VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui

TO: Patrick Leary, Chair, Curran Fellowship Committee, Research Society for Victorian Periodicals

FROM: Dr Sydney J Shep, Senior Lecturer in Print & Book Culture, The Printer, Wai-te-ata Press, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

DATE: 3 December 2009

RE: Curran Fellowship 2009 : : Final Report

My project to examine the archive of the printer-journalist John Southward (1840-1902) housed at the St. Bride Printing Library in London was highly successful. From 26 August to 1 October 2009 and under the professional eye of chief librarian Nigel Roche, I consulted and digitally photographed both manuscript and print resources dealing with Southward's relationship to the New Zealand printer-journalist Robert Coupland Harding. I was also fortunate enough to blow the dust off and blacken my fingers with material that probably had not been touched before or since the Blitz when the library was miraculously saved despite the surrounding buildings including St. Bride (the printers' church) and the Church Missionary Society being bombed out.

Thirty scrapbooks and various manuscript notebooks, correspondence files and press proofs demonstrated Southward's cut and paste approach to typographic press journalism when he was editor of and/or contributor to such important contemporary trade periodicals as *The Printers' Register* and the *Printing and Paper Trades Journal*. They also illustrated his working habits as he compiled the most important technical writings of the late 19th century on modern and artistic printing, as well as the history and latest developments in machine composition and stereotyping. Southward's commitment to technical education was exemplified in holograph manuscripts of his many lectures, his work on promoting technical libraries, and his role as printing examiner for the London and City Guilds qualifications. His correspondence with many of the key players in the international printing arena (including the typefounders Enschede of the Netherlands, and Raithby and Lawrence, the Leicester-based printers who put English printing on the map through the *Printers' international Specimen Exchange* and *The British Printer*) was very revealing as was his own personal mission to stamp out postcard pornography, fulsomely documented in his own testimonials and transcripts of court proceedings.

Southward turned out to be fascinating figure in his own right. When next in the UK, I hope to document his Liverpool pre-history where he trained with his father (also a printer), and investigate in more detail his various professional excursions to Spain and France. That a biography of Southward is well overdue was pointed out to me by Frances Wakeham, the antiquarian book dealer and paper historian. Southward doesn't (yet) merit an entry in the *Dictionary of Nineteenth Century Journalism*, though it is in the planning. As a newly

appointed Associate Editor focussing on the English printing trades for this publication I will be able to ensure that his networks are fully covered. Moreover, I have enough rich material to include Southward as one of my major case studies for a book-length work on typographical journals and nineteenth-century global communication networks, a project funded by a three-year Marsden grant from the Royal Society of New Zealand and scheduled to commence in early 2010.

A pleasant surprise during my research was the discovery that one of Southward's sons had emigrated to New Zealand, probably via South Africa (another international network to pursue). His grandson, Sir Len Southward, ran a successful engineering firm in Wellington and his passion for old cars, fast boats, and flying machines resulted in the establishment of the world-famous Southward Museum [http://www.thecarmuseum.co.nz/]. I met Sir Len many years ago when he was still collecting printing equipment and musical instruments, but until now had never made the connection. His son is still living in the region and I will be continuing the family history side of my research which may bring to light more archival material on this side of the water.

All these discoveries and breakthroughs would not have been possible without the financial assistance of the Curran Fellowship and the support from the many people who made my research visit focussed, productive, and immensely enjoyable. My sincere thanks to all concerned. I would like to offer a special thank you to Professor Eileen Curran for her vision and tangible support of scholarship. I am honoured to have been named an inaugural Curran Fellow and look forward to the Fellowship's future success and longevity. Should you wish me to sit on the Fellowship Committee at some point in the future, I am happy to put my name forward. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Cordially

Sydney J Shep

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