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# *Two rare table-top presses at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History*

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From the middle of the nineteenth century it was the regular (albeit not constant) practice of the Department of Entomology at the University of Oxford to identify specimens with printed labels, made in the Department, using a succession of small table-top presses.

## THE FIRST PRESS: A 'COWPER'

The first press to be acquired was one of Edward Cowper's 'Parlour Presses', manufactured and sold by Charles Holtzapffel, as described on pages 5–48 above (see Fig. 1, 2, 5–7). At least 1,076 such presses were manufactured and sold, but very few survive. In 1971, when a facsimile of the accompanying manual, *Printing apparatus for the use of amateurs*, was published,<sup>1</sup> only one had been traced (press 5 below), but now six are recorded, as follows:

1) Serial number 59. Private collection. Current whereabouts unknown. The standard model. This press had been identified by the mid-1980s when a number of replicas of press 5 (no. 940) were manufactured. The prospectus for the replicas notes the existence of press 59 (then in a collection in Bath, England) and describes it as 'an earlier and frailer version' than press 940, datable to 1840.<sup>2</sup> However, since the press numbered 58 was sold in the spring of 1839,<sup>3</sup> number 59 was almost certainly manufactured and sold in that year; it is frailer only in the sense that it is a standard model, without the stronger feet necessary to accommodate the drawer of the janned model (see pages 5, 12–13 above).

2) Serial number 92. Oxford University Museum of Natural History. The janned model. Probably manufactured 1839. See Fig. 1–5.

3) Serial number 874. Type Archive, London. The standard model, with frisket but lacking the lever and bridle. The frisket is of cast iron, with 'COWPER'S PARLOUR PRINTING PRESS' cast along one long edge and 'HOLTZAPFFEL & Co. LONDON | MANUFACTURERS & SOLE AGENTS' along the other.

1. *Charles Holtzapffel's printing apparatus for the use of amateurs ...* edited by James Mosley & David Chambers. London: Private Libraries Association, 1971.

2. Merrion Press, *Charles Holtzapffel's printing apparatus for the use of amateurs* [prospectus]. London: Merrion Press, 1986, p. [2]. Twenty replicas were manufactured. At least one further facsimile press was made by Stephen Pratt at Cove Fort, Utah. The Cowper press sold at Christie's South Kensington on 20 May 2003 (sale 9629, lot 825) appears to have been one of the Merrion Press replicas.

3. Manuscript 'Register of lathes made by Holtzapffel', London Metropolitan Archives, Ms 09475, ff. 165–166.

Fig. 1. Example of the japanned model Cowper parlour press at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History (Hope Entomology Collection), side view with the lever down and drawer in place.



4) Serial number 931. Platen Press Museum, Zion, Illinois. The standard model, complete with frisket and accompanied by an example of Holtzapffel's four-drawer lockable type-cabinet (containing type and furniture), a transfer composing stick,<sup>4</sup> bodkin and tweezers, all apparently originally acquired with the press. Owned by David Winkworth's Printing House Museum at Cocker-mouth, Cumbria, from the 1990s. When that Museum closed in 2009, the press was acquired by Paul Aken for his Platen Press Museum. See Fig. 3 and 4.

5) Serial number 940. Private collection of David Chambers. The japanned model, complete with frisket but lacking the drawer. This was the press described and depicted in *Charles Holtzapffel's printing apparatus for the use of amateurs*...<sup>5</sup> In 1986 a number of replicas of Cowper's press, carefully copied from this model, were manufactured and sold by the Merrion Press.<sup>6</sup>

6) Serial number 1076. Museum of the History of Science, Oxford (inventory number 81125). The japanned model. Complete with frisket and drawer, which contains an original rubber roller with a rosewood handle,<sup>7</sup> a bodkin with an ebony handle and sheath, and two small tins of ink (one black, the other probably red). See Fig. 6.

4. Mosley and Chambers (1971, note 1). See pp. 7–8 above.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Merrion Press (1986, note 2).

7. The roller is probably a 'Vulcanized India Rubber Inking Roller' as advertised by Holtzapffel in some late issues of *Printing apparatus for the use of amateurs*. See David Chambers, 'Printing apparatus for the use of amateurs', *The private library*, third series 10:4 (Winter 1987), 177–180.



Fig. 2. Cowper parlour press at Oxford University the Museum of Natural History, side view with the lever up and the drawer removed.



Fig. 3. Example of a standard model Cowper parlour press at the Platen Press Museum, Zion, Illinois, side view, closed (photograph by Paul Aken).

Press 2 is that described here. Like presses 5 and 6 (the former being that depicted by Mosley and Chambers) it is of the japanned variety. It lacks the frisket, but is otherwise complete, including the drawer (containing now only two wooden wedges and a small piece of furniture – there is a compartment clearly intended for a roller, and another lined with zinc; see Fig. 5). The most obvious difference between this press and presses 3–6 is that there is a

Fig. 4. Cowper parlour press at the Platen Press Museum, Zion, Illinois, side view, open (photograph by Paul Aken).



large turned wooden knob in the centre of the platen, as depicted in the wood-engraved illustrations reproduced in Holtzapffel's catalogues and manuals. This is probably also present in press 1, suggesting that parlour presses were originally fitted with such knobs, but that this ceased to be standard for either model of press at some before number 874 was manufactured. This knob was no doubt found to be unnecessary, as raising the platen could best be achieved during printing by holding the frisket-ear and raising the platen and frisket together (albeit the frisket is now absent from press 2). Another minor difference is that the handle on the end of the impression-lever is a different shape, being a rather short, plump knob in press 2 and a longer, more elegant form in the later presses.

Press 2 has a tympan covered with parchment, and to this is attached a small wooden box, apparently manufactured in the Department of Entomology, incorporating wooden wedges and forming a miniature chase to hold the few lines of small type required for each specimen-label (see Fig. 7–9). This was probably used in the conventional manner, held firm, or merely carefully placed, upon the bed, and has become attached to the frisket by accident, through the press being closed while wet ink remained on its upper surface.<sup>8</sup>

The press has a small printed label attached to one side reading '*Presented by the REV. F. W. HOPE*'. Frederick William Hope (1797–

8. It is possible that the press was used 'inverted' at the Department, that is to say with the type held in this box attached to the tympan (attached to the platen) and the paper placed, with suitable makeshift packing, upon the bed.



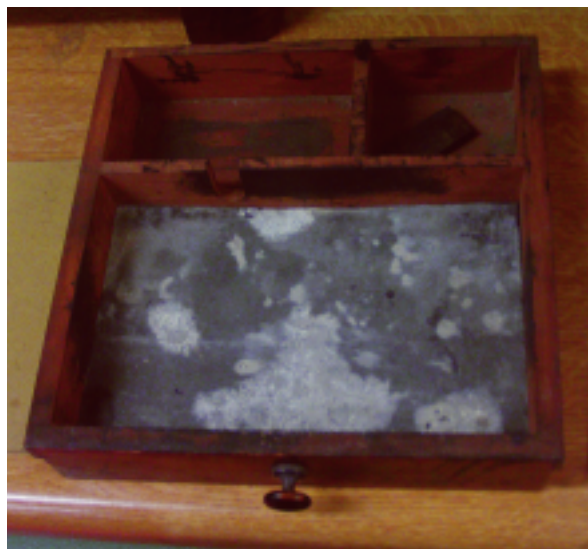


Fig. 5. Drawer of the Cowper parlour press at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History.



Fig. 6. Contents of the drawer of the Cowper's parlour press at the Museum of the History of Science, Oxford. (Inv. 81125. Copyright Museum of the History of Science, University of Oxford).



Fig. 7. Platen and tympan of the Cowper parlour press at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, with an improvised miniature wooden chase attached.



Fig. 8. The improvised miniature wooden chase attached to the Cowper parlour press at the Museum of Natural History, Oxford.

1862) was an important figure in entomology at Oxford in the first half of the nineteenth century. He presented a substantial collection of insect specimens and prints to the University in 1849 (at the same time endowing a professorship of zoology) and the 'Hope Department of Entomology' was established largely as a result of his benefaction.<sup>9</sup> The Department moved into the Museum

9. Audrey Z. Smith, *A history of the Hope Entomological Collections in the University Museum Oxford: with lists of archives and collections*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

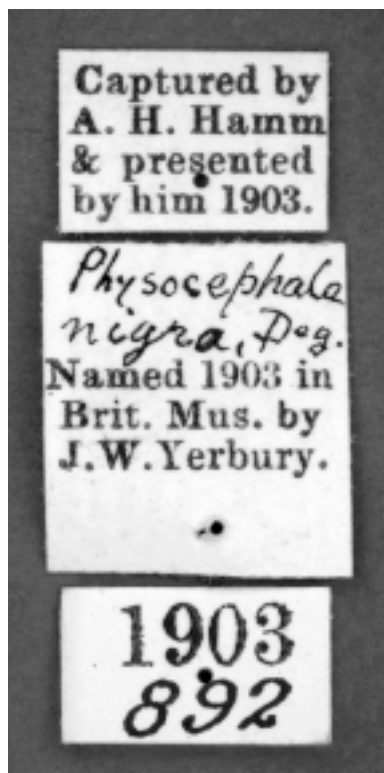


Fig. 9. Three insect specimen-labels at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, printed on the Cowper press (with manuscript additions), probably by Hamm at the time of presentation of the specimen (1903). Reproduced at around 220%. Courtesy Oxford University Museum of Natural History.

10. Edward Bagnall Poulton (1856–1943) was Hope Professor of Entomology between 1893 and 1933.

11. Smith (1986, note 9), pp. 30–31. It is unlikely that Hamm used the Cowper press for any of his printing for the Delegates; this work was probably undertaken using an 1878

of Natural History when it was established in 1860 (and moved out again in 1978, leaving the historical collections of specimens and miscellaneous impedimenta, including printing presses, as part of the Museum's 'Hope Entomological Collections'). It is likely that the parlour press was given to the University in 1849, and that Hope had originally acquired it around 1840. He had wide scientific interests, and may have bought the press with ideas beyond merely printing labels for his own specimens. Once in the Department, it was used for printing some specimen labels between around 1850 and 1893. In the latter year E. B. Poulton was appointed Hope Professor of Entomology<sup>10</sup> and overhauled the principles of specimen-labelling, encouraging greater use of the press. Surviving labels suggest that Poulton also acquired new type, in a smaller-size, at this period to allow for the printing of more-detailed labels. In 1897 Albert Harry Hamm (1861–1951) was appointed by Poulton as an assistant. Hamm was an entomologist, but also a professional printer, and his duties at the Museum were divided between working with the Hope Collection and printing for the Museum's Delegates.<sup>11</sup> He brought his typographical skills to the production of specimen-labels for Poulton, though he also brought his speech impediment – 'Hamm was unable to sound the letter "h" – this even spread to printing labels, and there are some in the Hope Collections to this day bearing the name "Ogley Bog" instead of Hogley Bog.<sup>12</sup>

In 1896 the Department acquired a copy of Holtzapffel's manual, *Printing apparatus for the use of amateurs*. Although dated 1846, this is evidently a later issue, with later advertisements pasted over pages 78–79,<sup>13</sup> and is inscribed 'Purchased for Hope Department Febry 1896. E. B. P[oulton]'. The packing under the tympan of the press includes scrap paper bearing ink notes and pencil drawings dated 1927, 1936 and 1937. Hamm retired in 1931, and Poulton in 1933, but the press evidently continued to be used to print labels at the Department until 1942 when a new press was acquired.

Harrild treadle press which was also owned by the Museum at this period.

12. Smith (1986, note 9), pp. 56–57. Hamm's typographical style was recognizable decades later. Ivan Wright recalls 'It certainly made possible a particular task – to find all of Hamm's specimens in the British Diptera collection.

Although it took over a week, I found (and extracted the data from) nearly 700 pin labels, and only because Hamm's printed labels stood out among the rest and could easily be read.' (e-mail from Ivan Wright to the author, 26 July 2017).

13. See Mosley and Chambers (1971, note 1), pp. [xxvi–xxvii].

## THE SECOND PRESS: A 'ZANO'

By the early 1940s it was evidently felt that the Cowper press, by then a century old, should be replaced with a more modern machine. The then Hope Professor, Geoffrey Douglas Hale Carpenter (1882–1953) discussed with Robert Wylie Lloyd (1868–1958) the question of a suitable press to succeed the Cowper. Lloyd is best remembered today as a mountaineer and collector of books, art and insects,<sup>14</sup> and was known to the Hope Department both as a donor of specimens and as the owner and Managing Director of Nathaniel Lloyd and Company, a colour-printing and publishing firm which specialised in scientific work, notably entomological books and journals.<sup>15</sup> However, it is unclear whether it was Carpenter's enquiry about a new press for the Department or Lloyd's determination to enter the market as a manufacturer of hobby presses that began the discussion. In any case Lloyd, a vigorous entrepreneur, evidently saw a potential market for small-scale presses at this period (perhaps in the knowledge that Adana had become insolvent in 1940),<sup>16</sup> and instructed his workshop to produce a prototype model of what he decided to call the 'Zano' press.<sup>17</sup> The prototype seems to have been delivered to the Department in late 1942. In the following February Carpenter placed an order for one of the presses and Lloyd replied, saying 'I was pleased to get your letter this morning and to note that you are satisfied with the new model and that you are going to give us our first order ... In the meantime ... would you continue to use my machine'.<sup>18</sup>

Lloyd produced a typed prospectus for his new press, and four pages of typed instructions for its use, probably intended to be copy for an accompanying booklet. The prospectus describes two presses, the 'ZANO PRINTING MACHINE 1 MODEL NO. 1 (to print an area of  $3 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ "') at £9.17s.6d. and the 'No. 2 Model Printing Machine (to print an area of  $6 \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ "') at £16.15s.6d. Each was offered with an 'outfit' of type, ink, spacing material, an ink plate and roller, galley, composing stick, cleaning brush, imposing surface, combined tweezers and bodkin, screw-driver, spanner and two type-cases, at a further £9.17s.6d. (or £12.17.6d. to accompany the model 2, the difference presumably being accounted for by a greater quantity of type). These prices included  $33\frac{1}{3}$  percent purchase tax. When Carpenter made his order from Lloyd, he included the 'outfit' but deleted from the list the type, galley, imposing surface and type-cases as 'not wanted'. The invoice survives in the Hope Collection, showing that Carpenter was charged £13.3s.9d. (£9.17s.6d. for a 'No. 1. Model Zano

14. On his death in 1958, Lloyd's collection of entomological specimens was bequeathed to Manchester University; his watercolours – including many fine examples by Turner – Swiss topographical prints and Japanese swords and artwork went to the British Museum.

15. Nathaniel Lloyd and Company Limited was founded by Robert W. Lloyd and his brother Nathaniel (1867–1933) in Blackfriars in 1893. The firm originally specialised in chromolithography. Robert ran the company from 1909, when his brother retired, and expanded the business into publishing, design, general printing, paper-making and dealing in cellophane. The firm published *The entomologist's monthly magazine* between 1924 and 1963, and for much of this period R. W. Lloyd was on the editorial board and was a regular contributor. Nathaniel Lloyd and Company continues to exist, but has been part of Sonoco Products (a California-based packaging company) since the 1980s.

16. See Bob Richardson, *The Adana connection*. London: British Printing Society, 1997. Other British hobby presses, such as those produced by Adams Brothers (Davenry), had also ceased to be available by the time war broke-out, leaving the market open.

17. The reason he chose this name is as obscure as Donald Aspinall's reasons for naming his press-making business 'Adana'. See Richardson (1997, note 16), p. 17. That Zano is almost as far away from Adana as it is possible to be, alphabetically speaking, may perhaps be significant.

18. Typed memorandum, [February 1943], from R. W. Lloyd to G. D. H. Carpenter, Hope Entomological Collections, Oxford.

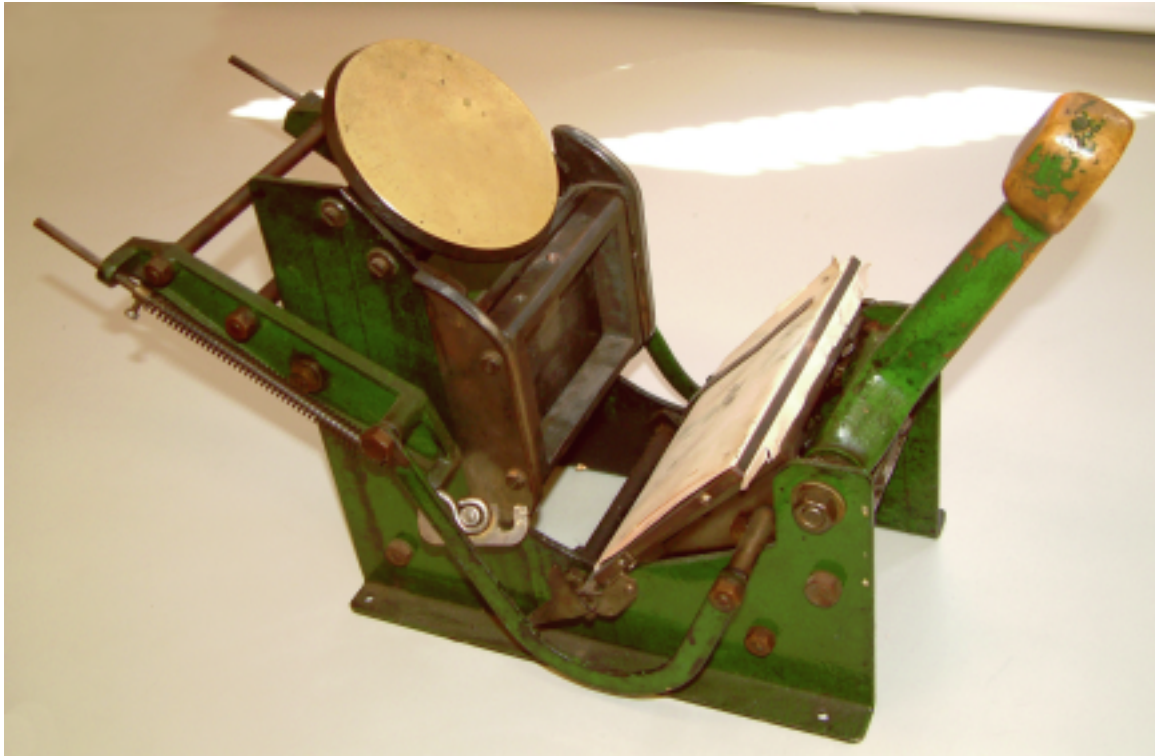


Fig. 10. 'Zano' press at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, side view with the chase in place.

19. Invoices in the Hope Entomological Collections, Oxford.

20. Typed letter, 16 February 1943, from Nathaniel Lloyd & Co. Ltd to G. D. H. Carpenter, Hope Entomological Collections, Oxford.

21. The 'No. 1' (or 'High Speed No. 1') was manufactured between 1934 and around 1956, with a hiatus during the War. A kit-form model was also available in the 1930s. For evidence of the price in the period 1946–1956 see the Adana advertisement of June 1953 reproduced at [www.gracesguide.co.uk/Adana](http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Adana) (consulted 22 July 2017). In 1936 the No. 1 press had evidently been available for as little as £1.18s.6d (see *The Meccano magazine* (December 1936), xxxi) and a sheet-metal model was introduced at the same period for a mere 18s.6d. See Richardson (1997, note 16).

Printing Machine' and £3.6s.3d. for the abbreviated outfit) on 16 February 1943. Supplying the outfit took some little time, due to wartime difficulties in obtaining materials, especially steel. The screwdriver and a tin of ink were not supplied until 8 July 1943, and the spacing and tweezers/bodkin did not appear until 14 October.<sup>19</sup>

Indeed, it remains unclear whether the Zano press itself was ever supplied. The letter accompanying the invoice of 16 February notes that this 'is our first machine. It will be finished in about three weeks and Mr Lloyd will bring it with him next time he is down. In the meantime, please use his machine as arranged'.<sup>20</sup> However, the press which survives in the Hope Department may well be the prototype which originally belonged to Lloyd, rather than the first fruit of the production line. It is quite possible that no Zano presses were ever produced, due to a combination of wartime difficulties in obtaining materials, economic pressures on the company and the limited market for hobby presses at this period. In 1946 a revitalised Adana began again to produce small table-top presses at prices with which Lloyd may have preferred not to compete; a comparable Adana 'No. 1' press would have been available after the War at £4.17s.6d.<sup>21</sup> No advertisements for Zano presses have so far been located; Lloyd would surely have



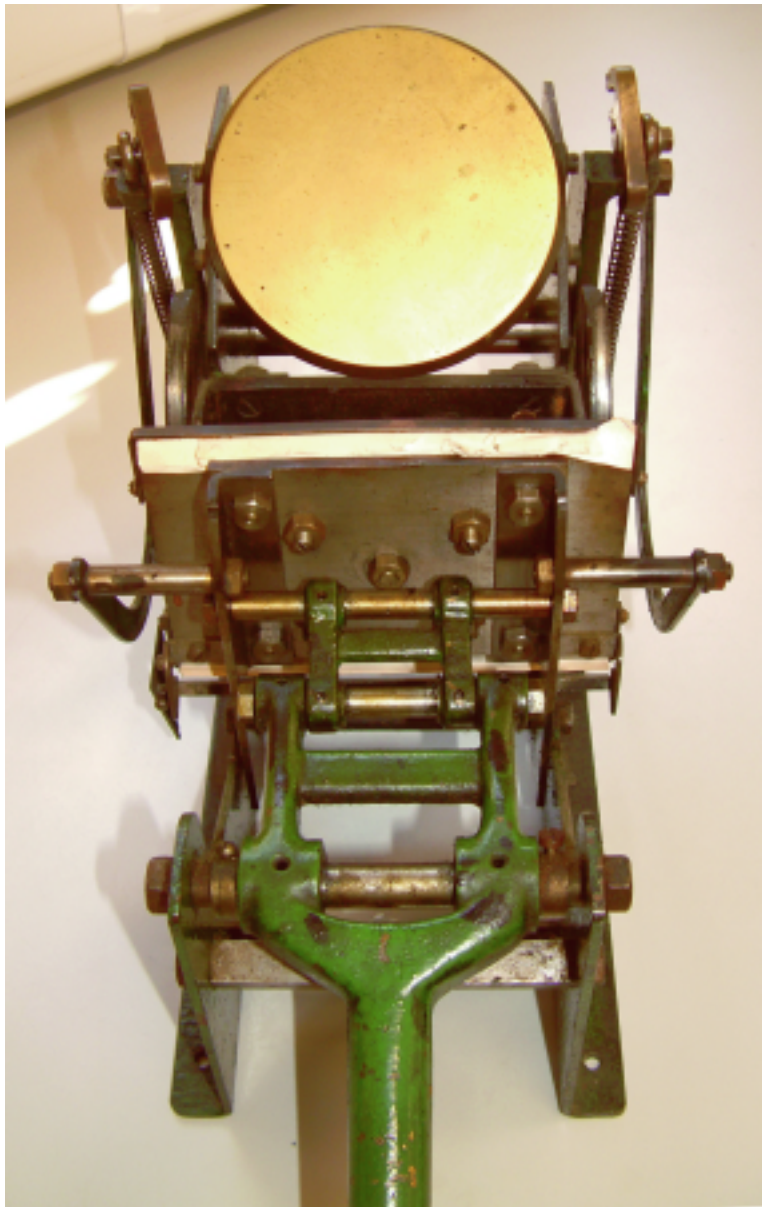


Fig. 11. 'Zano' press at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, corner view (the background has been lightened to remove shadows).

made strenuous efforts to promote his machines, in his own publications and elsewhere, had they come onto the market at this time.

Thus, the machine which survives in the Hope Department may well be Lloyd's prototype, and the only Zano press ever constructed. Photographs are shown in Fig. 10–12 and a measured drawing in Fig. 13. The press is manufactured largely from components cut from sheet steel, held together with rods, threaded at the ends to receive bolts. The inking-disc, saddles, handle and H-shaped coupling (see Fig. 12) were cast in brass, and the arms were cast in iron; the roller-bearers were cast in another metal (probably tin). The ratchet-wheel beneath the inking-disc is made of steel, but was probably not manufactured by Lloyd but bought from an engineering supplier. The chase (which has internal dimensions of 66 × 95 mm, 2½ × 3¾ inches) is of cast iron. The sheet-steel components of the press, and the brass handle and coupling, are painted green. The machine is complete and in working order, save for the absence of the original rollers.

Fig. 12. 'Zano' press at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, end view showing the inking-disc and lever mechanism (the chase has been removed).



22. On the Kelsey, and other American small presses, see Elizabeth M. Harris, *Personal impressions: the small printing press in nineteenth-century America*. Boston: Godine; London: Merrion Press, 2004.

23. See note 21. The 'No. 1' seems not to have been manufactured after around 1956, when it was superseded by the slightly larger 'Five Three', initially sold for £7.17s.6d. See Adana, *Catalogue* (1958), 58.

As will readily be perceived, the mechanical principles of the Zano are very similar to those of two contemporary models of clamshell press – the British Adana and American Kelsey Excelsior (and the earlier 'Model' range of presses which were made in England until 1906).<sup>22</sup> The size is closest to Adana's 'No. 1' with its 3 × 2 inch chase.<sup>23</sup> There are minor differences. The angle of the platen can be adjusted in the Zano with a system of nuts and bolts, while in the Adana the platen is fixed and the angle of the bed is adjusted with hand-turned bolts; in Excelsior presses the

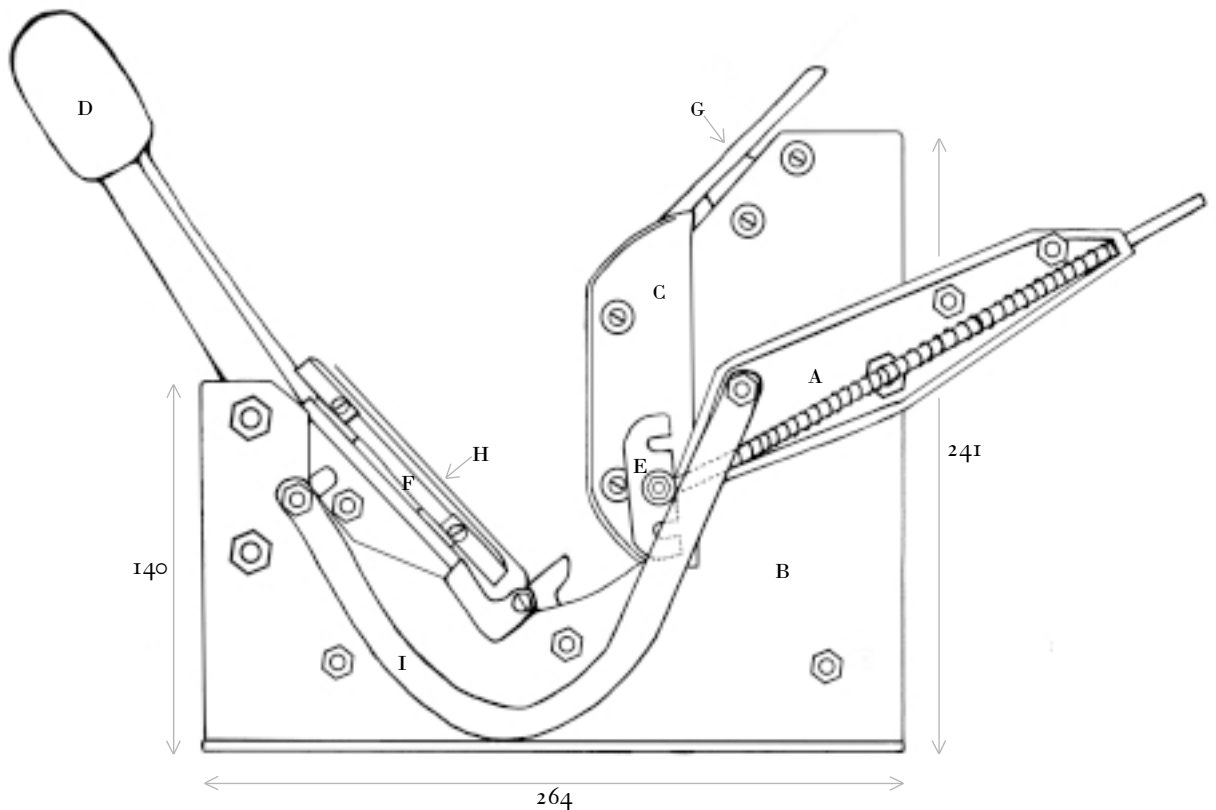


Fig. 13. 'Zano' press at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, side elevation. The outer dimensions are marked in millimetres. The disc is 115 mm in diameter. The distance between the cheeks is 112 mm.

*Key*

- A = arm
- B = cheek
- C = roller-bearer (with bed behind)
- D = handle
- E = saddle
- F = platen
- G = inking-disc
- H = gripper
- I = gooseneck

system varies between models. The structure of the fulcrum (on which principle the press operates) is different in detail from that used in the various models of Adana and Excelsior press. The Zano's transmission of power from the hand-lever to the arms by means of 'goosenecks' on either side of the press is unlike that of the Adana, but similar to the mechanism of the Excelsior (and Model) machines. The chase, with its grub-screws to hold the forme in place, is very like that of the smaller Adana machines. The cast-iron arms, on the other hand, are different in the Zano from those of either of its direct rivals, but similar to those of the larger Adana 'No. 2' press (also manufactured from 1934). Overall, the essential structure is much the same and, had the press gone into production, Lloyd could have risked legal action in the United Kingdom after the war from the re-established Adana (Printing Machines) Limited.

The Zano press in the Hope Department was used for printing specimen labels between 1942 and 1960. It obviously saw considerable use during this period. The paint wore away from the handle, which became polished by use to bright yellow metal; other signs of use are also visible (including wear to the bed and

chase, and ink-stains over the cheeks and rods). It seems the Department anticipated replacing the press with an Adana 'Eight five'<sup>24</sup> in May 1954, and correspondence survives there between Adana and B. M. Hobby,<sup>25</sup> then assistant to the Hope Professor, discussing this possibility, following a meeting at a trade fair at Olympia earlier that year. However, it seems that the sale did not go ahead and the Department continued to use the Zano until 1960, when an Adana 'Five Three' press was purchased, along with a new supply of type (among documentation in the Department is a copy of Adana's catalogue number 100, published around 1959, with red pencil marks next to the 6 point sizes of Rockwell Light, Gill Sans and Spartan). In its turn this press was used to print specimen-labels until the mid-1970s, when the technology of dot-matrix printing succeeded letterpress for this purpose, much to the detriment of the labels produced, which were both ugly and, it transpired, not of archival quality, the ink used fading in the intermediate decades.

The three presses – Cowper, Zano and Adana – are preserved as part of the Hope Entomological Collections in the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Some documentation survives too, but no type or other letterpress accessories have been found in the collection.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most grateful to the Hope Entomological Collections, Oxford University Museum of Natural History, for allowing me access to their small collection of presses and the accompanying documentation; special thanks to Ivan Wright, Amoret Spooner, Zoë Simmons and Darren Mann for their help and advice at the Museum. Thanks are also due to Paul Aken; Lucy Blaxland and Thomas Hopkins of the Museum of the History of Science, Oxford; Mark Barbour of the International Printing Museum, Carson, California; the London Metropolitan Archive; Susan Shaw of the Type Archive, London; Jeremy Winkworth; and Bob Richardson.

24. See Richardson (1997, note 16), pp. 62–64.

25. Typed letter, 26 May 1954, from Adana (Printing Machines) Ltd to B. M. Hobby, Hope Entomological Collections, Oxford. Bertram Maurice Hobby (1905–1983) was appointed assistant to the Hope Professor in 1935 and later became Librarian to the Hope Department, as well as holding a lectureship in entomology. He retired in 1972. Hobby was one of the editors of *The entomologist's monthly magazine*, published by Nathaniel Lloyd, between 1937 and 1981.