

## REVIEWS

Brooke Crutchley. *To be a printer*. London, Bodley Head, 1980. pp.192. £8.95.

Brooke Crutchley joined Cambridge University Press in May 1930 and remained there until his retirement in 1974. He began as Assistant Printer to the blunt Walter Lewis, who with John Johnson at Oxford University Press constituted a formidable printing duo indeed. Lewis could write, for example, "bloody copy" on an original manuscript of John Dover Wilson and held a lasting grievance against Russell Tanner, his first employer, which prevented him from being even civil to J.R. Tanner, the Cambridge historian, who was unwise enough to claim kinship.

Crutchley acknowledges his real debt to Lewis as a formative influence and succeeded him in 1946 after service in the Admiralty during the war years. Crutchley's period of office witnessed significant achievements including the introduction of new printing technologies, more sophisticated productivity bargaining with unions and the successful transfer of operations from the antiquated Pitt Street buildings to the present site on the outskirts of Cambridge. Nonetheless it is clear that certain contemporary aspects of the printing world are not entirely to his taste. He writes "The truth is that we are now in an age of indiscipline and good typography cannot be expected to thrive in such a setting." Crutchley has battled throughout his life for the principles of good typography in the face of deteriorating economic conditions and philistinism.

Crutchley's autobiography is without doubt a charming and urbane account, although perhaps over-modest. He writes that while at school at Shrewsbury he was advised by his teachers that "ostentation or any display of pride was taboo". It could be argued that this attitude permeates the book to its disadvantage. Thus in a certain Oxbridge manner he is occasionally too self-effacing. The reader therefore does not receive as full an account of his relationship with some of the leading printers and typographers as might have been expected. In this context his chapter on "American visits" is tantalisingly brief, his description of meetings with such leading figures as Grant Dahlstrom, Ward Ritchie, Ray Nash and Donald and Mary Hyde, being restricted to only a few pages. Crutchley moreover spends almost as much time in them on the description of social niceties as upon detailed printing matters. This is perhaps diffidence carried too far.

Without doubt the section prior to World War II is more instructive and informative than that after 1945, which is overly compressed. Crutchley's pre-war descriptions of the interaction of such characters as Lewis and Stanley Morison in particular are a joy to read. In this respect it is interesting to contrast the publishing side of C.U.P. at this time via Sir Sydney Roberts's *Adventures with authors* (Cambridge, 1966). It may be however that such a period allowed for more independence and thus more colourful characters. As Crutchley indicates "today we are ruled by budgets, every decision must be carefully assessed for its

financial effect''. Let us hope however that the cutbacks and cost analyses do not prevent the future writing of such mellow and witty autobiographies as that contained in *To be a printer*.

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*A Short-title catalogue of sixteenth century printed books held in libraries and private collections in New South Wales*. Compiled by John Fletcher and Rose Smith, Sydney, The Library Council of New South Wales, 1979. pp.[vi], viii, 230. \$8.00.

This modestly priced and produced catalogue is a welcome addition to a small but growing collection of guides to early printed books held in Australia and New Zealand. In 1966 the Public Library of New South Wales published H.G. Kaplan's *A First census of incunabula in Australia and New Zealand*. As a pioneering work it brought attention to the range of fifteenth century printed books in the two countries. Likewise, the publication of John Fletcher and Rose Smith's catalogue marks a step forward in our knowledge of the holdings of sixteenth century books which have found their way into the libraries and private collections of New South Wales. This localised catalogue, prepared and published in less than four years, presents a range of library resources in the state which will benefit scholars in the years to come.

The catalogue records 1,988 titles from thirty-one public, university, and other institutional libraries and twenty-two private collections. The most important and substantial holdings are at the Mitchell Library, the State Library of New South Wales, St. Patrick's College at Manly and the Fisher Library at the University of Sydney. Professor A.J. Dunston of Sydney University, with his twenty-eight books, has the largest private collection.

The British Museum series of short title catalogues of the fifteenth and sixteenth century for specific languages are the guiding models for this catalogue. The titles are arranged in alphabetical order of 'author' headings. Bibliographical detail is kept succinct though informative: short title, place of publication, name of printer or publisher where known, date of publication, format, and present location or locations. In most entries no collation is given and when required only a simplistic number of parts or the number of distinct volumes. Following the titles the compilers have given an admirable range of lists and indexes: an index to printers, publishers and booksellers, places of printing, proper names (excluding printers, publishers, booksellers) and provenances. These are all extremely useful

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