

Research Fellowship in Ephemera Studies

Applications are invited for the Michael Twyman Research Fellowship in Ephemera Studies in the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication at the University of Reading.

The Fellowship is available from September 2021, or a mutually agreed date and for a period of up to 12 months (we estimate this would equate to 2 to 3 months full-time equivalent) and will attract a stipend of £5,000.

The Centre for Ephemera Studies, inaugurated by Lord Briggs in 1993, is a national focus for research into non-book documents, both manuscript and printed, and stimulates discussion about typographic design, history of print production, the relationship between language and form, the reception of messages, and the social-material life of documents. The foundations of the collection of ephemera were laid with the acquisition in 1993 of the Maurice Rickards Collection of some 20,000 representative items of ephemera. A separate representative collection of ephemera, referred to as the Millennium Collection, has been built up since then and is approaching the same scale. Further significant additions, amounting to tens of thousands of items, include the Elizabeth Greig Collection of Civil Aviation, several collections of labels with a focus on hotels, wine and matches, and the Amoret Tanner Collection of book plates.

We are seeking an exceptional researcher (postgraduate or equivalent) with an interest in ephemera and in what the graphic design, typography, use of language and their physical attributes tell us about how and where they were used and by whom. Candidates will be asked to identify a theme around which to structure their work, and to contribute to future research and public engagement about an aspect of everyday life. Themes might include weather-related ephemera (from frost fairs to sun hats); domestic interiors (candles, carpets and keeping clean); public health (vaccination, TB, childhood illness); technology and impact on everyday life (typewriters and women); entertainment (music, tickets, programmes); book- and publishing-related (book plates, book marks) and many more.

The successful candidate will identify material relevant to their chosen theme, make digital surrogates and descriptions of visual attributes and physical attributes. They will research the context of use of the material from cross-disciplinary perspectives. Fellowship outcomes will include seeking opportunities for funding to continue the research and work on funding bids; to ensure outreach and consequently wider access, the Fellow will produce an open-access digital exhibition highlighting the approach taken and images representing their theme; writing a paper for publication in an academic journal, an overview piece for *The Ephemerist*, and presentation of the work at a Centre for Ephemera Studies event.

The successful candidate will be supported and advised by academics and volunteers in the Department of Typography & Graphic Communication and, depending on the theme, in the University's inter-disciplinary research centres, and colleagues from the University Museums and Special Collections Services.

The fellowship selection criteria include:

1. The significance and relevance of the proposed thematic approach, and feasibility with the CES collections
2. Experience of working in collections and archives
3. Evidence of interest in ephemera

4. Postgraduate or equivalent research experience in graphic design, typography, printing history, cultural studies or a related discipline.

How to apply

Applicants should provide by 9 July 2021:

- a CV
- a proposal (of up to 1000 words) that identifies the thematic approach to be taken and its relationship to the CES collections; explains how you would approach the work to be covered in the Fellowship; and demonstrates how your experience of working with material in collections and archives will enhance your approach.
- an indication of how you would propose to distribute your time covered by the stipend.

Informal enquiries to

Prof Sue Walker, Director of Collections and Archives and Director of Research
Department of Typography & Graphic Communication

Dr Emma Minns, Assistant Curator, Lettering, Printing and Graphic Design Collections