FOR SALE: ADANA FIVE-THREE

AND ACCESSORIES IN A FLOOR-STANDING CABINET

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This Adana Five-Three, which I bought in 1963, was the first printing press that I actually owned -- rather than merely being allowed to use. Several years later, I built a floor-standing cabinet to accommodate it.

My first enthusiasm for letterpress abated somewhat in my teens, but in those halcyon days no one had a computer or a 'printer', and for many years this Five-Three in its cabinet was wheeled out from under the stairs to print headed writing paper, correspondence cards, party invitations and other ephemera. (If you don't believe me, I still have a lot of proof copies....)

About fifteen years ago, I returned to letterpress, but in a much larger format. My Five-Three has had little use in that time. I think it would suit a beginner, someone interested in small-scale work, or simply a printer without much space. Here is a description of what is on offer:

Adana Five-Three

This press has been well looked after, and is entirely original, except for a small catch (www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/catch.jpg) which I added to stop the press closing when the press is inverted for storage. The first iteration of this catch was rather crude, and I have recently replaced it with something slicker. I have also dismantled, reassembled, and oiled the press.

Here are some close-ups:
www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/press1.jpg
www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/press2.jpg
www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/press3.jpg
www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/press4.jpg
www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/press5.jpg
www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/press6.jpg

Accessories

I still have the original bearer and interior chases, and I have acquired two more of each over time. (See www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/chases.jpg. There are only two bearer chases in the photo because one is on the press.)

Note that one of the bearer chases has had its grub-screw holes tapped out for new grub-screws a larger size. I presume this was done (not by me) because the grub-screws had been over-tightened and failed. Actually, larger grub-screws are quite a good idea....

Note also that I only have the steel strips for two of the bearer chases. There are none for the interior chases. It should be easy enough to make replacements.

There are two sets of rollers, one polyurethane, one rubber. (See www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/rollers.jpg). For some reason, the polyurethane rollers have come up in pustules (ugh!). The rubber rollers look reasonable, but I expect they have shrunk far too much to be usable. You will need to budget for new rollers. However, the nylon wheels on these rollers are fine, and there are a few spares.

Wooden cabinet

As far as I know, this design is unique. It was mainly constructed from good quality 9mm ply (birch, I presume)

The press is attached to a baseboard, which is not attached to the top of the cabinet, but sits in a recess (See www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/adpic.jpg). To store the press, the inking plate is removed, and the press is inverted and turned through ninety degrees. Then the baseboard top goes back in the recess, upside down, and the press hangs inside the cabinet. The top is now clear for other stuff.... (See www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/cabinet.jpg. The inking plate does not need to sit on the cabinet as shown: there is plenty of room for it inside.)

The front of the cabinet hinges down, revealing 24 Adana Junior typecases, which are in good clean condition. (See www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/typecases1.jpg for a close up of a few of them. Note that some of the pins have gone slightly rusty and stained the wood. See www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/typecases2.jpg). The cases have been fitted with little wooden handles, and I am including my remaining stock of these for fitting to replacements (not too difficult to

find on eBay), in case any of these are lost or broken. Note that the typecases are separated by thin plywood dividers when in the cabinet, so type should not be able to jump between divisions even if the cabinet is jolted.

Below the typecases are two drawers. The top drawer is designed for furniture and spacing. My early attempts to cut wooden furniture were not ideal, so I have recently cut new assortments of 28-line and 16-line furniture in various sizes more accurately, from old but sound pieces. There is also some 28-line Resalite. (See www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/drawer1.jpg.)

I checked the leads that were in the cabinet, and discarded any that were significantly corroded or of incorrect length. I have added a selection of 28-line and 16-line leads (6pt to 2pt), cut (with a decent lead-cutter) from old leads in decent condition and some new leading.

Note that the furniture and leads fits the bearer chase. There is none for the interior chases: using the interior chases is fiddly, and I don't see much point in doing so if several bearer chases are available.

The lower drawer has divisions designed to accommodate ornament, rules, &c. Currently it only holds a block for planing formes. (See www.johnwoodwark.com/letterpress/pics53/drawer2.jpg.)

There is a narrow shelf between these drawers which can be used to store galleys.

To get you started I have also included 2kg or so of spacing: 8pt, 12pt and 18pt spaces and quads, and a few clumps for filling large empty areas quickly.

The cabinet sits on castors, and I have recently replaced the metal originals (one of which was broken) with some 40mm castors with double rubber wheels.

It had always been my intention to paint this cabinet... but I never got round to it. I was tempted to give it a coat of paint now, so as to smarten it up; but I have left it alone so that it's easy to make any modifications that the purchaser my fancy or to apply a finish (such as veneer) without the trouble of stripping paint.

Price: £450

All you need to get printing with this outfit is type, ink, paper, and a pair of rollers.