

The Story of J M Kronheim & Co

Some months ago I purchased a batch of large Kronheim Calendars, 75 cm x 50 cm, chromolithographs, so not by the Baxter process, but skilfully printed and particularly beautiful. The problem was that I couldn't date them - surprising you may think as they are calendars but they were meant for the Shanghai market and are all in Chinese, apologies if this not 100% correct as it may be Cantonese etc.

This little collection had obviously come from a source within Kronheim as, I later found out, I had examples from every year from 1903 – 1918 including some obvious proofs and unfinished prints.

Initially I thought I might be able to date them from the addresses on the calendars but these didn't relate to any of the addresses for the Kronheim Company. After collating all the currently known information I could about the company, I started my own personal research.

Many of these calendars were printed for insurance brokers operating in Shanghai and one symbol that appeared on many was a flag and the letters B S. By a pure stroke of luck (and many hours surfing the net) I found out that this was a company called Butterfield and Swire, insurance brokers of Shanghai and a subsidiary of a company still operating today, Swire PLC, who own many companies throughout Asia, their airline division owns a little company called Cathay Pacific, so quite a big concern!

They were incredibly helpful and ironically their Shanghai office via London translated the calendars for me to give dates and other information. Some of the calendars were also for another Swire subsidiary, Taikoo Sugar, the Asian equivalent of Tate and Lyle.

The addresses, and now the dates, were added to the information I had, which seemed to be growing virtually daily, with small details and references I was coming across in my research. At this stage, to help myself understand the information, I put everything I had into a date line format to formalise the important dates and address changes within the company. I found this an easy way to log the information and before I knew it I found I was collating a very comprehensive story of the company.

Shortly before this, I had started a new 'interactive' research website www.georgebaxterdotcom.wordpress.com for exactly a reason such as this, to try to ascertain new information and get assistance from the wider Internet on the unanswered questions I had on many subjects relating to Baxter and colour printing. This particular line of research brought in some interesting results.

Over the next few months I was in communication with three completely different people whose relatives had at one time owned or been involved with Kronheim & Co and they helped bring the whole story together.

I now would like to publish this information but stress it is a working document as there are still plenty of unanswered questions, some of these further areas of research are already on my website – some are completely unconnected to the Kronheim story BUT at the same time, are an integral part of it, for example - Theodore Low De Vinne, an American printer who I had never heard of before is noted as having purchased Kronheim & Co in America and the rights to print by their process, although they obviously printed for some months nothing more is known about this and I feel sure there is more out there to be discovered – where did the author of the book on De Vinne get this quite detailed information. What about Kronheim's son, was he the Kronheim of colour printers Wemple & Kronheim operating in the late 1800's? Hopefully these and other areas of research on the website will produce some answers.

I find it ironic that Mr JM Kronheim himself was asked to stand as trustee when the company bearing his name was made bankrupt! (See 1884). I trust you will find this as interesting to read as I did researching.

As I said there are still many unanswered questions and I am hoping that if anyone reading this can add any information they will get in touch via the newsletter or via the website and add the information for the benefit of all interested parties to make this the most complete chronology of Kronheim & Co to date:

1810 – Joseph Martin Kronheim (JMK) born in Magdeburg, Germany 26th October 1810

1830's – JMK worked in Paris where he learned Lithography

1839 – JMK came to the UK and is working for Miller & Richard, type founders of Edinburgh

1842 – JMK marries Ann Stapleford King (*maiden name*) or Dallas (*previously married name*) on 12th March 1842 at St Cuthberts, Edinburgh. She brings with her two children Duncan Campbell Dallas (born circa 1828) and Charles Dallas (circa 1829). They have two children together Eliza Matilda (born circa 1845) and Martin (circa 1849).

1842 - JMK listed as engraver at **9 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh**

1844 - Kronheim & Co patents process of making castings of stereotype plates. Patent 10275 is registered 29th July 1844. Basically a mould is made from alternate layers of tissue paper and paste on a brown paper. JMK saw this being done by Demat of Brussels in 1843 and brought it to London, it took over from the plaster moulds previously used

1845 – 5th February 1845 – A partnership between JMK, John Skirving, William Shepperd, Frederick Wilson Sutton, trading as Kronheim & Co patent stereotype founders of Earl Street Blackfriars is dissolved. JMK, William Shepperd and Frederick William Sutton carry on the partnership.

1845 – 11th August 1845 – JMK leaves the partnership of Patent Stereotype founders, William Shepperd, Frederick Wilson Sutton carry on the business under their own names. They can be found in Berrow's Worcester Journal dated 21st August 1845 advertising Licencees available for Kronheim's Patent Process on application from The Foundry, 3 Earl Street (Kronheim's address, so still a business connection?) or Sheppard and Sutton, Foster Lane London. S & S partnership was also dissolved 25th April 1846

1845 – 'A Description of the Colosseum & Panorama of London' quotes "This catalogue has been prepared for the proprietor by Messrs Kronheim & Skirving, Engravers and Designers and the Illustrations and Letter-press are printed from Stereotype plates cast by the Patent Process of Messrs Kronheim & Co – **3 Earl Street Blackfriars**" (note: not printed by them)

1846 – Listed in London directory as Joseph Kronheim & Co patent stereotype founders at Earl Street address

1846 – JMK and John Skirving must have rejoined their partnership as we find on 17th December 1846 their new partnership was dissolved.

1846 – Later J M Kronheim & Co trade cards show this as the date that the printing company was established

1847 – In London directory but now at **36a Paternoster Street**

1849 – 8th August 1849 – A partnership between JMK and Alfred Baumann fancy printing manufacturers of **32 Paternoster Row** is dissolved

1849 – Joseph M Kronheim, engraver, stamp & die cutter, printer and embosser of fancy stationery listed at 32 Paternoster Row

1849 Charles Gregory (ex Baxter apprentice) moves from Gregory Collins & Reynolds to Kronheim, Gregory at some time also brought in other Baxter apprentices, Thomas Thompson and Thomas Dowlen and also Otto Mayer a Litho Artist.

1850 – Kronheim takes Licence to print using Baxter's process.

1851 – TWO stands at the Great Exhibition – Kronheim & Co Manufacturers – jurors said possessed merit for Printing in Gold and Silver & J M Kronheim & Co Engraver & Printer of 32 Paternoster Row on which was displayed colour printing of illustrated books, tickets, labels and bands

1852 - Oscar Conrad Christoph Gustav Frauenknecht (1821 – 1883) puts capital into the business

1853 – July 1853 moved to **Bangor House, 64 & 65 Shoe Lane Fleet Street**

1857 – Previously documented by Courtney Lewis as 1855, entry below confirms – JMK sold his interest to Oscar Frauenknecht, retired and returned to Germany where he invested his money in the manufacture of Bronze Powder (believed to used in gilding and gold leaf work) he lost heavily.

At some stage he moved to America with his son Martin (Martin can be found travelling alone on 19th May 1868) and possibly some of his family but at some stage he separates from his wife. She can be found, just with her son Duncan, listed in Tottenham in 1871 and elsewhere JMK alone in 1881, his wife dies in 1884.

In 1866 (possibly before he moved there) we find that well known American printer Theodore Low De Vinne contracts to buy out JMK's partner (?) for \$10,000 and pay Kronheim \$15,000 for his plant and rights to his invention. Kronheim was to be contracted and paid for 5 years but the contract only ran for 10 months before it was cancelled by mutual consent due to the cost of the operation. Kronheim signs the document so it must be JMK himself not Kronheim the company.

Martin Kronheim is listed in the New York directory as a Lithographic printer in 1870 and then regularly from 1878 onwards, other dates can't be confirmed at this stage. He must have returned home at some time as, although his first child is born in NY in 1873, his second child was born in Islington in 1875. His third and fourth child was again born in NY in 1883 and 1884 and he dies there in 1890. Was he the Martin Kronheim of Wemple & Kronheim and other companies operating in NY at around this that time?

It is known that Kronheim & Co are operating from **9 Dey Street New York** in 1876. Courtney Lewis always presumed this was his own and a new business BUT firstly, there can be found a print of Oswego Starch Factory that is stated as printed by Kronheim & Co London AND 9 Dey Street New York and also a board for 'Standard Trimmings' lace etc sellers also with both addresses so...there was still some connection with the old company AND was this JMK, Martin or a partnership between them, was JMK even involved at this stage?

At some stage JMK returns to be the UK and again works for his old company, but not as a partner.

1857 – 28th May 1857. The partnership of JMK and Oscar Frauenknecht is dissolved. OF to carry on the business alone

1857 – Gregory & Mayer become partners with Frauenknecht 1863 – Almanacks show offices in London, Manchester and Glasgow**

1865 – 11th January 1865 a fire at Bangor House does much damage

1875 – Steam Litho machines introduced at Kronheim & Co, steam being used for the embossing machines as early as 1858. Baxter process printing is regarded as being not used after about 1878 (*confirmation required*)

1881 – Joseph H? Kronheim a printer born 1810 in Germany is listed as unmarried and boarding with Eliza Davis of 19 Chadwell Street London in the census of that year

1883 – Frauenknecht dies 11th December 1883 at his home 73 Hungerford Road Islington. Gregory & Mayer have to buy out Frauenknecht's widow causing financial struggle

1884 – Otto Johann Von Nepomuk Mayer and Charles Gregory trading as Kronheim & Co of Bangor House Shoe Lane, London File for Bankruptcy.

19th Nov 1884 – Receiving Order, 19th December 1884 - date of Meeting, 31st Dec 1884 – Joseph Martin Kronheim!!! appointed as Trustee, 15th January 1885 - Date of Public Examination, 12th March 1885 – Both parties discharged from bankruptcy

1885 - John James Griffiths buys J M Kronheim & Co - Fred W Seeley writing in the Baxter times and other publications 1908 / 1919 confirms that Kronheim & Co was purchased in this year by the then, current owner

1887 – JMK retires from Kronheim & Co and returns to Germany.

1896 - JM Kronheim Dies in Berlin Germany 25th March 1896

1902 – The Bookseller states that Kronheim & Co moving to temporary offices at **16-20 Farringdon Avenue, Shoe Lane** during reconstruction work of Bangor House Shoe Lane “The printing plant and machinery will in future be installed in a specifically erected factory on the outskirts of London, giving greatly improved facilities for the turning out of rapid and first class work”.

1903 - An advert in The Printseller February 1903 confirms the Head Office address as Farringdon Avenue and now showing a separate address for the works as **Bangor House Tottenham Hale**, (this must be Fawley Road Tottenham Hale as mentioned in 1910 below) The advert also states, branch at Portland Street Manchester

1905 - The Post Office London Directory (POLD) shows Kronheim at **109 Hamilton House 149 Bishopsgate Without London**

1906 – Kronheim listed at 109 Hamilton House Bishopsgate Street (must be the same address) London in The Writers and Artists Yearbook. I have a Postcard of Blackpool printed from Hamilton House and postally used in 1920. Also have unconfirmed note that similar card had been posted in 1946!

1907? - Kronheim borrows the plates of the George Baxter's prints, The Lovers Letterbox, The Day before Marriage and The Bridesmaid from Mr Bramah (who had purchased all the Baxter and Le Blond plates from Frederick Mockler some 10 years before). The intention presumably was to print from them but they didn't have all the colour blocks. I have a pull from the plate of

The Lovers Letterbox in monochrome, that could it be a Kronheim printing? What is unusual, and possibly an identifier about this print, is that it has a printed number '3' in the outer margin. These three plates were returned in 1923.

1910 – (& 1914) Kelly's Directory lists Kronheim J.M. & Co Colour Printers Fawley Rd Tottenham N

1911 – 7th February 1911 - John James Griffiths dies

1912 - Hamilton House is renumbered as 155 Bishopsgate (the without is dropped) Kronheim is now listed at **10 Hamilton House, 155 Bishopsgate Street London**, an office previously occupied by another J J Griffiths business. The Patent Victoria Stone Company

1913 – 9th Sept 1913 - JJ Griffiths' son, Fred Griffiths & his son-in-law Samuel Archibald Vasey, being the executors of the late John James Griffiths sell J. M Kronheim (the goodwill?) to Norbury Natzio & Co Ltd. There is a legal case heard Norbury Natzio Co Ltd v's Fred Griffiths (1918) that refers to this sale. We also have letter from F Seeley of Norbury Natzio who refers to the sale in 1913 but states they also purchased all the plant etc (see note regarding Dickinson 1919)

1914 - A POLD entry shows Kronheim JM & Co (proprietors Norbury Natzio & Co Limited) **Billiter Buildings, 49 Leadenhall Street London** although Norbury Natzio factory is still based in Manchester until about the outbreak of WW2

1915 - The British & Colonial Printer refers to Norbury Natzio & Co as acquiring the Goodwill of JM Kronheim & Co "printing both at its considerable works at Old Trafford (*Manchester*) & at Tottenham Hale"

1919 – 2nd May 1919 A E Owen (well-known industrialist and Baxter collector of the period) pays £90 commission to Mr Bullivent of Birmingham, a Baxter dealer, for introducing him to the seller of 375,265 Kronheim Prints on 52,600 sheets, "John Dickinson Ltd of Hemel Hempstead" (famous paper manufacturers, Basildon Bond, Croxley Script etc). These prints became known as the New Hall Vault collection upon their sale by Christies in 1987. It is noted Norbury Natzio bought the GOODWILL of Kronheim & Co but Seeley's letter of 1923 (to A E Owen) says they also bought the plant. How did Dickinson come to have these prints? Further research / information required. One line of research is Millington & Sons, envelope manufacturers, had premises in Fawley Road Tottenham at the same time as Kronheim, Millington's were subsequently purchased by J Dickinsons in 1918.

1921 – Norbury Natzio Co Ltd now called Norbury Printers Ltd

1921 /22– Norbury Printers Ltd, Alf Cooke Ltd and Bemrose & Sons Ltd amalgamate to form Universal Printers Ltd. Bemrose being the dominant partners hence the later name change see 1972.

1923 – 12th July 1923 Letter from Fred Seeley on headed paper still of Norbury Natzio & Co Ltd (Lithographic & general printers) of Old Trafford Manchester stating offices at London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Paris, Lyons, Shanghai & Hong Kong

1972 – An entry states 'Bemrose Corporation of Midland Place Derby (formally Universal Printers)

1987 – circa – The packaging interest of Bemrose, which made colour printed folded cartons, was sold to Low & Bonar (Dundee) and subsequently changed ownership to Cereal Packaging, a division of Kellogg's, who had been a large customer of the company. At this time the

Manchester operation closed. Interestingly we have seen an advert for Kelloggs using Baxter's 'So Nice' perhaps this dates from this era via this connection or of course just totally coincidental

2003 – Bemrose bought by Appleton of USA

**J M Kronheim & Co trade cards can be found at the British Library giving the Bangor House, Shoe Lane address but also shows the addresses of:

14 St Andrews Street, Dublin
4 Portland Street Manchester
Flinders Lane West Melbourne

I can find no reference to Kronheim trading from these addresses BUT would it have been a practice in those times for the offices of one company to act as 'representative offices' of another? If so, the Flinders Lane West address is shown as the offices of J Kronheimer & Co, Tobacco Merchant (an important Australian businessman and philanthropist originally from Bavaria) in 1888 and 1899. A possible relation who allowed his address to be used, or just a very strange coincidence?

On this subject we also find in the Post Office Glasgow Directory for 1863 /4 J M Kronheim of London embossers and ornamental prints shown at 25 South Frederick Street Glasgow, did he operate from there or was it just an accommodation address? The answer must be the later as we find in the same directory, at the same address one Ernest Mirow agent for J M Kronheim & Co of London embossers and....

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One thing I will mention is that I can't find any reason for their different trading styles, any minor change in the company name doesn't give any indication to date or ownership. J M Kronheim, Kronheim, Kronheim & Co etc have been used inconsistently through the company's history.

As mentioned there is still ongoing research especially with the America connection and the whole question of the New Hall Vault Kronheim's, I'm sure there is plenty more to learn, directly or indirectly related. For instant we find a well documented Austrian by the name of Paul Pretsch who obtained a patent in 1854 for producing copper plates etc by photography. He worked for Kronheim sometime between 1851 and 1855 when he left to form the Patent Photogalvanographic Company. The manager of that company...Duncan Campbell Dallas, Kronheim's stepson, who went on to open his own company and becomes quite a well documented photographic printer in his own right. What, if any influence did these or other such companies have on colour printers of the day. For instance, how did Baxter print or make his plates for his Baxter photographs?

For ease of reading and storing I kept this information to a basic minimum, if any one would like more detail or references to the anything mentioned above please feel free to ask.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped with the research so far and offer my thanks in anticipation to anyone who can add further information

Mic Relf