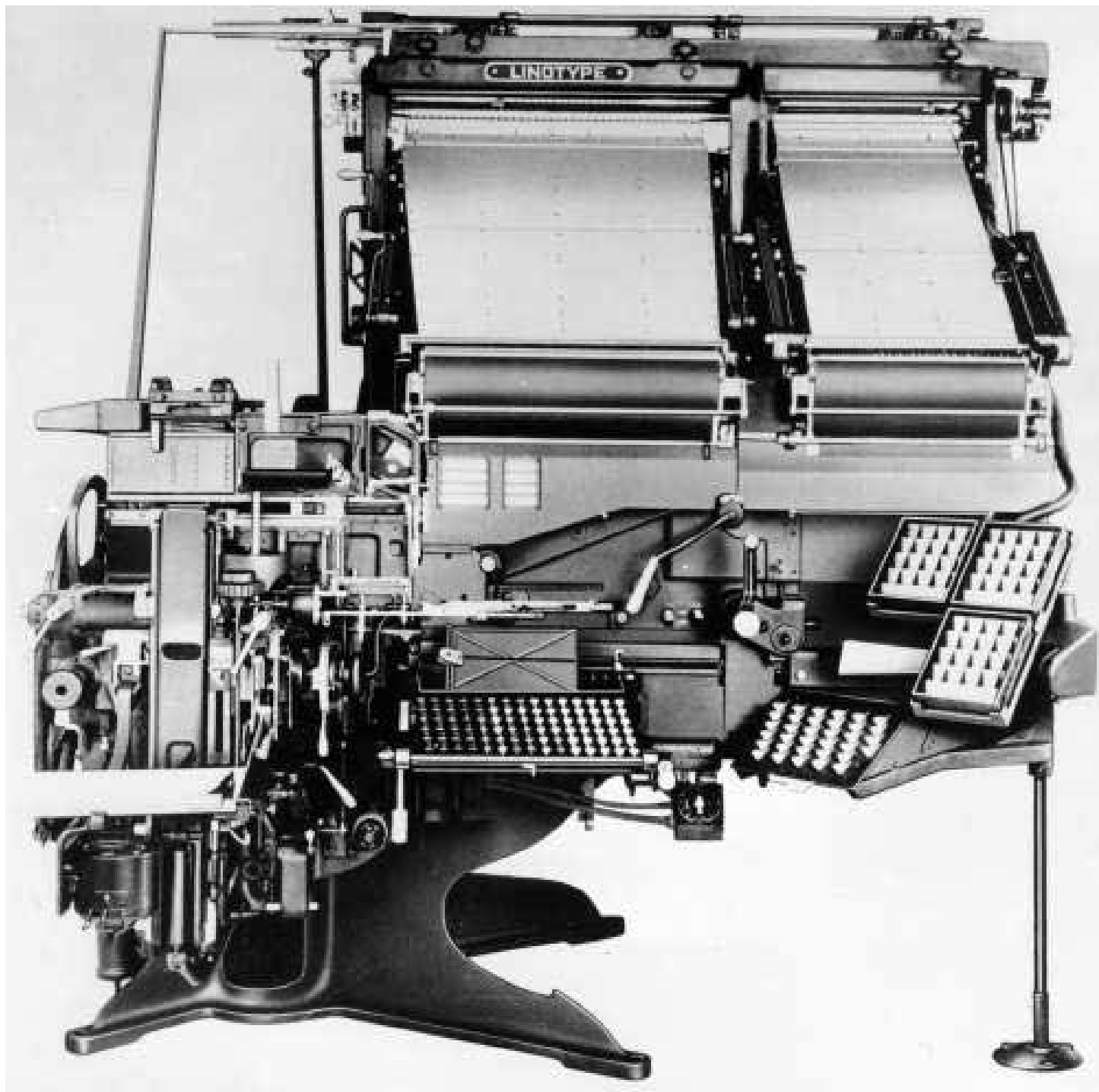


Monotype Matrix



THE SUPER CASTER

Mergenthaler Linotype



Linotype, the machine that brought printing to the masses. We produce Linotype material for bookbinders and printers. These machines are extraordinarily complicated and fascinating to watch.

Possible Homes for the Museum

The Museum needs a permanent home in central Wellington. Ideally around 800 square metres would accommodate all its activities but as little as 150 square metres would allow letterpress and book arts classes to commence. The Museum could make good use of a number of earthquake-prone buildings to preserve more of Wellington's heritage. The Museum will be a financially independent and sustainable institution. It just needs a home.



The Crèche, Buckle Street

The Ultimate Solution:
A home for the complete collection
with the Book Arts Centre

Starting point:
A home for the education and
Monotype casting section.



Corner Taranaki and Buckle Street



SIS Building, Taranaki Street



Shed 13, Queens Wharf

If you would like to help with, or contribute to this vision please contact the Museum Project Director:

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