

ELEANOR KELLY

4TH YEAR

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

1983

THE CELTIC REVIVAL AND THE DUN EMER\CUALA PRESS

ELEANOR KELLY

4th. YEAR

VISUAL COMMUNICATION

1983

At the turn of the century, the Celtic Revival was in full swing in Ireland while, simultaneously, the Aesthetic Movement, followed by the Arts and Crafts Movement, pervaded every aspect of English art and design.

Hand-press printing was very much a part of the English Arts and Crafts movement which revolutionised the approach to book typography in England.

It is against this background that we examine the Dun Emer Press, later called the Cuala Press. Influenced by these movements in England, Elizabeth Yeats applied the ideals nurtured by her contemporaries, such as William Morris and Emery Walker, to the setting up of a private hand-printing press in Ireland. Her actions were coupled with ideals drawn from the nationalist feelings generated by the Celtic Revival. A nationalist spirit was sought through the exploitation of Irish culture. This generation searched for their unique Irish identity by identifying and developing an Irish art style. Crafted by Irish hands, Dun Emer books were written by young Irish writers - thus Elizabeth Yeats hoped to contribute to the Celtic Renaissance. She also contributed to the advancement of the status of women who worked in the design field. By employing an all-woman workforce, she acknowledged the woman's skill and design sense which had, hitherto, been played down in the Arts and Crafts movement. In a short space of time a Dun Emer/Cuala book became distinctly recognisable with its characteristic design features - which were applied to each new publication.

Aims and Background of the Dun Emer/Cuala Press.

The Dun Emer Guild was founded in 1902 by Evelyn Gleeson, Elizabeth Yeats and Lily Yeats when they set up a craft studio in Dundrum, Co. Dublin, in a house called "Dun Emer", so called after the wife of Cuchulainn, famous for her skill in weaving and embroidery. The women chose three main crafts based on their previous experience in London: embroidery, printing and tapestry with the aim "to find work for Irish hands in the making of

beautiful things." Three factors influenced these women when they started the Dun Emer Guild. Firstly, there was the revival of Irish ideals which had grown out of the influence of The Nation and the writers of the 1840's; secondly, the women's interest in craftwork was, of course, an obvious factor and, thirdly, there was their interest in the movement for emancipation of women. Unlike other private presses of the time whose aim was to produce beautiful reprints, Elizabeth Yeats' aim was to produce beautiful editions of the new literature of Ireland - an aim which sets her apart from her contemporary private press printers. The first prospectus of the Dun Emer Press states:

"Though many books are printed in Ireland, book printing as an art has been little practised here since the 18th century. The Dun Emer Press has been founded in the hope of reviving this beautiful craft. A good 18th century fount of type which is not eccentric in form, or difficult to read, has been cast, and the paper has been made of linen rags and without bleaching chemicals at the Saggart Mill in the County Dublin. The pages are printed at a handpress by Miss Elizabeth Corbet Yeats, and simplicity is aimed at in their composition."

In an analysis of events in Ireland which formed the background for the founding of the Dun Emer Guild, we find in 19th century Ireland a growing sense of the connection between culture and an awareness of nationality. The antiquarians were interested in the past because of their pursuit of learning but a younger generation, the Young Irelanders, exploited Irish antiquities and contemporary Irish art for political ends. Thomas Davis, Charles Gavin Duffy and John Blake Dillon founded the newspaper "The Nation" "to create and foster public opinion in Ireland, and to make it racy of the soil"..."on the neutral ground of ancient history and native art, Unionists and Nationalists could meet without alarm." Even the '82

THE DUN EMER PRESS

THOUGH many books are printed in Ireland, book printing as an art has been little practised here since the eighteenth century. The Dun Emer Press has been founded in the hope of reviving this beautiful craft.

A good eighteenth century fount of type which is not eccentric in form, or difficult to read has been cast, and the paper has been made of linen rags and without bleaching chemicals, at the Saggart Mill in the county Dublin. The pages are printed at a Hand Press by Miss E. C. Yeats, and simplicity is aimed at in their composition.

The first book printed has been 'In the Seven Woods' a new volume of poems, chiefly of the Irish Heroic Age, by W. B. Yeats. The edition is limited to 325 copies, and the book will not be republished in this form. It is now ready, price ten shillings and six pence a copy payable in advance. The next book will be 'The Nuts of Knowledge' a book of new and old lyrical poems by A. E. The price will be seven shillings and six pence a copy. Subscribers names will be received by Miss E. C. Yeats at the Dun Emer Press, Dundrum, Co. Dublin.

Other books are in preparation, an Irish prose story by Mr G. Bernard Shaw; Dr Hyde's famous translations of the Love Songs of Connacht; some translations by Lady Gregory of heroic and mediaeval Irish poems; and a book on speaking to the Psalter, with music, and a description of the art by Mr Arnold Dolmetsch and others. Other books will be announced shortly.

Club was founded expressly "to encourage Irish art and literature and to diffuse a national feeling through society." There were two phases in the growth of Irish national consciousness in the 19th century - firstly, the Young Ireland Movement and secondly, in the 1880's, the Irish Renaissance or Celtic Revival, the basis for which were the feelings generated by the first movement. Jeanne Sheehy in "The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past, The Celtic Revival 1830-1930" comments:

"By the end of the century it would have been difficult to turn around in Ireland without being faced, in one form or another, by shamrocks, harps, round towers and wolfhounds - on tea services, glass, jewellery, book covers, workboxes, on banners, in graveyards, and even, if you were a Catholic in church. Although their popularity lasted well into this century, and in some cases still survives, they began to be regarded as suspect by the Celtic Renaissance generation at the turn of the century: all four emblems as a group, and the shamrock itself were thought to indicate a shallow, sentimental and ineffectual feeling for Ireland, or to symbolize the lip-service paid to an Irish identity by the royal family and by the Castle officials. Curiously enough, round towers or wolfhounds on their own were acceptable. So were archaeological symbols like high crosses, Celtic interlace and the "Tara Brooch", since they were reminders of Ireland's great cultural achievements of the past."

The enormous success of the Great Exhibition held in Dublin in 1853 and the other exhibitions which followed at frequent intervals afterwards, also played a part in awakening national pride in past and contemporary Irish arts and crafts. The opening of the National Museum of Ireland in 1890 gave an added boost to the Revival insofar as it firmly placed the prototype specimens before the eyes of the general public. Three years later the Gaelic League was founded, and this institution also helped

forward the Revival by its emphasis on everything gaelic. At the end of the century, therefore, it is not surprising to find "Celtic" art, of a rather reproductive style, being applied to a great variety of articles.

Irish Art and the Celtic Revival.

The Celtic Revival was mainly literary because the last great period of Irish art, in the 18th century, was associated in people's minds with the Anglo-Irish Protestant Ascendancy and, therefore, suspect among Nationalists. Also the great literary talents, e.g. Yeats, Synge and Russell consciously identified themselves with it. On the other hand, the painters of the time, such as Walter Osborne, Nathaniel Hone and John Lavery did not become involved with the political movement, and Orpen's work which was inspired by the Revival was satirical and not in keeping with the spirit of the movement. However, George Russell, (A.E.) who was a painter as well as a poet, and, of course, Jack B. Yeats, became involved with design and illustration for the Dun Emer Press.

The aspect of Irish art which came closest to the literary and language revivals was applied art. Edward Martyn, Lady Gregory and W.B. Yeats actively helped it and it was promoted by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, under Horace Plunkett and T.P. Gill. Douglas Hyde and the Gaelic League were also interested in applied art. The Earl of Mayo was the founder of the Irish Arts and Crafts Society in 1894, the aim of which was to foster artistic industries in Ireland, to promote artistic culture by means of lectures and to supply designs, to hold exhibitions of Irish arts and crafts. In a lecture to the National Literary Society in 1905, entitled "The Art Movement in Dublin", the Earl of Mayo claimed that the Gaelic League had arrived in time to prevent the snapping of the link that bound Ireland to her past and he associated the Celtic movement with the

progress of the art movement.

Contemporary Art Movements.

It is necessary to also consider events in England as well as Ireland because these played a major role in shaping the thinking of the founders of the Dun Emer Guild.

Across the water, the Aesthetic Movement was based on an elitist principle which sought to improve the standards of design and taste, and the general environment. Within this attitude resided the seeds of Ruskin's and Morris's dislike of the machine, and an assumption that what was mass-produced for the general public must be inferior - an attitude still prevalent today. Elizabeth Aslin in "The Aesthetic Movement, Prelude to Art Nouveau" comments: "Initially one of the motivating forces of the Aesthetic Movement was the antipathy of the art world to the products of industry and the machine, but, ironically enough, by the 1870's "art" was becoming a profitable adjunct of many an established business." Standards of taste suffered a sharp decline as a result of the Industrial Revolution which had brought a new prosperity to the rising middle classes. Mass production was made possible by the increasing use of machinery. The possibilities of mass-producing ornament instead of laborious methods of the past were exploited to the full, which resulted in mostly unimaginative decoration on even the humblest object.

William Morris's mediaeval escapism was to give way to an entirely different form of withdrawal from everyday life. His influence was dominant in the second half of the 19th century. His followers and assistants included some of the finest designers of the time and he inspired the creation of the Arts and Crafts Movement and the numerous Guilds and schools devoted to the concept of craft and handwork. He gave a series of lectures between

1877 and 1885 when he worked out his theory of art and society. "The chief source of art is man's pleasure in his daily necessary work, which expresses itself and is embodied in that art itself... The beauty of the handicrafts of the Middle Ages came from this: that the workman had control over his material, tools and time." It was this dimension which was lacking from the life of the modern workman, turning out mass-produced artefacts for a weekly wage. This attack on contemporary techniques of production and the revival of the craftsmanship of the Middle Ages led to the birth of the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain. Morris believed "that art cannot have a real life and growth under the present system of commercialism and profit-mongering." The movement's practical origins lay in the formation of the firm Morris, Marschall, Faulkner and Co. in 1861 and was well under way by the 1880's.

The desire to improve the quality of architecture and design on every level was basic to the Arts and Crafts movement, which sought to establish a society in which creative freedom was the right of all. The ideals of Morris and Ruskin looked back to an age in which the craftsman was both designer and maker, when, before division of labour, an artefact was the product of a single individual who saw the creative process through from beginning to end.

The Role of Women in the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Thus we have set the scene for a closer look at the Dun Emer Guild. It is interesting to note at this stage that this Guild was comprised totally of women. What role did women play in the Arts and Crafts movement? Let us consider the background of the founder women of the Dun Emer Guild and ^{role} compare ~~they~~ to that of women in the Arts and Crafts movement in general. Evelyn Gleeson had met followers of Morris when she studied art in London,

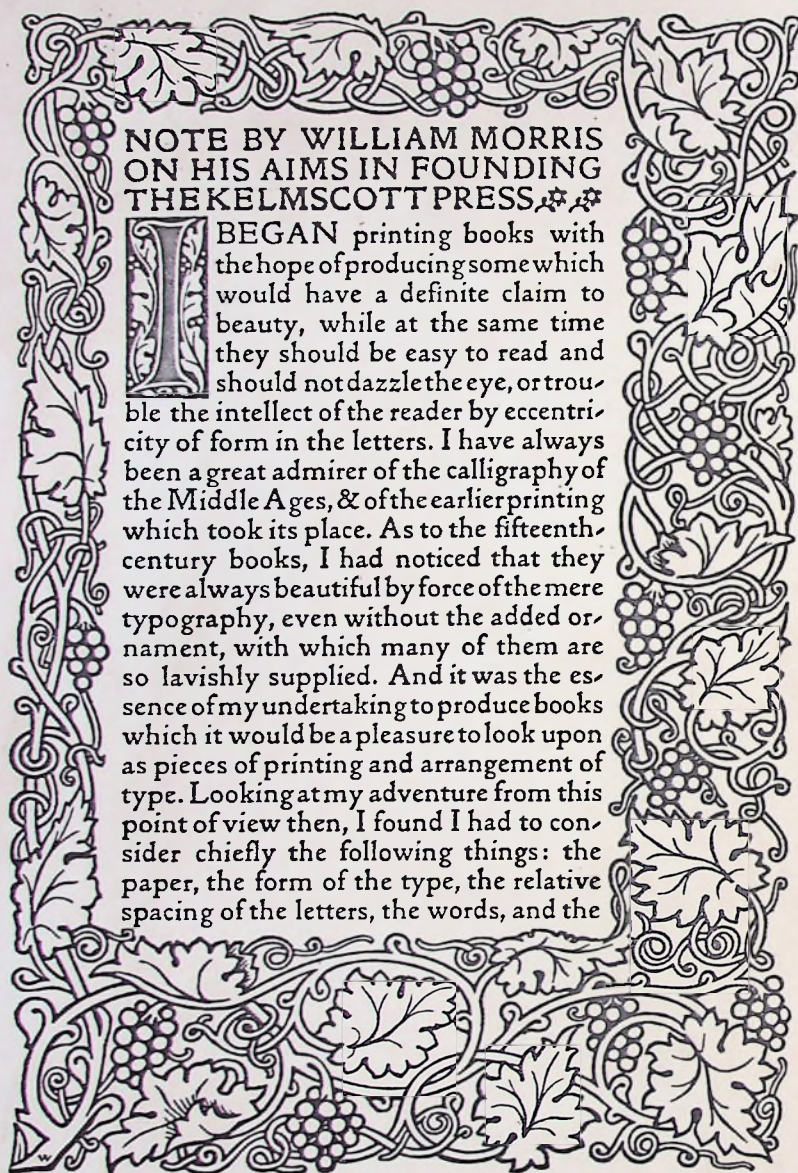
means for women to enter printing trades was by setting up their own presses. The Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, set up in 1859 in England organised a series of projects to train and employ women in fields of work from which they were excluded. Among these was the Victoria Press, a successful printing business run by women trained by the Society as compositors. There were at least three women's presses active in the latter part of the century in England, the Victoria Press, the Ladies Printing Press and the Women's Printing Society Limited, where Elizabeth Yeats trained for a time on the advice of Emery Walker, friend and advisor of William Morris. In several cases, women played an active part in helping their husbands to run their presses, e.g. Henry Daniel's wife, Emily, was entirely responsible for the setting up and printing of several of the Daniel's Press editions. She was particularly skilled in decorative ornamentation by hand - a characteristic embellishment of hand-printed books. May Morris often helped at her father's Kelmscott Press. However, private presses were predominantly a male sphere of activity, especially with regard to the actual setting up of presses, even if they were jointly run with women and men claimed most of the creatively original work. In general, women appear to have taken the lighter, more delicate task of embellishing or decorating or the work of engraving the blocks after another, usually male, artist's designs.

An exception to this pattern was the Dun Emer Press. The Press was involved in a literary revival as much as a craft revival and was run on lines very similar to all the philanthropically originating craft industries in England and Ireland, where middle and upper middle classes and aristocratic parties were concerned both with giving work to poor agricultural labourer's wives and with reviving country or artistic crafts. Wages were based on working-class rather than middle class standards. In terms of economic and class

structure the Dun Emer Press should be compared to the Langdale Linen Industry, begun in 1885 with the revival of traditional cottage spinning industry in the Lake District, and not to a cosy, middle-class, privately-financed press like the Doves Press which was privately financed by Annie Cobden-Sanderson from 1901. Although the movement remained traditionally structured and led mostly by men, it did give many women vital economic independence. Interestingly, Morris made a stand for women's rights when he won a case for the recognition of the status of his type compositor, Mrs. Pine, by the printing trade union. Obviously, Elizabeth Yeats played an important role in the recognition of women's creative work in Ireland in printing.

The Handpress Printing Movement.

Morris and Kelmscott Press had a far-reaching influence, felt also by the Dun Emer Press. "I began printing books with the hope of producing some which would have a definite claim to beauty, while at the same time, they should be easy to read and not dazzle the eye, or trouble the intellect of the reader by eccentricity of form in the letters. I have always been a great admirer of the calligraphy of the Middle Ages, and of the earlier printing which took its place. As to the 15th century books, I noticed that they were always beautiful by force of the mere typography, even without the added ornament, with which many of them are so lavishly supplied. And it was the essence of my undertaking to produce books which it would be a pleasure to look upon as pieces of printing and arrangement of type." (Morris). The Arts and Crafts revival of the hand-printed book and of private presses came as a reaction to the loss of craftsmanship - the result of increasing mechanization in the trade in the 19th century, and of the growing split between artist/designer and craftsman. The Arts and Crafts book, a revival which lasted from about 1890-1914, had a profound effect



NOTE BY WILLIAM MORRIS
ON HIS AIMS IN FOUNDING
THE KELMSCOTT PRESS.

I BEGAN printing books with the hope of producing some which would have a definite claim to beauty, while at the same time they should be easy to read and should not dazzle the eye, or trouble the intellect of the reader by eccentricity of form in the letters. I have always been a great admirer of the calligraphy of the Middle Ages, & of the earlier printing which took its place. As to the fifteenth-century books, I had noticed that they were always beautiful by force of the mere typography, even without the added ornament, with which many of them are so lavishly supplied. And it was the essence of my undertaking to produce books which it would be a pleasure to look upon as pieces of printing and arrangement of type. Looking at my adventure from this point of view then, I found I had to consider chiefly the following things: the paper, the form of the type, the relative spacing of the letters, the words, and the

These Books printed, as a first essay, the whole field of literature remains open to select from. To-day there is an immense reproduction in an admirable cheap form, of all Books which in any language have stood the test of time. But such reproduction is not

on the standards of mechanically-produced books in general. The revival of fine printing dates from the first printed book by Morris "Story of the Glittering Plain" 1891 Kelmscott Press.

The true Arts and Crafts hand-produced look fell into two main stylistic categories: first, the classical style with restrained design and ornament, associated with the Aesthetic Movement and seen in its purest form in the work of the Doves Press; second, the more romantically inspired Gothic mediaevalistic style characteristic of the Kelmscott Press. It used old-style, gothic type-faces; title-pages and often all double page spreads were treated decoratively as a single unit. Pages were densely covered with type and ornament, initial letters and matching decorative borders. Paper was always hand-made and deckle-edged, crisp and white to complement the very black ink and often red ink was used for displays in the gothic manner.

Printing at the end of the 19th century was in need of reform "The worst crime of the late 19th century was...the drab poverty of the ordinary reading page (set in spidery modern typefaces, over-widely spaced and under-inked), the neglected margins, the characterless title-pages, and the ignoble paper and binding cloths in use" (Ruari McLean "Modern Book Design").

Ruskin was one of the first to protest against this kind of printing but he was never seriously committed to changing it. Morris was committed to the "book beautiful". Kelmscott Press was the forerunner of a large number of private printing presses in England and Europe. The most important in England after Kelmscott was the Doves Press, founded by T.J. Cobden-Sanderson and Emery Walker in 1900. It was the Doves Press and not the Kelmscott Press which pointed the way for the future of book design. The classical style of the Doves Press concentrated on lightness and delicacy in the overall treatment of the book. These books were characterized by wide

margins, little ornament apart from initial letters, type styles which were classically light and legible, usually based on Italian 15th century prototypes. "Type and paper may be said to be to a printed book what stone or bricks and mortar are to architecture, without which there can be no book in the one case, and no architecture in the other!" (Emery Walker) The Dove Press books were the simplest and purest in style of all the private press productions; they were masterpieces of fine plain printing.

The paper was handmade with the Doves' watermark designed by Cobden-Sanderson of two doves breasting a perch, with initials C.S. and E.W. As with the Kelmscott Press the use of fine materials and a strong black print impression was mandatory. Initial letters were sometimes placed outside the printed area and usually printed bright red. The Doves type was based on Jenson's roman, re-drawn by an employee of Emery Walker under Cobden-Sanderson's supervision. This typeface was indicative of the future of type design, unlike Morris's gothic typefaces, "Golden", "Troy" or "Chaucer".

These and other private presses which followed, including the Dun Emer Press, were trying to make books as absolutely beautiful as possible. Such an aim could not have been achieved by mass-production methods in their day, and the results, usually hand-printed, hand-decorated and hand-bound, are more like individual works of art than examples of printing. This was, however, the logical first step to take at that time.

The Beginnings of the Dun Emer Press.

Elizabeth Yeats, inspired by this new legacy of hand-printed books, undertook the aim of making beautiful books by treating printing as a "handcraft" and by undertaking to have the work done by Irish hands: "to find work for Irish hands in the making of beautiful things." The goals of the Dun Emer Guild, set out in their prospectus issued in 1904, echo the philosophy of

Ruskin, passed on by Morris, about the freedom of the craftsman:

"Everything as far as possible is Irish: the paper of the books, the linen of the embroidery and the wool of the tapestry and carpets. The designs are also of the spirit and tradition of the country...things made of pure materials, worked by these Irish girls, must be more lasting and more valuable than machine-made goods which only have a temporary purpose. All the things made at Dun Emer are beautiful in the sense that they are instinct with individual feeling and have cost thought and care."

Obviously Elizabeth Yeats was very influenced by Morris's design principles but more especially by Emery Walker in practical terms. In fact, the lasting influence of the Kelmscott Press was its principles of fine materials and craftsmanship but the influence of the Doves Press was its ideas of adhering to classic principles of design and arrangement combined with fine materials and workmanship. It was really this latter influence which improved printing and book production standards later on. Walker laid out the requirements for the Doves Press - later to be used by the Dun Emer Press - as follows: first, fine press-work on a fine paper in a well-designed Roman typeface. (Caslon was used by Dun Emer Press and the Doves Press had its own faces cut); second, composition and imposition of the typeform was to adhere to a classic proportion; third, paper was to be made in a size which produced a small quarto in similar proportions to books printed in the same format at Kelmscott Press. The small quarto of the Doves Press produces a page 9 x 6½ inches and a type area 6⅞ x 4 inches. This format was derived from the classic works of the early printers and can be compared with a 15th or 16th century small quarto in Roman type. On Walker's advice, Elizabeth Yeats took a month's training in printing at the Women's Printing Society in London. This then constituted all her basic training - she knew nothing about press-work, disliked machinery and declared she was afraid of a sewing machine!

FINTAIN.

Come here, fool; come here, I say.

BARACH.

(coming towards him but looking backward towards the door.) What is it?

FINTAIN.

There will be nobody in the houses. Come this way, come quickly; the ovens will be full we will put our hands into the ovens. (They go out.)

Here ends In The Seven Woods, written by William Butler Yeats, printed, upon paper made in Ireland, and published by Elizabeth Corbet Yeats at the Dun Emer Press, in the house of Evelyn Gleeson at Dundrum in the county of Dublin, Ireland, finished the sixteenth day of July, in the year of the big wind
1903.

FINTAIN.

Come here, fool; come here, I say.

BARACH.

(coming towards him but looking backward towards the door.) What is it?

FINTAIN.

There will be nobody in the houses. Come this way, come quickly; the ovens will be full we will put our hands into the ovens. (They go out.)

Here ends In The Seven Woods, written by William Butler Yeats, printed, upon paper made in Ireland, and published by Elizabeth Corbet Yeats at the Dun Emer Press, in the house of Evelyn Gleeson at Dundrum in the county of Dublin, Ireland, finished the sixteenth day of July, in the year of the big wind
1903.

THE LAST PAGE OF "THE SEVEN WOODS," THE GOLD PHON APPEARED IN RED.

The women acquired an Albion handpress, built in 1853, similar to the one used at Kelmscott and Doves Presses, from an Irish provincial printing house through an advertisement in the paper. Walker advised the purchase of a fount of Caslon old style type, 14 pt. size. Special rag paper made at Saggart Mills in Co. Dublin was used for all the books issued in the standard format, a small quarto, $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The paper is a fine, crisp, mould-made paper of a slightly creamy tone which varies in substance. During the war years for example, the quality of the paper disimproved somewhat, due to the shortage of raw materials.

Although all the typesetting and printing of the Press's books was done by women, the editor of the Press was W.B. Yeats, Elizabeth's and Lily's brother, and of course, a leading figure in the literary movement. He chose what was to be produced and announced in 1916 (the Press was then called the Cuala Press) that he selected books which had "an intimate connection with the literary movement in contemporary Ireland". He later admitted that in order to justify the publishing of Ezra Pound's "Noh" plays, he had to annex Japan to Ireland. He felt that the books would be as characteristic of their time as the "library of Ireland" had been to the Young Irelanders. Deeply influenced by Morris's search for a contemporary audience for the saga, Yeats felt that the work of the Kelmscott Press suggested a fitting style of presentation for the new literature of Ireland, not so much the finished aspect, but the ideal behind the press. "The dreamer of the Middle Ages" was how Yeats always referred to Morris.

Design Features of Dun Emer Press Books.

Printing at the Dun Emer Press began early in 1903 and the first book to be printed was "In the Seven Woods" a collection of poems by W.B. Yeats, in August of that year. It included his play "On Baile's Strand" and sold at 10 shillings six pence. 325 copies were published and it sold rapidly -

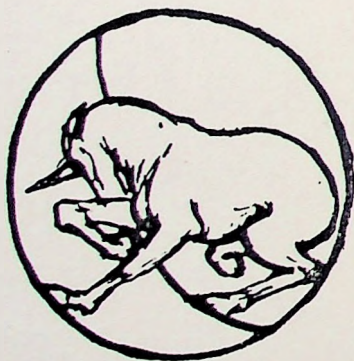
and was soon out of print. A trade edition was published in New York which reprinted verbatim the contents of the Dun Emer book. The design features of the Press were established in this first book. The format was a small quarto, $8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ inches - 21×14.15 cms - the paper crisp, thin and lightly toned. It was made in a sheet measuring $16\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$ inches, to Walker's specification. The books were printed in sheets of eight pages, from two forms of four pages each. The classical page was set in unleaded 14 point Caslon typeface. Ten point size was used for footnotes and a 30 point fount was used for titling in some later issues. Red ink was used to print the colophon as well as some headings and notes. The binding was a full case of natural Irish linen with a paper label on the front board. This style did not prove practical in manufacture however, and was only used in this book.

The binding was executed in Dublin by Galway and Co. From the second book onwards they were cased with a linen spine and coloured paper sides. All edges were left untrimmed. The front cover was lettered in black, and a spine label, usually in black print on white paper, pasted at the head of the spine, reading upwards. From the third book onwards each one had endpapers to match the coloured paper sides. Also a blank section of press paper was often sewn on as flyleaves at each end of the book. This binding style is similar to the quarter holland style favoured by Morris and several other private presses in England during the 1890s and the first decades of the 20th century.

The title-page of "In the Seven Woods" is simple and reveals the planning of Walker in its authoritative placing on the sheet and finally, the colophon, printed in red at the end, established a standard form used in the later books. The typographic style and standards set in the first book were adhered to throughout the history of the Press. The books "had a distinctive quality which commercial imitators on both sides of the Atlantic failed to capture".

THE CAT AND THE MOON AND
CERTAIN POEMS: BY WILLIAM
BUTLER YEATS.

W.B. Yeats



THE CUALA PRESS
MERRION SQUARE
DUBLIN IRELAND
MCMXXIV

EXAMPLES OF CUALA TYPEFACE, SIZE AND FORMAT.

THE CAT AND THE MOON

SCENE: The scene is any bare place before a wall against which stands a patterned screen, or hangs a patterned curtain suggesting St. Colman's Well. Three Musicians are sitting close to the wall, with zither, drum and flute. Their faces are made up to resemble masks.

FIRST MUSICIAN

(singing) The cat went here and there
And the moon spun round like a top,
And the nearest kin of the moon
The creeping cat looked up.
Black Minnaloushe stared at the moon,
For wander and wail as he would
The pure cold light in the sky
Troubled his animal blood.

(Two beggars enter— a blind man with a lame man on his back. They wear grotesque masks. The Blind Beggar is counting the paces)

BLIND BEGGAR

One thousand and six, one thousand and seven, one thousand and nine. Look well now for we should be in sight of the holy well of St. Colman. The beggar at the cross road said it was one thousand paces from where he stood and a few paces over. Look well how, can you see the big ash tree that's above it?

not for one thing, but no matter any way.

LAME BEGGAR

If I speak out all that's in my mind you wont take a blow at me at all?

BLIND MAN

I will not this time.

LAME BEGGAR

Then I'll tell you why you are not a great fool. When you go out to pick up a chicken, or maybe a stray goose on the road, or a cabbage from a neighbour's garden, I have to go riding on your back; and if I want a goose, or a chicken, or a cabbage, I must have your two legs under me.

BLIND BEGGAR

That's true now and if we were whole men and went different ways, there'd be as much again between us.

LAME BEGGAR

And your own goods keep going from you because you are blind.

BLIND BEGGAR

Rogues and thieves ye all are, but there are some I may have my eyes on yet.

LAME BEGGAR

Because there's no one to see a man slipping in at the door, or throwing a leg over the wall of a yard, you are a bitter temptation to many a poor man, &

I say it's not right, it's not right at all. There are poor men that because you are blind will be delayed in Purgatory.

BLIND BEGGAR

Though you are a rogue, Lame Man, maybe you are in the right.

LAME MAN

And maybe we'll see the blessed saint this day, for there's an odd one sees him, and maybe that will be a grander thing than having my two legs, though legs are a grand thing.

BLIND BEGGAR

You're getting flighty again, Lame Man, what could be better for you than to have your two legs?

LAME BEGGAR

Do you think now will the saint put an ear on him at all, and we without an Ave or a Paternoster to put before the prayer or after the prayer?

BLIND MAN

Wise though you are and flighty though you are, and you throwing eyes to the right of you and eyes to the left of you, there's many a thing you don't know about the heart of man.

LAME BEGGAR

But it stands to reason that he'd be put out and he maybe with a great liking for the Latin.

(Liam Miller). Yeats said of his book:

"This is the first book of mine that is a pleasure to look at - a pleasure whether open or shut."

In 1904 the third Irish Exhibition of Arts and Crafts included printing and book-binding from the Dun Emer Press which proves that even in that short time, it had established itself in arts and crafts circles, as well as the publishing and reading world in Ireland.

Eleven books in all were printed by the Dun Emer Press. The second book "The Nuts of Knowledge" by A.E. was technically much better than "In the Seven Woods." Yeats said of this second book (in a letter to Lily from New York, December 1903):

"I have just seen "The Nuts of Knowledge". Tell Lolly (Elizabeth) I think it perfectly charming. It is better than "In the Seven Woods" and should, I think, advance the fame of the Press." In 1904 a bindery was added to the Dun Emer industries, under the direction of Norah Fitzpatrick and later Eleanor Kelly, but it didn't undertake regular edition binding of the Press, rather special commissions. It remained a part of the Dun Emer workshops after the split between the Dun Emer Guild and the Dun Emer Industries in 1908. Evelyn Gleeson continued the running of the Dun Emer Guild while the Yeats' sisters established Dun Emer Industries and the press became known as the Cuala Press. The first series of "Broadsides" began before the name of the press was changed. It was published monthly for seven years with 84 issues altogether. It measured 11 x 7½ inches of Cartridge paper. All drawings in the first series were executed by Jack B. Yeats. A line of 4-line French Antique Woodletter, made by Stephenson Blake and Co. in Sheffield, was used as a heading in each issue. The press also did a series of hand-coloured prints and greeting cards, bookplates and some thirty privately-printed editions.



"LUALA" DRAWING BY JACK B. YEATS FROM A LETTERHEADING, C. 1908.



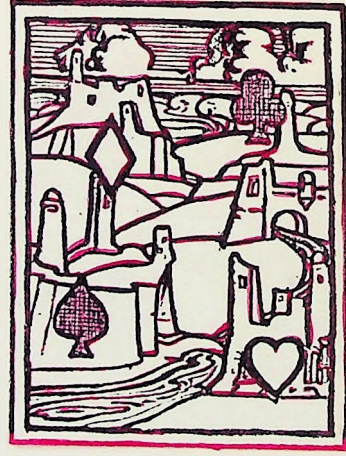
1. "UNICORN" BY EDMUND DULAC "STORIES OF MICHAEL ROBERTS AND HIS FRIENDS"
2. "THE SWORD OF LIGHT" BY AE "THE NUTS OF KNOWLEDGE", 1903

Use of Illustration.

A design feature which must be singled out is the use of illustration in the Dun Emer/Cuala Press. This was kept to a minimum in general, usually consisting of a title page graphic. The pressmark designed by Elinor Monsell was an engraving on boxwood $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches high showing Lady Emer by a tree. Elinor Monsell also designed the emblem of Queen Maeve with her wolfhound for the National (Abbey) Theatre. The Lady Emer device was first used on the title page of "Twenty-One Poems" by Katharine Tynan, 1907, and then became the practise in the future. "The Sword of Light", the device by A.E. for "The Nuts of Knowledge" and printed in red was not altogether accepted by Yeats as being successful. "There are moments when I think that the winged sword is a little large as well as a little vague in design. I am very uncertain about this, but I think, on the whole, I would have liked it smaller, small, perhaps, as a penny piece, and up in the right hand corner."

The third prospectus of the Press August 1904 announced that "Bookplates are designed and printed at the Dun Emer Press." Amongst these were several by Jack B. Yeats, who designed plates for John Quinn, Lennox Robinson and Lily Yeats. T. Sturge Moore, W.B. Yeats and his wife also designed bookplates, as did Elizabeth Yeats herself, some elaborately hand-coloured. This other aspect to the work of the Press improved its income and so was important.

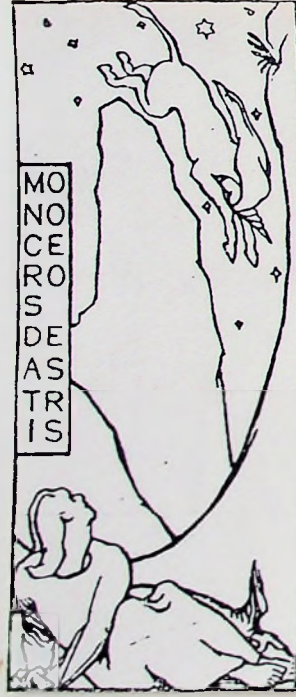
"Stories of Red Hanrahan" by W.B. Yeats and the fifth book to be published, has an illustration by Robert Gregory. Printed in red it contrasts effectively with the rich, black print on the cream-coloured paper. The illustration of four aces of a pack of cards on a background of castles and towns, faces page one. Yeats associated the four aces with the four Tarot Aces and these with the four legendary cities of Ireland, which are named in his poem "Baile and Ailinn." The style of this illustration differs from the precise and economical line of the design for Yeats' autobiography "Reveries over



1. "CANDLE IN WAVES" BY T. STURGE MOORE.

2. ILLUSTRATION BY ROBERT GREGORY.

"STORIES OF RED HANNAHAN" (1908)



1. "MONOCEROS DE ASTRIS," THE UNICORN FROM THE STARS, BY T. STURGE MOORE
2. "HAWK ATTACKING A SMALL BIRD," BY T. STURGE MOORE

Childhood and Youth", 1915. Sturge Moore executed the leaping unicorn "Monoceros de Astris", the symbolism of which is based on a medieval legend familiar in Italian art. The unicorn, although a fierce animal was thought to be gentle towards virgins and in the Middle Ages, it became symbolic of Christ and the Virgin, love and purity - this image was in keeping with the theme of Yeats' book. A second device in the book is "Candle in Waves" also by Sturge Moore, and symbolic of the soul almost extinguished by the world and the flesh. "Four Years" by W.B. Yeats had a new design by Sturge Moore showing a hawk attacking a small bird, also printed in red on the title page, as was in keeping with the design features of the press.

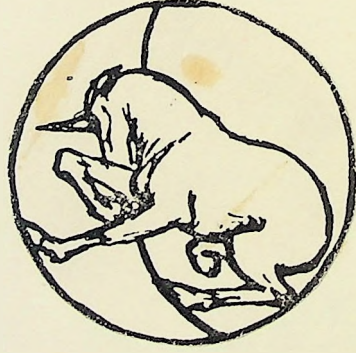
Between 1910 and 1928, several works about Synge appeared from Cuala as well as a print of him made by Emery Walker in photogravure after John Butler Yeats' portrait. Another aspect of design was incorporated in the series of "Illuminated Poems" begun in 1908, each with a text by W.B. Yeats and decorative initials and sometimes a border decoration. Hand-coloured, these and the series of pictures were by Jack B. Yeats and for many years the most popular productions of the Press.

Pressmark Design.

In August, 1923, the Cuala Press set up in the basement of W.B. Yeats' home at 82, Merrion Square. His wife became involved with the working of the Press and took charge of Cuala embroidery. In February, 1925, Cuala Industries took lease of a shop and workroom at 133, Lower Baggot Street. This was the first time that Cuala had a showroom offering items for sale. The output of books increased and in five years ten new titles appeared including "Love's Bitter Sweet", a book of translations from Irish by Robin Flower. It used a new pressmark from a line drawing by Elizabeth Yeats, showing a lone tree against Irish landscape. This design became the regular device of Cuala from then on. In a comparison between the two pressmarks used by the Dun Emer/Cuala



1. CUALA PRESSMARK. "LOVE TREE IN IRISH LANDSCAPE" BY ELIZABETH C. YEATS, 1925.
2. DUN EMER PRESSMARK. "LADY EMER AND TREE" BY CLINOR MONSIELL, 1904.



Press, the earlier one, a line drawing framed by a vertical rectangle is not as successful as the later pressmark. The same feature of a tree is carried through in this later square design. A pure graphic style is used with simple outline and areas of black complement the white spaces effectively.

In the "Death of Synge" by W.B. Yeats the new pressmark appeared again. Other new designs appeared in Sean O'Faolain's selection of "Lyrics and Satires from Tom Moore", 1928, which had five illustrations from line drawings by Hilda Roberts. This book was bound at the Three Candles Press in patterned boards with a black spine, a departure from the regular style which occurs only in this book.

"Stories of Michael Robartes and his Friends" by W.B. Yeats, 1931, has three designs by Edmund Dulac, which had originally been commissioned for the limited edition of the first version of "A Vision", printed in London in 1923. The device on the title page, a unicorn, was one of Yeats' favourite symbols and the block appears in several later books. The other two Dulac designs "The Great Wheel", a diagram to accompany the text, and the "Portrait of Giralduis", an imaginary portrait of Yeats, were printed in grey paper and tipped into the book as plates.

In general, the use of illustration in Cuala books can be said to be restrained but simple and effective - especially as far as the title page devices are concerned. On the other hand, the full colour illustrations which appear in "A Broadside" demonstrate the Press's ability to handle "picture illustrations" - as opposed to straightforward designs - and combine these with type to produce an overall unified design. "A Broadside" was revived in 1933 in a new series of twelve parts, edited by W.B. Yeats and F.R. Higgins with illustrations by Jack B. Yeats.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE CUALA PRESS
FORMERLY THE DUN EMER PRESS
FOUNDED BY ELIZABETH CORBET YEATS
IN MCMIII



THE CUALA PRESS
DUBLIN, IRELAND
MCMLXXI

THIS BOOK WAS PRINTED IN 1971 IN THE FORMAT ESTABLISHED BY E.C. YEATS.

The Effect of the Private-Press Movement on General Book Design.

An assessment of the private press movement - both in England and Ireland - must reach the conclusion that their work revolutionized the approach to book design. Gradually, more and more publishers became interested in the problems of design and books. Faced with the problems of how to apply the ideals of the hand-printed books to mechanically-produced books, they had to try to multiply good design by the million, and to educate the public to want to buy good design.

Elizabeth Yeats, who died in 1940, "pursued her aims for thirty-seven years and published a fine list of books which were significant, not only for the quality of their production, but also for their contribution in large measure to the revival of Irish literature in the 20th century. The Dun Emer Press published living Irish writers at a critical time in the development of modern Irish culture and had a much wider influence than any other private press of that era." (Liam Miller). This is what sets Elizabeth Yeats' work apart from the work of other private presses of the era. It is unique in that it published new books of the Irish literary revival. One of the requirements for publication by the Press was that the authors should point the direction to Ireland's imaginative future. Therefore the Press was actively involved in the contemporary world with a forward-looking view and not totally preoccupied with glorifying the past, emulating the achievements in book design of centuries long gone. Obviously, Elizabeth Yeats was very influenced by Morris's ideas - Professor Shotaro Oshimo in "Yeats and Japan", 1938, describes a visit to the Cuala Press: "I became convinced...that the Kelmscott of Morris had had some influence on her publishing business" - however, she made these ideals her own when she applied them to the literary climate in Ireland.

In July, 1922, "The Bookman's Journal and Print Collector" published an important article on Cuala by W.G. Blaikie Murdoch, in its series on notable private presses, and in it he related Elizabeth Yeats' achievement to that of other figures in the movement:

"William Morris erred pathetically in seeking to revive the cryptography of pre-Renaissance years. And even when he wrought in his lucid Golden type he marred his books by prodigality in ornamentation. If Mr. Charles Ricketts, in the various founts he devised for the Vale Press, showed himself something of a classicist, he, too, was prone to deal in unduly lavish ornaments. And it is when remembering that such proneness, with the tendency to the cryptic, were much in evidence with aspirational printers in general, towards the time Miss Yeats began work, that there becomes most patent her wisdom. Like the 18th century artist in typography, she has marked well that in this, as in architecture, one sure road to merit lies in the very avoidance of embellishment. She has perceived that, given a beautiful type, like Old Face, the printing itself is the proper decoration of the page. Far from her is the noble austerity of those great Georgian printers who accepted this lead of Caslon. Yet the Irish artist, using always quite an unpretentious paper, has attained a rare beauty of the homely sort, as in the pictures of Chardin and the Dutchmen.

It was, indeed, impossible that Miss Yeats should actually vie with the best masters of the Caslon school. These men frequently employed sizes like folio or quarto, facilitating considerable generosity in space between lines. And this is partly the secret of the majestic air in their books. But exceptional opulence in spacing is virtually inhibited in the Cuala volumes, since each is in octavo. All have the charm of slimness, for none has more than fifty pages. All are bound with canvas back, the sides covered with roughish paper, grey, or green, or blue. And these unassuming, yet notably

artistic bindings, so apposite to the plain style of the printing in the letterpress, are in good harmony again with the title pages. For they are invariably set with one kind of letters alone, these being simply the capitals of the text. If an ornament is to be found in the smaller books of the 18th century, commonly it is a vignette on the title page. And possibly with deliberate intent to strengthening Cuala consanguinity with that exquisite period, the decoration in question is the solitary one which Miss Yeats allows."

Although the Press was just fourteen years old when this article was written, it was already seen in the context of contemporary book design as a whole. The work of the Press can be compared favourably to that of the private presses in England, e.g. The Eragny Press, The Vale Press, and the Essex House Press. These had considerable influence on the future of book design, as too had the Dun Emer Press in Ireland. The design of commercially-published books since 1900 showed a steady improvement, so the contention so often held that no living tradition was passed on in art as it was in literature as a result of the Irish Revival must be disputed with regard to book design in Ireland. It was Elizabeth Yeats' aim to re-establish the art of the book as practised in Ireland in the 18th century, thus following in the spirit of the Celtic Revival. It is ironic that while a distinctly "Irish" art style was being sought by the Celtic Revivalists, the applied arts section of the movement can also be viewed in the wider context of the English Arts and Crafts Movement because its influence was felt here too. At the same time, the women of the Dun Emer Guild emphasized women's role in art and design. The Dun Emer/Cuala Press was not just an aspect of the Celtic Revival but part of these other far-reaching contemporary movements as well.

Bibliography.

1. The Dun Emer Press, later the Cuala Press.
by Liam Miller, with a preface by Michael B. Yeats.
The Dolmen Press, 1973.
2. The Celtic Revival - The Rediscovery of Ireland's Past,
1830-1930.
by Jeanne Sheehy.
Thames and Hudson, Cond. 1980.
3. Angel in the Studio - Women in the Arts and Crafts
Movement, 1870-1914.
by Anthea Callen.
Astragal Books, 1979.
4. William Morris and Kelmscott.
The Design Council, 1981.
5. The Aesthetic Movement, Prelude to Art Nouveau.
by Elizabeth Aslin, 1969.
6. The Aesthetic Movement, 1869-1890.
Edited by Charles Spencer.
Academy Editions 1973.
7. William Morris and his World.
by Ian Bradley.
Thames and Hudson, 1978.
8. Progress in Irish Printing.
Issued by Alex Thom and Co., 1936.
9. Modern Book Design.
by Ruari McLean.
The British Council, 1951.

10. A Brief Account of the Cuala Press, formerly the
Dun Emer Press, founded by Elizabeth Corbet Yeats.
by Liam Miller.
The Cuala Press, 1971.
11. The Dun Emer Press and the Cuala Press, 1903-1932.
by William Maxwell, 1936.
12. "The Revival of Irish Art in the Late 19th and
Early 20th Century."
by Etienne Rynne, from "Themes in Irish Culture"
Topic 24. Washington and Jefferson College, Wa.
Pennsylvania, U.S.A.
13. Yeats as Editor.
by Edward O'Shea.
Dolmen Press, 1975.
14. William Caxton and William Morris, (a Lecture)
by Joseph R. Dunlap.
William Morris Society, 1964.