Like all St. Paul’s Bibliographies, this book is beautifully produced. Crisp printing, clear layout, minimal punctuation in descriptions, and an unpretentious format are refreshing and easy on the eye. There are fourteen photographs – several of Maudsley autograph material, including his signature in a pane of glass – and the endpapers are a Maudsley family tree.

The Introduction, the running text within the bibliographical descriptions, and the article annotations give just enough material about Maudsley the man to make one wish for a full biography, and yet not enough to answer many of the questions raised. What were Maudsley’s relations with women, including his wife? We are told he was invited to the United States in 1883, but did he go? There are no details on the foundation of the Maudsley Lecture series, or how to find out more about it, and it is not in the Index. Nor are all the bibliographical questions about Maudsley answered, notably the problem of attribution of editorial articles, and especially unsigned medico-legal articles, in the Journal of Mental Science. There is clearly need for further research on Maudsley in the histories of science and medicine, social, legal and feminist studies, biography and, indeed, bibliography; nonetheless, Henry Maudsley: Victorian Psychiatrist is an excellent bibliographical study.

GILLIAN FENWICK

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Private Press Books, published more or less annually since 1960, is referred to by its publisher, the Private Libraries Association, as ‘a bibliography of books and pamphlets published by private presses in the western world.’ After a recent lapse in the publication schedule, this latest edition with its two-year coverage brings the bibliography up-to-date. The promise of a 1987 volume ‘now with the printers’ indicates that the bibliography is back on the track of the elusive private presses once more.

Some 350 individual items, printed by nearly 140 presses, are described in the 1985-1986 volume. The presses are located [in order of their frequency in the bibliography] in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Australia, Holland, France, New Zealand and South Africa. The list is confined to English-language works, and is arranged alphabetically by press name. Each publication is fully described, including such private press niceties as typeface and paper stock, method and materials used in binding, number of copies printed and the printing press used, e.g. ‘25 copies printed on Barcham Green Hayle paper on a 16 x 11 Albion hand press.’ Although the price is quoted, it is likely the price at the time of publication rather than today’s price. Prices range from reasonable (Canadian $10.00) to rarefied (us $4,500.00), but
unfortunately for the collector, many items are noted as 'out of print.' Press owners’ names and addresses are provided for ordering or enquiry purposes.

Roderick Cave, author of the authoritative work, The Private Press (2nd ed., 1983) was one of the founding editors of Private Press Books. Cave’s well-known description of private presses continues to guide the selection of today’s editors. Presses included are obviously private establishments where the owners print what they choose with aesthetic rather than commercial goals. Some of their publications are expositions of printing and binding styles for a traditional text like Lewis Carroll’s Jabberwocky (In de Bonnefant, 1985), while others combine original writing with creative book design. The nine original-size reproductions of press book illustrations attest to the editors’ appreciation of the visual qualities of the works they have examined and described. In particular, the three-page colour foldout of an etching form J. G. Lubbock’s From the Snows to the Seas (J.C. Lubbock, 1985) is a knockout and worth the price of the bibliography.

An extra bonus is the regular addition of a list of books and articles relating to private printing, compiled for 1985 and 1986 by Peter Hoy. Under the headings ‘General Works’ and ‘Individual Presses,’ this edition’s list of over 100 items includes conference proceedings, exhibition catalogues, and reviews of private press books, as well as articles in newspapers, little magazines and journals. The bibliography is rounded out with an index to all authors, titles, press names and owners mentioned in the book.

The presses covered in this edition of Private Press Books are, for the most part, not included in Dustbooks’ International Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses, 1985-86; nor are their publications found in the concurrent Small Press Record of Books in Print. If small presses can be characterized as independent, private presses are solitary. Because the private press exists primarily for the personal pleasure and education of its owner, publications of private presses are difficult to discover in standard bibliographical sources, national or specialized. Although it is hard to believe that the 1985-86 output of English private presses in the United Kingdom, United States, Canada and ‘the rest of the world’ can be described in a short 91 pages, Private Press Books is a singular, outstanding contribution to the bibliography of private press work.

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