







'The establishment of the Peacock Printmakers' Workshop in Aberdeen is the most important development in the visual arts field here for many years. Acting as a catalyst and a focal point for those young artists working locally who might otherwise drift to other centres, it has created an arts centre in a workshop situation.

I welcome it in that I no longer feel I am operating in a vacuum. I have a sense of communication with a professional body — working in parallel, you might say.

We hope to continue to take into stock at the Gallery some of those prints made available through the Workshop, but I should also like to see Peacock's own exhibitions working effectively.

I am 100% for it.'

**Ian McKenzie Smith
Director
Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums**

October 1975

Once upon a time there was a rickety old house in Aberdeen's cobbled Castle Gate. In the days when they hanged men for stealing bread, the house was only fifty yards from the gallows from which the poor souls glimpsed the harbour and the seagulls before they died. In the days of poetry, Lord Byron peeped in on a dancing lesson in the same close. It was named after a beautiful bird : the peacock.

And the church decided to look after the old house and filled its halls with meetings and good works and scout gatherings. In fact the church was right next door, so that it could keep an eye on things.

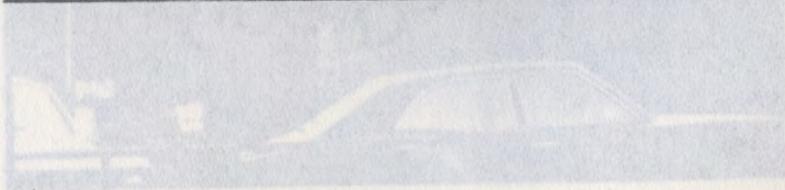
But one of the scouts grew up and became an artist. And he and some other artists wanted to create a workshop where all the more good works could be produced. And the church agreed, for a minimal fee.

And about that time Cornwall's, an old printing house in Castle Street, breathing its last, gave away all its litho stones (400 of them), furnishings, process camera and a messenger's bicycle to Peacock and they called themselves Peacock Print-makers and things started rolling.

The Scottish Arts Council heard of them and provided £1500 capital and £1400 revenue for the first year. The Gulbenkian Foundation gave £1600 and Aberdeen Corporation granted £1000. And gradually, over a few months, through donation and purchase, hard thinking and hard labour, the machines came to the house and were welcomed :

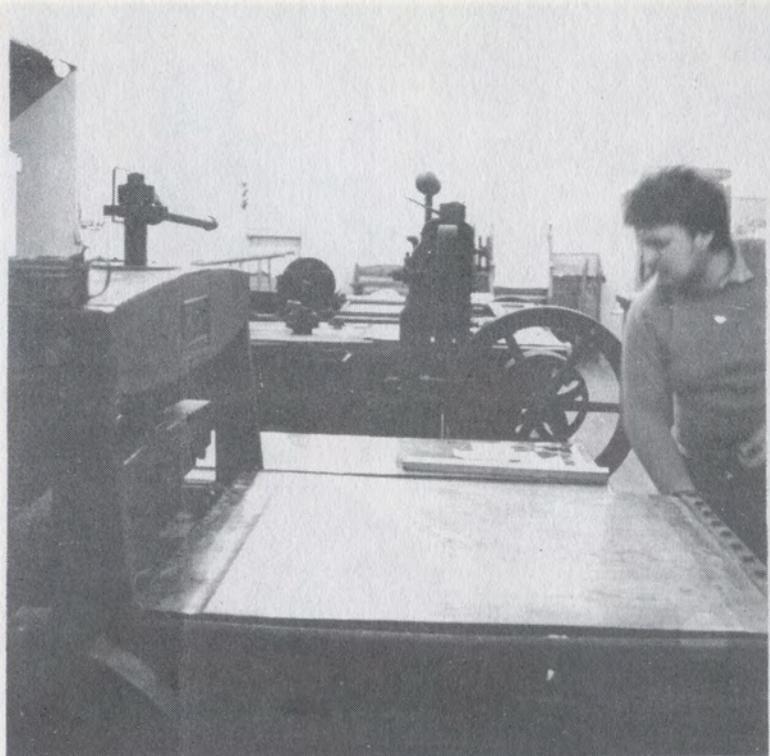


Once upon a time there was a village...

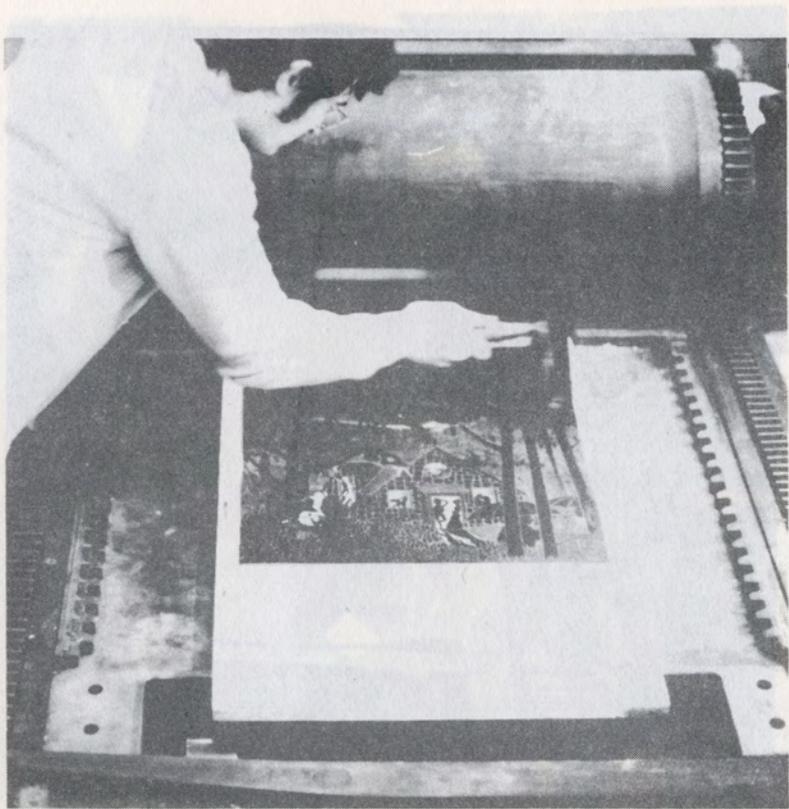




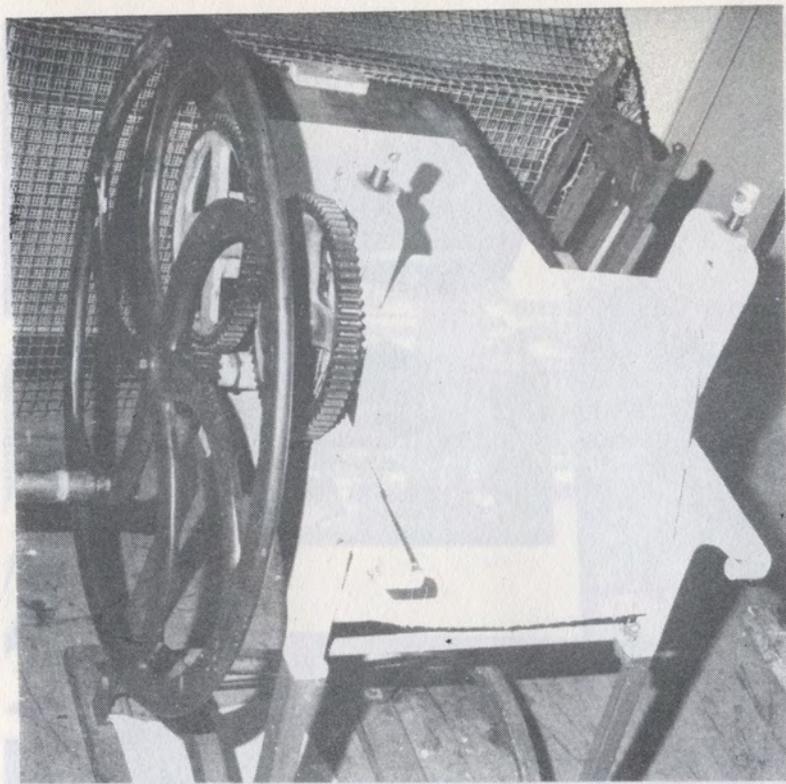
downstairs went the 26'' x 36'' offset litho press, the biggest press the peacock had ever seen.



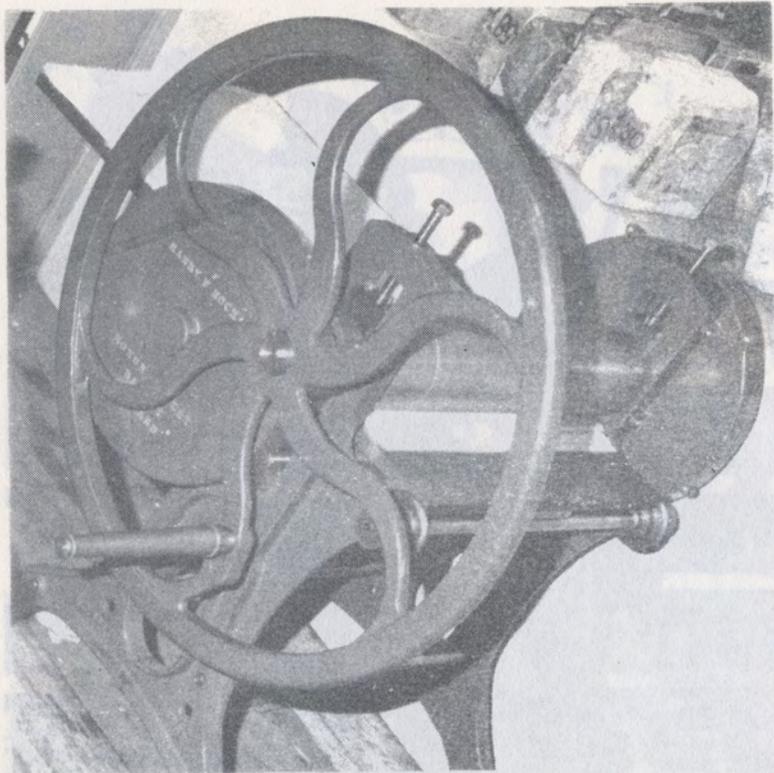
**It was followed closely by two direct litho presses (18'' x 24''
and 36'' x 30''),**



two relief presses (16'' x 12'' and 26'' x 30''),



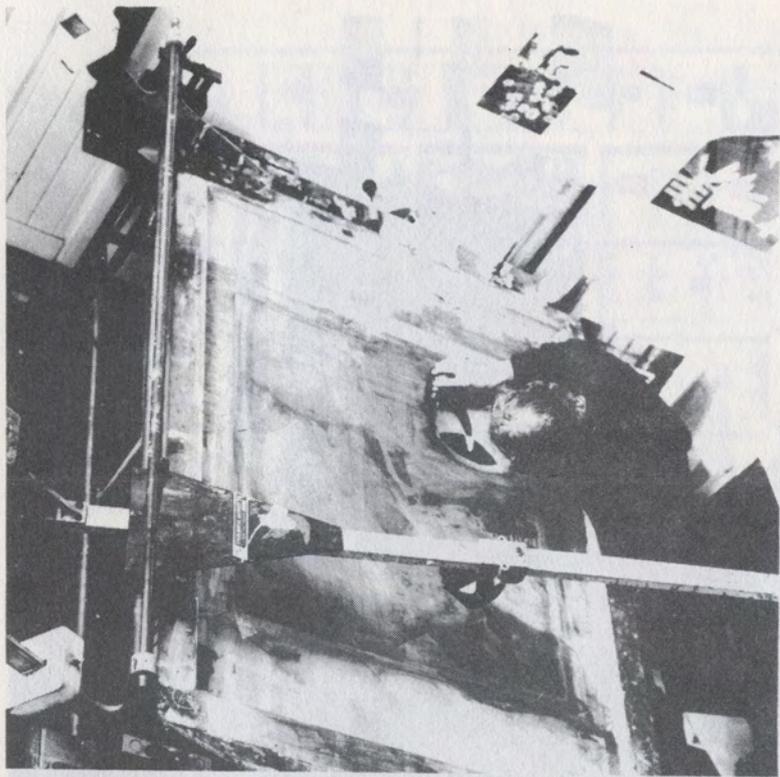
and two etching presses (18" x 30")



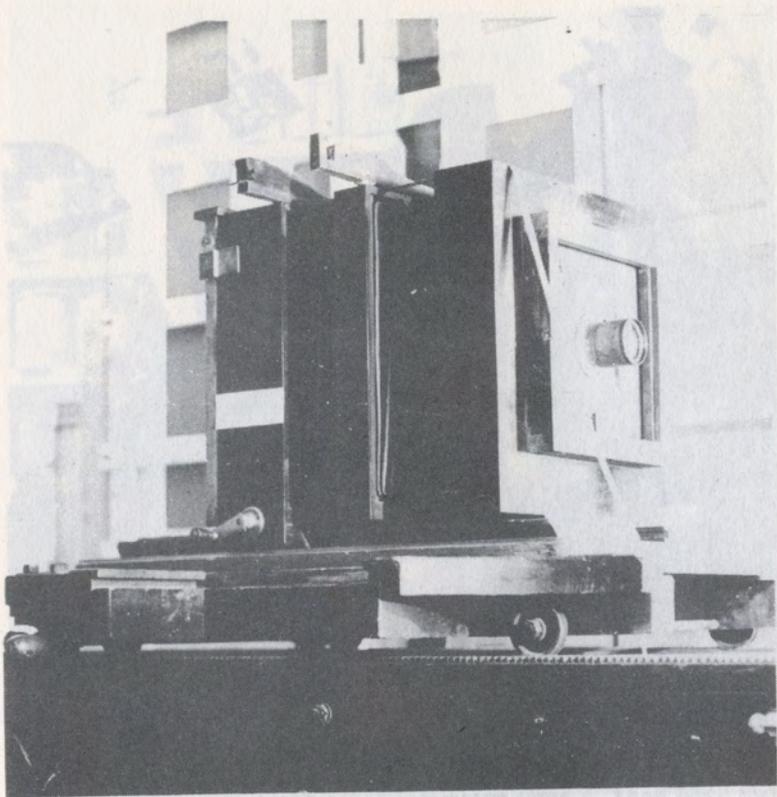
and 26' x 40')



Upstairs trooped the silkscreen crew :

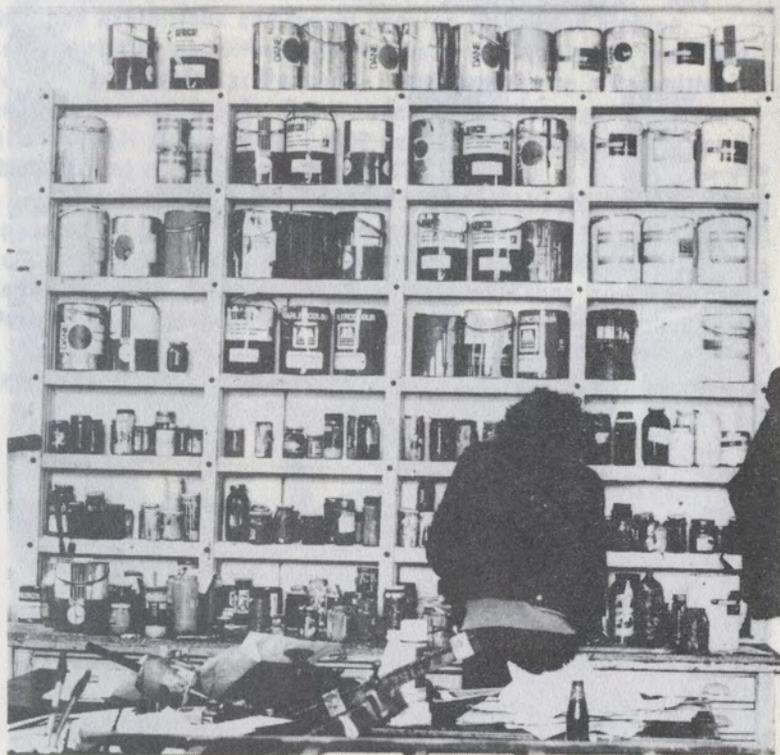


two hand beds, a semi-automatic press 60'' x 40'', and a vacuum bed with a one-arm squeegee, 40'' x 70''.



Into the upstairs darkroom marched an enlarger and a printing-down unit to join the old Cornwall camera.

In the first year, the workshop had 100 members who came to



Inks and dyes, etching acids and plates jumped into shelves and lay waiting to do good works. And it was the first of June 1974.



lay waiting to do good works? And it was the first of June 1918.
The 25-ton printing press was brought into the room.

In the first year, the workshop had 100 members who came to the house they called a workshop to create new things. And they had exhibitions and taught evening classes in etching, screen printing and lithography to those who wanted to learn and do more good works at Peacock. And they set up a Committee and Ian Fleming R.S.A., R.S.W. became its chairman. And the Arts Council granted them £1000 capital and £3500 revenue for their second year and things were really rolling.

Silkscreens were made for classes, plan chests and racks appeared as if by magic, and mysterious forces in the darkroom could enlarge anything until it was almost as big as the old house; and new friends came to join the workshop from as far as Pennycuik and Lewis.

And the old house hummed and the peacock was pleased because things were happening again inside the walls.



And they're humming still.

M.C.Y.

General Information
Specialties
Date of Birth
Address

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Castle Gate, Aberdeen
Aberdeen 51539**

