Printing in Australia before WWI

a time line of significant events in the history of printing in Australia
compiled by Benjamin Thorn

1788 A small hand press is brought out on the first fleet. Unfortunately, no-one knows how to use it.

1795 - 1800 Convict George Hughes teaches himself to use the press and print orders and regulations for Governor Hunter.

1800 George Howe replaced Hughes in the Government Printing Office. He is allowed to do non-governmental work for his own profit. His press can produce about 50 sheets per hour.

1802 Howe produces first book in the colony *The NSW Standing Orders*.

1805 Howe starts weekly newspaper *The Sydney Gazette*. It is required to print government announcements and is subject to heavy censorship by the authorities. In the years until 1850, some 38 different newspapers and journals are produced (sometimes fleetingly) in Sydney.

1810 First (short lived) Tasmanian news journal the *Derwent Star*.

1821 Two lithographic presses are set up at Parramatta Observatory. One is subsequently transferred to Surveyor Generals Department and used for printing maps.

1827 *The Sydney Gazette* (now produced by Howe's son Robert) becomes daily. It continues until 1842.

1829 First printing industry strike by a small number of typographers employed by *The Australian*.

1830 Engraver W Moffit opens a business in King Street. He prints labels for pills, potions and liquor and advertising cards etc. David Jones is one of his early customers.

1831 *The Sydney Herald* is first produced. In 1841 it is bought by John Fairfax and becomes *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

In Western Australia the first printed newspaper *the Fremantle Observer, Perth Gazette and Western Australian Journal* starts. It uses the press that once printed the *Derwent Star* in Tasmania.

1837 *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* printed in South Australia (the first edition had in fact been published a year before in London before the colonists set out for South Australia).

1838 *Melbourne Advertiser* is first newspaper in what would become Victoria**.**

1846 *Moreton Bay Courier* first newspaper in Queensland.

1850 *The Sydney Morning Herald* imports the first steam driven printing press capable of printing 3000 copies a day.

1851 The first printing union, Sydney Typographical Association, is formed. It continues for 25 years but achieves little.

1867 First printing ink manufactured in Australia by Fred T. Wimble and the future F.T. Wimble & Co. is started.

1869 Edwards and Dunlop establish a business as paper merchants and distributors of stationary and printing machinery.

1870 First lithographic machine imported to Melbourne.

1871 *The Sydney Mail* is first daily newspaper to use illustrations. These are printed from woodcuts. The first picture is a prize bull.

1874 First printing equipment manufactured in Australia.

1880s Wood engraving begins to be used instead of woodcuts for newspaper illustration.

1881 Reformed union, NSW Typographical Association, starts collective bargaining with individual employers on wages and conditions.

1885 First employers' group, Melbourne Master Printers Association, founded in Victoria.

1887 Master Printers Association of Sydney founded.

1894 Major industrial action organised by the Typographical Association in Sydney. A month long strike is a failure as the newly invigorated Master Printers Association imports labour from outside of Sydney and threatens to blacklist striking workers.

1894 *Daily Telegraph* imports first Linotype machines. *Sydney Morning Herald* starts using Hattersley typesetting machines a year later and Linotype in 1903.

1905 Printing classes begin at Sydney Technical College.

1912 First industrial provisions for women workers in the industry are made.