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**The Society's Ninth Annual General Meeting**

The Society held its 9th Annual General Meeting, covering the 2015 calendar year, on the evening of 27 April, again imposing on the kindness of owner Pat Corrigan and staff of the Better Read Than Dead bookshop in Newtown in Sydney's lively inner west. Attendance was strong, and fittingly so, in light of the proposed discussion of a range of activities planned to celebrate the Society's tenth anniversary in October.

The initial business of the meeting comprised delivery of the President's and Honorary Secretary's reports and the financial statement for 2015. The Society's *Newsletter* had continued to attract interesting contributions from members and friends as well as many compliments on its content and appearance. The President thanked members for their continuing interest in and financial support for the Society, and in particular Bronwyn Vost, honorary secretary for organising a successful annual meeting and a very pleasant show and tell meeting in her own home, and Mary Keep for superlative design of the *Newsletter* and the most attractive invitation 'postcard', the fourth of which formed the invitation to the 9th AGM.

At the end of December 2015, the Society numbered 73 financial members — having lost four and gained three in the year — and its bank balance had increased over the 12 months from roughly one thousand to two thousand seven hundred dollars. There was no change in office holders for 2016 as no nominations were received other than from incumbents in 2015; office holders and committee members were confirmed for 2016.

The discussion of activities to promote the Society and to pursue the previous year's suggestion of mounting a bookplate design competition and exhibition generated much excitement and a foment of great ideas; many of those present volunteered to assist in different ways (see page 7). Enhancing the Society's website is a perennial topic, whilst giving the Society a social media presence was raised. In addition, various members with connections with other art organisations agreed to approach them to make the Society known to them and to canvass the possibility of cross promotion.

The Annual General Meeting concluded with a show and tell when a number of those assembled showed interesting bookplates with

**CONTENTS**

The Society's Ninth Annual General Meeting 1  
 Megalo Print Studio + Gallery, Canberra 2  
 A most unusual bookplate: Bruce E Tory 4  
 Exhibition review: an exhibition of association copies 5  
 Notes and happenings 7  
 The Society's Bookplate Design Award 2016 7  
 Editorial 7



**Members attending the Society's Ninth Annual General Meeting, 27 April 2016 (l-r): Nicholas Ingleton, Ray Brown, Paul Feain, James Fellows, Nik Linkiewicz, Brendan Sforcina, Bronwyn Vost, Mark Ferson, Monica Oppen, Juanita Hattersley. Missing: Pamela Horsnell, Mary Keep.**

interesting stories. As the meeting closed, it was heartening to see members continuing to chat with each other about common interests and newly discovered connections. Once again we wish to thank the staff of Better Read Than Dead for their kindnesses in looking after us on the evening.

## Megalo Print Studio + Gallery, Canberra

Exhibition speech, for the opening, 18 June 2016, of *Ex Libris* — *Celebrating the art of the bookplate*  
By Caren Florance,  
Ampersand Duck, Canberra

Thanks so much for coming here on this cold wet winter afternoon! Megalo is always a delightful place to be, isn't it? Forgive me reading from my notes: most of you know that I can talk incessantly at any time, but when I want to say something meaningful and pertinent, notes are necessary.

We're here today to mingle, to have some warm social time, to support the arts in the face of ridiculous government cuts, and to pick a winner or two from this wonderful selection of images. The exhibition is called *Ex Libris*, but it's not a conventional bookplate exhibition, in that participants were not requested to design a specific bookplate for Megalo. Instead, they were asked to submit prints of a particular size that are either dedicated bookplate designs or images that could be turned into bookplates, so that Megalo staff could work with the winning artist to turn their print into an actual Megalo bookplate, I'm guessing as a screenprint reproduction. The winner has been selected by myself in consultation with the Megalo staff — and it was a really tough choice, as there are a number of contenders and so many beautiful prints here. I'm going to announce both the overall winner and the people's choice winner very soon.

But first: what we're really doing today is celebrating the fact that Megalo has a library of real, physical books, donated by Megalo members and supporters over the years, and that Megalo treasures them enough to want to mark their ownership

with a bookplate. This is a remarkable and commendable thing at a time when libraries are being culled and binned in favour of a computer in the corner or a Kindle in the hand. Many people think that books and computers are an either/or kind of dichotomy, but Megalo knows, being an enlightened sort of place, that analogue and digital are able to exist side by side: that digital prints can be combined with more manual forms of printmaking, for example. Sometimes, it's good to sit down and look through a book to get serendipitous ideas and, more importantly, to share ideas during a conversation with a cuppa without worrying about keyboard spills. And also, books are the best kind of wall-coverings, alongside original prints, of course.

Treasuring one's library and wanting to protect it is an age-old impulse. As the *Ex Libris* wall text says, bookplates emerged from the 16th century, around the time when printing was in full flight, when books were editioned rather than hand-scribed and when libraries were being collected by private individuals as well as institutions. But well before bookplates, there were book *urses*. The earliest known

were used in the 7th century B.C. [1]. Book curses were hand-written into books in the initial pages alongside other paratexts such as dedications and they are often quite scary. Some are short and terse:

*Hanging will do  
for him who steals you.* [2]

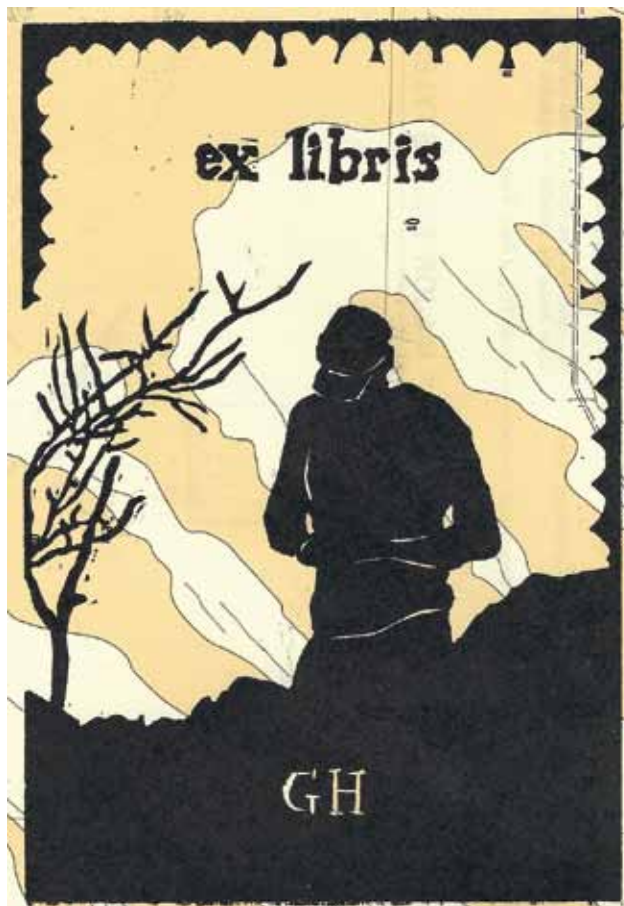
Or plaintive:

*Steal not this book my honest friend  
For fear the gallows should be your end,  
And when you die the Lord will say  
And where's the book you stole away?* [3]

And then there's the quite gory:

*This book belongs to none but me  
For there's my name inside to see.  
To steal this book, if you should try,  
It's by the throat you'll hang high.  
And ravens then will gather 'bout  
To find your eyes and pull them out.  
And when you're screaming "oh, oh, oh!"  
Remember, you deserved this woe.* [4]

Bookplates, as I said, have been around since books began to be mass-printed. They have always had a close relationship with



printmaking because they are editioned to mark entire libraries in the name of their owner. As I tell my students, printmaking precedes commercial book printing in terms of woodcuts, but it has developed alongside text printing in the never-ending quest to make commercial processes faster and cheaper (and therefore more profitable). Etching, lithography, wood engraving, lino, screenprint: all were developed as commercial book-making processes, and as each was superseded economically, the artists moved in and took them on for pure art-making, and there are bookplates out there that use every single process.

Most popular seem to be etching and wood-engraving designs, predominantly because they are easily combined with text, but also because they suit traditional tastes, and historically, the people who used bookplates were those who could afford large collections of books, and could afford to commission good artists to make bookplates for them to personalise their collection.

Good bookplates make books more collectible. Imagine finding a book that has a Thomas Bewick bookplate in it! I'm sure the topic of the book (and the identity of the owner) often fades into insignificance because of the value of the bookplate. In Australia there are books out there with plates by Lionel Lindsay, Norman Lindsay, Thea Proctor, Ethel Spowers, Jessie Traill, even Brett Whitely — who cares what the books are about? Original bookplates are miniature works of printmaking art. So of course, bookplates are collected in their own right, and there are various bookplate societies around the world, including Australia, and most of them promote and encourage contemporary bookplate design and production. If any of you, as a printmaker, are interested in making bookplates and taking on commissions, get in touch with organisations such as the New Australian Bookplate Society.

Of course, these days you can buy packets of commercially-printed bookplates in

bookshops or gift shops, and I always have to laugh at the idea buying of just ten or twenty plates; I have a bookplate of my own design, and I printed about 200 on gummed paper. I haven't run out yet, but that's because I only use them in the books I think I'll keep for life: everyday novels just have my name written in them, and perhaps from now on, a small curse. I still lose books, however, because I enjoy sharing them and using them for classes. I have lost many books in my time, and no doubt I have a few books in my library that I've borrowed and forgotten to return. I received a great tip recently, a very modern one: when you lend books, take a photo of the person to whom you're lending as they hold the book. Then, when you're

looking through your photos, you'll see the book and think 'a-ha!'. I've started doing this, but I'm pretty much as bad with photos as I am with books and with remembering names. Here's hoping that Megalo continues to be good with books, and that their wonderful library thrives, and that once they have a fabulous and original *Ex Libris*, their library stays intact.

So: which bookplate will it be? I'd first like to applaud everyone who contributed to this display, it is a lovely showcase of the talents of members and the staff, and all are commendable for different reasons.

Firstly, the People's Choice Award goes to number 36: Prudence Borthwick, *Let Sleeping Dogs Lie*.



Opposite page: Colour linocut by Peter McLean for GH, 2016

Linocut by Maiju Altpere for herself, 2016



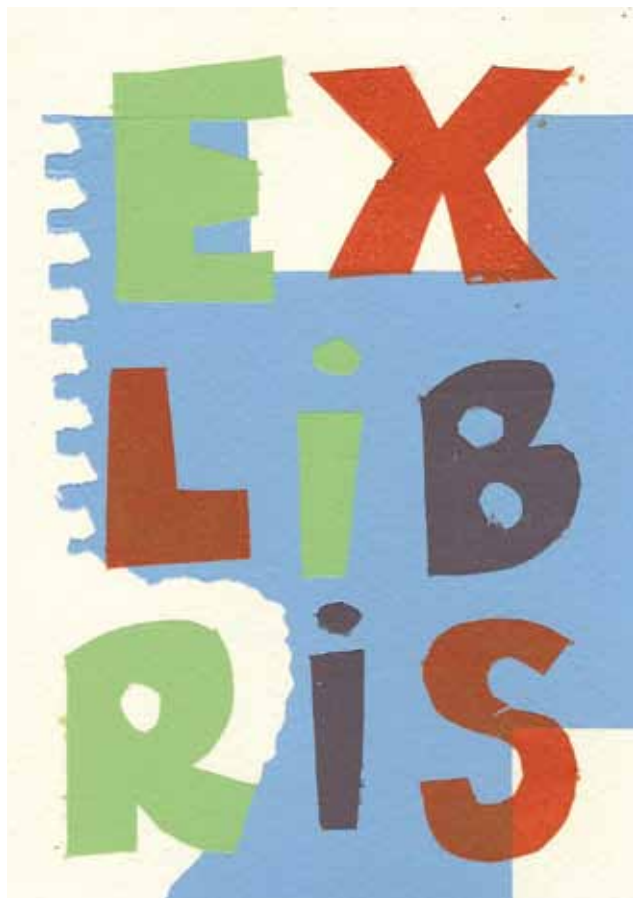
Linocut by Ian 'Spike' Farrawell for himself, 2016

And finally, the winning number, with a print that will look fantastic in Megalo's books and will work as a quirky little *momento mori* and warning, is number 69, *Ex Libris Spike*, by Ian 'Spike' Farrawell. Congratulations to Spike, it's a beautiful little design.

Thank you all again for coming, enjoy the evening.

#### References

- [1] Norton, Jeremy. 'Knowledge as power: The earliest systematically collected library as distinct from an archive (668 BCE – 627 BCE)'. *History of Information*. <http://www.historyofinformation.com/expanded.php?id=11> Accessed 18/6/2016.
- [2] <http://www.medievalists.net/2015/09/20/top-10-medieval-book-courses/> Accessed 17/6/2016
- [3] <http://bookplatejunkie.blogspot.com.au/2012/09/threats-and-warnings-on-bookplates-part.html> Accessed 18/6/2016
- [4] <http://www.medievalists.net/2015/09/20/top-10-medieval-book-courses/> Accessed 17/6/2016



Screenprint by Diana Corr, 2016

#### A most unusual bookplate: Bruce E Tory

By Jürgen Wegner, Sydney

Bookmarks are well known as coming in a variety of materials other than paper. Plastic is common but there are also bookmarks in leather (not recommended that you leave these in your books though!), various metals including thin filigree stainless steel and even wood. On the other hand, bookplates tend to be made of paper and placed inside the front cover — or, at a pinch, on the free front endpaper. But not the bookplate of Bruce E Tory — and in this case literally a plate!

Not all books are treasured. And it seems to be especially the sad fate of books on the subject of printing — printing, paper and type — to be regarded as mere tools of the trade. Even printer's manuals which can be extremely expensive to buy new at the time of publication. They are not collectors' books or even a reader's and so they tend to be thrown around offices or factory floors. Superseded, they are almost invariably dumped, or, if they belong to someone of a certain sensibility, dumped in a box in the garage or back yard shed, food for cockroaches, silverfish, mould.

My copy of *The lithographer's manual*, 6th edition (Pittsburgh: Graphic Arts Technical Foundation, 1980) weighs in at a hefty 603pp. It has survived the past 36 years relatively unscathed and, apart from having been dropped on its spine at some time and with some minor spots of mildew on the cover, it is a good copy. The work was first published in 1937 by Waltwin Publishing as Walter E Soderstrom's *The photo-lithographer's manual*. The

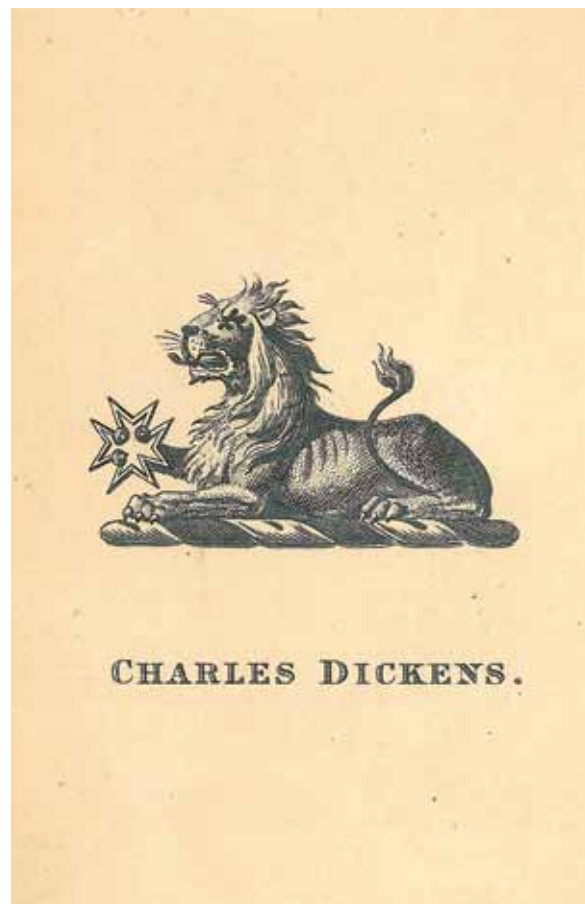
*Foreword* to this sixth edition notes that over the years the book has witnessed ‘the transformation of lithography [*i.e.* offset printing] from a small, struggling stepchild of the printing industry into today’s giant’. The last edition, the ninth, was published in 1994, almost sixty years after the first — not a bad run for a specialist trade text book.

The sixth edition is made up of twenty individually paginated sections, written by a number of authors and edited by Raymond Blair and Charles Shapiro, lithography experts from the US. This copy of the book is signed by both editors and comes from the collection of Bruce E Tory. Tory was well known in the Australian printing industry, writing two authoritative books on the subject: *Photolithography* (Sydney: Associated General Publications, 1953) and *Offset lithography* (Sydney: Horwitz Publications, 1957). The former gives Tory as the head of both the Sydney Technical College and the College’s School of Graphic Arts.

Tory’s copy of *The lithographer’s manual* is also unusual for its bookplate. This is in the form of an engraved rectangle of brass, 25 by 127 mm, which has been affixed not to the inside of the book but to its front cover!



**Engraved brass bookplate for Bruce E Tory**



**Armorial bookplate for Charles Dickens**

### **Exhibition review: an exhibition of association copies**

*Signed & Inscribed: Association Copies and Their Owners. Reed Gallery, Dunedin Public Library (23 March to 12 June 2016)*

Review by David Skegg, Dunedin

One of New Zealand’s first major publishing houses was founded by a remarkable man, A H Reed. In his 99 years, Reed accomplished many things — including walking from Sydney to Melbourne at the age of 89. A keen collector of books and manuscripts, his gifts and endowments form the nucleus of the heritage collections at the Dunedin Public Library. Reed’s collection was particularly strong in material relating to the English Bible, Charles Dickens, and Samuel Johnson; but he was also fascinated by association copies. These latter were the subject of the library’s latest exhibition, entitled *Signed & Inscribed*.

While most of the exhibits featured inscriptions by famous authors and celebrated owners, some interesting bookplates were on display. One of four books from Dickens’ personal library

contains his striking crest bookplate. Another Victorian author, Charles Kingsley, is represented by his armorial bookplate. Brian North Lee, in his book *British bookplates*, described a variant of this plate as “the dullest kind of Victorian ‘die-sinker’ bookplate”, which typifies “the nadir of artistic armorial design”. A more interesting plate is that for Edward Fitzgerald (translator of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*), which was drawn by his close friend, the novelist William Thackeray.

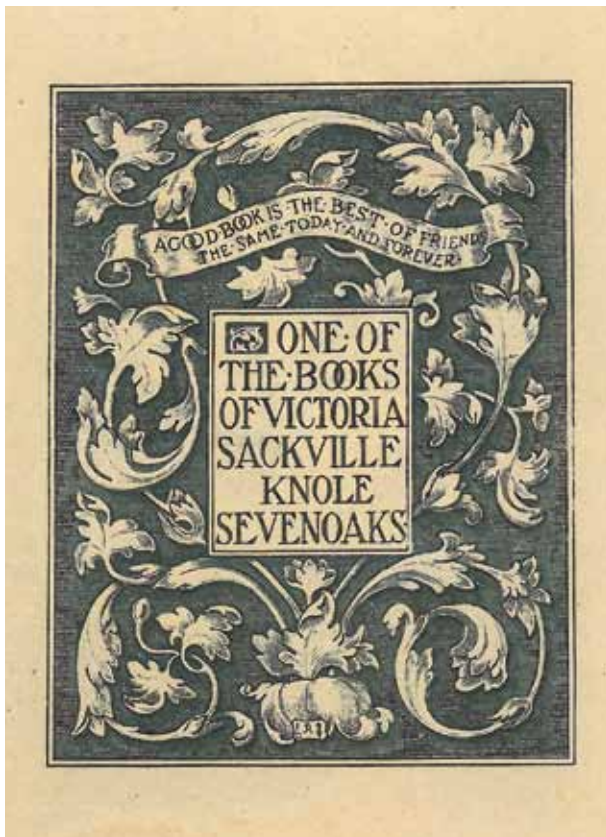
Victoria Sackville-West, Baroness Sackville, has been overshadowed by her daughter Vita (who created the famous garden at Sissinghurst), but she was certainly a fascinating woman in her own right. Her bookplate shown refers to the family seat, Knole House, Kent. Lady Sackville clearly had a liking for bookplates. Bonhams, the



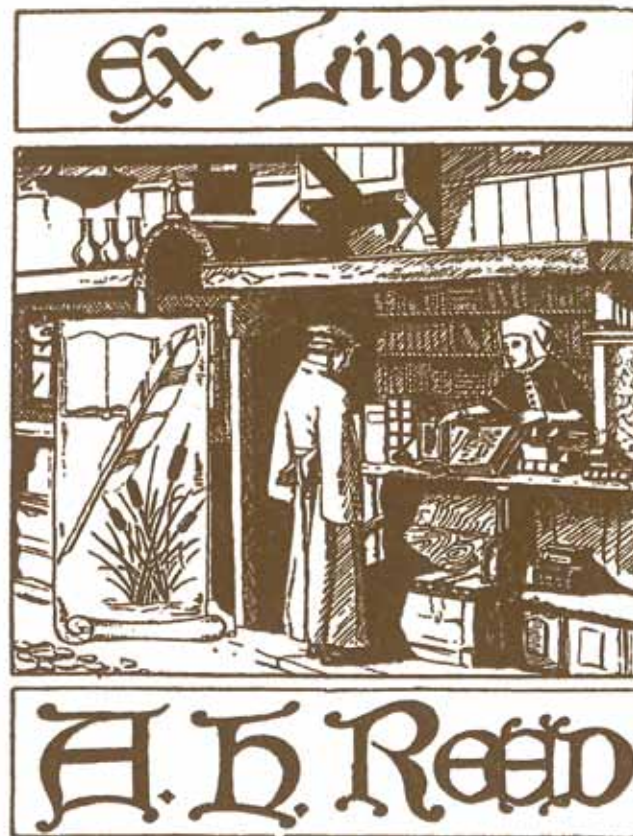
**Pen and ink design by W Thackeray for Edward Fitzgerald**



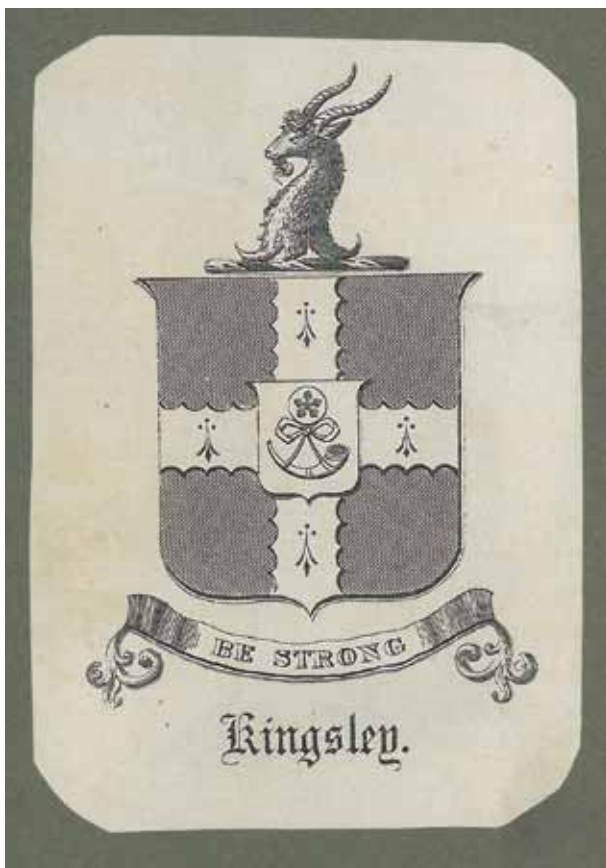
**Bookplate for Sir Hugh Walpole**



Bookplate for Victoria Sackville, 1908



Pen and ink design by A W Reed for A H Reed



Armorial bookplate for Charles Kingsley

auction house, sold a few finely bound volumes from the library at Knole House, containing 12 different Victoria Sackville-West bookplates.

The twentieth century author, Sir Hugh Walpole, also had a bookplate that referred to his residence — Brackenburn, in the English Lake District. With a handsome gilt monogram, this mimics a traditional leather book label, but is actually embossed on burgundy-coloured, textured paper. Walpole was born in Auckland, and this was one of the few Australasian links to bookplates in the exhibition. A small number of New Zealand bookplates could be seen, especially the one belonging to the collector, himself, A H Reed. This pen-drawing, adapted from a Belgian painting, was by his nephew (his partner in the firm of A H & A W Reed). A H Reed did the lettering. The clump of New Zealand *raupo* (a bulrush or reed) on the left echoes the family name.

Loose bookplates in an album or box can provide all kinds of interest: artistic, historical, genealogical, and so on. But there is something special about seeing a bookplate in the book for which it was destined — especially when this belonged to a notable person.

Grateful acknowledgement is due to Julian Smith, Reed Rare Books and Special Collections Librarian, Dunedin Public Libraries, Dunedin City Council, for providing bookplate images.

## Notes and happenings

### Publications

JURGEN WEGNER. 62.8. Dr Claus Gerhardt, his bookplate. *Shadowland newsletter* #62, Apr 2016

Perfectly valid musing on where to place a bookplate in the book prompted by the example of the subject's bookplate located — most unusually — at the centre of the right-hand edge of the front free endpaper.

RICHARD OVERELL. John Emerson collection. *BibliNews and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 390, Jun 2016; pp. 51-63

Shortened version of talks presented at the Book Collectors' Society of Australia (Victorian Branch) and State Library of Victoria, both April 2016, regarding the significant historical book collection donated to the SLV; image of John Emerson's book label.

WILLIAM E BUTLER. Review of Charles Stitz (ed.) *Australian book collectors: some noted Australian book collectors & collections of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. Vol. 1, 2 and 3. *BibliNews and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 390, Jun 2016; pp. 78-9

Reprinted from the *Bookplate Journal* (UK), Spring 2015; shows image of A Feint's bookplate for John Gartner

MARK FERSON. Notes & Queries. [Manly Literary Institute]. *BibliNews and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 390, Jun 2016; p. 91

Colour reproduction of the bookplate of the Manly Literary Institute, c. 1930s

### Sint-Niklaas International Bookplate and Small Graphics Competition 2017

This biennial design competition conducted by the International Exlibris Centre, Sint-Niklaas, Belgium, is open to artists from all over the world, and bookplates on any subject and in any medium are accepted. Entry is free and there is a total prize pool of €7,500. The competition theme is the 'City of the future.' Deadline for entries is **1 November 2016**.

Information (in Dutch, French, German and English), rules and entry forms are available at

<http://musea.sint-niklaas.be/exlibris/grafiekbiennale/concours-wettbewerb-competition> or by email to [museum.competition2017@sint-niklaas.be](mailto:museum.competition2017@sint-niklaas.be)

## The Society's Bookplate Design Award 2016

Initially suggested by Nick Ingleton at the 2015 Annual General Meeting, the Design Award took clearer form during discussion at the 2016 Annual General Meeting, when it was decided to target art and design students attending Australian tertiary institutions as entrants. At the meeting, a small committee was formed to develop the idea and make it happen; it consists of Nick Ingleton, Bronwyn Vost, Monica Oppen, Juanita Hattersley, Ronald Cardwell and myself. The first major task was to compile a list of appropriate contacts for the relevant university and college courses, and this huge job, entailing many phone calls and emails around the country, was largely the work of Bronwyn Vost, with assistance from Monica Oppen, Andrew Peake, Jennifer Rogers and Kathryn Lovejoy. Importantly, a number of members — Nick Ingleton, Pat Corrigan, Paul Feain of Sydney Rare Book Auctions and Ronald Cardwell — generously promised funding for the prizes. In the meantime, Akky Van Ogtrop, art patron and president of the Print Council of Australia, offered to be a judge of the Award, and Steven Miller, Librarian at the Art Gallery of New South Wales's Edmund and Joanna Capon Research Library, agreed to provide the venue to exhibit the Award finalists. Tasks which have fallen to me, in addition to assisting in the above duties, are to devise **Competition rules**, an **Entry Form** and **Poster**, and to add a Bookplate Design Award 2016 page to the Society's website.

Indicative dates at present are: submission deadline, 16 September; exhibition, 12 October to 16 December. Check out the web page which is now active at [www.bookplatesociety.org.au/designaward](http://www.bookplatesociety.org.au/designaward)

## Editorial

Firstly, I must express my apologies for the lateness of this issue, which tho' showing a June cover date is likely to be out in early August; I can use as an excuse only the work involved in preparing for the Society's Bookplate Design Award later in the year. And speaking of the latter, this year's Annual General Meeting featured vital discussions which crystallised our directions for the Award, and we have made huge headway with preparations.

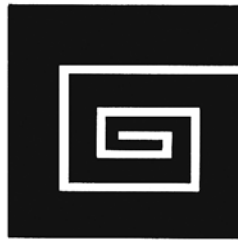
Coincidences abounding as they do, I became aware by serendipity of the bookplate exhibition and award being conducted by Megalo Print Studio + Gallery in Canberra, and was able to convince my wife and some good friends to join me on a quick trip to attend the function where the awards were announced. The guest speaker, artist and eminent letterpress printer, Caren Florance, was kind enough to allow me to reproduce her both witty and considered speech in the *Newsletter*, whilst Megalo permitted me to reproduce some of the designs to accompany it.

I also wish to acknowledge other contributors to this issue of the *Newsletter*: Jürgen Wegner, who has contributed on a number of previous occasions, has written an article featuring a bookplate which is an actual miniature brass plate — the first I have seen; Dunedin (NZ) member Dr David Skegg readily accepted my request to visit a fascinating exhibition at the Dunedin Public Library and to provide a short report of its bookplate aspects, and Julian Smith, Reed Rare Books and Special Collections Librarian, was kind enough to provide a number of high quality images to go with the article.

Finally, those observant among you may note in the *Newsletter* masthead the Shakespearean bookplate for Dr Thomas Greenaway, a wood engraving by Paul Beadle, 1945, which we included as a small nod to the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death.

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AUSTRALIAN  
SOCIETY OF  
MINIATURE  
ART • (NSW)



## AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF MINIATURE ART (NSW)

### **National Awards Exhibition 2016**

Judged by Michael Herron

You and your friends are invited to the opening  
Friday 5 August at 6.30 pm

Exhibition continues until 3.00pm, Saturday, 20 August

Ewart Gallery opening hours:

Monday to Friday 9.30 am – 4.30 pm

Saturday 10.00 am – 3.00 pm

[www.asmansw.com](http://www.asmansw.com)

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Any bookplate designer wishing to be the subject of a Designer profile or to have work reproduced in the Newsletter should contact the Editor on 02 9428 2863 or by email. The Society's website may be found if you go to [www.stoploughing.com.au/bookplatesociety](http://www.stoploughing.com.au/bookplatesociety)

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