

Editor/President

Dr Mark Ferson
4 Sofala Ave
Riverview NSW 2066
0401 141 890
m.ferson@unsw.edu.au

Secretary

Bronwyn Vost
bronwynvost@bigpond.com

Designer

Mary Keep
mary.keep@gmail.com



Jeff Bidgood and his contribution to bookplates

By Mark J Ferson, Sydney

(based largely on an interview that Mark conducted with Jeff on Thursday 2 August 2018)

Jeff Bidgood has been a great supporter of bookplates in Sydney through his activities with the Book Collectors' Society of Australia — to be discussed later — and by generously encouraging younger bookplate collectors, including the author.

Brought up in Sydney, at the age of eighteen Jeff enlisted in 1945 in the Royal Australian Air Force, working as a pay clerk and photographer, and was discharged in 1948, marrying Jeannie Fraser that year. He was introduced to bookplates because his father-in-law, Jack Fraser, last Superintendent of the Triggs Pastoral Estates, was aware of the use of an armorial bookplate by A B Triggs^[1], and was keen to obtain one for his own use. Exploring the possibilities of commissioning a bookplate was a task given to Jeff and his wife Jeannie. They approached a number of booksellers and finally at Fred Jones' bookshop in Hunter Street, the proprietor directed him to a customer browsing the shelves, Colin Berckelman. Colin was one of the founding members and a driving force behind the Book Collectors' Society of Australia, and had also built up a substantial bookplate collection, acquired in 1969 by the Fisher Library at the University of Sydney^[2].

Although the plan for Jeff's father-in-law to have a bookplate lapsed, the Bidgoods decided they wanted a bookplate for themselves, and Berckelman introduced them to P Neville Barnett, who offered to arrange a commission. However, his prices were not affordable, but through Jeannie's connections as a kindergarten teacher and her interest in children's books, they were able to ask children's book illustrator Margaret Horder, who had just returned to Sydney after 15 years in London^[3], to design

their first bookplate for them. Their next foray into commissions was, through Colin Berckelman's good offices, to have Sydney cartoonist Cecil John 'Unk' White design two fairy bookplates for the Bidgood's young daughters Linda and Jillian.

Around this time, Jeff made his own excursion into bookplates, completing three linocuts for himself, wife Jeannie and a friend Alan Hawkins, the latter a two-colour design obviously inspired by the multicolour linocuts of George D Perrottet. He continued to build up his bookplate collection, frequently discovering them in old books found in secondhand bookshops and opp shops at a



Design in pen and ink by Margaret Horder for Jean and Jeff Bidgood, 1950

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time when bookplate collecting had fallen out of fashion, but Jeff also noted the encouraging role of the older collectors such as Berckelman, Barnett, Fred Lane, George Boreham and James Tyrrell who generously gave Jeff copies of their own bookplates and spares they had gained by swapping with others^[4]. Many years later, when secondhand book dealer Dorothy Quinn noticed the author's novice interest in bookplates and asked Jeff and I if we wished to make contact with each other, this pattern was repeated with Jeff giving me many duplicate bookplates and suggesting I join the Book Collectors' Society.

Whilst Jeff's bookplate collection quietly grew, the next phase of his contributions to bookplate lore began after he became active in the Book Collectors' Society after his wife Jeannie's death in 1986. Having joined the Committee in September 1987, the sudden death of the Honorary Treasurer, Jean Stone, on 31 May 1992 led to Jeff's agreeing to act as Secretary for the Society's June 1992 meeting and his position was confirmed by the following meeting, held on 12 September. Jeff had met Betty and they married in 1988 (with Betty making a major contribution to the Society as Honorary Treasurer) and from September 1992, meetings were held at Jeff and Betty's Croydon (Sydney) home.

Jeff had always thought it would be worthwhile putting together a publication on the bookplates of Society members, and

the upcoming golden jubilee celebrations to mark the Society's fiftieth anniversary appeared to provide the perfect opportunity. This project became *Australian bookplates: an illustrated collection from members of the Book Collectors' Society of Australia* (ed. Jeff Bidgood and Mark Ferson), of which 100 copies were printed; numbers 1 to 35 including tipped-in bookplates and were reserved for those members who had supplied them. *Australian bookplates* was launched at the golden jubilee celebrations on 26 March 1994, and was the first number in a new Society publication series in A5 format titled 'Studies in Australian Bibliophily'. Two more of the A5 booklets followed from Jeff's pen based on his research in various libraries: J Bidgood (ed.), *Special purpose bookplates of Australian libraries (I): Dixon Library of the University of New England* (1995, with 16 bookplates shown, Studies in Australian Bibliophily no. 2) — this library was chosen as Jeff had personal contacts in the New England district and was visiting on a regular basis; and J Bidgood (ed.), *Special purpose bookplates of Australian libraries (II): State Library of Queensland* (1997, with 14 bookplates, Studies in Australian Bibliophily no. 4).

It should be noted that Jeff took on the entire responsibility for the production of the new series including desktop design, dealing with the printer, taking of orders and despatch of copies. Although number 5 in the series, B Taylor (ed.), *Fellows of the book: a volume of essays commemorating the 50th anniversary of Biblionews*, 2000, was not a bookplate work, Jeff 'compiled and designed' it as well as contributing an essay 'Lending library bookplates' (pp. 219-31). Number 6, the author's *P Neville Barnett: Australian genius with books* was a multi-author work published in 2003 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of Barnett's death. It was, again, 'compiled and designed' by Jeff who, again, contributed a chapter, in this case the 'Introduction' which put before the reader his recollections of Barnett. The last publication in this series — to date, at least — was number 7, *Mark Ferson, bookplate artist* (2009) and was entirely Jeff's initiative, although it did require some degree of cooperation from its subject.

In addition to the 'major works' described above, Jeff has over the years written a number of bookplate-related articles, which have appeared in *Australiana*, *Biblionews and Australian Notes & Queries* and more recently the New Australian Bookplate Society's *Newsletter*. Having passed his ninetieth year, Jeff has had to downsize but his collection numbering over 3000 bookplates remains in family hands; he was made a life member of the Book Collectors' Society of Australia some years ago for long service to that body, and he retains his membership of the New Australian Bookplate Society and a continuing keen interest in bookplates.

[1] Jeff Bidgood. A collector of collections. *Biblionews and Australian notes & queries*, no. 313, Mar. 1997, pp. 17-27

[2]. Berckelman collection. *Australian Library Journal*, supp., Aug. 1969, pp. 78-9

[3]. Walter McVitty. *Authors & illustrators of Australian children's books*. Sydney: Hodder & Staunton, 1989; pp. 98-9

[4]. Mark Ferson. The Australian bookplate collector — a vanishing species. *Biblionews and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 278, Jun. 1988, pp. 35-8

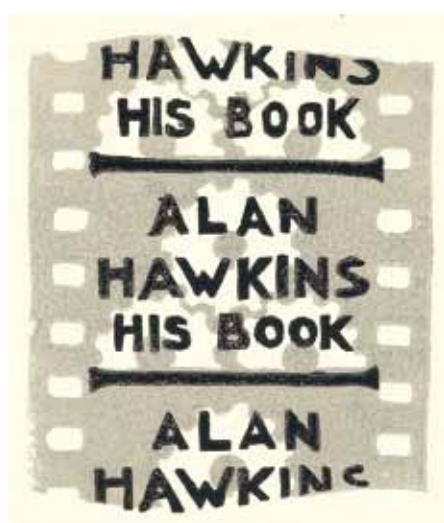
The power of bookplates

By Elisabeth Bastian, Blackheath, NSW

If we stop for a few moments and reflect on the course of our lives, many of us can recall a pivotal moment that determined our fate. For me, it was receiving a book prize for English at High School and seeing my migrant parents' immense pride and joy when I was presented with it in front of the whole school. To have their first daughter master, and excel in, a language that was foreign to them, was a dream come true.

There is a long history of recognising achievements with book awards and one of the most delightful trends that developed alongside this was the designing of bookplates to go inside them. I was lucky enough to know how exciting it is to receive them on numerous subsequent occasions and, as a result, books and bookplates have been linked to great joy and great pride, leading to a lifelong passion for both. For me they are intimate embodiments of dreams come true.

Years later, while studying to become an art teacher in Sydney, this passion led me



Two-colour linocut by Jeff Bidgood for Alan Hawkins, c. 1950s

to work for Louella Kerr Books in Paddington. While there I simply couldn't resist collecting more and more of these endearing and inspiring miniature artworks as I discovered them in the books that passed through Louella's shop.

It was here that I met Dr Mark Ferson, an equally passionate collector of books and bookplates, and so began a lifelong friendship and shared interest that eventually led to the launching of the New Australian Bookplate Society on 22 October 2005.

One of the great joys we shared was not just collecting bookplates, but also starting to produce our own. One of my first bookplates was for Louella Kerr, drawn from the desk in her bookshop during a few quiet moments between customers.

Mark and I were both passionate about early Australian printmakers and I eventually went on to produce linocut and etched bookplates as well as hand drawn ones. In 1990, after opening my own bookshop in Orange, I also adapted a beautiful old bookplate I discovered (that was out of copyright!) and turned it into a bookmark that I gave away with books I sold in my shop.

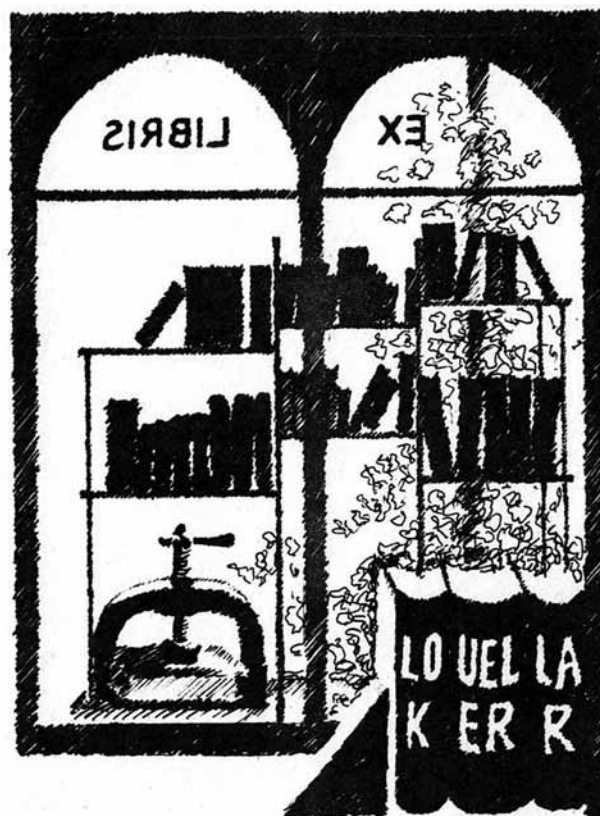
I've always found bookplates a unique way of linking my passions for both books and art, and while I was a student, they were also a way of making often high quality art very accessible as a result of traditional printmaking techniques.

In 2002, my husband Ian Dalkin and I opened Stop Laughing This is Serious Gallery in Blackheath. The gallery specialised in cartooning and illustration, so when Mark and I came up with the idea of having an exhibition of bookplates as a prelude to possibly launching a Bookplate Society, I leapt at the opportunity. For the first time, many of my favourite bookplates were framed and hung in a gallery and their artistic merits were able to be recognised — and appreciated by many, not just by book and bookplate collectors!

A year later in Sydney, on 22 October 2006, a meeting to form the New Australian Bookplate Society was held. The draft constitution was accepted, and office bearers were elected.

While I no longer have a gallery, bookplates are tucked into many nooks and crannies throughout my house ... on walls, in beautiful boxes and, of course, in books.

In *Remembrance of things past*, Marcel Proust wrote about the incredible power of scents to trigger memory. For me, opening a book and seeing a bookplate transports me back in time to that exciting moment when I was presented with my first book prize in front of my proud parents — a powerful moment that determined the course of my life.



Above: Pen-and-ink design by Elisabeth Bastian for Louella Kerr, c. 1980s

Hand-coloured linocut by Elisabeth Bastian for herself, c. 1980s



Designing for the New Australian Bookplate Society

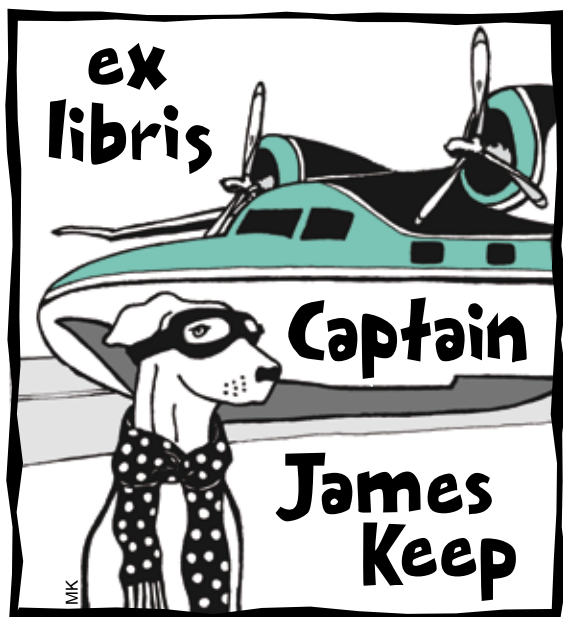
By Mary Keep, Sydney

I first made a linocut bookplate in 1989 for a friend, when I was doing a printmaking course at East Sydney Technical College (now the National Art School). This was followed by a second linocut bookplate in 1991. In 2005, I was commissioned by a friend to make a bookplate for his son, and then one for his father; these were both



Above: Mary's favourite design in all 50 issues, is from *Newsletter* no. 2, a woodcut by Valerie Carter for Fred Hiley, 1934

Below: Computer aided design by Mary Keep for her brother, James Keep, 2015



hand drawn and scanned, with lettering added digitally.

I didn't know a lot about *ex libris*, but I was hooked. So in 2005 I did some research, and found that I had just missed an exhibition of bookplates at the Stop Laughing This Is Serious Gallery in Blackheath. I rang and spoke to Lis Bastian, the gallery owner, who was kind enough to invite me to the gallery for a private viewing after the exhibition had closed. She was very generous and seemed pleased to find a fellow enthusiast who might be a prospective member for a planned new society of bookplate lovers!

Lis suggested I contact Mark Ferson, who was organising a meeting to officially form the Society and I did so immediately. Even though the Society had not been officially formed yet, Mark had already decided to start to issue a bookplate bulletin, and that is when I began designing the *Newsletter*, the first issue of which was dated June 2006 and which has been produced on a quarterly basis ever since.

At the official meeting to form the Society, held in Sydney in October 2006, I became the Society's Secretary, but I realised it was not my *forté* and in 2012, very gladly stood down to be replaced by Bronwyn Vost, who continues to do a wonderful job.

It has been a joy working on the *Newsletter* (as well as the two editions of the *Index*, the *Directory of members*, annual membership forms, the odd flyer designed to promote

the Society and the AGM invite cards). It is always interesting to see the content Mark gathers together for the *Newsletter* and so many beautiful bookplates. I've come to know the work of many brilliant artists, my particular favourites being Adrian Feint, George D Perrottet, Eirene Mort and Hilda Wiseman. At times it's a fiddle, either to make all the copy and illustrations fit, or if the material doesn't fill the usual six or eight pages, to request more copy and/or images to fill the available space.

It takes me on average three hours to design each issue, which I do using Adobe InDesign. I feel we

are very fortunate to have such an excellent printer in Siung Tan (proprietor of Sydney Design & Print). He has been printing our *Newsletters* from the beginning, and always seems to go to great trouble to make sure the printing is carried out to a high standard on a good paper stock.

It's hard to believe we are up to issue number 50. We have received a lot of positive feedback regarding this publication, which is very gratifying, for a labour of love.

The Eirene Mort bookplate collection — a gift from the Mort family to the New Australian Bookplate Society

By Bronwyn Vost, Sydney

As a result of contributing some items to the Canberra Museum and Gallery exhibition *Eirene Mort: a livelihood*, I met the exhibition's Curator, Dale Middleby. On becoming aware of my interest in Eirene's bookplates and also of my status as Secretary of the New Australian Bookplate Society, Dale asked me to deliver an exhibition Floor Talk on the topic (see *Newsletter* no. 47). At the same time I met Tim Thelander, a great-nephew of Eirene's and Executor of her estate.

When the exhibition was dismantled, Tim began to look for appropriate permanent housing for a great deal of valuable art work which had been held within the family since Eirene's death in 1977. We are extremely fortunate that he considered our Society the best home for Eirene's personal collection of nearly 1,000 bookplates by the artists of Eirene's era, mostly Australian but some overseas. There is also a box of metal line blocks for printing eight of her own designs, wrapped in brown paper, one of which has a label from the Sydney printer and stationer Turner & Henderson, dated 13 March 1911 and annotated variously 'Block', 'Ross-Johnson' [the owner of the bookplate], 'Miss Mort' and 'Call'.

There are 974 plates in all according to my count, arranged in seven albums, alphabetically according to the name of the owner. Unfortunately, the albums containing the A and B names are not part

of this collection, and must have become separated off at some earlier stage. What makes the collection very accessible, and brings joy to my librarian heart, is the fact that it includes a fine catalogue, written in Eirene's neat script. Each plate is catalogued according to: owner, method, artist, date (if given) and country of origin. This makes it relatively easy to gain an overview of the collection or to search for a particular individual. Mary Keep and I are transcribing Eirene's 40-page handwritten catalogue into a spreadsheet and once I have scanned the catalogue we will be able to put it up on the Society's website in the form of images and as well as a searchable document.

So far I have done a count of plates by some of the better-known Australian artists. There are 138 by George D Perrottet, 84 by Eirene Mort herself, 28 by Adrian Feint, 27 by Ella Dwyer, 11 by Phillip Litchfield, 10 by L Roy Davies, 10 by Norman Lindsay, 10 by Lionel Lindsay, 8 by Eric Thake, 8 by Percy Neville Barnett, 6 by Margaret Oppen and 5 by Pixie O'Harris. A few famous names make cameo appearances with one plate each — Ruby Lindsay, Hugh McCrae, Thea Proctor, Lloyd Rees, Tom Roberts and Sydney Ure Smith.

Our job now is to ensure that the collection is housed and conserved in such a way that it can be viewed but also kept safe from damage. Mark and I are examining various options in this regard.

David Graham, bookplate collector extraordinaire

By Ian Thwaites, Auckland

David Henry Graham (1885–1965) was probably best remembered for his valuable monograph, *A treasury of New Zealand fishes* (A H & A W Reed, 1953). The former farmer, mosquito research officer and marine biologist was also an avid bookplate collector. In 1963 he gave his collection of over 4,000 plates to the Alexander Turnbull Library, augmenting what was already one of the pre-eminent institutional collections in the country, along with Auckland War Memorial Museum, Auckland Public and Hocken Libraries.

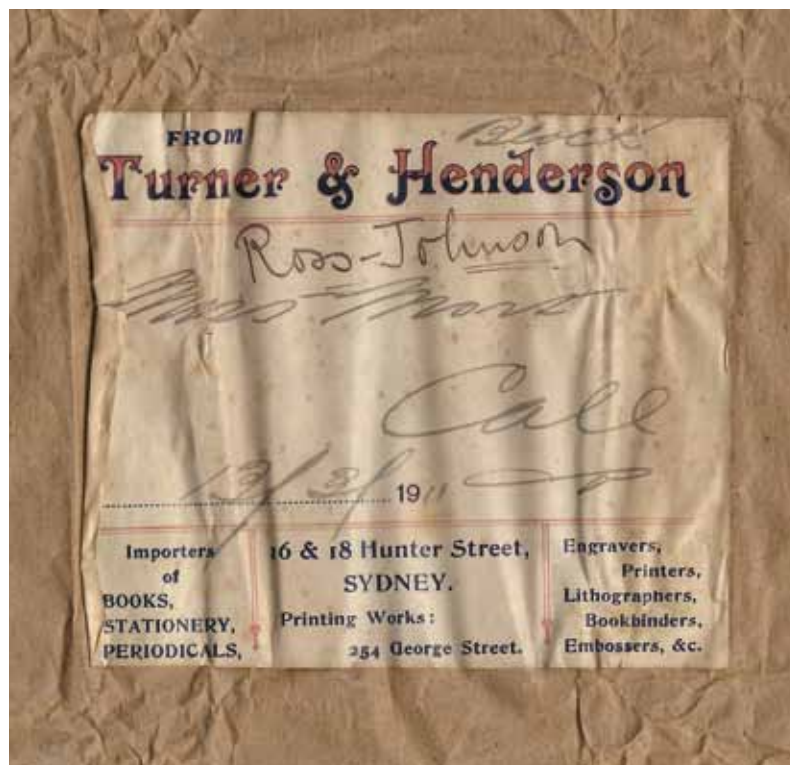
That he amassed his collection under distressing circumstances was most admirable, given continued ill-health over many years. He was in fact bed-ridden for the last 10 years of his life and after a stroke further rendered his right hand useless, valiantly typed letters with his unaccustomed left hand.

David Graham had been randomly collecting bookplates for many years when in 1949, Turnbull Librarian C R H Taylor suggested that he compile a



Above: One of the 'H' pages from an album in Eirene Mort's bookplate collection

Below: Wrapper with Turner & Henderson label for line block for Mort's bookplate for Violet Ross-Johnson, 1911



book about New Zealand bookplates. This project appealed immensely to the ever-enthusiastic Graham and so for the next ten years or so he set about writing letters to New Zealand and overseas addresses, actively seeking items for inclusion. And how successful his zeal proved. The results of his amazing efforts in locating New Zealand ex libris alone can be found in plates contained in folders at the Turnbull Library (listed online). Helpfully, his own typed annotations have been kept with the plates, in many cases on the card mounting, sometimes including transcripts of responses from artists and plate owners. Although the book (which was to be modelled on Percy Neville Barnett's *Australian book-plates*) never came to fruition, his gifts of plates and bookplate literature have proved to be a wonderful legacy.

It became apparent to me some years ago that many of the items in his New Zealand collection did not appear to be held elsewhere, at least not in the two principal Auckland repositories, Auckland War Memorial Museum and Auckland Public Libraries. About three years ago I embarked on an exercise to research some of these bookplates. I identified 200 items in this category and to date have studied 80. Now and then my judgement has been faulty and I have subsequently discovered examples in Auckland but that has not reduced the pleasure of this exercise — as

one can imagine, they are all mostly little-known items anyway!

And what great fun it has been, discovering the hidden talents of so many of the artists and owners whom David Graham sought out and retrieved so enthusiastically over 60 years ago. Not unexpectedly, these names are often well documented in sources such as electoral rolls, school, club and society histories, almanacs and of course online newspaper archives such as Papers Past, our equivalent of Trove (Australia).

Other factors have also made my researches less daunting. When David Graham was seeking out his treasures, New Zealand had a much smaller population, and it was a time when 'everyone seemed to know just about everyone else!' David himself, over 60 when he began the project, having lived in all four main cities, had many contacts. Connections with knowledgeable and willing ex libris friends such as Pat Lawlor, Ronald Holloway, Mervyn Taylor, Violet Markham Jones and Hilda Wiseman were a great help, even though they may not have been actively collecting at that time. It wasn't all plain sailing, however — poet and typographer Denis Glover apparently never answered Graham's pleas despite several requests for help accompanied by stamp addressed envelopes! And in case you may be wondering, yes, Graham did have his own bookplates, being the recipient of designs by Hilda Wiseman, E Mervyn Taylor, Ronald Holloway (2), Ella Dwyer, James Berry, Jessie Jackson — later, Mrs Graham, Sam Harris, Adele Younghusband (2) and Theunis Broekstra.

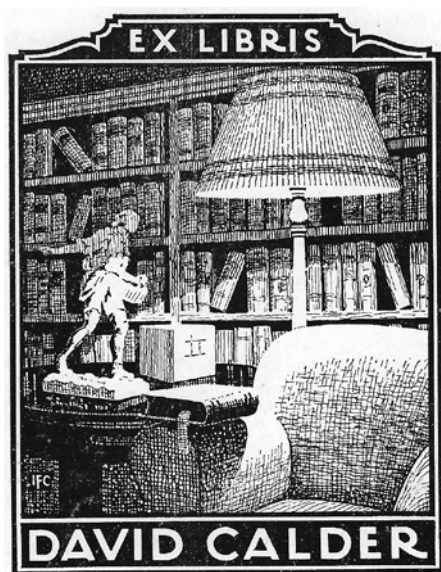
Now to comment on some of the bookplates. To make things reasonably succinct I will keep my specific comments to a small selection of items. David Graham's large collection of overseas ex libris do not form the subject of this article. Grateful thanks are due to Barbara Lyon, Curator of Ephemera at the Alexander Turnbull Library who provided me with copies of selected bookplates.

Not surprisingly, Graham was able to locate plates of those with bookplate connections. Turnbull Chief Librarian Clyde Romer Hughes Taylor was a major figure during the final years of the New Zealand Ex Libris

and Booklover's Society (ceased 1960) — his is an unusual choice, drawing its inspiration from Rafael Sabatini, accompanied by the inscription 'The Glowing Page Afire, With All the Chivalry of Yore'. James Berry (1906–79) enjoyed an enviable reputation for his skill as a coin and medal designer. He was, in addition, an enthusiastic member of the New Zealand Ex Libris Society (NZELS) and a designer of at least ten bookplates, including that for Philip Levy, a colleague of Berry's at Goldberg Advertising Agency, 1927–32. The gun carriage denotes Levy's keen interest in artillery, for during the 1930s he was active in the New Zealand Territorial forces. Major P B Levy, 4th Field Regiment, NZ Artillery was killed in action on 24 July 1942.

The indomitable Mrs Violet Markham Jones was a tower of strength in the Wellington bookplate world. As Mrs Violet Wakelin, she was NZELS secretary and treasurer from the mid-1930s to the 1950s and, like her Auckland counterpart Hilda Wiseman, supplied material for several ex libris exhibitions. Included in the Graham Collection is a simple plate for her son Ronald Wakelin, featuring the crest of Wellington College and the school's motto 'Lumen Accipe et Imperti'. Furthermore, given her long association with the British and Foreign Bible Society, she is likely to have helped her friend David Graham to locate many other items. Wellington architect Ian F Calder was the son of British and Foreign Bible Society secretary Reverend David Calder. Ian Calder supplied an attractive design for Yolande Murray, daughter of pioneer condensed milk producer William Tullibardine Murray, associated with the famous 'Highlander' brand. Island Bay, Wellington, resident Mabel Willard Clapson produced two plates for herself — she was also a member of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Violet's own movements were not always easy to trace, however, for she was thrice-married and died on Vancouver Island the day after her 103rd birthday!

Here are two plates with Welsh associations, both with rebus elements. Christchurch civil servant Frank George Price's plate is an armorial heraldic design accompanied by a punning motto 'Ffyniant Gwasanaeth Pris, ie 'Prosperity is the Reward



Pen-and-ink drawing by Ian F Calder for David Calder, c. 1935

of Service' which embodies the double punning elements of the owner's initials and the word 'Pris' (prize or reward). Medical practitioner Charles Arundel Overbury Fox (1887–1971) settled in Britain, although his homeland was not forgotten, hence his pictorial plate which contains the visual pun of a fox peering out to sea from the cliffs of Gower (West Glamorgan) towards 'My native land [New Zealand] which I shall never see again'. Perhaps as consolation, he became a discerning collector of early New Zealand and Pacific art.

Bookplates for and by women can be found aplenty. Joan Fanning (1912–2000) was a respected Wellington watercolourist who is well represented in New Zealand galleries. Her linocut design appropriately features a large fan bearing the owner's surname. Elsie Euphemia Andrews (1888–1948), a courageous New Plymouth primary teacher, was known as 'a woman of parts, a great feminist and pacifist'. Fittingly, her own pen-drawn plate shows 'a small craft sailing towards a rocky coast'. Elizabeth Brown added something relatively unusual — A bookplate without words. Her beautiful drawing of Wellington harbour (1954) forms the plate for her mother Mrs Joye Taylor, a prolific writer of plays (with music) and verses for children. There is also a charming tribute to Miss Nellie Dutton, Principal, Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association, 1922–38, depicting a young boy and girl, drawn by former pupil Miss E Reid.

Educators are well represented. Here are three examples: Alfred Edward Caddick OBE was Headmaster, Christchurch Boys' High School — his passions for Kipling, Shakespeare and cricket are well portrayed by artist Colin Lovell-Smith; by the 1930s themes relating to Māori were increasingly popular, aptly represented in a plate for Feilding Agricultural High School Memorial Library by teacher Charles Sayers (1936) which features the motto: Kia Toa, Kia Ngakau Nui, signifying courage and strength of character and Huia feathers denoting leadership and mana; in 1951, well-known Christchurch artist W A Sutton supplied a line drawing for his friend, sculptor and Canterbury College of Art lecturer Thomas James Taylor.

Not surprisingly, many armorial ex libris can be found. 'Ex Libris P H W Nevill (Nec Volentes Volare)' is the 1937 plate for Philip Hugh Walter Nevill, grandson of Samuel Tarratt Nevill, first Anglican Bishop of Dunedin and Primate of New Zealand; 'Arthur and Marion Harper: Coelum Non Animum' (1911) reminds us of lawyer, mountaineer and conservationist Arthur Paul Harper CBE (1865–1955), grandson of Bishop Henry Harper, first Anglican Bishop of Christchurch; Reginald James Richards (1893–1950) was Headmaster, Christ's College, 1932–50 and like Nevill and Harper, a former pupil of the famous Christchurch secondary school. His semi-armorial plate contains the seals of Christ's College and Canterbury University College, and, in addition, images of the chapels at Clifton College, Bristol (where he taught) and Christ's College.

Two plates with Australian significance come to mind, firstly that of Victor Edward Galway (1894–1960) who was organist, Cairns Memorial Church, East Melbourne and then at St Andrew's Uniting Church, Brisbane (1913–19), before coming to New Zealand, where his contributions to the Dunedin musical scene included many years as City Organist and Blair Professor of Music, Otago University. His bookplate was designed in 1938 by A H McLintock, later a noted historian and editor of the three volume *An encyclopaedia of New Zealand* (1966). Marjorie Wingate left New Zealand for Australia in 1937 and worked as a journalist, becoming a sub-editor for the *Daily Mirror*, Sydney, before her marriage to Wilfred Leslie Stapleton in 1943. Her bookplate was drawn by Donald George Croll in 1936. Although David Graham made few errors of attribution, the plate for Victor Singer by Karel Vik (see *Australian personal bookplates* by Andrew Peake, p. 181) is certainly not New Zealand-related! It is also worth remembering that Sydney etcher Ella Dwyer was a friend — she visited David Graham in 1951 while on a cruise in the *Dominion Monarch*.

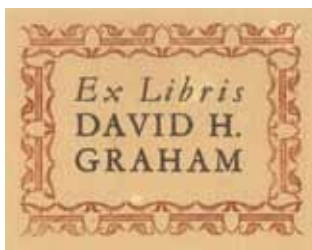
And there are more treasures to ponder: D F Lagan owned what is almost certainly a Book Society universal plate designed by Robert Gibbins; some plates are

commendably plain but effective. That for A R Hughes depicts a tiger such as can be found in Ceylon where he was New Zealand Honorary Agent in Colombo during the 1930s (undoubtedly, Arthur Hughes' best-known bookplate was that by Australian war artist Vaughan Murray Griffin which reflects his imprisonment in Changi Gaol in World War II); Taranaki artist Bernard Aris invariably included iconic Mount Egmont in his work — a central feature of the plate for New Plymouth draper Percy James Hoyland White; well-known Auckland cartoonist Neil Lonsdale provided an affectionate caricature of a colleague, the bespectacled commercial artist Robert Turnidge; Reverend H H Fountain's plate is no more interesting than the accompanying letter he wrote to David Graham in which he describes the lovely surroundings of Cothelstone Vicarage in West Bagborough, near Taunton, Somerset, where he relocated after leaving Christchurch. This was close to the Quantock Hills where S T Coleridge wrote much of his poetry.

To complete this glance into the past, here are two worthy plate-owners with very differing backgrounds. Rev Percy Paris (1882–1942) was a Wellington Methodist minister and political and social activist who challenged church and society to act on behalf of the poor, vulnerable and voiceless.



Scissor-cut bookplate by Theunis (Tom) Broekstra for David Graham, 1953



Typographic design by Ronald Holloway for David Graham

Christian pacifism, monetary reform and support for the welfare state were just three of the causes which he espoused. As with many bookplates in the Graham Collection his bears a Latin motto 'Manus ad clavum. Oculus ad coelum'. Egon Schoenberger (1914–78) was one of the few Jewish people who escaped the Holocaust and came to New Zealand. Upon arrival in September 1939 he exclaimed 'I think I shall like it, as they say here', which he did, becoming librarian at Ruakura Animal Research Station, Hamilton. Schoenberger's translated diary, a poignant reminder of his past, became the basis of a 24 part blog which accompanied the 2018 Anne Frank Exhibition at Auckland War Memorial Museum. Originally a line drawing by Oscar Wilhelm, Mainz, 1928, the bookplate was adapted to include his wife Eileen, thus 'Ex Libris Eileen & Egon Schoenberger: Nil Difficile Volenti'.

Notes and happenings

Publications

BIDGOOD, JEFF. Nancy Lambert Johnson further remembered. *BibliNews and Australian Notes & Queries* no. 398, Jun 2018; p. 108
Shows one of Nancy Johnson's bookplates by Vane Lindesay.

COLLINS, R T. Book-plates. *Sydney PICA Bulletin*, Sep 1951 (unpaginated)
A brief overview of bookplates in this Sydney printing industry magazine [courtesy of Jürgen Wegner]

FERSON, MARK. Appendix VII. An introduction to the Australian Ex Libris Society, in, *Letters from Daisy. Letters from Daisy, Margaret (née Arnott) Oppen, to her mother, Polly, Mary Eleanor (née Dixon) Arnott, 1929–1934*. Tiliqua press, Sydney, 2018; pp. 314-8, also p. 271

A variety of plates by Margaret Arnott/Oppen reproduced [with thanks to Monica Oppen]

HEATHCOTE, RICHARD AND ANNA JUG (EDS). *Stanley Spencer: A twentieth-century British Master*. Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 2016; p. 36

Shows two bookplates by A Feint for Richard Smart

[MECHANICS INSTITUTE OF VICTORIA.]

Ex libris. *Useful Knowledge* Winter-Spring 2018, no. 47; pp. 30-31

A book formerly belonging to the Geelong Mechanics' Institute c. 1928 with its bookplate shown

PEAKE, ANDREW. Vale: Glen Ross Ralph (1932-2018). *BibliNews and Australian Notes & Queries* no. 398, Jun 2018; pp. 112-115

Shows the linocut bookplate for Glen Ralph's Wilmar Library by Marie-Claire Ralph.

SINNOTT, NIGEL. More interesting items on my bookshelves. *BibliNews and Australian Notes & Queries* no. 398, Jun 2018; pp. 81-90

As marks of provenance, bookplates of W P Hurst (by G D Perrotet), Enid Milnes Torr, J E Pyke, A Alonza Sheldrick, James Humphrey Skerry (by C H Crampton), Athelstan Rendall (by Sydney Hunt), Enid Derham (for herself) and a prize plate and supralibros from The Leys School, Cambridge (UK), are reproduced.

STITZ, CHARLES. *Australian bookplate collectors* — the final series. *BibliNews and Australian Notes & Queries* no. 398, Jun 2018; pp. 63-70

In this version of an address to the 25 November 2017 Sydney meeting of the Book Collectors' Society, an image of the book label for John Emmerson is shown.

Editorial

Welcome to the **fiftieth** number of the *Newsletter*, it's hard to believe that we have made it this far! As Mary Keep points out, the first number came into being even before the Society was officially formed, and it was her interest which led her to contacting Elisabeth Bastian; Lis introduced Mary to me with words along the lines of 'she's a lovely person and she would make a great designer for the *Newsletter*.' And so here we are. Lis gave me the courage and opportunity to think about turning into

reality my dream of forming a society for bookplate lovers, and without Mary there wouldn't be a *Newsletter* — and a gorgeous one at that. And if you will allow just one further indulgence, I can say that Jeff Bidgood was my bookplate mentor over 30 years ago and introduced me at that time to the Book Collectors' Society of Australia, which has published a number of bookplate items, mostly as a result of Jeff's drive and commitment to our chosen artform.

So this celebratory issue is peopled with the above characters; Lis and Mary have been kind enough to pen their reminiscences of involvement in the world of bookplates and contributions to the Society, and Jeff permitted me, after a bit of arm twisting, to interview him so that we can record the important part that Jeff has played in raising awareness in Australia of the history and art of the bookplate.

But wait, there's more! The Society has been the recipient of an exciting and really important donation: the bookplate albums of Eirene Mort. Mort was an early and major Australian bookplate artist of the pictorial period, who designed her first bookplate in 1902 and by writing to and exchanging with other artists and collectors, she built up her own substantial collection. Bronwyn Vost tells the wonderful story of how this donation came about. Now although we are an Australian society, we have always had a great relationship with our friends across the Tasman, and so Ian Thwaites has added to his long list of bookplate writings by giving us a lovely essay on an important bookplate collection, that of David Graham, which reposes in the Alexander Turnbull Library, part of the National Library of New Zealand in Wellington.

Members who receive the *Newsletter* in hard copy will find some extra inclusions in number 50; Pat Corrigan AM has generously donated copies of some recent bookplates commissioned from Aboriginal artists. In addition, the Bookplate Society (of the United Kingdom) has sent some leaflets about the FISAE Congress being held in Cambridge, UK, in 2020 in the northern hemisphere summer; I understand a number of Australians have already registered and I encourage you to think about going. MF