

**DAVID OSBALDESTIN**

### **Yesterday's Tomorrows: A Throwaway History of Ephemera Studies**

This chapter discusses the methods used by historians in analysing, ordering, and interpreting printed ephemera from the nineteenth century. Several typographic historians, including Michael Twyman, Maurice Rickards and John Lewis, have focused their study on the use of printed ephemera and its historical value in material culture. There are a multiplicity of people working with printed ephemera, from museum curators to private collectors, and yet there is no common language to enable the various parties to speak with each other.<sup>1</sup> Attempts to facilitate such dialogue will be discussed in the following chapter.

Printed ephemera presents historians with alternative forms of literature for interpreting the past. John Lewis states that ephemeral printing in Europe has a longer history than book printing. The oldest dated item of European printing is the 31-line Indulgence, assumed to have been printed by Johannes Gutenberg in 1454. Indulgences were formal documents printed and sold to achieve atonement for sins through fasting, crusades, pilgrimage, good deeds and pious donations. Classified by Lewis as printed ephemera, the Indulgence was the earliest dated piece of printing by Gutenberg, as his printing of the Bible cannot be precisely dated. This is important because ephemera precede books which have customarily received greater attention from printing historians.

The word ephemera is derived from the Greek word 'ephēmeros', meaning things that last through the day.<sup>2</sup> According to Lee Kirk's definition, ephemera include printed material,

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<sup>1</sup> D. Sutherland & R. Hibbard National Art Library Jobbing Printing Collection. *The Ephemérist*, (2018), 3. Maurice Collins worked in the printing industry and became a collector of printed ephemera relating to social history. M. Collins, 'Moving Paper', *The Ephemérist*, (2018), 16. M. Rickards *Collecting Printed Ephemera* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1988).

<sup>2</sup> M. Rickards. & M. Twyman, (2000). *The Encyclopedia of Ephemera: A Guide to the Fragmentary Documents of Everyday Life for the Collector, Curator, and Historian* (London: British Library), endpaper notes.

handwritten documents and photographs.<sup>3</sup> This chapter is wholly concerned with ephemeral printed material, which was intended to be disposable, short-lived and typically incidental documents. Maurice Rickards (1919–98) defines ephemera as paper-based ‘minor transient documents of everyday life’, which include posters, flyers, rail and bus tickets, trade cards and billheads etc.<sup>4</sup> With the exception of labels and packaging, Rickards excludes three-dimensional objects such as uniform buttons, board games, printed tins, and other heavy weight materials from his definition, stating ‘ephemerists tend to stick to two dimensions rather than three. Uniform buttons and other heavy durables are out’.<sup>5</sup>

Michael Twyman notes that in the early nineteenth century, in line with economic growth during the second half of the Industrial Revolution, production of printed ephemera increased. He considers the ‘proliferation of printed matter’ by provincial jobbing printers in the late eighteenth century as ‘self-generating’, servicing the growing advertising needs of local businesses.<sup>6</sup> Developed primarily, as David Jury explains, for localized advertising, they were produced in response to commercial needs of businesses, government, political organizations, societies and religious groups which generated a large number of ephemera to communicate to their communities. Jury comments on the increase of printed ephemera responding to businesses’ advertising needs, pointing out that as ‘the business of commercial enterprise increased, so too did the demand for stationery, invoices, announcements, leaflets and other items that were needed to promote and record transactions’.<sup>7</sup>

Printed ephemera were created by jobbing printers responding to the demand for advertising from the local economy. They used a wide range of printing types and typographic

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<sup>3</sup> L. Kirk (2019). ‘Ephemera – what and who wants it?’, <<https://www.biblio.com/book-collecting/what-to-collect/ephemera/ephemera-what-is-it-and-who-wants-it/>>, accessed 30 August 2019.

<sup>4</sup> This definition of ephemera is used by the Ephemera Society for its advertising strap line on its website. Ephemera Society, <<http://www.ephemera-society.org.uk/index.html>>, accessed 3 July 2017.

<sup>5</sup> M. Rickards, *This is Ephemera: Collecting Printed Throwaways* (London: Gossamer Press, 1977), 13.

<sup>6</sup> M. Twyman, *Printing 1770–1970: An Illustrated History of its Development and Uses in England* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1970).

<sup>7</sup> D. Jury, *Graphic Design Before Graphic Designers: The Printer as Designer and Craftsman 1700–1914* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012), 10.

arrangements. Alongside the proliferation of printed ephemera, the visual richness of these documents was characterized by the use of new typefaces. The development of these display faces grew exponentially in the nineteenth century, with typefounders increasing their stock by producing additional typefaces that would stand out and capture attention. The use of these new printing types is a key attribute of the genre.

For the purpose of this chapter printed ephemera are mostly single-sided documents that have many formats, from large-scale theatrical playbills to small bookplates. They are mostly printed in one or two colours, using a variety of display printing types. The quality of paper and the presswork varies across different forms of ephemera, from trade cards printed on thick pasteboard to handbills on cheap coarse woven paper stock.

### **The History of Collecting Printed Ephemera**

Ephemera studies was widely recognized by historians in the late twentieth century, but the history of the ephemerists begins in the sixteenth century. Rickards identifies the ‘great ephemerists’ as the legal scholar John Selden (1584–1654), the diarist Samuel Pepys (1633–1703), and the printer John de Monins Johnson (1882–1956).<sup>8</sup> He acknowledges their contributions to history as the forefathers of English ephemera studies.

John Selden was a seventeenth-century polymath: a jurist, a parliamentarian, a scholar of ancient English and Jewish law, and collector of street literature. Selden collected ballad sheets, popular broadsides of contemporary songs sold by chapmen and balladeers, an

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<sup>8</sup> Christianson, Paul. ‘Selden, John (1584–1654), lawyer and historical and linguistic scholar.’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-25052>>, accessed 27 August 2020; Knighton, C. S. ‘Pepys, Samuel (1633–1703), naval official and diarist.’ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-21906>>; accessed 17 August 2020; Batey, Charles, and Julie Anne Lambert. ‘Johnson, John de Monins (1882–1956), printer, ephemerist, and classical scholar’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-34203>>, accessed 17 August 2020.

‘unusual’ practice for seventeenth-century collectors. Selden was the first ephemerist to value the social historical importance of ephemera as ‘straws in the wind’, everyday documents that can be used to read history.<sup>9</sup> His ballad collection was later acquired by Pepys, who combined it with his own collection that survives in the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge. The ballad sheets are ordered thematically, although the distribution of material between Selden’s and Pepys’ ballad collections is unrecorded.

Samuel Pepys was a celebrated diarist and administrator for the British Navy, but he was also a dedicated collector of social historical evidence. In the Pepys Library, there survives a diverse range of ephemera including specimens of calligraphy, shorthand writing systems and albums of art prints. His collection includes over a thousand items of everyday printed ephemera, bound into two large albums entitled *London & Westminster*. He was a generalist collector of seventeenth-century ephemera, including trade cards, early advertising broadsides, bills of morality and invitations that he kept to ‘illustrate his daily life in London’.<sup>10</sup> In 1980, his contribution to ephemera studies was recognized by the Ephemera Society, through the Samuel Pepys Gold Medal for outstanding contributions, and his image is used as the emblem of the society.

John Johnson was an English printer, scholar and collector. His interests in ephemera began through his field research as a papyrologist in the Egyptian Civil Service when he discovered a papyrus manuscript by Theocritus. It was in Egypt that he became concerned with the preservation of ‘our immediate paper heritage’.<sup>11</sup> In 1914, he was appointed Assistant Secretary of Oxford University Press, and later Printer to the University (1925–46). In Oxford, Johnson developed his interests in educational publishing and the history of printing. The latter stimulated a lifelong concern for the collection of printed ephemera. He named his collection

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<sup>9</sup> M. Rickards, *Collecting Printed Ephemera* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1988), 42.

<sup>10</sup> *Ephemera Society*, <<http://www.ephemera-society.org.uk/about.html>>, accessed 3 September 2010.

<sup>11</sup> John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera (2019). Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, <<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/johnson/about>>, accessed 7 May 2019.

the Constance Meade Collection of Ephemeral Printing, later to become the John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera after it was moved to the Bodleian Library in 1968.

Johnson observed that formerly printed ephemera had been disregarded by Museum curators and were destined for the wastebasket. He recognized the social and political historical relevance of ephemera, regarding his collection at the university as completing ‘a gap in the world which nothing else really fills’.<sup>12</sup> Johnson was a collector of all forms of ephemera, including advertisements, handbills, playbills and programmes, menus, greetings cards, posters, and postcards. The John Johnson Collection contains mainly documents from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries, ordered under 700 subject headings. It is one of the largest surviving collections of printed ephemera in the world.

In the 1920s, Johnson began a long-standing correspondence with Bella Landauer (1874–1960), a collector of American advertising in New York. Landauer began collecting printed ephemera about the same time as Johnson. In 1923, she started with the acquisition of a small collection of bookplates, and that grew into what Rickards considers to be an expansive ‘collection of collections’.<sup>13</sup> Her archive contained a diverse range of printed material, described by Lewis as a ‘vivid picture of the professional and business history of America’.<sup>14</sup> It ranged from trade cards, advertising fans, valentines, and railway tickets to posters, and other thematic-based collections, for example, of early aeronautical material. Originally housed in an old kitchen of the New York Historical Society, the Bella C. Landauer Collection gained an international reputation, moving to purpose-built accommodation that gave access for researchers and facilitated educational study visits. Her collection is now owned by the Smithsonian Institution, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dartmouth College Library, and the

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<sup>12</sup> R. Shackleton, *The John Johnson Collection: Catalogue of an Exhibition* (Oxford: The Bodleian Library, 1971), 8.

<sup>13</sup> Rickards, *Collecting Printed Ephemera*, 42.

<sup>14</sup> J. Lewis, *Printed Ephemera: The Changing Uses of Type and Letterforms in English and American Printing* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969), 5.

Baker Library in New Hampshire. In the early twentieth century, the dedicated work of both Johnson and Landauer, and their associated ephemera collections, advanced the field of ephemera studies, and garnered recognition from the next generation of historians.

## **Twentieth-Century Ephemerists**

The following review of the literature around printed ephemera studies is structured on an author-by-author basis, focusing on the main protagonists' contributions to the advancement of this field: Michael Twyman, John Lewis and Maurice Rickards. These authors are discussed in chronological order from their publication dates, focusing on their methodologies for organizing printed ephemera and identifying approaches that have influenced the development of a new methodology for working with printed ephemera.

Michael Twyman has published widely on printing history, where his four main interests are: lithography; nineteenth-century jobbing printing; printing techniques and processes; and the theory of graphic language in education.<sup>15</sup> In his first publication, *John Soulby, Printer, Ulverston* (1966), Twyman examines the 'printer's file' and archive collections of the Ulverston printer, John Soulby senior (1771–1817) and his eldest son, John Soulby junior (1796–1843). In 1965, the Museum of English Rural Life at the University of Reading acquired the Soulby Collection. The collection was a 'time capsule' of ephemera, recording the everyday lives of the community of Ulverston. It contains 497 items of jobbing printing from 1821–27, ordered chronologically and collected into a blue paper guard book.<sup>16</sup> Twyman stated that there was 'no similar corpus of work by a family of printers in this period',

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<sup>15</sup> Michael Twyman is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Typography and Graphic Communication, University of Reading, where he taught full-time between 1956 and 1998; he is President of the Printing Historical Society [1964–present], the Director of the Centre for Ephemera Studies [1993–present] and President of the Ephemera Society [2016–present]. Boge, G., *Interview: Professor Michael Twyman* [Online]. Lettering Tours, <[http://letterspace.com/LETTERING\\_TOURS/twyman\\_interview.htm](http://letterspace.com/LETTERING_TOURS/twyman_interview.htm)>, accessed 17 July 2017.

<sup>16</sup> There were another twenty-one items from other regional printers of a later date.

and the collection was likely to have been used as a stock book by John Soulby Junior for printing repeat orders.<sup>17</sup> Twyman also used two other collections of printed ephemera from the Barrow-in-Furness Public Library. These contain 600 earlier items from 1792 to 1811, pasted into two guard books.<sup>18</sup> Presented as records of local printing rather than of a particular press, the work is mainly by John Soulby Senior and his competitor George Ashburner (1795–1823). Between the collections there are over 700 items including bill heads, receipts, posters, notices and trade cards spanning thirty years (1796–1827) of one family of jobbing printers, although there is a gap in the collections between 1812–20. The largest category of work in the collections comprises theatre posters. The collections cover one of the most eventful periods in the history of printing and communication, in which a ‘revolution can be said to have taken place in the design of types’.<sup>19</sup> For a printing historian, the collections are valuable because of the quantity of surviving material, and the high quality of its preservation, rather than the quality of the presswork, which is generally regarded as unexceptional.

In *John Soulby*, Twyman follows the same chronological ordering of the material as implemented by the original collectors. His book opens with a contextual introduction to Ulverston community life by William Rollinson (1937–2000), an historical geographer of the Lake District.<sup>20</sup> Twyman discusses the origins and the importance of the collections and presents a biographical narrative of the Soulbys based on key events, such as the death of John Soulby junior’s first wife, Margaret (1826), which coincides with him starting to withdraw from printing. He contextualizes the Soulbys’ work within the technological advancements in printing and typography of the period: Soulby senior’s work reflects eighteenth-century

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<sup>17</sup> M. Twyman, *John Soulby, Printer, Ulverston: A Study of the Work Printed by John Soulby, Father and Son, Between 1796 and 1827*, (Reading: University of Reading, 1966), 16.

<sup>18</sup> The earlier items are in the Aldred Collection, named after its collector, Mrs Aldred, a schoolteacher in the 1950s; and the second guard book has items from 1804–11, bought in 1963 from T.T. Walker, who collected the items at the start of the nineteenth century.

<sup>19</sup> Twyman, *John Soulby, Printer, Ulverston*, 29.

<sup>20</sup> M. Bragg (2000). William Rollinson, *The Guardian*, <<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2000/mar/29/guardianobituaries>>, accessed 15 July 2017.

jobbing printing, where the ‘idioms of elegance and common sense seem to have been the natural gifts of even the provincial printer’; and Soulby junior’s presswork integrates the ‘latest and most fashionable type design’ of the nineteenth century, using typefaces that were unavailable to his father, where impact was required in display work.

In assessing the role of typography in printing history, Twyman makes general observations on the developments of typographic arrangements. These include: the use of brass rules of different typographic weights to separate a heading from the body of the text, to help ‘people to understand the subject of the poster at a glance’; and how bold type was used to foreground two related lines of copy from the rest of the body text, used in ‘for sale’ posters, ‘as a visual equivalent of the spoken word merely by a hierarchy of sizes disposed on different lines’. He comments on how Soulby junior occasionally used an Italian display face as a disruptive element in his compositions, and how the measure of type was fully justified wherever possible, using the largest size types to fill a line with one word or by increasing the letter spacing, limited only by the size of the printer’s chase. Soulby junior also fully justified type in smaller sizes where there was more than one line of type. Twyman illustrates a sample of the typefaces used in Soulby junior’s presswork, and he presents his findings in simple tabular form. In charting the typefaces, Twyman organizes the types used by their typographic classification, recording a description of the typefaces as roman or italic, and the use of capitals, upper and lower-case type. He measures the size of the type, by the height of the caps and the ‘x’ height, in centimetres. In a remarks section, he comments on the frequency of usage of the type, and records if it was wood or metal type. He then identifies the typefoundries and in some cases the names of the typefaces. Sans serif printing types are not used in the Soulby collection, even though these typefaces were becoming available in Britain and Germany during this period. Twyman was particularly interested in the sizes of the type as this reveals information about the mechanics of production and what equipment the printers would have used. Through



his tables he presents an overview of the typography employed in the documents. In measuring the size of the printing types used and providing a visual reproduction of the typefaces, he aids the reader in identifying the typefaces. With some of the rarer typefaces, he takes a more detailed approach, recording the number of times they were used and what text they were used to communicate.

In *Printing 1770–1970: An Illustrated History of its Development and Uses in England* (1970), Twyman considers 200 years of printing history. The book is intended for people interested in printing and social history, and for typography and graphic design students. He is interested in exploring the relationship between printing and the community it serves, using printed ephemera to highlight this relationship, with examples showing events, ideas, products, and the tastes of the time. Twyman references items in the following collections: the John Johnson Collection; St Bride Library; University of Reading Library; and the Museum of English Rural Life. He uses many other sources of printed ephemera, from private and public organizations, and private collectors. These include Associated Newspapers Ltd., Monotype Corporation Ltd., the Science Museum, and the collection of architect and typographer Maurice Goldring (1928–2000).<sup>21</sup>

Twyman addresses history using two approaches, with critical texts and thematic groupings of visual examples, and his book is divided into two sections. In Part One, his essays analyse important aspects of printing history during the period. Following on from his earlier work, Twyman sets the context of the role of printing in the ‘everyday life of the community’. He discusses the impact of printing technology on communication, from limited traditional processes to a rise in experimental practice that led to rapid changes and then expansion of printing. He connects these changes to ideas of inventiveness in engineering and

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<sup>21</sup> Hyphen Press (2000). *Maurice Goldring*, <[https://hyphenpress.co.uk/journal/news/goldring\\_obituary](https://hyphenpress.co.uk/journal/news/goldring_obituary)>, accessed 20 July 2017.

manufacturing, already reflected in other trades, and explores the social impact when applied to printing. One area of particular interest is how Twyman tracks significant developments in type design, for example towards the end of the eighteenth century ‘types specially designed for display purposes began to be produced’. He discusses the slow emergence of new typographic design styles in printing, in relation to advances in printing technologies.<sup>22</sup> Twyman relates these new design approaches to social and economic changes in an industrialized society, and the growing need for clarity in communications through information design.

In Part Two, Twyman organizes specific examples of printed ephemera into a thematic and illustrated narrative. His five themes are intended to ‘convey the variety of printing produced during the last two hundred years, but also provide a vivid documentation of some key aspects of the history of the period’.<sup>23</sup> The themes he develops are Ceremony, Rural Life, Transport, Wars, and Exhibitions. These were chosen for the historical interest of their subject matter, and to provide a varied range of work, from prestige printing by metropolitan printers, to the presswork of provincial craftsmen. The examples were selected for their merits as visually exciting images, and for their qualities as documentary evidence of printed information design. Twyman subdivides his themes to make a comparative study across the material (see Appendix: Table 1). He uses printed ephemera to show the new kinds of problems faced by printers, and makes parallels through modern examples, shown side by side.

Twyman acknowledges the influence of John Lewis’s book *Printed Ephemera* (1969) on the second part of his text, using a thematic approach to ordering his narrative. He also acknowledges the influence of James Mosley, Librarian of St Bride Library (1958–95), for

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<sup>22</sup> Twyman, M., ‘New approaches to typographic arrangements and layouts. The influence of art and architecture’, in *Printing 1770–1970*, 119.

<sup>23</sup> Twyman, M., *Printing 1770–1970*, 3.

enriching his understanding of printing history.<sup>24</sup> He recognizes that there are gaps in his knowledge, and he has not covered all aspects of print history of the period. Twyman's approach to organizing ephemera into themes and subgroups is useful in presenting a diverse range of material, both in terms of its form and its content. His groupings provide a focused structure to a complex set of data, enabling a coherent interpretation and analysis, presented through his historical narrative of typography and printing.

John Lewis (1912–96) was a collector of printed ephemera and a lecturer at the Royal College of Arts (RCA). He developed his collection with his wife Griselda (1917–2014) to illustrate the history of printing and graphic design. The collection began with an album of printed ephemera, bought from a bookseller in Suffolk, that was originally compiled by Dr Lodge, a librarian at the University Library, Cambridge.<sup>25</sup> The album contained pages collected from damaged books, including over 100 engraved title pages, early printers' devices, a rare type specimen sheet from the printer John Baskerville (1707–75) and an Indulgence printed by Thierry Martens (c.1446–1534) for the repair of the Hospital of the Cathedral of Santiago in Compostela. The Martens indulgence is cited by Lewis as the starting point for his printed ephemera collection. Lewis described the evolution of his collection as following a 'haphazard manner into a kind of designer's scrap book'.<sup>26</sup>

Lewis studied printed ephemera collections in the British Museum, in particular a series of albums made by the antiquarian John Bagford (1650–1715). Bagford's collection contained fragments of books, including title pages, that earned him a reputation as a biblioclast. Bagford collected his ephemeral material for a book on the history of printing, which was never

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<sup>24</sup> B. Richardson (2015). The Mosley Effect, St. Bride Foundation, <<https://stbridefoundation.wordpress.com/2015/05/05/the-mosley-effect/>>, accessed 17 July 2017.

<sup>25</sup> The album was assembled by Dr John Lodge [c.1792–1850] in c.1820. John Lodge was University Librarian, Cambridge, between 1828–45. Cambridge University (2019). *A Cambridge Alumni Database*, Cambridge University, <<http://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/cgi-bin/search-2018.pl?sur=Lodge&suro=w&fir=John&firo=c&cit=&cito=c&c=all&z=all&tex=&sye=&eye=&col=all&maxcount=50>>, accessed 6 October 2019.

<sup>26</sup> Lewis, 1969, *Printed Ephemera*, 4.

published. Lewis's search in the British Museum extended to John Fillinham's (1785-1862) scrapbooks of eighteenth and nineteenth-century entertainment ephemera; and to nineteenth-century material in the Victoria and Albert Museum.<sup>27</sup> Other British printed ephemera collections referenced by Lewis include: Pepys' *Vulgaria*, a volume containing early Trinity House licences and certificates in the Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge; found railway tickets and bills from the British Transport Museum; and the John Johnson Collection, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

Lewis demonstrates his passion for collecting printed ephemera, describing the action of collecting as a chase, finding material in antiquarian bookshops, printing works, factories, businesses and shops. He viewed ephemera collecting as 'tremendous fun', gathering together material thrown away and found in waste-paper baskets, rubbish bins and even in the gutter.<sup>28</sup> His book *Printed Ephemera: The Changing Use of Type and Letterforms in English and American Printing* was the first publication to acknowledge the value of printed ephemera to social history and design. He views the material both from a design and an historical perspective. He introduces his text with an index of typefaces used in ephemeral printing, thus aiding the reader to understand the typography of the document and showing the impact of different typographic styles and fashions through time. Lewis draws on a broad knowledge of ephemera collections in England and America, with particular reference to the collection of Mrs Bella C. Landauer and the New York Historical Society.

He groups typefaces as Black letter, roman and italic, Egyptian, French Antique, Italian, Sans serifs, Clarendon, Latin, Tuscan, Rounded, Stencil, Ornamented and Scripts. This is useful in understanding the development of the typography through its application in the documents. Lewis acknowledges a wide range of printed ephemera to order his material,

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<sup>27</sup> Margaret Makepeace (2017), 'The mysterious Mr John Fillinham: an apprentice made good?', Untold Lives Blog, *British Library*, <<https://blogs.bl.uk/untoldlives/2017/01/the-mysterious-mr-john-fillinham-an-apprentice-made-good.html>>, accessed 18 January 2023.

<sup>28</sup> Lewis, 1969, *Printed Ephemera*, 5.

following a category-based approach defined by the different formats (see Appendix: Table 2). Lewis's singular approach to organizing ephemera by its form is limited for historians wishing to make connections and create meaning across a wide range of material. His groupings are specific to the function of the ephemera, giving detail to a particular form of ephemera that is analysed in isolation from other categories. The wide scope of his categories reflects the diverse nature of ephemera and is useful for curation of a singular form of ephemera.

Maurice Rickards (1918–98) was a graphic artist, whose interests in ephemera led him to a career in authorship. The collector, librarian and government spokesman Patrick Hickman Robertson credited Rickards with being the first to 'elevate the study of ephemera into an academic discipline'.<sup>29</sup> In 1975, Rickards founded the British Ephemera Society alongside six British ephemera collectors and one American. This is important as it gave focus to the subject and shows a critical mass of interest in the study of printed ephemera. Original members of the British Ephemera Society included: John Lewis; Peter Jackson of the London Topographical Society; Patrick Robertson, a specialist in vintage magazines and pictorial newspapers; Amoret Tanner, collector of funeralia, material on the Duke of Wellington, and parrot ephemera; John Hall, lettering and typographic expert, including chromolithography; Graham Hudson, design and printing of British and American ephemera; and Calvin Otto, paper specialist. To attract new members the Society held an exhibition entitled 'This is Ephemera' at Paper Point, Central London (1975).<sup>30</sup> The Society organized public lectures, educational trips, ephemera trading fairs, and a newsletter that developed into the quarterly journal *The Ephemerist*. An early offshoot of the Ephemera Society was the Foundation for Ephemera Studies; established in 1984 as an educational charity, the foundation aimed to develop a permanent archive of printed

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<sup>29</sup> P. H. Robertson (1998). *Obituary: Maurice Rickards, The Independent*, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/obituary-maurice-rickards-1145817.html>>, accessed 16 May 2017.

<sup>30</sup> Sally De Beaumont (2017), '1975-2015 The Ephemera Society, Celebrating 40 years', *The Ephemera Society*, <<http://www.ephemera-society.org.uk/articles/ephsoc.html>>, accessed 16 May 2017.

ephemera and to facilitate research projects. In 1992 permission was granted for the Centre for Ephemera Studies, Department of Typography & Graphic Communication at the University of Reading, which was formally launched by its first president, the historian Asa Briggs, in May 1993, under the directorship of Michael Twyman. Rickards' personal collection of printed ephemera formed the basis of the centre; the Rickards Collection contains over 20,000 items of ephemera, used for teaching and scholarly research.

Rickards authored eighteen books on printed ephemera and contributed forewords to an additional two books. His early books focused on specific forms of ephemera such as posters and notices, related to his career as a graphic designer. He later began to publish texts that developed his interests in the value of ephemera as historical and cultural documents (see Appendix: Table 3). *This Is Ephemera* (1977) is a concise guide to the history and value of ephemera for historians and collectors. Rickards organizes ephemera into three groups that reflect an increased 'self-awareness' of graphic design: the transient (tickets); semi-durable (calendars); and the keep-it-forever (commemorative souvenirs). Within his definition, Rickards includes self-contained areas of popular study, such as postcard collections and stamp collecting. He defines these areas by their 'collectability', each with their own societies, collectors and historic scholars.<sup>31</sup> His book presents a functional overview of the history of collecting and of using printed ephemera for historical study, including a list of books and addresses of periodicals and ephemera dealers, reflecting the growing interest in the subject of ephemera, coinciding with the advancement of the Ephemera Society. In his later work, *Collecting Printed Ephemera* (1988), Rickards expands his ideas through a scholarly text on working with ephemera. Based on examples from his collection, he presents a method of interpreting printed ephemera that connects three approaches. He first discusses the methods of production characteristic of printed ephemera, setting a context within which to understand

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<sup>31</sup> Rickards, *This is Ephemera*, 12.

the nature of ephemera and how they were made. He focuses on the processes of letterpress, engraving, lithography/chromolitho, embossing and use of lace paper. He uses these attributes to support his definition of the genre, identifying businesses associated with the production of ephemera and discussing the cultural impact of these technologies. Following Lewis's approach of defining categories based on specific forms of ephemera, Rickards organizes his material into categories based on classes of documents defined by their use and function (see Appendix: Table 4). Rickards' final approach is to organize ephemera into ten themes, which are determined by the content of the material found in his collection (see Appendix: Table 5). Through the use of themes, he develops his historical narrative, presenting a connected social and cultural interpretation of history through the study of printed ephemera. Some of Rickards' themes build upon other scholars' methods of organization, such as Twyman's themes of Transport and Rural Life. They also reflect areas of specialist interest amongst ephemerists, for example, Amoret Tanner's collection of funeralia. Rickards identifies many different classes of ephemeral documents based on their format and uses. Categorization of these documents is mainly defined by the collections used, with organizational systems devised around specialist areas of interest, limited by the material to hand. In the *Encyclopedia of Ephemera* (2000), Rickards and Twyman look beyond their immediate fields of research and focus on the task of establishing a wider-ranging system for organizing ephemeral documents into categories.<sup>32</sup> In the process, they establish a long list of documents that they considered as ephemera, forming the basis of a universal system for others to contribute towards. The *Encyclopedia* was designed as a guide to organize ephemera using examples from the Rickards collection. Like Lewis's system, it was organized by categories led by the form of the ephemera. Each category of ephemera was illustrated and defined in detail, with additional signposting provided between

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<sup>32</sup> Michael Twyman completed the *Encyclopedia* after Rickards' death in 1999. The *Thesaurus* is published on the University of Reading's Website. Morris, B. (2013). *Thesaurus of Ephemera Terms*, Reading: Centre for Ephemera Studies, <<http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/typography-at-reading/files/2014/07/Ephemera-Thesaurus.pdf>>, accessed 3 July 2017.

categories to assist others in the indexing of ephemeral material. These groupings were not intended as an absolute system or as a language by which to discuss ephemera. Some categories make location of items difficult, for example, categories based on printing processes such as Chromos (chromolithographic prints) rather than ordering under specific terms to group ephemera such as Advertising cards, Religious cards, Liebig cards and Collecting cards.

In 2013, the Centre for Ephemera Studies (CfES) advanced Rickards' and Twyman's work, with the publication of a thesaurus of ephemera terms, designed for use by archivists, curators, historians and librarians to order and catalogue ephemera.<sup>33</sup> Barbara Morris explains that the *Thesaurus* extends ideas originally presented in Rickards' and Twyman's *Encyclopedia of Ephemera* which developed detailed definitions for the wide range of printed ephemera but these were 'being used in ways for which it was not intended'.

The *Thesaurus* presents a structured framework, grouping the definitions, with scope to cross-reference and make relationships between documents that span several classes. The *Thesaurus* set standards in how ephemera can be catalogued and indexed. It is structured by a set of broad terms that have a bias towards contemporary nomenclature, relevant to present and future audiences. In the *Thesaurus*, individual terms are first developed with a Scope note (SN) that gives an outline description of the material to help identify the ephemera. Recommendations for alternative terms are given if the material does not match these criteria or if it has specialist characteristics. The *Thesaurus* recognizes that terminology changes over time, and signposts outdated terminology to contemporary forms. Under the recommended terms the older terminology is acknowledged with a tag of Use for (UF). Through the use of Broader terms (BT), Narrower terms (NT) and Related terms (RT), the *Thesaurus* presents connections between different forms of interrelated ephemera. For example, book labels are

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<sup>33</sup> The team was led by Barbara Morris with Amoret Tanner and Michael Twyman. Additional support was provided by Ann Copeland of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, Julie-Anne Lambert of the Bodleian Library's John Johnson Collection, and Woody Woodis at the Library of Congress.



organized as follows: firstly, under the broader term of labels; then the narrower terms of Binders' labels, Bookplates, Booksellers' labels, Library labels, Prize labels, and Stationers' labels; and finally, there is a connection to the related term of Books. The *Thesaurus* is relevant through its use of contemporary terminology to order historical documents: Playbills are ordered under Posters; and handbills are categorized as Flyers.

Graham Hudson, a founder member and the secretary of the Ephemera Society, used printed ephemera to discuss design history. In *Design and Printing of Ephemera in Britain and America 1720–1920* (2008), he identifies three factors – function, process and period – that together have affected the design and appearance of ephemera over a period of 200 years. Hudson defines these factors as follows: the purpose the ephemera were produced to serve; the printing processes used to make ephemera; and the historical period that the content of ephemera reflects.<sup>34</sup> Hudson acknowledged Rickards' and Twyman's *Encyclopedia* for its contribution to the categorization of ephemera, and he uses their terminology to describe his ephemera. Where Rickards and Twyman present detailed descriptions for over 500 subjects of ephemera, Hudson's focus is on design history. He considers Rickards' and Twyman's approach to evaluating the design of individual categories to be 'scarcely feasible' and repetitive. Instead, he structures his narrative using themes rather than by categories of document class, focusing on printing technology, processes, artistic movements and techniques. Hudson considers the cultural influences on the production of printed ephemera both in commercial terms and their popularity. Hudson's research is led by the history of the printing press. His critique is advanced through an historical interpretation that considered the value of ephemera as 'expressions of commerce and culture'. He demonstrates that display

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<sup>34</sup> G. Hudson, *The Design and Printing of Ephemera in Britain and America, 1720-1920* (London: British Library, 2008), 8.

typefaces were used to increase the visual prominence of advertising, leading to an increase in sales; and he explored the influence of cultural trends and fashions on jobbing typography.

William Fenton began collecting printed ephemera with a bias towards graphic design. As an artist and typographer, he collected ephemeral material that included nineteenth-century typefaces and ornaments which he used as visual references for his work. As a historian, Fenton used printed ephemera to interpret social history. In *Railway Printed Ephemera* (1992), he develops a thematic approach to communicate an historical narrative of the railways, using examples of printed ephemera from his personal collection. Fenton chose not to interpret his ephemera by categories; instead, he groups ephemera loosely into chapters that visually progress the story of rail transport through printed documents. His themes are explored through a diverse range of printed ephemera, in chronological order.

David Jury explored the histories of typography, printing and graphic design from the perspective of design in the digital age. In *Graphic Design Before Graphic Designers* (2012) he examines the history of graphic design through printed ephemera. He structures his narrative through the themes of print technology and production, audience consumption, printers' education, and design. Each theme is explored through visual examples of ephemera, followed by an expanded selection that are organized by category, presenting a deeper perspective of each field.

In conclusion, the disposable nature of printed ephemera causes problems for historians as there is a huge volume of surviving material, which is often scattered across a diverse range of collections and mostly uncatalogued. Organising printed ephemera is challenging as there are many differences between the variety of surviving documents: printed ephemera has many sizes and formats; the method of production was varied; documents were used for innumerable purposes; and the typography unconstrained by convention combined mixed typefaces. These factors cause problems for the cataloguer, archivist, and researcher in analysing the material.

The field of ephemera studies is extremely valuable in the interpretation of printing and social history. The contributions of Twyman, Lewis and Rickards to the fields of ephemera studies aids in the long-term development of a common language for research and discussion of printed ephemera. From Lewis's singular approach to organising ephemera by its form, to Twyman and Rickards's use of themes and subgroups, their work in ordering and classifying a diverse range of printed documents, and the methodologies that they have developed has established a working language for other ephemera scholars to use. These methods seek to provide solutions to the complexity of classifying printed ephemera. They provide contemporary scholars with the tools required for describing and interpreting printed ephemera.

The terminology developed in the *Thesaurus of Ephemera Terms* attempts to cover all the formats of printed ephemeral documents. As a result the *Thesaurus* can be used to describe the interconnected categories of documents, including a wide range of printed matter (posters, booklets, leaflets, flyers); disposable material (tickets, flyers); and printed ephemera to be preserved and collected (invites, commemorative programmes, dance cards). It allows scholars of printed ephemera to discuss the material using the correct historical names and then categorize them using terms that are easy to understand by contemporary readers.

The study of printed ephemera is an integral aspect in consideration of our material culture. It can be approached as an independent field, with its own history, or used in conjunction with other disciplines. These minor transient documents of everyday life do indeed represent yesterday's news but they can also reveal a new understanding for the future.

## Appendix

**Table 1.1: Groups of printed ephemera used by Michael Twyman**

Theme	Subgroup
<i><b>Ceremony:</b></i>	Coronation tickets and invitations;
	George IV's coronation
	Queen Victoria's coronation
	Public celebration of royal occasions
	Nelson's funeral
	Wellington's funeral
	Announcements of royal deaths
	Queen Victoria's death and funeral
	Special issues of newspapers
	Royal openings; and Banquets, balls, and special performances
<i><b>Rural Life:</b></i>	Associations for the prevention of crime
	Reward notices
	Game and poaching
	Public notices
	Friendly societies
	Poor relief
	The country labourer
	Horticultural shows

	Agricultural shows and fairs
	Livestock sales
	Farms and produce
	Cultural activities
<b><i>Transport:</i></b>	Railway guides
	Openings of railways
	Railway timetables
	Railway novelties
	Coaching
	Roads
	Canals
	Steam-boat notices
	Disasters at sea
	Steam-boat excursion guides
	Tickets
	Motor buses
	The petrol engine
	London's transport
	Motor licences and certificates
	The Highway code
	Automobile Association
	Imperial Airways
<b><i>Wars</i></b>	Propaganda
	Anti-war bills

	Recruiting
	Militia notices
	Anti-militia notices
	Conscription and anti-conscription
	Representations of battles
	Service certificates, record books, and forms
	Notice of casualties
	News of war and peace
	Glorification of war
	The home effort
	Second World War information leaflets
	Air raids
	Celebration of peace
<b><i>Exhibitions</i></b>	Dioramas and panoramas
	Models and curiosities
	Waxworks
	Madame Tussauds' exhibition
	Great Exhibition, official printing
	Views of the Great Exhibition
	Great Exhibition novelties
	Trade advertising at the Great Exhibition
	International Exhibition, 1862
	Empire exhibitions
	Festival of Britain, 1951

	Trade exhibitions
	Art exhibition notices and posters
	Art exhibition tickets and private view cards
	Art exhibition catalogues.

**Table 1.2: Categories of printed ephemera used by John Lewis**

Indulgences, proclamations and official printing
Proclamations, decrees and petitions
Proclamations and decrees; certificates
Official notices and election printing
Police notices
Election notices
Rewards and wanted notices
Booksellers' lists and leaflets
For sale notices
Travel notices
Entertainment notices
Playbills
Sporting posters
Programmes, menus and wine lists
Tickets for travel (tollgate tickets, and railway tickets)
Tickets for functions and exhibitions (admission tickets to various functions, cloakroom tickets)
Invitation and announcement cards (funeral invitations, functions, dinners, balls etc., and exhibitions)
Exhibition cards
Trade cards
Stationers' and ex-libris labels



Invoices and billheads (engraved, and letterpress)
Tobacco labels (wood engraved, copper engraved, letterpress)
Tea, coffee and grocery labels (grocery and sauce labels, and grocers' bags and labels)
Pharmaceutical and perfumery labels
Hardware labels and wrappers
Watch papers
Gunpowder and Ink labels
Cutlers' and Toolmakers' labels
Crockery and glass labels
Sail needle labels.

**Table 1.3: Books authored by Maurice Rickards**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Publisher</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>The Lovely Awful Thing</i>	Blond	1959
<i>Off-Beat Photography</i>	Studio	1959
<i>The Pye book of science</i>	Longacre	1963
<i>Posters of the Nineteen-twenties</i>	Adams & Dart	1968
<i>Posters at the Turn of the Century</i>	Adams & Mackay	1968
<i>Posters of the First World War</i>	Evelyn Adams & MacKay	1968
<i>Brews and potions: A hand book of remedies, spells, elixirs, cordials and aphrodisiacs</i>	Hugh Evelyn	1968
<i>New Inventions. A Comprehensive Survey of Scientific and Technical Progress in the Arts, Sciences and Manufactures as Published During the Reign of Her Majesty</i>	Hugh Evelyn	1969
<i>Posters of Protest and Revolution</i>	Walker	1970
<i>The rise and fall of the poster</i>	David & Charles	1971
<i>Banned posters</i> , Hardcover	Evelyn, Adams & Mackay	1972
<i>The World Communicates</i> , Hardcover	Longman	1972

<i>World Saves Lives</i>	Prentice Hall Press	1972
<i>The public notice: an illustrated history</i>	David & Charles	1973
<i>Where They Lived in London</i> , Paperback	David & Charles	1974
<i>The First World War: Ephemera, Mementoes, Documents.</i> Maurice Rickards, Michael Moody	Jupiter Books	1975
<i>This is Ephemera: Collecting Printed Throwaways*</i>	David & Charles	1977
<i>Ephemera of Travel and Transport;</i> Janice Anderson and Edmund Swinglehurst with an Introduction by Maurice Rickards**	New Cavendish Books	1981
<i>The ephemera of crime and punishment</i>	The Ephemera Society in association with The Solicitors' Law Stationery Office	1983
<i>Happiest days of your life: The ephemera of education</i>	Times Educational Supplement	1986
<i>Collecting Printed Ephemera*</i>	Phaidon Press	1988

<i>The Encyclopaedia of Ephemera: A Guide to the Fragmentary Documents*</i>	Routledge	2001
<i>Wake Up, America: World War I and the American Poster - foreword by Rickards**</i>	Artabras	2001
<i>*Books by Rickards discussed in this chapter</i>  <i>**Introductions or forewords presented by Rickards</i>		

**Table 1.4: Categories of printed ephemera used by Maurice Rickards.**

Tradecards
Billheads/letterheads
Labels
Admission tickets
Flagday emblems
Toll/turnpike tickets
Handbills
Poster stamps
Sale notices
Playing-card stationary
Watchpapers
Dance programmes
Scraps/diecuts
Book labels
Valentines
Rewards of merit

**Table 1.5: Themes of printed ephemera used by Maurice Rickards**

Travel and transport
Funeralia
Crime and punishment
Charity
Rural Life
Cigar packaging
Education
Entertainment
Security printing
Today's ephemera