

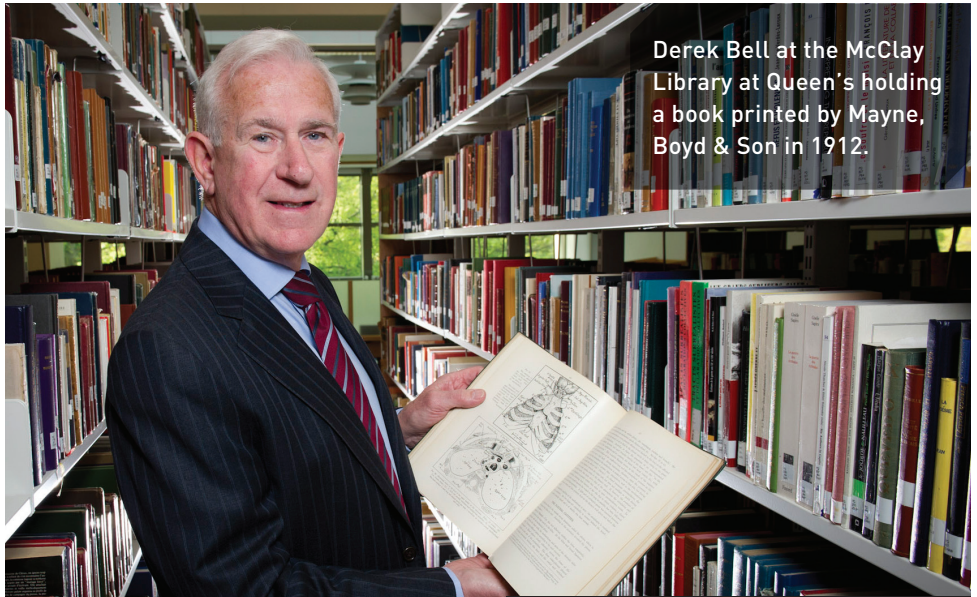
AS TIME GOES BY...

May 12, 2015 marks the 103 year anniversary of the incorporation of GPS. However, many may not know that our story goes back much further than this.

Printing first came to Belfast in 1694 through James Blow and Patrick Neill. Our story begins 100 years down the line when Joseph Smyth set up business in High Street, Belfast in 1797. Throughout the early part of the 19th century, Smyth dominated the Ulster print market along with rival firm Simms & McIntyre.

At the time, both firms specialised in cheap paperback editions and are said to have revolutionised the whole business of printing cheap fiction, not just in Ireland but also throughout the English-speaking world. The importance of Smyth's work is demonstrated by the fact that the British Museum exhibits six of his printed books.

Smyth was also famous for the publication of his Directory of Belfast and its Vicinity in 1820. At 144 pages the Directory would have taken a considerable time to prepare and produce. In fact the Directory was advertised for 3 years before it was finally completed. However, a considerable amount of time was wasted due to new street numbering being announced halfway through the project.



Derek Bell at the McClay Library at Queen's holding a book printed by Mayne, Boyd & Son in 1912.

Joseph Smyth died in 1851 and the business was taken over by his apprentice, Alexander Mayne. By then the business model had changed as the firm became the official printers of Queen's University Belfast.

In 1885 John Boyd became a partner and the firm incorporated as Mayne, Boyd & Son Ltd in 1912. However, a major influence and driving force of the company was John Boyd's daughter Marjory. This was at a period in history when it was illegal for women to become lawyers, civil servants or even vets. Therefore, for a woman to be prominent in a respected business was highly unusual and quite revolutionary.

Miss Boyd died in 1968 and her interest in the company was passed to Queen's University which she had tirelessly served for several decades. It was a stipulation in her will that if the company was ever sold, the name would have to be changed.



John Boyd

In 1983 Derek Bell acquired Mayne, Boyd & Son Ltd and the name was changed to GPS Colour Graphics Ltd. Although the name has changed, the enterprising spirit and ambition of the company's founders live on.

The rest, as they say, is history.