



Stanborough Press, 1928.

Photo courtesy of Stanborough Press Archives.

# Stanborough Press Limited

---

## DAVID R. NEAL

David R. Neal, B.A in theology (Newbold College) serves as editor of the Stanborough Press, Grantham, England, with the main role of editing the British Union news magazine, *The Messenger*. David has served the church for 33 years as a field pastor, conference youth director, president of the Irish Mission, and prior to his current role, Stewardship director for the Trans-European Division.

---

The Stanborough Press Limited<sup>1</sup> is the publishing house owned and operated by the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in the United Kingdom and Ireland (BUC). In times past it served as both printer and publisher, but today it is strictly a publisher. As well as contributing to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist

Church in the U.K. and Ireland, it supplies printed materials to Kenya, Botswana, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Malawi, Zambia, Seychelles, South Africa, and Uganda (2020 markets).

Stanborough currently publishes subscription books, trade books, tracts, children's games, and the following periodicals: *British Advent Messenger* (the British Union nurture and news magazine for members, today known as *Messenger*); *Encounter* (the British Union youth magazine); and *Focus* (a Bible-based, faith-sharing magazine with the aim of turning everyday conversations into Good News).

## Developments that Led to the Establishment of a Publishing House

One cannot understand the history of the Stanborough Press (originally established in 1894 under the name International Tract Society) without knowing the story of Adventist literature evangelism in the UK, which began 30 years prior to the organization of the current company.

William Ings, originally from Dorset, England, became an Adventist in the U.S.A. and began work in Battle Creek, Michigan. Ings meant his return to Britain in May 1878 as a two-week holiday. But Adventism in those days was a full-time thing—including holidays! Accordingly, Ings had come armed with a large number of denominational periodicals and tracts. Each had a local four-page supplement, run off by a local printer. About 1,000 copies of them would be circulated each year for two years. First, Ings passed them out among the ships in Southampton and then door-to-door in the city. Even though his work generated results, it would take until 1884 before Adventists set up the first small printing plant in Ravenswood, Southampton, and then only for a brief time.

With Ings arousing so much interest, he felt it appropriate to write to the General Conference (GC), requesting them to send over the most able evangelist they could find. That came as a surprise to church leadership, because the only Adventist to visit Britain thus far, J. N. Andrews, had done so briefly en route to Switzerland and had only contacted a few Seventh Day Baptists. By contrast, Ings had hit the ground running!

Impressed by Ings' appeal, GC president James White decided that it had been a mistake to neglect England. The GC committee, on June 27, 1878, agreed to prioritize mission England and chose the best man they could find. John Loughborough, who already had 30 successful years as a preacher behind him, arrived in Southampton on December 30, 1878. By the time Loughborough began his tent meetings, colporteur William Ings had done four months of solid, door-to-door work in the city in preparation. Weeks before the tent series began, Ings had already reported 10 Sabbath-keepers in Southampton.

John Loughborough did not need any convincing of the evangelistic potential of publications. He made use of thousands of the American *Signs of the Times* magazines. However, not long after beginning his evangelism, he grasped the importance of putting the Adventist message into an English context for English readers, hence the addition of the four-page local supplement targeting local concerns. However, it was not until the Seventh-day Adventist headquarters moved north to Grimsby in 1884 that the publishing program really got underway.

## Founding of the Publishing House

A. A. John led the second wave of Adventist pioneers to that part of Lincolnshire from whence the Pilgrim Fathers had sailed in 1608 in search of religious freedom in the Netherlands. (In 1621 they departed from Plymouth to New England.) One church historian<sup>2</sup> believes that Adventists targeted Lincolnshire because of the earlier success of the Millerite movement and its publications there, and because it had many subscribers to American Adventist publications. Whatever the reason for the choice, John established the British headquarters at Heneage Road, Grimsby. There, working in a small double-fronted house, M. C. Wilcox issued the first number of *Present Truth*. A lack of type limited it to only four pages. When the first part of the paper had been printed on the presses of the Grimsby News Company Ltd., the lead type had to be broken up and returned to Heneage Road for use in the second part of the publication. Someone had to convey the type back and forth by wheel barrow.

*Present Truth* began as a fortnightly publication. By the time it became a 16-page weekly in 1885 Adventists had acquired more type and their own printing press. They printed 5,000 copies of each issue and distributed them nationwide by railway between October 1884 and September 1885.

In 1887 church headquarters and its printing press moved to 451 Holloway Road, London. By the time leadership had registered the International Tract Society under the Companies Act on August 23, 1894, they had a city office in Paternoster Row with J. I. Gibson as manager. The first home-produced subscription books<sup>3</sup> came off the press in 1892, and George Drew was one of a growing band of literature evangelists. The pattern of evangelism in the 1890s was that the literature evangelists moved in for a minimum of six months before the public evangelist and his team began their work.

Judson Washburn was the most successful evangelist of the decade. By 1899 Drs. D. H. and Laretta Kress launched a health magazine, *Life and Health*, and in November 1901 M. E. Olsen and his brother Dr. A. B. Olsen became the joint editors of *Good Health*. One of the early press managers was Alfred Bacon (1896-1902). His first initiative was to order a 3,000-copy print run of *Christ's Glorious Appearing*, and to prioritize the circulation of *Present Truth*.

As the twentieth century dawned, the Seventh-day Adventist Church embedded itself in the UK. In 1902 the British Union formally organized, and by 1907 it employed 31 ministers and 19 Bible instructors. But the backbone of the mission outreach was the colporteurs, whose numbers between 1894 and 1914 remained a constant 75. By this time, the most visible sign that the Adventists were in the UK to stay was the purchase in December 1906 of the Stanborough Park estate near Watford, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) from London. With a gift from the General Conference of £2,000 (out of a £30,000 budget) and with members' subscriptions on a £1-per-member basis, the church built a publishing house and food factory in 1907. Total construction costs for the press and food factories came to £6,287. The new publishing house building on the Park, designed by W. C. Sisley, commenced full production in 1909. At the time of relocation to Stanborough Park, *Present Truth* had a

weekly circulation of 20,600 copies, and *Good Health* a monthly circulation of 37,700. In 1908 and 1909 the press produced 74,499 books and 3,446,592 periodicals, the total sales being £29,611. The press building, with an 85-foot (25-meter) frontage, consisted of a composing room, pressroom, and bindery. Two 40-horsepower steam engines powered the machinery.

Since the publishing facilities in the span of less than 40 years had grown from a humble front room to a large factory, it would be natural to assume that the sales trajectory for the press was always upward. In reality, the economy then, as now, experienced peaks and troughs. While the British church had built a fit-for-purpose factory, something little more than a dream for the early workers such as Ings, John, and Wilcox, little did anyone know that within a few years of the relocation to Stanborough Park, World War I would commence.

With the war breaking out in 1914, the world of printing and publishing changed. The government restricted paper supplies, conscripted literature workers for national service,<sup>4</sup> and sales fell. And yet the publishing house produced more than the colporteurs were selling. For example, in March 1918 the literature evangelists received a rebuke for working 'less than bank hours.'<sup>5</sup> The two years following the Armistice of 1918 were, notwithstanding their austerity, the most successful years for the press and literature evangelists up to that date.

## A New Name

Shortly after the war ended, the church administration changed the name of the publishing house to The Stanborough Press Limited. The books then being printed for sale by literature evangelists in Britain were *Christ Our Saviour*, *The Great Controversy*, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, all by Ellen White; *Bible Readings*; and Uriah Smith's *Daniel and the Revelation*. On the magazine front, sales of *Present Truth* had reached 35,000 per fortnight, while *Good Health* sales stood at 25,000 monthly.

The publishing house inaugurated in 1922 a new series of inexpensive, stitched books to immediate success. Nearly a quarter of a million sold during the two years 1922 and 1923.

In 1924 the first volume of *Bedtime Stories* by Arthur S. Maxwell<sup>6</sup> came off the press and became an instant bestseller. Thereafter, Stanborough published an annual edition.

In February 22, 1929 *Missionary Worker*,<sup>7</sup> A. S. Maxwell confirmed that not until 1928 were the figures for the two immediately post-war years bettered. The Great Crash of 1929 made door-to-door selling extremely difficult, and things flatlined for a time. Hence, the 1928 figures represented another high that would remain unrepeated for 10 years. The literature sold comprised: bound Books [hardbacks] 9,817; 'Shilling books' [paperbacks] 204,208; *Present Truth* 732,000; *Good Health* 280,000; and tracts (approx.) 274,000. Church members distributed the magazines and tracts. Such members, who considered themselves bound by Christ's gospel commission, sold the majority of *Present Truth* door to door.

The production of paperbacks was ahead of the national publishing trend and represented one of many initiatives taken by the progressive and imaginative Arthur Maxwell, who had been editor since 1920. Maxwell's paperbacks included *Protestantism Imperiled*.<sup>8</sup>

Photographs appearing in the *Missionary Worker* for 1929 show 32 South Conference (SEC) and 19 North Conference (NEC) colporteurs.<sup>9</sup> Maxwell, Weeks (from the GC), Oscar Dorland (SEC president), George Bell (field missionary—later publishing—secretary), and Alfred Warren (press manager) addressed the SEC colporteurs in North London. The same speakers are pictured with NEC colporteurs meeting in Leeds.

Maxwell told both colporteur gatherings that the publishing house had been extremely busy, with staff working overtime to cope with orders, and that recent college graduate, W. Leslie Emmerson, had joined the editorial team. In total, the press had 36 employees in 1929. Alfred Warren spoke of the success of the Maxwell paperbacks in the British market and of exports to Australia and Canada. The hardcover bestsellers included *Christ Our Saviour* and *Bible Readings*. They, together with *Bedtime Stories* and *Health and Happiness*, were being exported to South Africa, Mauritius, Newfoundland, Egypt, Trinidad, Bermuda, and, curiously, Turkey.<sup>10</sup>

Each issue of *Missionary Worker* for 1929 featured conversions resulting from literature evangelism. A "Colporteurs' Corner" would feature the profile of a successful full-timer. Among them was 18-year-old Bernard Kinman<sup>11</sup> who would become one of the most outstanding Adventist leaders and preachers in his century.

Sadly, the Britain of the Great Depression and mass unemployment proved calamitous for the colporteur program, as for much else. During the depression years of the 1930s progress slowed, and at the outbreak of World War II, sales had dropped to a total around £30,000 annually.

The church paper received a new name in 1936, and as the *British Advent Messenger* reported on the end of year "Colporteurs" conference" held between December 28, 1938, and January 5, 1939<sup>2</sup>. The total value of books sold for 1938 amounted to £20,402, a 20 percent improvement over 1937.<sup>13</sup> At the BUC Winter Council G. D. King reported that "at least 34 of our colporteurs have shown greatly increased sales" and that 16 had done well enough to qualify for "holidays with pay." A major factor in the return of prosperity was the contribution of student sales. In 1938 Newbold students sold £2,860 worth of literature, double the student sales for 1937!<sup>14</sup>

By the end of 1938, King, who was then BUC field missionary secretary, had become president of the SEC. Two years earlier, Arthur Maxwell had moved to become senior editor at Pacific Press Publishing Association, then based in California. Leslie Emmerson replaced him and held the chief editor's position for 30 years. His *Bible Certainties*, published in 1939, became even more timely when the Blitz began.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps providentially, during World War II, as in the 1914-1918 conflict, the Stanborough Press continued to operate. Inescapably, it did experience problems with both supply and demand, especially toward the conclusion of the conflict. But British Union president H. W. Lowe, aware that people were reluctant to attend evangelistic meetings during the blackout, urged: 'We must change our methods with the times. . . Even

evangelists and Bible workers must get back to a larger door-to-door work with literature.<sup>16</sup>

In 1941, when the worst of the Blitz began, Lowe reported that 35 Newbold students had earned full scholarships with their summer book sales. The “young people” had sold 46 percent more than during the Battle of Britain summer of 1940.<sup>17</sup> By 1945 sales amounted to £45,000. The war years also saw the beginning of a new publishing venture, the annual magazine *Good News*, followed later by two other annual journals, *Health and Happiness* and *Happy Hours*, resulting in a great increase in small literature sales. The periodicals continued in publication until the early 1970s.

By the end of the war most Stanborough Press publications contained invitations to apply for Bible correspondence courses. The editor marked the lessons until the BUC transferred the correspondence school to its own office in 1947. That same year saw the appointment of a new associate editor. He signed himself “Ray D. Vine” and had made his contribution to war-time evangelism by conducting evangelistic meetings in members’ homes. His theme, based on Daniel 2, was well-timed: “Hitler’s Doom Foretold.” First in association with W. L. Emmerson and, after 1966, as chief editor, he brought his grasp of the structure of language and knowledge of contemporary affairs to the service of Adventist publishing. In common with his friend and colleague, Emmerson, Vine would give more than 30 years to the publishing ministry.

The 1950s saw an upturn in the economy. Politicians got reelected on the slogan “You’ve never had it so good.” *Present Truth* became *Our Times*. *Good News*, *Health and Happiness*, and *Happy Hours* became subscription magazines, which made it possible for literature evangelists to make a living selling only small literature. The publishing house had no shortage of “big books,” however. W. L. Emmerson produced *The Bible Speaks*, *God’s Good News*, and the full-color, four-volume set *Footprints of Jesus*. R. D. Vine published *God’s Answers* and *Radiant Health*. The more ambitious literature evangelists specialized in these books. Each autumn Stanborough Press published a new edition of *Bedtime Stories*. “Uncle” Arthur Maxwell had not forgotten the publishing house that made his name.

A veritable army of literature evangelists met at a Derbyshire conference center each January. The 18-year-old colporteur from 1929, Bernard Kinman, having served as a departmental director, pastor, evangelist, and field leader, became BUC publishing director. One of the issues he faced was that, with inflation rampant, the prices of the products were challenging for those who opened their doors to those literature evangelists working the council estates of Britain. But things were on the up. Why worry?

Then, as press employees walked through the gates of Stanborough Park on January 3, 1964, expecting the usual press worship at 7:30, they saw huge flames leaping into the sky. As they rounded the bend in the road, they made the heart-stopping discovery that the press (in the words of Vine) “was in the throes of a raging inferno.”

Having “reduced the shipping department, the art department, the editorial department, the chapel, and the paper store to ashes,” the venom of the fire visibly collapsed. Some thought it miraculous that “the engraving,

photo-litho, silkscreen, composing and parts of the press room" survived. On January 17, 1964, *Messenger* told colporteurs, "It's business as usual."<sup>18</sup> The strongly pro-publishing union president, J. A. McMillan, presciently told his constituency, "I am confident that from the ruins of the old Stanborough Press will come a better, more efficient institution, more adequate to cope with the growing demands of the work."<sup>19</sup>

The fire was not the only tragedy the press faced in 1964. Adventist publishing in the British Isles produced a number of truly magnificent characters. One of the greatest was Joe Craven, a chartered accountant with considerable expertise in legal matters. In 1949 he had succeeded his brother Jack Craven as press general manager. He became acquainted with the working details of every department, being himself a capable printer, typesetter and photo-engraver. R. D. Vine wrote, "Under him the Press acquired new departments which lifted it to vastly higher levels of technical skill and productivity. Notably, the photo-engraving departments and the introduction of lithographic color printing." A generation of new men joined the staff of the press under his management. And he had the good sense to listen to them, run with their ideas, and provide opportunities for implementing them.<sup>20</sup> Among the new generation was Mervyn Whiting. The press would benefit from his expertise for almost half a century.

Craven himself, however, was already suffering from cancer. At one union session the president said that the press was Joe Craven's life and joked that, even on Sabbaths, Craven would walk through Stanborough Park and look lovingly at the press buildings. But the work of management was not easy. Some of the problems that brought the institution to a crisis point in the later 1960s were already surfacing before fire struck. But the manager received the news as heartbreaking. Craven's death was announced on July 3. The editors said it was "a grievous loss." Vine commented: "For forty years, with unflagging energy and with an application that far exceeded the limit of normal duty," Joe Craven had faithfully served his church.

## A New Location - Grantham

When the new Stanborough Press officially reopened on September 30, 1966, it was in Grantham, Lincolnshire. At the time of the fire few, if any, would have forecast or, indeed, wanted such a move. Watford had developed as a major center of the printing industry, notwithstanding that it was only 20 minutes by rail from London, the center of the national publishing industry. Why then relocate to Grantham, and how did it happen?

First, perhaps, it was hard to resist the claim that it was high time that at least one denominational institution be based in the North Conference. Second, the government was offering financial incentives for companies to move to certain "development areas" in the north. Early investigations into some of those areas by the union officers and press management had not been encouraging. By comparison, the ancient Lincolnshire market town of Grantham looked like a desirable place to live. The low price of housing and the quality of life it offered (by comparison with the increasingly gridlocked Watford) made it appear a desirable place in which to establish a church presence and build the publishing house.

The move to Grantham felt like a bright new dawn. But it was not as bright as hoped. During 1969 the press management discussed with the union officers the idea that “joining forces with an American publishing house” might be a solution to their problems. They explored the idea with the Northern European Division and the General Conference. Word came back that the Review and Herald Publishing Association (RH) “would be interested in forging a closer relationship with our Press” (*Messenger*, March 27, 1970).<sup>21</sup> In November 1969 C. E. Palmer, the manager of RH, met with the press officers and negotiated a contract. By February 1970 the two parties had reached what they termed a “merger agreement,” its date set as April 1, 1970. The success of the press both before and after the merger was still conditional “upon a much larger corps of literature evangelists.” The Review now felt they had a base in Britain, while the Stanborough Press felt a little more financially secure. The feeling that it was the end of an era increased when news arrived of the death of Arthur Maxwell, “the dean of editors.” Maxwell had been editor in Britain for 16 years, editor of the U.S. *Signs* for 34 years, and had written 110 books that collectively had achieved a world circulation of 50.<sup>22</sup> The terms of the merger agreement infused trans-Atlantic capital into Stanborough Press, certain American books could now be printed there, and the monthly edition of *Adventist Review* began to roll off the presses.

The backdrop against which the new press manager worked was one of political instability. The British government declared a series of states of emergency to deal with major strikes. They coincided with a power crisis, the result of an explosion in Middle Eastern oil prices. The power cuts caused by this crisis necessitated a three-day working week. But that brought the very best out of the press’s highly skilled and committed workforce. They proved that they could produce more in three long days than in four-and-a-half shorter days. But at the same time, once again Stanborough Press experienced plummeting circulations and economic pressures, leading to combining the two signature magazines *Our Times* and *Good Health* under the title *Life and Health* in 1974. The same economic pressures forced the termination of *Life and Health* in 1976.

In 1975, Dennis H. Archer, who had begun as a printer and risen through the ranks, became general manager. He had a good grasp of the business and was noted for his collegiate management style. With the national market continuing to pose a problem, W. J. Arthur and his team of publishing directors took many bold initiatives and enjoyed a significant degree of success. One of the success stories involved Roy Chisholm. Roy and his family were among the many who had migrated from the West Indies to make an excellent contribution to literature ministry in Britain. Based in the flat above the Barnsley church, his work involved souls as well as sales. Many of those baptized at Barnsley during the 1970s represented the fruitage of his ministry. After a successful period as a publishing director, leadership ordained Roy to the ministry, and he went on to pastor some of London’s larger congregations.

Despite the efforts of some outstanding literature evangelists—David Ahwan, N. A. Burton, William Harper, Arthur Morgan, and G. C. Noel, to name a few—the literature ministry faced a formidable barrier. The door-to-door approach on which they had always relied was in danger of becoming an obsolete method of marketing. People were apt to feel resentful about someone knocking on their doors to sell something. Increasingly,



colporteurs found themselves forced to rely on referrals from members of the Adventist community or mass mailings.

While sales at home were weak, through the dedicated support of the division publishing director of the time, Ron Appenzeller (later to become the General Conference publishing director), D. H. Archer was able to export books to Nigeria and Ghana, at the time part of the Northern Europe West Africa Division. For a period of eight years such sales to West Africa helped transform the fortunes of the Stanborough Press.

Improved profitability made possible the installation of a fully-mechanized bindery line and a state-of-the-art Heidelberg four-color printing press. Archer also oversaw the change from traditional to computer typesetting. The press employees made a major transition to new skills and a new approach to publishing, which in the nation generally had led to strikes and stoppages. When Mr. Archer, with members of his team, went to William Collins of Glasgow to purchase the bindery line, a company official asked, "Which union are you with, then?" Quick as a flash, Archer answered, "BUC." There was no reply. Since their arrival in Grantham, the majority of press employees had become homeowners. However, they had more than just a stake in society. Archer's management skills had given them a sense of partnership in a successful publishing enterprise.

In 1979 the press renegotiated the merger agreement with the Review and Herald Publishing Association as a management agreement. Subsequently, the two institutions renewed the management document every five years.

## A New Editor

After a period of almost two years without a full-time editor, David Marshall arrived in January 1979, charged to edit the union paper (*British Advent Messenger*) and revive a magazine and book program.<sup>23</sup> In his early 30s, he had spent 11 years combining full-time teaching with Ph.D. research. By the time of his arrival, the composing department had retrained its staff in computer typesetting and graphics.

Marshall's instructions were to minimize the time spent on the *Messenger* (as it was now called) to one day in a fortnight. Eventually he realized that, with a little more time and creativity, the union paper could be the press's flagship publication. By September 1979, with the help of Barry Alen, the art editor, he was able to publish the pilot issues of two new periodicals, bringing back to life the magazine program.<sup>24</sup>

Eager to appeal to a wider readership than 'the religious,' he followed W. J. Arthur's suggestion and titled the message magazine *Focus*. In the belief that a first-approach magazine was also required, he persuaded the publishing fraternity to produce *Family Life*. The idea was that each issue would contain an interview with a well-known person who was either a Christian or committed to vegetarianism and healthy living. He sought to aim the magazine at secular people concerned about health and family issues. The British union subsidized *Focus* to keep the price down, and it enjoyed circulations of between 65,000 and 100,000 per quarter during the first five

years of its existence. The circulation of *Family Life* in the same period, however, varied between 19,000 and 38,000 since it remained at the mercy of market forces.

The 1979 pilot issue of *Focus* sold 100,000 copies in seven weeks. *Family Life* took the remainder of the year to sell its 32,000-print run. The press management chose to continue with both magazines—*Focus* on a quarterly basis and *Family Life* as a bi-monthly. Philip Anderson, the marketing director, took on responsibility for circulation. Both magazines depended for their success on the goodwill of the church membership.

From the start the circulation of *Focus* was uneven. Church members asked for, and received, more doctrinal content. Nevertheless, some issues sold as many as 50,000 copies, but others as few as 18,000. Over the past 35 years those figures have not improved. *Family Life* received the enthusiastic support of some congregations, but only patchy support among others. It continued publication until June 1993.

Since the early 1970s the publishing house had an annual Press Open Day in September. A well-known speaker was one of many attractions for a sizeable proportion of the Adventist constituency to turn out and buy magazines, books, and health foods. Press employees marveled at the numbers and spending power of their fellow believers. Each year, beginning in 1982, those who manned the press supermarket at annual camp meetings had additional opportunities to marvel. Both British conferences held camp meetings. They were essential to the press's survival, as was the support of personal ministries teams throughout the British Isles and the faithfulness of the mainly aging force of literature evangelists. The management suspected, however, that, as in the recent past, the publishing house in its current form ever more depended on finding overseas markets for its products.

One cannot underestimate David Marshall's impact on the life and work of the Stanborough Press from 1979-2010. Marshall's gift was communicating the gospel through the written word, but greatly influenced by his love of history. Beginning with *Where Jesus Walked*, for the next 25 years he published one book a year.

Deeply rooted in the heritage of British Adventism (born in Ulceby, close to Grimsby, the location of the first U.K. publishing house), his enthusiasm for the U.K. church to grow was a constant in his writing. As interested as he was about its numerical growth, particularly in reaching the indigenous British and Irish, his even greater concern was that his fellow believers should enjoy the full and abounding joy of the gospel of Christ. It was critical for Marshall that contemporary Adventism understood its mission to continue the Reformation with its reawakened essentials of the Christian faith: *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), *Sola Fide* (faith alone), *Sola Gratia* (grace alone), *Solus Christus* (Christ alone), and *Soli Deo Gloria* (to the glory of God alone). His writings shone with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ as the antidote to legalistic works as the basis for righteousness.<sup>25</sup>

The 1980s saw the publication of a two-volume edition of *Footprints of Jesus*. Family-related books published in the 1990s came from Dr. Jeff Brown, and in the case of *Family Matters*, a variety of experts, including the late Dr. Kevin Howse. Health education specialist R. J. B. Willis produced a number of bestsellers, along with the late Dr. Clemency Mitchell. A. S. Maxwell's work, especially the 10-volume *Bible Story* set, continued to be in demand, as

were updated versions of Maxwell's *Our Wonderful Bible* and *Your Bible and You*. Stanborough published a whole range of books on family themes by the late Nancy Van Pelt in editions updated and specially orientated to African markets.

During the mid-1980s the press management team made annual visits to the Christian Booksellers Convention. By the late 1980s the publishing house had created the "Autumn House" range of books and showcased them in an impressive booth at the Christian Booksellers Convention. As a result, Stanborough Press books (traded as Autumn House books) appeared for sale in Christian bookshops throughout the UK and in most of Ireland. It had a positive effect on the way other Christians viewed Adventists.

Orders for the Autumn House series also came from North America and Australia. Overseas authors presented Marshall with manuscripts. Between half a dozen and 25 new titles came off the press each year between 1990 and 2012. However, such a visionary evangelistic venture would not have been possible had the general manager of the time, Paul Hammond, not been successful in his search for overseas markets.

At first, overseas orders arrived from the Inter-American Division. However, Paul Hammond's visits to the African continent produced sales beginning in the early 1990s on which the current viability of the publishing house rests. Only the constant travels of Paul Hammond and, since 2016, the current general manager, Elisabeth Sangüesa, ensured repeat customers. In countries like Kenya and Zambia there continued to be vast armies of literature evangelists who needed constant supplies of suitable publications. The quality of Stanborough Press products and the excellent relationships Hammond made created great demand across the English-reading countries of Africa.

As the printing industry during the 1970s to the 1990s experienced massive technological advances, the press moved with the times. Hot-metal typesetting phased out in 1979 with the introduction of computer typesetting. In 1987 the house installed a Compugraphic system. The year 1990 saw the replacement of the Crabtree Sovereign with a new Heidelberg Speedmaster VP102, CPC Tronic four-color press.

## Difficult Days

During the late 1990s the General Conference took steps to introduce a free market internationally. The publishing houses that could compete on both price and quality of product would succeed and those that could not, would go to the wall. The result was that the Stanborough Press found itself in stiff competition with other publishing houses, not least for the export markets of Africa. Since the early 1980s the Stanborough Press management team had been aware that the publishing houses that succeeded were not those that did their own printing and finishing. In the world in general, as well as in the denomination, publishing houses began to outsource such functions to specialist companies which, because of their volume of work, could significantly cut unit costs.

The harsh realities of stiff competition for exports led to the decision of the Stanborough Press Board in October 2001 to vote the closure of the production unit starting in June 2002, and to make Stanborough Press a publisher (as opposed to a printer and publisher). Printing and binding would be outsourced. The decision resulted in redundancies and was not taken lightly. It was a serious blow to the morale of the staff, particularly those who had relocated from Watford in the 1960s. But it was this action of major rationalization that enabled Stanborough Press to stay in business as a viable, mission-driven publisher. In 2002, none could see the looming global “Credit Crunch” of 2008 and the worldwide recession that resulted from it. If the changes hadn’t taken place, the press would have possibly closed. The general manager’s report to the Press Board for 2010-2013 indicated that, given the international economic scene, the press had weathered the recession. On March 5, 2013, for example, Hammond was able to report an increase of just over £100,000 in direct exports for the previous year.

## A New Era

During 2015-2020 Stanborough continued gradually to increase its export sales. At the same time, the home market began to level out. In particular, sales of the signature witness magazine *Focus* declined further, due to a conflicting misunderstanding between supplier and consumer. Church members related their confidence in the effectiveness of the magazine directly to its content. If the subject matter highlighted one of the key doctrines of Adventism, including apocalyptic prophecy, sales were high. When *Focus* dealt with a Bible doctrine that the church shares with fellow Christians, sales dropped. At the time of writing, *Focus* in its present format is under review.

As the Stanborough Press heads into the 2020s and beyond, the need to stay innovative is critical—not least in the transition from print to digital publishing. In addition, the question remains as to how long the traditional overseas market will continue to purchase at the levels seen during 2015-2020. Most critical of all is to finish the task William Ings took upon himself—to reach the home market.

## Editors in Chief

M. C. Wilcox, 1884-1887; S. N. Haskell, 1887-1888; D. A. Robinson, 1889-1891; E. J. Waggoner, 1891-1902; W. T. Bartlett, 1902-1920; A. S. Maxwell, 1920-1936; W. L. Emmerson, 1936-1966; R. D. Vine, 1966-1978; D. N. Marshall, 1979-2010; J. Hibbert 2011-2019; D. R. Neal 2019- .

## Managers

J. I. Gibson, 1894-1896; A. E. Bacon, 1896-1902; W. C. Sisley, 1902-1918; W. E. Read, 1918-1922; G. L. Gulbrandson, 1922-1925; A. S. Maxwell, 1925-1932; A. Warren, 1932-1945; J. C. Craven, 1946-1949; J. H. Craven, 1949-1964; W. J. Newman, 1964-1968; K. A. Elias, 1968-1971; C. E. Palmer, 1972; N. Tew (acting), 1972; E. A.

Pender, 1972-1975; D. H. Archer, 1975-1984; P. Hammond, 1984-2010; E. Sangüesa, 2016- .

---

## SOURCES

Belton, B. "Young and Brave." *The Missionary Worker*, July 12, 1929.

Combridge, S. "A Notable Colporteurs' Conference." *British Advent Messenger*, January 20, 1939.

"Dean of Editors." *British Advent Messenger*, July 17, 1970.

"Fifty Recruits Wanted." *The Missionary Worker*, March 1918.

Foster, E. H. "God be with you." *British Advent Messenger*, January 5, 1979.

King, G. D. "Union Field Missionary Secretary's Report for 1938." *British Advent Messenger*, February 17, 1939.

Lowe, H. W. "Notes from the Union President." *British Advent Messenger*, November 10, 1939.

Lowe, H. W. "Providences in War Time." *British Advent Messenger*, September 12, 1941.

Marshall, David. "Stanborough Press: 120 years of service." *Messenger*, August 15, 2014.

Maxwell, Arthur S. "The Stanborough Press Ltd-Manager's Report for 1928." *The Missionary Worker*, February 22, 1929.

McMillan, J. A. "Fire and Faith at the Stanborough Press." *British Advent Messenger*, January 17, 1964.

"Now ready! Order a supply at once!" *The Missionary Worker*, March 26, 1926.

Obituary and tributes in *British Advent Messenger*, December 18, 1970.

Seaton, B. E. "New Horizons." *British Advent Messenger*, March 27, 1970.

*Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1966).

"So What's New at the Press?". *British Advent Messenger*, July 27, 1979.

Vine, Ray D. "At Rest, Joseph Harrison Craven obituary." *British Advent Messenger*, July 3, 1964.

Vine, Ray D. "The Work will Go On." *British Advent Messenger*, January 17, 1964.

"War." *A Century of Adventism in the British Isles*. Centennial *British Advent Messenger* Special, 1974.

Warren, A. "Book department Report for 1928." *The Missionary Worker*, February 22, 1929.

---

## NOTES

1. Unless otherwise indicated this article is adapted from: David Marshall, "Stanborough Press: 120 years of service," *Messenger*, August 2014, 1, 8-15
2. Dennis Porter
3. Subscription books were printed specifically to be sold door-to-door by literature evangelists (often known as colporteurs or canvassers).
4. "War," *A Century of Adventism in the British Isles* (Centennial *British Advent Messenger* Special, 1974), 16-18
5. "Fifty Recruits Wanted," *The Missionary Worker*, March 1918, 12.
6. *Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories* and the 10-volume *Bible Story* set became well known not just in the British Union but across the world.
7. Arthur S. Maxwell, "The Stanborough Press Ltd-Manager's Report for 1928," *The Missionary Worker*, February 22, 1929, 4, 5.
8. "Now ready! Order a supply at once!" *The Missionary Worker*, March 26, 1926, 7.
9. Arthur S Maxwell, "The Stanborough Press Ltd - Manager's Report for 1928," *The Missionary Worker*, February 22, 1929, 4, 5.
10. A. Warren, "Book department Report for 1928," *The Missionary Worker*, February 22, 1929, 6.
11. B. Belton, "Young and Brave," *The Missionary Worker*, July 12, 1929, 6.
12. S. Combridge, "A Notable Colporteurs' Conference," *British Advent Messenger*, January 20, 1939, 1.
13. *Ibid.*, 3.
14. G. D. King, "Union Field Missionary Secretary's Report for 1938," *British Advent Messenger*, February 17, 1939, 5.
15. G. D. King "Launching Bible' Certainties," *British Advent Messenger*, January 6, 1939, 6, 7.
16. H. W. Lowe, "Notes from the Union President," *British Advent Messenger*, November 10, 1939, 3.
17. H. W. Lowe, "Providences in War Time," *British Advent Messenger*, September 12, 1941, 1.
18. Ray D. Vine, "The Work will Go On," *British Advent Messenger*, January 17, 1964, 2, 3.
19. J. A. McMillan, "Fire and Faith at the Stanborough Press," *British Advent Messenger*, January 17, 1964, 1, 2.
20. Ray D. Vine, "At Rest, Joseph Harrison Craven obituary," *British Advent Messenger*, July 3, 1964, 16.

21. B. E. Seaton, "New Horizons," *British Advent Messenger*, March 27, 1970, 1, 2.
  22. "Dean of Editors," *British Advent Messenger*, July 17, 1970, 3; Obituary and tributes in *British Advent Messenger*, December 18, 1970, 4-7.
  23. E. H. Foster, "God be with you," *British Advent Messenger*, January 5, 1979, 3.
  24. "So What's New at the Press?," *British Advent Messenger*, July 27, 1979, 8.
  25. For examples of this see any of his editorials in the editions of the *British Advent Messenger* spanning the years that he was editor.
- 

encyclopedia.adventist.org is an official website of the [Seventh-day Adventist World Church](#)

© 2020 General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists 12501 Old Columbia Pike Silver Spring , MD 20904 USA 301-680-6000