

A culture of sharing

*The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft agley.*

—Robert Burns

THIS SPRING ISSUE of *Amphora* is appearing relatively later in the year than desired, but as Robert Burns reminds us, even the best-laid plans don't always work out as planned. Or, to crib another literary reference, from the medieval devotional of Thomas à Kempis, "Just men depend on the grace of God rather than on their own wisdom in keeping their resolutions. . . for man, indeed, proposes, but God disposes."

Nevertheless, reader, another issue of this journal is in your hands, a miracle as always of many hands and no small amount of grace. A host of advisors and contributors supported the efforts of yours truly, associate editor Naomi Pauls and layout artist Thomas Law to deliver material that reflects the interests of members and those we hope would be members.

You'll find in Lana Okerlund's article that leads off this issue the story of a Victoria bookseller who stands very much at the centre of the early book trade in that city. While not the city's first bookseller, he might well be deemed its premier purveyor of literature given the longevity of his shop and the many shops to which it gave rise. It stands as a model of what a good business can be: successful in its own right, and the foundation for the success of others.

Paul Shaw picked up the theme in his presentation at the Arts & Letters Club in Toronto this spring, sponsored by the Alcuin Society in partnership with the Sheridan Typographic Hub, the Type Directors Club and the Registered Graphic Designers. Coinciding with the launch of his book *Revival Type: Digital Typefaces Inspired by the Past* (Yale, 2017), Shaw addressed a "Revival Meeting" that showed the great cloud of witnesses surrounding contemporary designers and always ready to inform current

typeface designs. Rod McDonald has often described the dialogue he engaged in with designer Carl Dair as he redesigned Cartier Book for digital use, and Shaw highlighted many more designers who've engaged in conversation with the designers and works of the past to yield fresh designs for each new generation.

A unique collaborative element in this issue lies behind our choice of images. *Amphora* 174 featured a selection of images from the collections of the New Brunswick Museum, which charged a modest fee for their use. However, in approaching the Royal BC Museum and Archives for images of early Victoria booksellers, we found the fee required was many times more for a similar number of images (and exponentially more, in fact, than the amount demanded of bloggers). Sound editorial and business practice decreed that we see what the alternatives were, and queries to other local collections found many of the same images available on more reasonable terms. Indeed, some images were in the public domain and no fee was charged our small not-for-profit.

This is the collaborative, generous spirit that builds a community of knowledge, and knowledge of the community of which we're a part. Too often, licensing fees—an essential revenue stream for many collections these days—create enclosures that hinder rather than facilitate the sharing of our cultural inheritance. Discussions of digital rights management and "fair dealing" provisions for the education sector make fence pickets of dollar signs.

Yet the essays in this issue—including one from an anonymous contributor—show we're much stronger when we collaborate and share our knowledge and culture with one another. Indeed, as Canada's banknotes themselves have proclaimed, "Could we ever know each other in the slightest without the arts?"

~ Peter Mitham, editor