

## A Note on The King's Printing House, its Labour Force, and Professional Advisors 1603 – 1625

How do you run the King's Printing House, an institution that in the Jacobean period stood at the summit of the London printing trade? How do you run a business, which had to offer at short notice, and often at its own expense, to uphold the king's demands for the production of everything from a broadside proclamation to a folio Church Bible?

These questions could be answered by asking a whole range of subsidiary questions—how and for how much did the KPH acquire type and paper, how did they organize the warehousing of plain paper and the books it was turned into? How did they arrange their retail outlets and run the European end of their business? All these questions ask for detailed treatment and will receive it in due course. For the moment we want to concentrate on some of the personnel involved in the KPH—the holders of the patents, the family members, the accountants, the book-trade associates, the compositors, pressmen, correctors, warehouse workers, the shopkeepers, apprentices and miscellaneous servants—for an insight into the working of the office and as an aid to readers consulting our transcription of the primary-source documents.

### THE THREE FAMILIES

#### (i) *Robert Barker and Family*

**Robert Barker** (1570–1645) held the office of King's Printer through a reversionary patent first assigned to his father Christopher Barker. He was freed in 1589, becoming master of the Stationers' Company in 1605 and 1606.<sup>1</sup> Although he understood the work practices of the KPH, Barker was not astute or lucky enough to make the best of his monopoly. The obligations that went along with his office, his weaknesses as a manager, and the costs he incurred through litigation eventually ruined him—leaving him to die in debtors' prison in 1645. His land agent William Taylor commented on Barker's shortage of money and poor investment and management of the office (prior to 1618) in his answer to a petition from Bonham Norton in 1622: 'for along tyme' Barker 'vsed (for present money) to sell his Books in the said office before they were halfe printed & finished att halfe the prices he might otherwise have sould the same & having in that manner sould all the books he had in the said office' to Stationers, 'they needed not to buy any more books from the said office for a long tyme after'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Some of the biographical details of the dramatic personæ are taken from, *Dictionaries of the Printers and Booksellers who were at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland 1557–1775*, by H. R. Plomer, R. B. McKerrow et al., repr. in one vol. (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1997); and *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland & Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475–1640*, first compiled by A. W. Pollard & G. R. Redgrave, sec. edn. revised and enlarged, begun by W. A. Jackson and F. S. Ferguson, completed by Katharine F. Pantzer, with a chronological index by Philip R. Rider, 3 vols. (London, 1976–81).

<sup>2</sup> C2/JASI/N7/44.

Barker was not fully alive to the opportunities created by the book trade and early capitalism in the reign of a king whose cultural politics exalted the printed word. Barker's obligation to print the new translation of the Bible in 1611 at his own expense added to his money problems. This shortage of money enabled Bonham Norton, his cousin John Norton (King's Printer in Latin, Greek and Hebrew 1603–1612), and others to further undermine him financially through their consortium got up to trade in Bibles (including illegal importation) so that Barker was never able to make his Bible monopoly pay.<sup>3</sup> John Norton, Bonham Norton and John Bill, keen to get their hands on Barker's Bible monopoly, were able to weaken him further by adding Bibles bought cheaply from Barker to their very profitable import/export and general book-trade joint-stock partnership set up in 1603.<sup>4</sup> Through their 1603 partnership the Nortons and Bill had a constant turnover in book stocks and were able to offer an increasing number of book titles and Bibles to their customers, and so they rather than Barker were able to take advantage of the market at home and abroad for many KPH titles.

Robert Barker's eldest son **Christopher Barker** was the holder of the reversionary patent, which would give him the office of King's Printer on the death of his father.<sup>5</sup> He married Sara Norton (see below) in 1615, and shortly afterwards became a partner of John Bill, and Bonham Norton, when Robert Barker assigned to them the King's Printing House and its stock. But money was still short after the assignment, and it seems that Christopher did not pay his third share of the money needed to invest in a stock of books belonging to the office. If Bill, Norton, and Robert Barker senior are to be believed, Christopher was not very acute and was regarded as a 'yonge foole' with no feel for printing house politics. Robert Barker also claimed that Christopher had been cozened by Norton and Bill who persuaded him he need not check the accounts belonging to the 1615 KPH partnership, and so Norton and Bill 'did cunningly devise & practise how to obteyne & get y<sup>e</sup> said office of printing wholly into theire owne hands [...] and therefore not onley concealed and deteyned the benefit and proffitt of the said office' but 'refused to give anie profit accompt or reckoning of the said office for the space of three yeares & vpwards'.<sup>6</sup> In fact Robert and Christopher Barker seem to have been constitutionally gullible for, when Norton and Bill presented them with the indenture for the sale to them of the Barkers' present and future interests in the KPH, they signed it without 'reading or perving' it at all.<sup>7</sup> During his father's life Christopher's connection with the KPH seems to have been limited to wrangles over land, and his and his wife Sara's marriage settlement.

**Sara Barker** (née Norton) had an interest in one of Robert Barker's properties, Upton Farm in Buckinghamshire, through her marriage to Christopher. In 1623 Robert Barker and Bonham Norton were still in dispute over their rights to the office of King's Printer. Sir Euball Thelwall negotiated a Chancery settlement by which Bonham Norton was to

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<sup>3</sup> John Barnard, 'The Financing of the Authorized Version 1610–12', p. 29.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed account of John Norton, Bonham Norton, and John Bill and their 1603 joint-stock company and how it became entangled with the KPH see, Wakely, 'Printing and Double-Dealing'.

<sup>5</sup> C66/1608/[25]; see Hunt, 'Book Trade Patents', p. 40.

<sup>6</sup> C2/JASI/B17/56

<sup>7</sup> C2/JASI/B17/56.

persuade his daughter Sara to allow Upton Farm to be sold for £2,000. This sum was to be paid to Bonham immediately, with another £6,000 to be paid by Barker from the profits of the KPH within three years. But Sara, with or without the encouragement of her father, refused to consent to the sale and so the settlement was never fulfilled. Sara's reluctance to agree to the sale of Upton Farm is hardly surprising as under the arbitrator's ruling she would not have been fully compensated for her loss and her future maintenance left uncertain.<sup>8</sup>

**Robert Barker junior** was Robert Barker's second son. It was while the latter was negotiating the 1617 sale of the KPH to Bonham Norton and John Bill that on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 1617, he obtained the reversion of the office of King's Printer for his son Robert, for thirty years from the deaths of himself and his elder son Christopher.<sup>9</sup> Presumably the point of this was to increase the value of the office at a time when Barker senior was negotiating its sale to Norton and Bill. There is no evidence that Robert Barker junior worked in the office.

(ii) *The Norton Family*

**John Norton** (1556/7–1612), a Shropshire man, was freed in 1586 and set up business as bookseller in Edinburgh in the reign of James VI, and later in London in the reign of James I. He had wide-ranging overseas contacts in the book trade, and was trading at the Frankfurt Book Fair by 1600.<sup>10</sup> Although John Norton never had a stake in the KPH, he went into the 1603 partnership with his cousin Bonham Norton and John Bill. It was through this partnership that John Norton developed business interests in the book trade and these became entangled with the KPH and undermined Barker prior to 1612. In fact 1603 was an important year for John Norton. James I had just acceded to the English Crown and John Norton's fortunes were already linked to those of the incoming monarch. Norton had published *Basilikon Doron* in London in 1603 even before the king's arrival from Scotland, and so the king's textual authority arrived in London before his physical presence. As John Barnard has shown, John Norton was rewarded for his loyalty to the King with the office of King's Printer in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, accordingly his extensive overseas contacts and understanding of the Continental book trade enabled him to make the patent pay. Although royal patents could be profitable they could also carry with them expensive obligations but, unlike Robert Barker, John Norton managed to avoid costly commitments to the Crown.<sup>11</sup>

**Bonham Norton** (1564–1635) was also born in Shropshire. He was a very powerful and wealthy Stationer, going on to succeed John Norton (*d.* 1612) as Master of the Stationers' Company in 1613, and again in 1626 and 1629. But Bonham's understanding, of the London and Continental Book Trade, was nothing like John's. Early in his career

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<sup>8</sup> PRO C22/601/28.

<sup>9</sup> C66/2096/14; see Hunt, 'Book Trade Patents', p. 46.

<sup>10</sup> See Barnard, 'Financing the Authorized Version', p. 23; also Wakely, 'Printing and Double-Dealing in Jacobean England', p. 124.

<sup>11</sup> Barnard, 'Financing of the Authorized Version', pp. 27–30

Bonham Norton's interests and status lay in his native Shropshire where he inherited and purchased lands and estates, and where he became sheriff in 1611–12.<sup>12</sup> But on the death of John Norton, James I granted Bonham Norton the reversion of the Latin patent on the same terms as John Norton: 'to provide any books required by the King in the said languages' even though Robert Barker had previously been granted its reversion for thirty years from the death of John Norton. Barker's reversion of the Latin patent, in 1604, may have been compensation from the king for the massive outlay Barker would need to make for his 1611 printing of the King James Bible, the new translation set on foot in 1604.<sup>13</sup> But unlike Barker, Bonham was a wealthy man and so would have been able to pay for the printing of books in Latin, Greek and Hebrew as ordered by James I. Bonham tended to delegate his interests in the KPH to his family and kinsmen, but he was constantly in court over the KPH assignment from Barker. After the marriage of his daughter Sara, to Barker's son Christopher, his interests and involvement in the KPH became increasingly caught up with struggles over marriage settlements (see above).<sup>14</sup>

**Roger Norton** (c. 1600–1662) was Bonham Norton's son. He worked in the KPH from 1619/20, when his father nominated him to run the office on his behalf. Roger Norton kept the accounts for his father, paid the servants wages and kept the accounts for all the apprentices.<sup>15</sup> He was also involved in a certain amount of double-dealing. In 1625/6 Bonham Norton conveyed his share of the KPH to his son Roger to try and keep Robert Barker from gaining control of the KPH through the Courts. When in 1629 Chancery found in favour of Robert Barker and against Bonham Norton, Roger seems to have been the driving force behind a 1629 raid on the warehouse belonging to the KPH. Roger, Susan Norton, and others broke down a wall from Norton's house through to the warehouse. Books and stock belonging to the KPH were removed and hidden away or sold.<sup>16</sup> Bonham was in prison at the time and the court ordered him to deliver to Barker all the bonds and bills he held regarding the King's Printer, reassign his KPH interests to Barker, and to stop printing, which he and Roger Norton refused to do. The gang involved in the raid were Norton's servants, friends and family members and they included: Susan Norton, John Norton (Bonham's son), Sara Holmewood, Anne Clarke, John Colly, Thomas Talbot, William Lewes, John Trout, Richard Whittaker, William Holland, Nathaniell Preene, Peter Jones and John Mason.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Barnard, *ibid.*, p. 22; also see Barnard, 'Politics Profits and Idealism: John Norton, the Stationers' Company, and Sir Thomas Bodley', *Bodleian Library Records*, 17.5 (2002), 385–408.

<sup>13</sup> C66/1966/6, see Arnold Hunt, 'Book Trade Patents', pp. 40–46. Also see C3/334/73; and Wakely, 'Printing and Double-Dealing in Jacobean England' for details of the demands James I made on Norton to fulfil the terms of his patent, and for details of John Bill's willingness to join with Norton to print expensive texts on behalf of the Crown. See also Wakely and Rees, 'Folios Fit for a King' for the ways in which James I acted through the KPH, and in particular through John Bill, in his creation of a national politics.

<sup>14</sup> For details of the assignment to Norton and Bill of Barker's lands, see C2/JASI/N4/57. This Chancery petition is dated January, 1618 and is addressed to Francis Bacon.

<sup>15</sup> C22/601/28.

<sup>16</sup> See C33/157/608 & 609 for evidence that Roger Norton directed the operations and Wakely, 'Printing and Double-dealing in Jacobean England' for an account of the warehouse raid.

<sup>17</sup> See C33/157/608 & C33/157/741.

**Joyce (Jocosa) Norton**, widow of John Norton (see above) and publisher from 1632–38,<sup>18</sup> may have inherited money from the 1603 partnership on her husband’s death in 1612, through death benefits paid to Bonham Norton, John’s executor. But Joyce Norton retained links with the KPH through family ties. Chancery documents suggest that she was engaged in the sale of books through Bonham Norton’s English shop. Joyce Norton claimed she had an assignment of Bonham Norton’s English shop and stock, and with Robert Coggan was involved in the selling of books in that shop. This may have been a purely nominal assignment by Bonham Norton, designed to prevent the Court from sequestering his KPH assets.<sup>19</sup> Many books which William Garrett (see below) delivered from the KPH warehouse to this shop in St. Paul’s Church Yard were evidently sold by Joyce Norton. One consignment of books was delivered to Norton’s shop illegally, and consequently Barker petitioned the court for compensation. Joyce Norton and Coggan were ordered to pay money to Barker as reparation for the books which were embezzled from the KPH warehouse. But for the benefit of the court, and to avoid paying the fine, Joyce Norton, and Mr Coggan laid the blame at Bonham Norton’s door, claiming he sold the books in question, ‘pursed the money’ and then sold them books worth £4,000 which were never received. But the court further ordered Joyce Norton to pay money she had received in profits from the shop to both Robert Barker and Martin Lucas (see below) together with damages and costs as she ‘made eleccōn to stand vpon the validity of the *said* assignment’.<sup>20</sup>

**Arthur Norton** was the eldest son of Bonham Norton. He was not directly involved with the KPH, but family ties were important in early-seventeenth Century enterprises and especially so to Bonham Norton who relied on the loyalty of family members. A deposition of Roger Norton mentions that ‘books and printed workes of the office, that were printed sould giuen lent or yssued out of the said office to Arthur Norton [...] Thomas Hungate and one John Hodgetts deceased, to haue them harmles, against certaine engagements’, presumably to prevent Chancery from sequestering them.<sup>21</sup> There is no evidence that Arthur Norton worked in the KPH.

**John Norton** (junior) Bonham’s son, seems to have acted as a part-time legal advisor to his father, and was involved with the KPH in 1630 when he drew up a petition on the imprisoned Bonham’s behalf.<sup>22</sup> Chancery had finally found in favour of Barker and against Norton in 1629, and John Norton’s petition recklessly, but probably truthfully, accused the late Francis Bacon (Lord Keeper in 1619) and Lord Keeper, Thomas Coventry (1629) of accepting bribes from Barker to find in his favour in the KPH dispute. In response Star Chamber immediately brought a case against Bonham Norton and others, ‘for preferring a most false & fraudulent peticōn’. The court declared Norton’s witnesses were to be examined as defendants as they had sought self advancement rather than justice. The defendants were Bonham Norton, John Norton, S<sup>r</sup> Francis Ashley, Thomas Smyth, Thomas Hungate, Thomas Harper, Richard Slake, Gyles Winston,

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<sup>18</sup> See *STC*, III, p. 127.

<sup>19</sup> See C33/157/799.

<sup>20</sup> For instance, see C33/159/639–40; C33/157/621; C33/159/68; C33/159/181; C33/159/1; C33/159/318–9.

<sup>21</sup> C22/601/28.

<sup>22</sup> SP16/169/20.

Lawrence Lownes, William Lee, Robert May and Gyles Digges, with Bonham's servants, John Troute and William Lewes also finding themselves in the dock.<sup>23</sup>

**Thomas Hungate** was a kinsman of Bonham Norton.<sup>24</sup> Bonham Norton assigned his share of the KPH to Hungate and John Hodgetts (see Arthur Norton above) in 1621 to prevent Chancery sequestering it during the long-running fight over the KPH. Hungate was also one of the defendants in the Star Chamber case against Bonham Norton, et. al., in 1630 (see above).

(iii) *John Bill and Family*

**John Bill** (1576–30) was yet another native of Shropshire who had come to London as an apprentice in the book trade. He was apprenticed to John Norton, and freed in 1600/1. It was through John Norton that John Bill developed his extensive overseas contacts which benefited their 1603 joint-stock partnership. John Bill invested no money in this venture, but he was to run the business and travel twice a year to the Continent to buy and bring 'bookes maps and other Stacōnary wares & merchandises in and from ffrance Germany & other parts beyond the seas into England, & in selling the same againe & in printinge of diuers bookes here in Englande and beyond the seas'.<sup>25</sup> Bill claims he made the joint-stock partnership very profitable, and took great pains to increase its turnover. Bill's intelligent understanding of the London and Continental book trade and his sharp grasp of printing-house work practices enabled him to make the KPH profitable, partly by combining the business interests of the office with other potentially profitable enterprises like the continental interests of the 1603 partnership.<sup>26</sup> Bill was on good terms with James I, and had private meetings with him. He had an acute understanding of royal politics: he collected books on the Continent for the king, and served as a part-time spy for him. He paid for the printing of many expensive books for the king—including James's *Workes* which were printed by the KPH and sold through Bill's contacts at home and abroad. It was John Bill who directed his and Bonham Norton's investments in the KPH and increased their stock of books which meant that 'the office & stock was much bettered & great proffitt likely to growe thereby'.<sup>27</sup> He also kept a close eye on the cash flow through the KPH, keeping his own account books or employing trusted servants or friends to do so—often rewarding them with potentially lucrative perks (see Thomas Harper below). Although it seems that Bill was not involved directly in the calculation of the wages of the workmen he understood the system absolutely: 'the wages to the Compositors and Pressmen in the said office for the tyme aforesaid hath bene for the most parte certaine and constant for the particular works wherein they haue bene employed [...] yt is constantly knowne among the workmen by their wages and the booke in hand what

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<sup>23</sup> SP16/169/5, 6, 7.

<sup>24</sup> C33/157/260–61.

<sup>25</sup> C3/334/73.

<sup>26</sup> John Bill developed his expertise in the London and Continental book trade with John Norton, and is remembered for his role as book-collector for Sir Thomas Bodley's cultural project of a national library. He regularly attended the Frankfurt Book Fair and published editions of the Frankfurt Catalogue for the English market for many years. See also C3/334/73; C5/592/24; C2/JASI/N5/65.

<sup>27</sup> C2/JASI/N7/44.

worke is and must be downe for the same. And if there be any interruption of the worke by their negligence or other wayes the workmen are abated of their wages, and so the wages expresse the workes, and by those wages the beginning of the worke is knowne but not the ending'.<sup>28</sup> It was John Bill who, after Barker's assignment in 1615 had a grasp of and influence on all aspects of business at the KPH, relying on Anna Bill his wife, and trusted friends and servants while enjoying the protection and patronage of King James.<sup>29</sup>

**Anna Bill** was the first wife of John Bill. She was the daughter of Thomas Mountford DD, who was Canon of St. Paul's and Vicar of Tewin. Thomas Mountford was wealthy enough to buy property in Hertfordshire and it is possible that Anna received a good marriage settlement from her father, which enabled her and John to expand their interests in the book trade. Anna Bill died in 1621 but it seems that she was keenly involved with John Bill's book-trade enterprises and in particular in the running of the 1603 joint-stock partnership which became entangled with and inseparable from the interests of the KPH. Anna was responsible for supervising the importing and exporting of drifatts to and from the Continent. The Nortons and Bill were not only importing books, wares, and paper from the Continent but they were exporting books, printed in London, to the continent to be sold through their Nortoniana outlets, or through John Bill's overseas contacts.<sup>30</sup> Bonham Norton was in dispute with Bill over the profits of the joint-stock partnership for the period from John Norton's death in December 1612, to March 1618. During this five year period Norton claimed that Bill had brought in 300 drifatts to England and that Anna Bill had sold the empty drifatts for 6/- each and pocketed the money. This is, of course contested by Bill, who claimed his memory, nor his accounts, show how many drifatts were imported but he suggested it was not above 200 with 100 drifatts being sent abroad again. He claimed that over 50 drifatts were broken or stolen and so Anna Bill's payment for her efforts only came from 50 drifatts, sold at 4/- or 5/- each: money 'allowed vnto her for her labour & paines in the same sorte as they <were formally allowed vnto her during the ioynt Copartnershippe betweene John Norton Bonham Norton & this *defendant*> and not entered into the booke of Accompts'. We cannot be sure of the numbers, but it is interesting that Bill suggested to the Court that he, Anna Bill, and Bonham Norton were exporting at least half as many fatts as they were importing, and many of the imported fatts would have contained paper as well as printed sheets, books, and other stationary wares. Anna Bill's role in the import/export business needs more research, but the turnover of their import/export business during this time must have been very substantial indeed. John Bill suggested in a Chancery document that he could prove that Bonham Norton received £4,000 profits from the joint-stock partnership during the

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<sup>28</sup> C22/601/28.

<sup>29</sup> For Bill's close relationship with James I, see 'Printing and Double-Dealing in Jacobean England'.

<sup>30</sup> Bonham Norton would also have been exporting Latin texts to the Continent through his patent as King's Printer in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, which he had managed to obtain following the death of John Norton who formerly held the patent. John Bill was also involved with the Latin patent through his KPH interests, and through his willingness to print and publish certain Latin texts on behalf of James I. The working of the Latin patent, the 1603 joint-stock partnership, and the KPH became inseparable in many important ways. See Wakely and Rees, 'Folios Fit for a King', and for details of the 'Officina Nortoniana' imprints up to 1617 see Barnard, 'Financing of the Authorized Version', pp. 35–41; and Graham Rees, 'A Note of the *seuerall sorts of Bookes in the Ware-houses: stock-holding and stock-building in the early-modern book trade: the case of John Bill and Bonham Norton*', forthcoming.

five-year period in question, and this is besides further investments in book stocks, Bill's share of the profits, and the repayment of Bonham Norton's original investment and other death benefits paid to John Norton's executor.

(iv) *Accountants and Debt Collectors*

As stated earlier, the court battles that Bill, Barker and Norton fought to establish and maintain their rights to a share in the business were long-running and bitter. From depositions taken by Chancery in 1626/7, as part of its endeavours to settle the dispute between the King's Printers, one thing becomes apparent, the fight over who had the rights to the office of King's Printer was carried out not only in Chancery but on the shop floor through the KPH accountants and their account books.<sup>31</sup> Chancery frequently ordered the books of accounts and the schedule of works to be brought to Court in an attempt to arbitrate a settlement. But it seems that after Barker's 1615 and 1617 assignments of the KPH, separate accounts became the norm, with Barker, Bonham Norton, and John Bill keeping their own private accounts rather than relying on general accounts kept jointly by the business. For this they sought specialist helpers.

One such was **Robert Constable**, the brother of the London bookseller Francis Constable. Born c.1592, Robert Constable lived in the parish of St Faith's in London in 1627. He worked as an accountant for his kinsman Robert Barker from 1607 to 1617, and knew Bonham Norton and John Bill from the time of Barker's 1615 assignment of the KPH. Constable carried on working at the KPH under the three-way partnership between, Christopher Barker, Bonham Norton, and John Bill, until 1617.<sup>32</sup>

In Robert Barker's time, Constable's job was 'to order and oversee the accomptes and workes and stock of the said office'. But Constable lost control of the accounts of the KPH in 1617 when Barker assigned his present and future interest in the KPH to Norton and Bill alone. After 1617 Constable claimed he was 'but a Spectator' in the office. Constable complained bitterly that even after a Chancery decree of 1623 (presumably following Euball Thelwall's arbitration) ordered that he should oversee the keeping of the accounts for Barker, he was often denied access by Bonham Norton. He accused John Bill in particular of keeping private account books and of not entering receipts into the 'vsuall accompt bookes of receipts or paymen<sup>ts</sup> kept for the office'. Evidence Constable gave to Chancery suggests that he was familiar with all aspects of the business. For instance, he knew KPH edition sizes and the allowance of overplus upon every impression—knowledge which enabled him to accuse Norton and Bill of creative book-keeping by entering 'greater allowances [...] by one quire of paper in euery three reames' while failing to make a similar increase in the number of books to be added to every impression. He stated that when he was the accountant at the KPH prior to 1615 the practice was 'to keepe one booke for the entrie of paper bought, & payment for the same & other for paper deliuered to the presse out of the warehowse & of the worke printed therevpon & receaved back from the presse into the warehowse whereby yt might

<sup>31</sup> C22/601/28. See also, Wakely, 'Printing and Double-dealing in Jacobean England'.

<sup>32</sup> C22/601/28.



appeare still what was printed, what sould, & what remayned’. Under Norton and Bill, Constable claimed that there was no such paper trail: ‘noe Accompt nor booke kept of the worke of the office from the presse to the warehowse’ was maintained, and so Norton and Bill were able to misrepresent to Chancery, their moiety in book stocks—assets that he suggested were worth £7,000—as a mere stock of books consisting of ‘dead wares’ (unsaleable books) which were only worth £2,000.<sup>33</sup>

Another individual who dealt with accounts was **Thomas Harper** (born c. 1589). Yet another Shropshire man, he had been apprenticed to Melchisedeck Bradwood in 1604 and freed in 1611. He was a bookseller and printer in London from 1614–56, but he did not acquire printing materials until 1628.<sup>34</sup> In 1627 Harper lived in the parish of St Anne’s. He had known Robert Barker since c. 1607 and Bonham Norton since c. 1601. Harper worked in a position of real trust in the KPH on Bill’s behalf. He sometimes kept Bill’s accounts, and he bought and sold wares and commodities for the KPH, from the time of the 1617 assignment from Barker to Norton and Bill. He recorded the receipts and profits of the office, giving ‘Creditt to them that bought books w<sup>th</sup>out ready monie out of the said office for the most parte’.<sup>35</sup> He was very familiar with the work practices of the KPH and he had responsibility for the calculation of wages, their payment, and their abatement if any of the men worked irregularly. Items he printed in 1624 or entered in the Stationers’ Register were produced at the KPH. Harper may well have had Bill’s permission to print these works, using KPH equipment and workmen, as a reward for his loyalty. Thomas Harper seems to have retained his contact with the KPH after John Bill’s death (May 1630) as he is listed as one of 14 defendants in the Star Chamber case against Norton in June/July 1630 (see John Norton junior above).<sup>36</sup>

**Thomas Talbot** was a servant of Bonham Norton who worked in the KPH. He became involved with the KPH dispute between Bonham Norton and Robert Barker

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<sup>33</sup> C22/601/28.

<sup>34</sup> Harper was apprenticed to Melchisedeck Bradwood during the time that Bradwood was printing Savile’s edition of *Chrysostom* (1610–12) for John Norton at Eton. Harper’s brother, William Harper, was apprenticed to John Bill in 1604. (Arber, II. p. 125).

<sup>35</sup> C22/601/28.

<sup>36</sup> SP/169/5,6,7. Also see *STC*, III, p. 76. The books that Thomas Harper was associated with in 1624, were: Fardinando Texeda, *Scrutamini scripturas: The exhortation of a Spanish converted monke*, London, Printed by Thomas Harper 1624. This book has a King’s Printer ornament on the title-page with a dedication to the Bishop of Lincolne, and preface ‘To the Noble and Religiovs English Nation’. It appears to be an ‘official’ King’s Printing House publication, in both form and content (Paolo Sarpi and Marc’ Antonio de Dominis are mentioned in the preface) yet the colophon reads, London, Printed by Thomas Harper, 1624. It was entered in the Stationers’ Register by Thomas Harper, ‘vnder the handes of master Doctor FEATLY and master Bill warden A booke called The exhortacon of a Spanish converted Moncke[,] collected out of the Spanish authors themselues by FERDINANDO TEXEDA’ (Arber, IV, p. 77). John Aspley, *Speculum nauticum: a looking glasse for sea-men*, London printed by Thomas Harper, 1624. Henry Wotton, *The elements of Architectvre, collected by Henry Wotton Knight, from the best Authors and Examples*, Printed by Iohn Bill, 1624. It was entered in the *Stationers’ Register*, on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1623 [1624] by Thomas Harper, ‘vnder the handes of master Doctor FEATLY and master Bill warden / *The Elements of Architecture* by sir HENRY. WOTTON knight’ (Arber, IV, p. 73). For details of the relationship between de Dominis, Sarpi, James I, and John Bill see, Wakely and Rees, ‘Folios Fit for a King’.

when he prepared an account of a debt for Norton. This debt was for Latin books sold to the Company of Stationers, a debt which Francis Bacon declared belonged to the KPH.

**Joseph Bysett** (c.1571) lived in the parish of St. Giles in 1627. He worked in the KPH from c.1617/8, about the time Robert Barker assigned his future interests in the office and stock of the KPH to Norton and Bill. In the KPH he acted as a debt-collector, who was ‘imployed in the gatheringe & Callinge in’ of debts. In fact he pestered debtors so diligently that he ‘was much blamed by many of the Company [of Stationers] for being soe earnest w<sup>th</sup> them for the same debts’.<sup>37</sup> Trusted by Bill, he occasionally kept the accounts on his employer’s behalf when the latter was out of the office. He also acted as one of the warehouseman.<sup>38</sup>

**John Hodgetts** was a publisher and bookseller in London from 1596 until 1625. He was apprenticed to William Norton. Hodgetts had close connections with the Nortons but was regarded with suspicion by Bill who claimed in a statement to Chancery in 1624 that Hodgetts was at one time (between 1612 and 1617) the foreman of the shop that sold the books of Bill and Norton, as part of their joint-stock business set up in 1603. Bill suggested that Hodgetts had been swindling this partnership by not entering all receipts in the accounts and of pocketing the difference between the recorded and unrecorded takings. Bill declared that his ‘dislike of the said Hodgetts ill dealinge therein, that for the same & other misdemeanours hee [John Bill] [...] displaced the said Hodgetts’.<sup>39</sup> But even though Bill sacked Hodgetts, Norton continued to employ him. Hodgetts seems to have acted as Norton’s cashier, his accountant and debt collector.<sup>40</sup> Hodgetts died in 1625 and at the time of his death he had certain account books of Bonham Norton’s in his possession. There followed a Chancery suit between Bonham Norton and Margaret (Hodgett’s widow) for their recovery.<sup>41</sup> John Hodgetts also printed a beautiful memorial volume dedicated to Anna Bill’s memory: *A Monument of Mortalitie*, 1621. Some copies contain fine engravings by Simon van de Passe, and include dedications to Anna from John Bill, and to Thomas Mountford, Anna Bill’s father.<sup>42</sup> The van de Passe (he engraved the title-page of Bacon’s *Novum organum*, and the engraved portrait of James I, which appeared in the *Workes*) engravings would have been very expensive to produce, and it is likely that John Bill paid for these.

(v) *Compositors and Pressmen*

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<sup>37</sup> C22/601/28.

<sup>38</sup> C22/601/28.

<sup>39</sup> C2/JASI/N5/65.

<sup>40</sup> C22/601/28.

<sup>41</sup> For evidence of the Chancery suit, Bonham Norton v. Margaret Hodgetts, see C33/156/1008.

<sup>42</sup> *STC* 6427.5 & 22621.

When the King's Printers were working flat out during say the bulge in Bible production in the years 1612 to 1614 or in the exceptionally busy year of 1620, they employed in all probability more than six presses and in excess of eight compositors and ten pressmen<sup>43</sup>

**William Bate** (born c. 1597) was living in Hosier Lane, London in 1627. He was employed by Bonham Norton and John Bill, and previously Robert Barker as he had been a compositor for 16 years in the office of the KPH.<sup>44</sup>

**Nathan Pearce** (born c. 1597) was living in Aldersgate Street, London in 1627. In 1627 he states that 'at this *presente* hee is not a workeman in the office of Kinges printer, but hath bene hertofore employed there about 20 yeares in the place of a Compositor'.<sup>45</sup>

**Richard Jackson** (born c. 1585) lived in the parish of St. Margaret's on St. Peter's Street in 1627. He was employed by Norton and Bill in the KPH as a pressman for 12 years 'except two or three yeares that hee was absent'.<sup>46</sup>

#### (vi) *Correctors*

At least four correctors, **Henry Cooper, Robert Futter, Thomas Pakeman, and Thomas Bird**, were employed by the KPH in 1634, and they had 'bene for some yeares Correctours in the Kinges Printhouse'.<sup>47</sup> **John Cosin**, was employed at the KPH in the correcting of the Book of Common Prayer in the reign of James I. He was a 'Laudian' in James's reign and later become a bishop.<sup>48</sup>

#### (vii) *Shopkeepers, Miscellaneous servants*

**William Garret**, a publisher and bookseller in Foster Lane at the White Bear, 1622–74. He was a good friend of John Bill with close links to the KPH and Bonham Norton. Garret was a witness and assistant executor of John Bill's will, where Bill refers to him as 'a loveinge freind' to whom he bequeathed 'tenn pounds', going on to add 'I shall hartilie desire him to continue the same employment wch now he hath for the good and benefitt of my Children whose fidelitie and care towards mee hath been such as deserves a farre greater acknowledgment'.<sup>49</sup> Garret was at one time an agent in Bonham Norton's 'Englishe Shoppe' and in 1629, after Chancery finally found in favour of Barker and against Norton in the long-running KPH dispute, Garret immediately removed a huge parcel of books, including 200 Bibles, and 'foreign Latin stock' (a value of £4,000 is

<sup>43</sup> See *A Companion to Arber*, ed. by W. W. Greg, (Oxford, 1967) pp. 54, 131; see Arber, I, p. 248; see also *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain, IV: 1557–1695*, ed. John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie (Cambridge, 2002) p. 794.

<sup>44</sup> C22/601/28.

<sup>45</sup> C22/601/28.

<sup>46</sup> C22/601/28.

<sup>47</sup> Arber, IV, p. 20.

<sup>48</sup> C. J. Cuming, *A History of Anglican Liturgy*, (Hampshire, sec. edn. 1982), p. 107.

<sup>49</sup> NA prob/11/157.

mentioned) from the KPH to Norton's warehouse for his shop in St Paul's Church Yard. Garret claimed he had a general order from Mr Norton *and* Mr Bill to send to the office for such books as the shop wanted.<sup>50</sup> Many of these books were apparently sold in Norton's shop (see Joyce Norton above) before they could be recovered. Barker subsequently brought a case against the Nortons and Garret to try and win compensation—he claims to have invested in the 'embezzled' stock in 'bynding and addicōns' before it was sold. It is possible that Garret was also involved in bookbinding. In 1625 he was fined 20 shillings for using 'vnfitting wordes' to a warden who was searching for books unlawfully 'bound in sheepes leather'.<sup>51</sup>

**Martin Lucas** was a friend of John Bill, Anna Bill, and Bill's second wife Jane. John Bill trusted Lucas with his estate and thanked him in his will 'for his care and direcon wch he hath had in the settinge of my estate and for that great trust wch I repose in him hereafter for the mannaginge of the same for the good of my wife and children fiftie pounds'. Martin Lucas was to receive £100 a year, out of the profits of the KPH, until Bill's children reached the age of 21. Lucas does seem to have maintained his employment in the KPH after Bill's death, on behalf of the Bill family. In 1630 when Robert Coggan and Joyce Norton were ordered to pay money to Barker in lieu of the books that were taken to Norton's shop in 1629, Cogan was also ordered to pay money to Martin Lucas 'to whom the same belongeth'.<sup>52</sup> Martin Lucas was also fined, along with Robert Barker, for omitting the word 'not' from the seventh commandment in the 1631 edition of the Bible.<sup>53</sup>

**Robert Coggan** at one time kept Norton's English shop with Joyce Norton.<sup>54</sup> Unlike Joyce Norton, who argued that Norton's assignment of his English shop to her was valid, Coggan agreed in court to waive Norton's assignment and so pay money that was owed by the shop to Martin Lucas and Robert Barker.<sup>55</sup>

**James Burrage** is mentioned in John Bill's will.<sup>56</sup> He is described by Bill as his trustworthy servant: 'and I desire him to continue the same employment in the printinge office wch now he hath for the good of my Children'. It is possible that Burrage is one of John Bill junior's assigns (1630–60) but there is no evidence for this.<sup>57</sup>

**William Taylor** c.1575, lived in Lincolns Inn, in Middlesex in 1627. He worked as land agent and sometime legal advisor to Robert Barker, to whom he was related through marriage (he referred to Barker's wife Ann, as his 'neere kinswoman').<sup>58</sup> He occasionally drew up Indentures, petitions and other documents associated with the KPH. He was

<sup>50</sup> C33/157/621; C33/159/68; C33/159/639–40; C33/159/318–19; C33/159/181.

<sup>51</sup> See C33/159/2–3; and *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company, 1602 to 1640*, ed. by William A. Jackson (London, 1957) p. 176.

<sup>52</sup> C33/15/640.

<sup>53</sup> See, Gregg, *A Companion to Arber*, pp. 263–4.

<sup>54</sup> C33/159/318–9.

<sup>55</sup> C33/159/640.

<sup>56</sup> NA prob/11/157.

<sup>57</sup> See also, *Records of the Court of Stationers' Company*, ed. by Jackson, p. 203.

<sup>58</sup> C2/JASI/N7/44.

drawn into the legal wrangle over who had the rights to the office when, in 1622, Bonham Norton presented a petition to Chancery against Robert Barker and William Taylor in the long-running battle over the rights to the office and stock of the KPH.<sup>59</sup> It seems that Taylor, as steward of Barker's manors, witnessed Barker's signing over of all of 'his coppie hold lands tenements & hereditamen<sup>ts</sup> to Bonham Norton'.<sup>60</sup>

(viii) *Book Trade Associates*

**Humphrey Dyson** (1582–1633) was a notary public and London scrivener.<sup>61</sup> He had a large and varied library and was arrested for possession of seditious books in 1610. He is remembered for his part in the reprinting of Elizabethan Proclamations in 1618 through Norton and Bill, and for his 1610 publication of James I's collected proclamations.<sup>62</sup> He seems to have been a one-time trusted friend of both Norton and Bill, who at certain times drew up various articles of agreement concerning the King's Printing House.

He became involved in a certain amount of KPH sharp practice in connection with Robert Barker's 1617 assignment of the office to Norton and Bill. Before Barker's assignment was sealed Norton insisted that Bill should sign a covenant, stating that if he, Bill, died without leaving any male children 'lawfully begotten' then £2,000 would be paid to Bill's executors and administrators within three years of his death, whereupon the office of King's Printer would pass entirely to Norton. Bill was reluctant to do this, as at that time he had no children, nor was 'like to haue any' with his wife Anna. Norton it seems enlisted the help of Humphrey Dyson to persuade Bill to sign the covenant. According to Bill, Dyson assured him that in any case, such a covenant would not be 'good or effective in law'.<sup>63</sup> Bill went on to sign the covenant but that was not the end of the matter. In 1619, Barker's 1617 assignment of the King's Printing House to Norton and Bill was again in dispute. This followed Francis Bacon's 1619 Chancery ruling which found in favour of Barker, a ruling (aided by a £700 bribe paid to Bacon by Barker) which meant that Norton lost his hold on the KPH while Bill was found to be a *bona fide* purchaser of the office. In an attempt to pay-off Barker, Norton and Dyson approached Barker with a quite amazing and fascinating offer. According to William Taylor, Dyson showed Barker a mysterious black box, which contained inside a 'iacke in a box', which Norton and Dyson claimed 'might proue very beneficiall' to Barker. The jack-in-the-box was Bill's covenant concerning inheritance and Bill's childlessness, which was being offered to Barker as a sweetener, to encourage him to come to some accommodation with Norton. Bonham Norton suggested the covenant was worth £3,000 to Barker. Barker was impressed by the jack-in-a-box as Humphrey Dyson then drew up articles of agreement between Barker and Norton outlining a new agreement. John Bill must have heard of the jack-in-a-box as he presented a petition to Chancery in November,

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<sup>59</sup> C2/JASI/N7/44.

<sup>60</sup> C2/JASI/N7/44.

<sup>61</sup> See C24/460 for Dyson's date of birth. Transcriptions of C24/460 will be added to the website in due course.

<sup>62</sup> See *STC*, I, pp. 355–6.

<sup>63</sup> PRO C5/592/24

against Norton and Humphrey Dyson. In his petition he accused Barker and Norton of conspiring together in a post-Chancery tactical alliance to deprive him [Bill] of his *bona fide* right to the office of King's Printer as granted by Bacon in May, 1619.<sup>64</sup>

**Matthew Lownes** worked as a bookseller in London from 1595–1625. A prominent stationer he had close links with John Bill and a good standing with the Court of Chancery. After Bill was found to have *bona fide* rights to the office of KP, the fight in Chancery between Barker and Norton became so bad that the court decided it was interfering with the maintenance of the king's printing. In 1622, the court ordered that the office be sequestered into the hands of John Bill and Mathew Lownes: 'for the better and more peaceable service of his *Maiestie* in the meane tyme [...] his *Lordship* doth think fit and order that a Bond be awarded to John Bill *Esquire* and Mathew Lowndes stationer to sequester into their hands and possession the moiety of the *said* office of Kings printer'.<sup>65</sup>

Lownes was also one of four prominent stationers chosen to look at the account books of the KPH and then examine witnesses and report their findings to Chancery.<sup>66</sup> It is not clear why Matthew Lownes was chosen by the Court to work alongside John Bill. Lownes had published texts by Richard Montague in 1621 (*STC* 18037; Montague had edited James's *Workes*), and Pierre du Moulin (*STC* 7331), who had assisted the king in writing a response to Cardinal du Perron in 1615. The publication of texts by Montague and Moulin would have given Matthew Lownes standing with the Crown. Lownes seems to have been on good business terms with John Bill, as in 1622, after Francis Bacon's fall in 1621, Matthew Lownes went on to publish certain potentially profitable Bacon texts (see *STC* 1155, 1156, 1159, 1160). John Bill, the King's Printer had printed Bacon's *Instauratio magna* in 1620, but after Bacon's fall from grace, the printing of Bacon texts passed to Matthew Lownes—it seems that the name of John Bill the King's Printer could no longer be associated with the disgraced Bacon.<sup>67</sup>

#### (ix) *Warehousemen*

It is highly probable that at times in the reign of James, the King's Printers would have employed more than one warehouseman, not least because they had to manage the phenomenal volumes of white paper coming into the business, and the masses of printed books going out.<sup>68</sup> In addition the King's Printers had more than one warehouse at times for instance in 1614/5 **Joseph Bysett** (see above) acted as one of the warehousemen, as he is described in depositions as 'being one of the warehouse keepers of the said office'.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>64</sup> PRO C2/JASI/N7/44; C5/592/24

<sup>65</sup> PRO C33/143/337.

<sup>66</sup> PRO C33/147/660. For details see Wakely, 'Printing and Double-dealing', p. 31, fn 106.

<sup>67</sup> See Wakely and Rees, 'Folios Fit for a King'.

<sup>68</sup> See Joseph Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises on the Whole Art of Printing (1683–4)*, ed. by Herbert Davis & Harry Carter (London, Oxford University Press, 1958) for a warehouseman's duties.

<sup>69</sup> C22/601/28.

(x) *Apprentices*

We need to carry out further research on KPH apprentices. This work will be added to the website in due course.