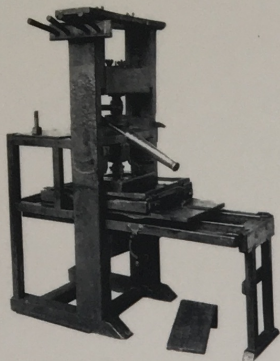


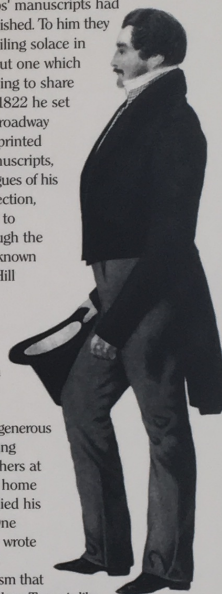
# THE TOWER PRESS



Middle Hill House

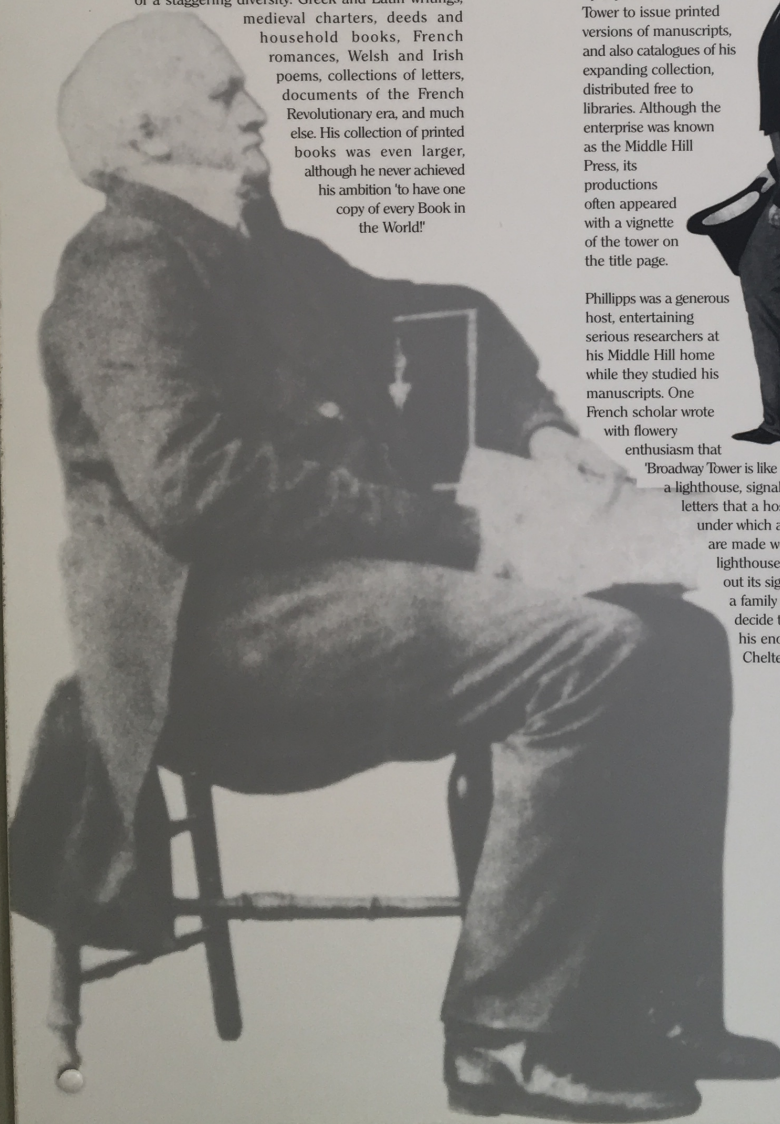
Built as a folly, Broadway Tower unexpectedly became a workplace when it was acquired by Sir Thomas Phillipps, owner of the nearby Middle Hill house and estate. Phillipps (1792-1872) may well have been the greatest collector of manuscripts and printed books in history. He eventually owned 60,000 manuscripts of a staggering diversity: Greek and Latin writings, medieval charters, deeds and household books, French romances, Welsh and Irish poems, collections of letters, documents of the French Revolutionary era, and much else. His collection of printed books was even larger, although he never achieved his ambition 'to have one copy of every Book in the World!'

Most of Phillipps' manuscripts had never been published. To him they were 'a never-failing solace in every trouble' but one which he was very willing to share with others. In 1822 he set up a press in Broadway Tower to issue printed versions of manuscripts, and also catalogues of his expanding collection, distributed free to libraries. Although the enterprise was known as the Middle Hill Press, its productions often appeared with a vignette of the tower on the title page.



Phillipps was a generous host, entertaining serious researchers at his Middle Hill home while they studied his manuscripts. One French scholar wrote with flowery enthusiasm that

'Broadway Tower is like a lighthouse, signalling to the friends of letters that a hospitable roof exists, under which all pilgrims of learning are made welcome.' The lighthouse continued to send out its signals until 1863, when a family feud made Phillipps decide to remove himself and his enormous collection to Cheltenham.



ABOVE: Thomas Phillipps as a young man

LEFT: Phillipps at Spring Hill