

conventional or contemporary, that is not proper in handpress printing; and there is no set method of dealing with materials which is necessary to ensure that 'proper principles' of fine printing have been employed. This is not to say we have no body of received assessment of prior achievements and general values in the matter. Of course we have these, and of course the handpress printer needs to know what others have done before him in his medium. He also needs to know, and this is less generally acknowledged, what is being done by others in the field *now*, in his own time. In other words, his sense of the possibilities needs to be constantly renewed and enlivened by whatever information he can gain about the whole field of handpress printing as it extends back from his own time and outwards from his own place.

The question about what a handpress printer will print is a matter to be decided by the printer. I'm sure this will be a controversial view. Current trade practices mitigate against the kind of craftsmanship we are concerned with. One of those practices is where a printer is given work to print, on a particular machine, with no discriminatory choice in the matter. This is not only a printing trade practice, but also a social pattern of wide scope. One of the pleasures of the craftsman potter is that he or she can remain unaffected by the tastes, preferences and informations of other people, and can create a pot according to his or her own impulses, based on all experience, knowledge and imagination the potter can bring to bear on it. The craftsman printer does the same thing. He does not merely fulfil others' designs or attempt to reify others' tastes. The risk factor of course is high. The making of books is one of the most conventional trade procedures we have, and it's likely that bookbinding is its most conservative aspect. Legibility studies have shown that most people *like* those typefaces that they are most *familiar* with. My experience shows that most people have very strong views about what they think this or that book ought to look like. The crucial point to me, however, is that in spite of everything many magnificent books have been produced without taking too much notice of predecessors. The bindings for instance of Edgar Mansfield were revolutionary in that he bypassed the then current 'appropriate' ways of treating leather in order to achieve a result which was illuminatory of the book's content. In order to do this, Mansfield did not have to ignore the achievements of his predecessors or his teachers, or to devalue them in any way. What he did have to do was to follow his own predilections, make his own mistakes, take his own risks, and do his own bindings.

So, the handpress printer must print what he pleases in the way he pleases. But he must be informed about his craft, make informed decisions on his designs. In New Zealand, the prospective