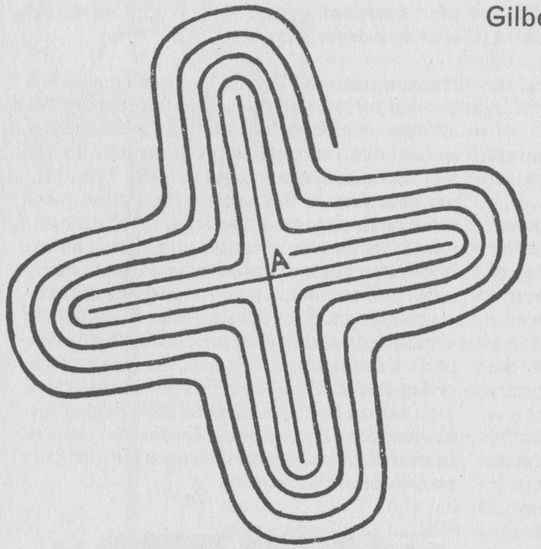
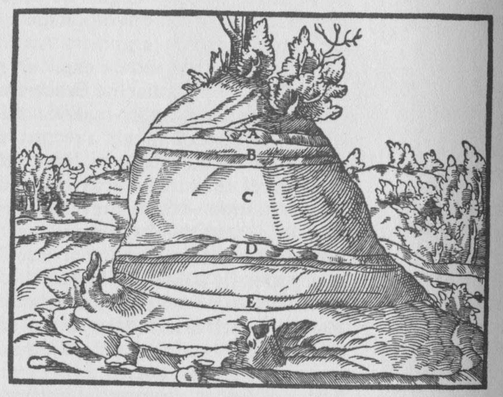
Curatorial Goings-on at the Alphabet Museum



Gilbert Again





We opened a museum on the site where the first letter had been discovered.

Nobody remembered that primitive place, or if they did they never spoke of it. We found it buried beneath an abandoned parking lot. Overlooked for an eternity, it was in bad shape.

We dug down, excavated it with utmost professionalism and only the best equipment and practices. We had time to dedicate to this important work. When it was fully revealed we saw that we could not possibly transport such a monumental object.

That's when it was decided to have the alphabet museum there, at the site where the first letter had been discovered. We would install our exhibits on and around the lot. It was perfectly fitting, we all agreed.

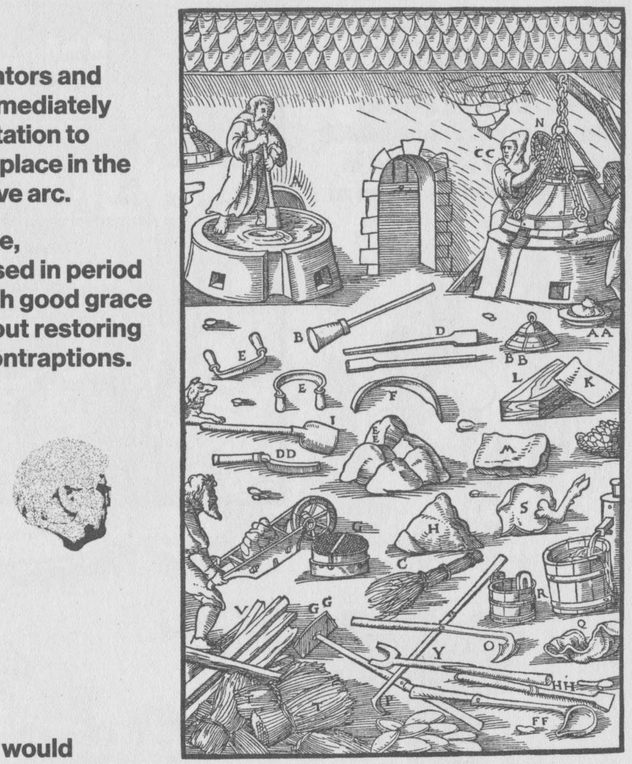
After an auspicious start, the project ran into problems. There were objections to our presence from a pack of stray dogs who had been using a vacant building adjoining the lot as their parliament.

Negotiations with them were protracted and painstaking, but finally (with the assistance of our Backers) a settlement was hammered out and the animals were moved on. Relieved, we resumed our curatorial duties.

We reached out to the historic Miners who had once toiled to unearth alphabetic fragments from these lands, but neither they, nor their Representatives, ever responded to us. Not to be disheartened, we recreated—to the best of our knowledge and abilities—a working letter pit for our museum, landscaped from the vast piles of earth which we had displaced.

Happily, the Inventors and the Engineers immediately accepted our invitation to take their rightful place in the museum's narrative arc.

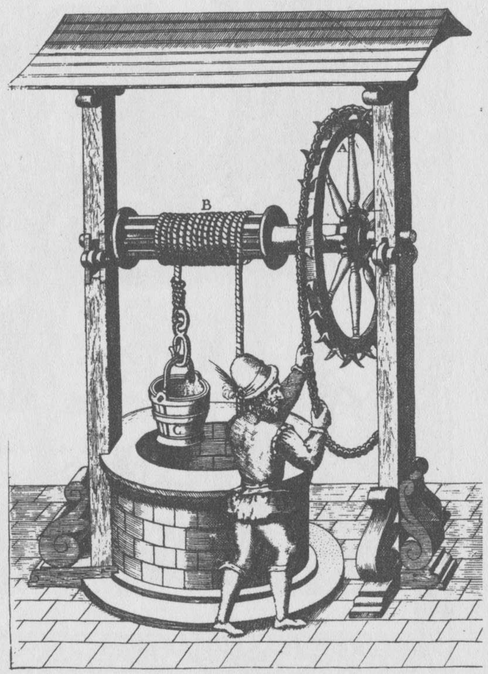
They came on-site, impeccably dressed in period uniforms, and with good grace and gusto set about restoring their grand old contraptions.



The E-Pounder and The Well of C would become two of the museum's most beloved attractions.

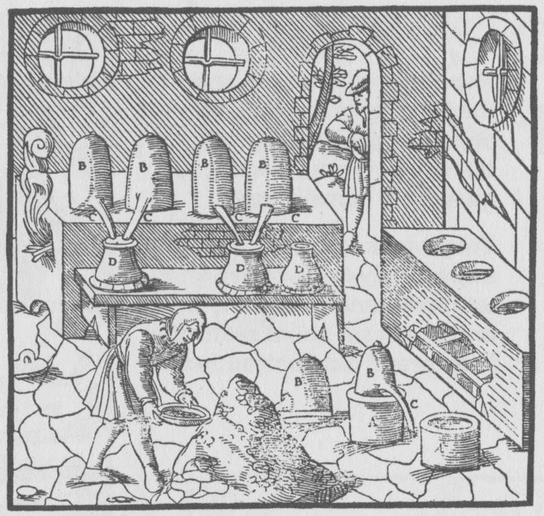
The Inventors and the Engineers were always a pleasure to work with, and they never failed to extend a hearty greeting to our visitors.



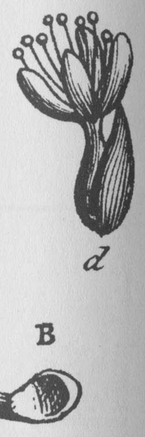


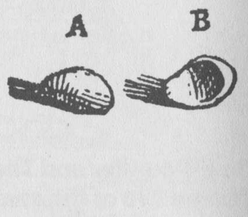
Seasonal merchandise from our Gift Shop.

We also offered a hand-printed paper range which could be personalized in under 15 minutes (even at busy times).











Our visitor figures were showing a positive trend, word of the museum was spreading, and we were able to employ an educator to host family workshops in basic typographic techniques on the third Saturday of the month. The workshops covered proper hierarchy, spacing, line-endings, and so on.

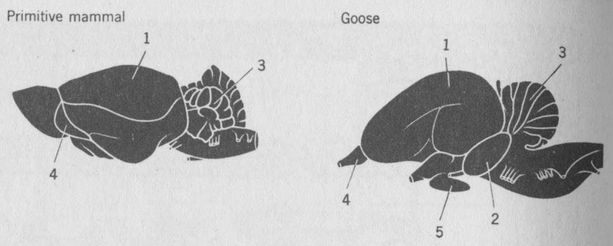
The Alphabet Museum was a resounding success.

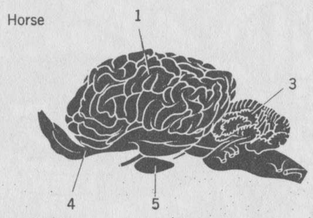


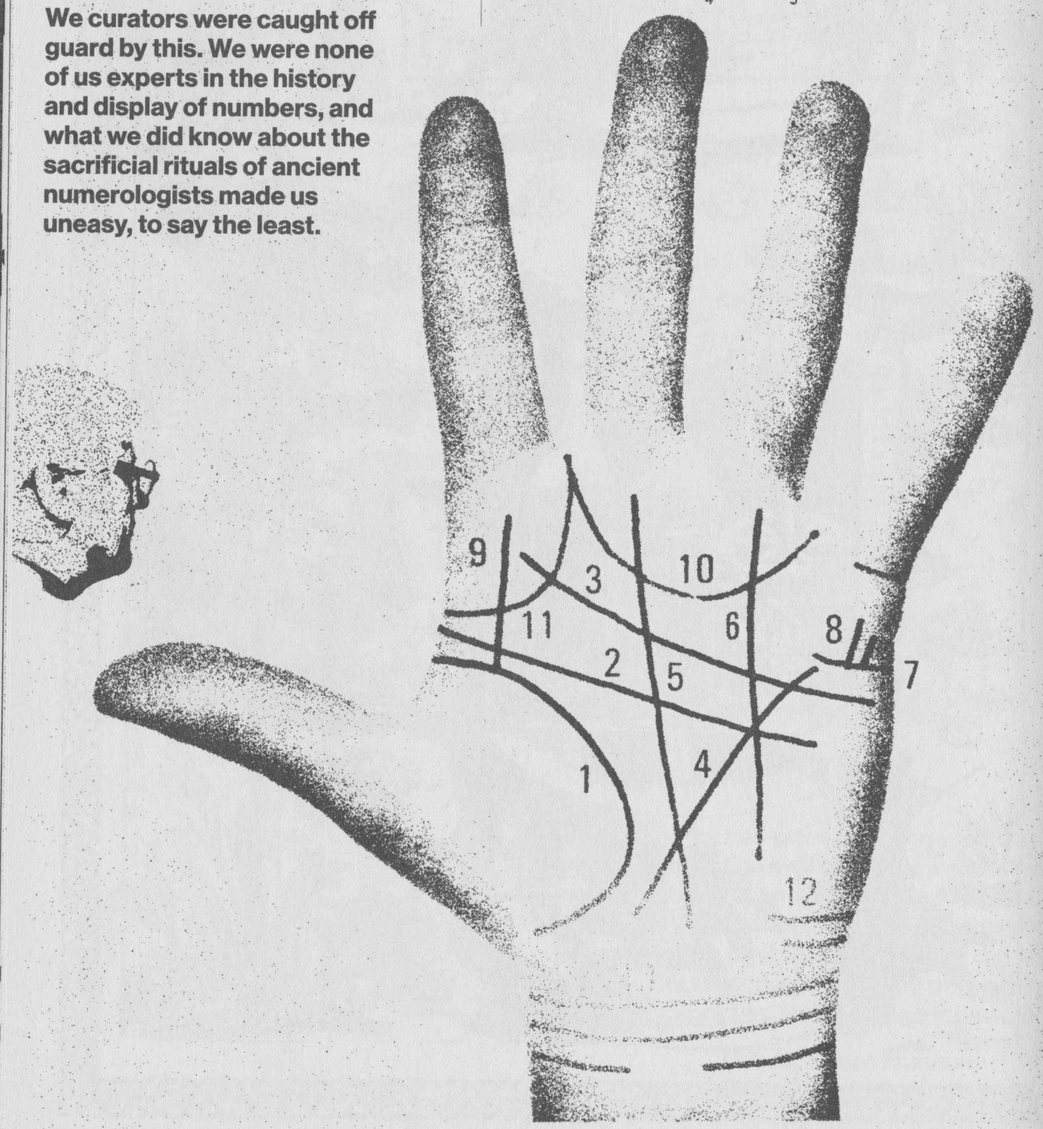
When our Backers first mooted the idea of an annex we were not opposed in principle. The museum had proven popular but of course, we conceded, it would soon need new attractions to keep its public satisfied.

In a blatant, calculated move our Backers suggested that this proposed annex feature numbers.

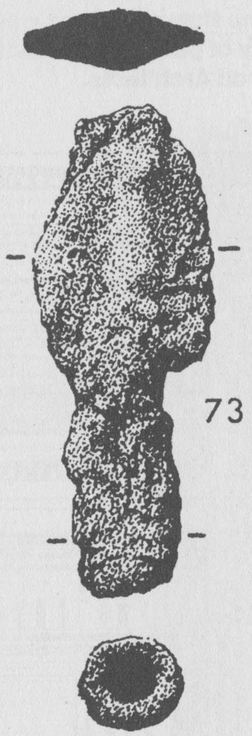
We curators were caught off guard by this. We were none of us experts in the history and display of numbers, and what we did know about the sacrificial rituals of ancient numerologists made us uneasy, to say the least.

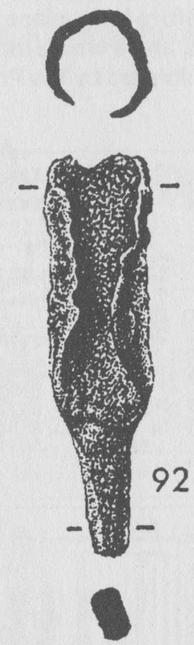






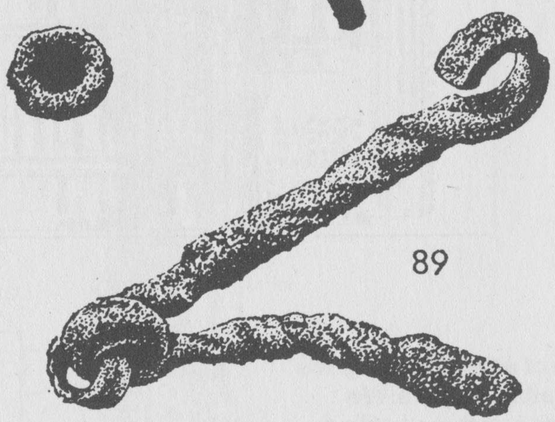


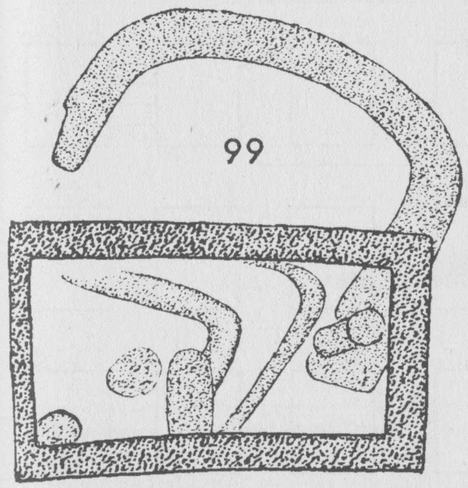


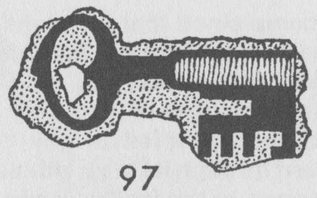


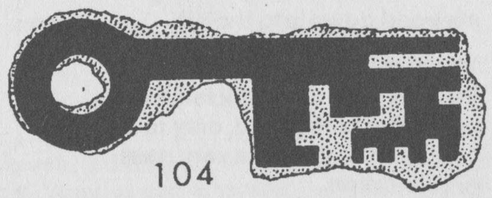
Irrespective of the substance of these concerns, we simply felt that our Backers were overreaching, and that they should let the curators handle content decisions.





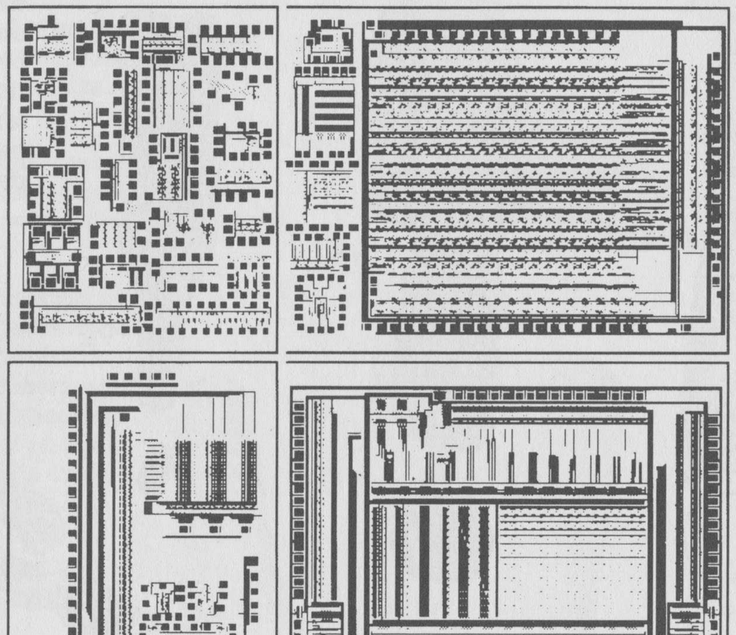


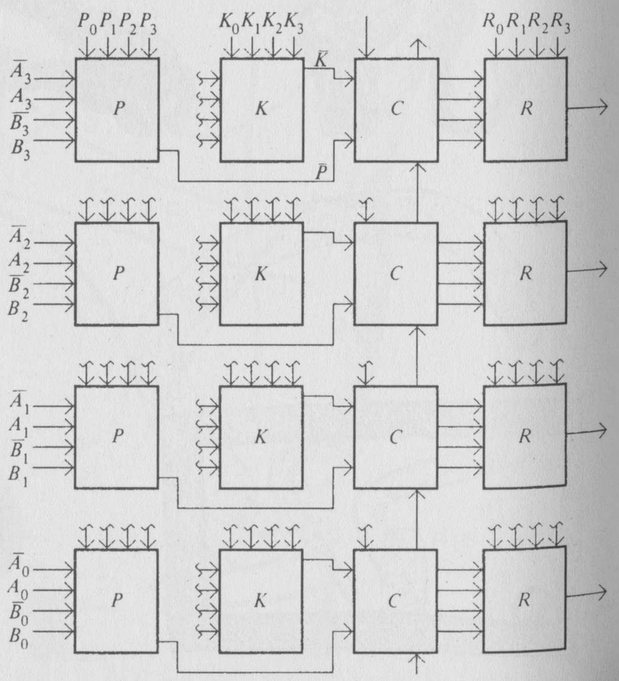




Before long, plans for the Number Annex were drawn up, and a whole itinerary of pacifying presentations delivered by the Preferred Architects.





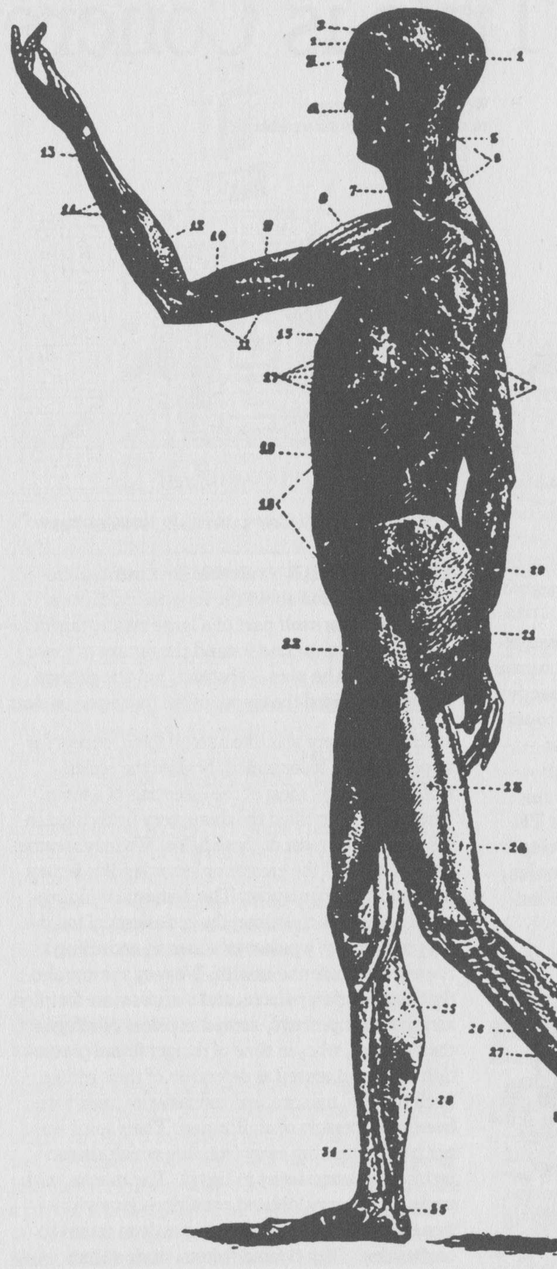


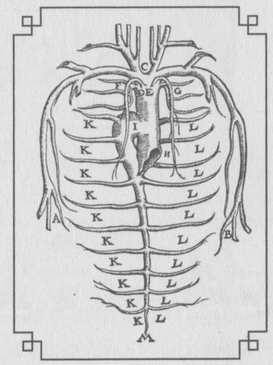
They spoke of attention analytics and aggregating clickers. We glanced at one another, baffled, while our Backers nodded along.

We complained that the plans lacked the metabolic character of the original museum, lacked the sense of discovery which the visitor felt as they passed through its labyrinthine passages, or the feeling of awe which stirred in them as they stepped down into the pit.

The architects, though, were invulnerable. Our criticisms were cynically transcribed, only to be said back to us in the very next presentation.

We are told that the museum will soon change its name.





This piece is derived from Donald Barthelme's 'The Flights of Pigeons from the Palace'.

Images sourced from Agricola, Ramelli, Vesalius and others in the depths.

