

Key Steps Performed to Produce a Published Work

These guidelines are intended to assist TCC researchers and writers with the process of writing, publishing and printing scholarly work in the field of British transferware.

There are three separate steps involved in producing a written work, each one different from the other two. They are:

1. Writing
2. Publishing
3. Printing

(A fourth step, marketing, is significant *after* the book's production, of course.)

Although they absolutely do overlap, each of the initial three, distinct steps requires knowledge unique unto itself. The necessity of dealing with more than one portion all-too-often dilutes the concentration required for a singular effort. The system is quite simple; a writer writes, a publisher publishes and

a printer prints.

Within the organized transferware-collecting hobby, there are many collectors who, because of their great affinity, do willingly and eagerly research their particular area of interest. For the rest of us, the result of their labors *would* be a wealth of information, if only available to us. Few among us, however, ever produce a work easily acquired by a majority of collectors. In addition, many books that *are* released lack the basic features of book publication.

Let's examine each step included in the production of a book.



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Writing

Writing about transferware in general – or any given category – is a challenge requiring time and effort, often more than a collector readily has available. After all, this is a hobby; life is demanding and often requires us to have a day job. One has to employ discipline and “create” the time, or abandon the writing. In the past, some writers have solved this problem by collaborating with another author, bringing an expanded effort to the creation.

In order to be accurate and thorough, a writer *must* do extensive research, often in a particular geographical area. Although a labor of love, this constitutes an extremely time-

consuming and often costly task. The most common complaint collectors have of any publication is that it is merely a gathering of photographs of the wares, maybe with prices of the day, and contains *no* historical data. This is a direct result of an attempt to produce a marketable product while saving time.

Many collectors, while willing to take the time and make the effort required to become knowledgeable, simply feel they are not adequate writers. Though less likely in the TCC than other clubs, most of the group will probably never produce a text the rest of us can share. With the right encour-

agement and good editing, though, any individual can produce a valuable book of which he or she can be proud.

In addition to being difficult or impossible to obtain, a small portion of the information already in print is less than thorough and can be, though not often, absolutely false. As Dick and Judy Wagner pointed out, simply by repetition, a printed error can become, over the years, the perceived reality and reversing such a detail becomes more difficult as time passes.

Writing a manuscript about one's favorite things is a most



About the Author

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The Transferware Collectors Club Pattern and Source Print Database

This database is an invaluable resource for the study of British Transferware. It provides members with easy online access to a valuable source of information about transfer-printed patterns and source prints. Patterns can be searched under Pattern (and Series) Name, Maker's Marks and Factory Name, Border, and Predominant Features, along with the source prints that inspired many of the transfer-printed patterns. Members are able to access the full database with their logon and password.



Writing (continued)

pleasurable, educational and rewarding pastime. The collector who does so becomes even more knowledgeable about his or her pieces, enables others to become more informed and, in addition, has a wonderful time.

Publishing

While the entire industry may appear very glamorous, most of the actual publishing work is tedious and (again) time consuming. Volumes have been written encouraging authors to self-publish, a process that is feasible but usually dilutes the creative effort of writing. However, since getting published by a major house usually requires a well-known name or a previously published bestseller, many authors are forced to either self-publish badly or discontinue their efforts.

In addition, self-publishing is a costly endeavor, one that immediately discourages many writers from even attempting the effort. Should one choose to continue, he or she can best be aided by removing many of the details of the process, enabling concentration on the creative aspect. While the majority of the costs remain the author's, they can be minimized and concern for the bothersome details removed.

In the event an interested publisher is found – usually a small publisher – the personal involvement required of the author is enormous in cost and effort. (Self-publishing guru Dan Poynter stresses writing the book is just 25% of the effort required, with publishing and marketing occupying the other

75%.) The first question a publisher asks an author is, "How much do you intend to spend marketing this book?" In most cases, the publisher can ill afford (in time, expertise or money) to accept any additional works that do not promise success. Often (as in my case), a company was originally established in order to produce a single author's book or books, although some may do a few other books (also my experience). There are literally thousands of publishers in the category that the industry calls "Small Press".

Publishing includes many chores. Some are free, while the rest are not extremely costly. Most of these procedures require copies of the completed publication. Although, technically, none of these steps is required by law, the author will want to do them. The actions lend credibility and professionalism to the book and are important in marketing the volume. These steps, in sequence, are as follows:

1. Registering each volume with two groups, both important but indeed separate. Each of the groups uses a standard numbering system. These are the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) 1 and the Library of Con-

gress Cataloging in Publication (LCCN or CIP)2. Included in this step is obtaining a Publisher's Cataloguing in Publication information (P-CIP). This block of information will appear on the copyright page of your book and is used by libraries.

2. Filing each volume with the Advanced Book Information (ABI) agency (primarily facilitated by the R.R. Bowker Company, Inc.). When the form is received, the publication appears in *Upcoming Books in Print*; after the book is printed and a copy arrives at the LCCN headquarters, the listing appears in *Books in Print*. Both volumes are used by every bookstore in the country and most libraries. Since availability is one of the primary reasons for producing the book, this step is very important.

3. The pre-press work, involving lay-up of text and cover. This is probably the most important function of a publisher and the most costly, usually requiring graphic skills. Interestingly, with the technology currently available to the public, placing images, typesetting and general formatting of both text and cover can be done by the writer, on his or her home computer. 3 Although many of today's hobby authors write, edit and produce books electronically, experienced pub-

Publishing (continued)

lishers and cover artists often provide formats that are much more creative and attractive... and usually more professional.

4.

Editing is a step no manuscript writer should ever skip. Editing one's own work effectively is impossible and family members and friends are usually much too close to adequately assess the work. A professional editor can create a masterpiece from an ordinary manuscript without damaging the author's intention or voice. Perhaps equally important for TCC collectors and authors is an editor with particular knowledge of the English transferware industry and its wares.

5.

In any bookstore, a Bar Code is necessary on the cover of a book; if there is none, the bookstore will add one by adhesive label, often damaging the appearance of the book. A bar code can be provided by the publisher or by an industry service provider, ready to be incorporated electronically into the cover design. They also can be obtained (for a fee of about \$50) by the writer but, again, diverting

the attention from his or her primary task. Even the simple task of locating a barcode provider is bothersome. Bar-code software can be purchased but, for the writer, the \$400 cost is not justified when he or she plans to write only one or two books.

6. Finally, once a book is printed, the copyright is registered with the United States Copyright Office, requiring the proper forms and two copies of the work. (Another copy is required by the LCCN agency.) Since copyright is a product of authorship, registration is not mandatory but it *does absolutely* establish ownership of the written material, of inestimable value if the written material is ever challenged in court. The cost for registering a single book is currently \$30.00 and will probably remain so for many years.

Footnotes:

1. Manuscript must have no fewer than 49 pages (exceptions are bibliographies, children's books, artist's books or books of poetry or drama) and qualify with ISBN program guidelines.

2. Essentially the two are the same program; publishers must apply for CIP first and, after three books, are given a password into the LCCN program on-line. Both programs require copies of the finished book be sent to the Library of Congress.

3. Both require graphic programs and a working knowledge of the book industry.



Printing

Almost without exception, an author desires to produce an attractively bound book. There is so much more to printing than simply transferring words to paper. Choosing which printing companies to approach, requesting bids, acquiring the necessary knowledge to *read* those bids, comparing costs, selecting the proper binding, choosing papers for text and cover, arranging for photographs, providing all fonts

and graphic files, handling shipping details... and so many more. All these details fall into this printing category. Beyond robbing the creative effort's time and attention, dealing with book printers can be an intimidating task to a writer.

The work requires more time and effort than most writers, fledging or seasoned, usually

desire to give. Even publishers *often* become baffled and seek out answers from a printer friend. Printing technologies are constantly changing and improving; keeping abreast is difficult but not impossible.



The Paul and Gladys Richards Research Grant Program for Studies in British Transferware

Launched in 2009, the Paul and Gladys Richards Charitable Foundation grant is dedicated to supporting research focused on British transferware produced from 1760 to 1900. Paul and Gladys Richards were avid transferware collectors, and a charitable foundation was established in their memory in 1995. A long-time supporter of the Transferware Collectors Club, the Richards Charitable Foundation also provided a generous grant to aid in the establishment of the club in 1999. The TCC research grant program is named in the Richards' honor.

Applicants are invited to submit proposals for the following year. Research grant proposals are due on February 1 of each year. Grant recipients will be notified in late March with funds made available in early April.

For further information, contact TCC President at president@transcollectorsclub.org



The TCC Bulletin
TCC Members receive quarterly bulletins covering a broad range of topics related to transferware collecting.