

**Editor/President**

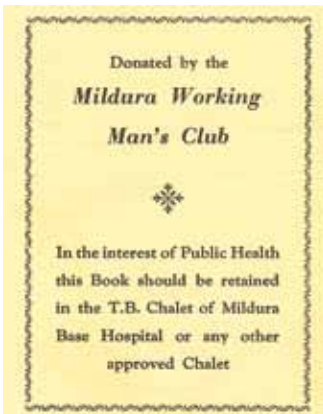
Dr Mark Ferson  
4 Sofala Ave  
Riverview NSW 2066  
0401 141 890  
m.ferson@unsw.edu.au

**Secretary**

Bronwyn Vost  
bronwynvost@bigpond.com

**Designer**

Mary Keep  
mary.keep@gmail.com



**My bookplate collection**

Written in 2006 by the late Janet Robinson (1932–2019), submitted by Janet's daughter, Jean Burke, Sydney

Cecil Rhodes gave his bookplate to my grandfather, when he was practising as an architect in Capetown, South Africa, where my mother was born in 1899. The family returned to England and then migrated to Cootamundra in New South Wales. After my grandfather's death when I was aged 14 years, the heraldic bookplate of Cecil Rhodes came into my possession. It started my interest in bookplates.

After I passed the Leaving Certificate, I went to the Macquarie Secretarial College for a year, where the director, author George Mackaness, knew of my wish to get into the publishing world. He supported me to obtain a job in the Publishing Department of Angus & Robertson in 1951, when it was a family firm in Castlereagh Street. I was incredibly lucky as it was exactly what I wanted.

In those days there were quite a number of second-hand bookshops in Sydney, including those of Angus & Robertson, Dymocks, Stewarts, Tyrrells (beside Wynyard), Greenwood and Ashwoods, near Park Street, and Jones' Bookshop in Hunter Street. I had an hour for lunch, so I would often eat my sandwiches in a hurry, then dash to one of the second-hand bookshops for the rest of my lunch break. Of course, I sometimes didn't come away empty handed! My regular visits also meant I got to know the booksellers, and they learnt of my interest in bookplates. I have the bookplate of bookseller James Tyrrell, which is a wood-engraved design by P Neville Barnett showing two Aboriginal people, one lying down and one armed.

I asked the bookseller Fred Jones if he could save any bookplates from discarded books. He told me that he had built up quite a collection but they had been destroyed in a fire. Fred gave me his own small album of bookplates which

was an incredibly generous thing for him to do. According to an article in the *Australian Genealogist* (May 1949), Mr Jones had been born in 1884 in Essex and arrived in 1907 in Australia, where he became established as a bookseller, interested particularly in genealogy, military history and ethnology. The album he gave me had his personal heraldic bookplate in the front, followed by sixteen pages of bookplates stuck onto a black background. They included those of Josiah Spode, the Victoria League, the Seafarers' Education Service and others of various institutions and individuals such as the Australians Dame Nellie Melba, John Dunmore Lang and Peter Lindsay. I always treasured this small album.

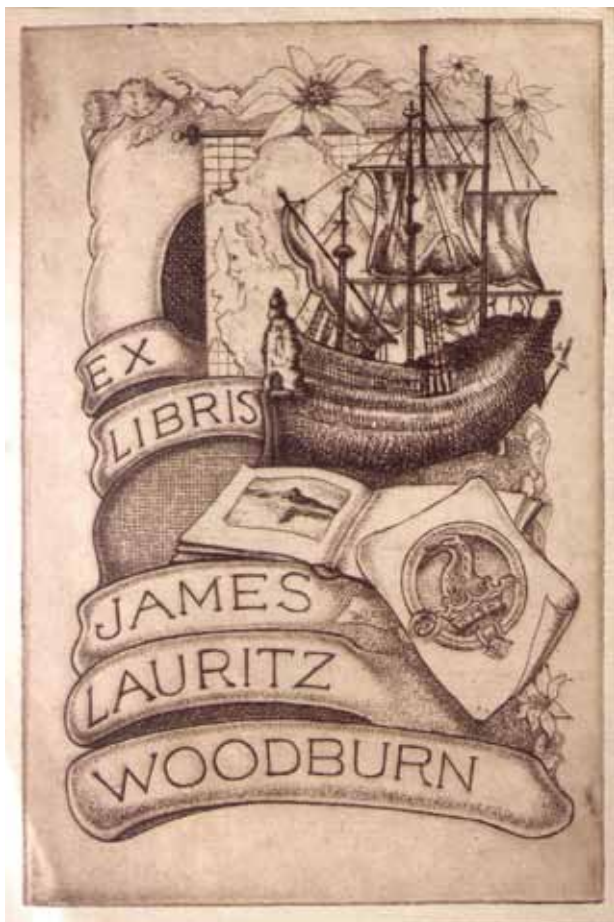
I mentioned my interest to some of the Angus & Robertson authors and so was able to



Pen and ink design for F C Jones c. 1910

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Aquatint bookplate by Harold Byrne for James Lauritz Woodburn, c. 1940s



Ink and wash design by W L Trigg for V J Schofield

add the plates of George Mackaness (design by G C Ingleton), Walter Stone (Raymond Lindsay), M H Ellis, Marjorie Barnard (Harold Byrne), A Gift from the Australian People under the Colombo Plan (Lionel Lindsay), Arthur Robinson (P N Barnett) and Frances Zabel (Adrien Feint). Several are signed in pencil, including a Geoffrey Ingleton design featuring George Howe, the printer of the *Sydney Gazette*, for the Ferguson Collection at the National Library of Australia in Canberra. There is also a microscopic one — the size of a postage stamp — for Frank Clune.

With the help and encouragement of booksellers, authors and staff at A & R, I built up a small collection of about 100 bookplates. Four of my favourites, which I later had framed, are by Alfred Henry Fullwood for Rubery Bennett, showing a man comfortably seated in an armchair in front of an open fire; by W Mahony for Allan McClure, showing Don Quixote and the mill; by H J Weston for P Neville Barnett, with an illustration from the *Sentimental Bloke*; and by Lionel Lindsay for Camden Morrisby, illustrating a famous Dr Johnson episode.

Another favourite is a humorous one for Captain Francis de Groot, in which the Sydney Harbour Bridge is displayed with a banner reading 'The sword is mightier than the scissors'. This refers to how, as a member of the Home Guard at the opening of the Bridge, he rode up on a white horse and cut the ribbon with a sword. I am also very fond of a bookplate which belonged to a friend of my parents, Jim Woodburn (1900–1952). It encapsulates his Norse ancestry, with a map and ship, together with his Scottish connection, with a thistle and a crest. The flannel flowers are for his Australian wife, Dulcie née Harding.

For all my interest, I only ever used bookplates that you buy in packets, like my mother had. I never thought of having one designed for myself. To me, bookplates are perfect art miniatures and go nicely with my love of books, but unlike books, they take up little space. I attended bookplate exhibitions in 1984 [possibly Proud's Second Bookplate Exhibition] and 'The Art of the Bookplate' in 1996 [marking the Pat Corrigan donation to the Art Gallery of NSW Research Library], and was pleased to join the New Australian Bookplate Society when it was founded. It would be great if there was a revival of interest in the bookplate.

### Bookplate collections: Monash University, Melbourne

By Clare Presser, Melbourne

Monash University Library has an extensive collection of bookplates. A selection of these can be accessed through **Monash Collections Online** <http://hdl.handle.net/1959.1/964402> the home of the Library's digitised Special Collections.

Part of the collection showcases designs from high profile Australian artists and commissioned by members of the Book Collectors' Society of Australia. Its early members were initially divided about the relevance of collecting these [so-called] ephemera but some went on to commission bookplates and create large collections over an extended period of time.



**Pen and ink design by Vane Lindesay  
for Robert C Littlewood**

Represented in the collection are a number of bookplates designed by the brothers Lionel and Norman Lindsay, both prolific Australian artists of the early 20th century. Lionel, known for his etchings and wood engravings, created more complex and detailed designs than the simple pen-and-ink illustrations showcased in Norman's work. Themes found in Norman's other work can be seen in these designs, including nude women and Australian native animals reminiscent of his illustrations in his children's book *The Magic Pudding*. Lionel and Norman worked together for a series of magazines, including *The Bulletin* (Sydney), of which Norman was a regular editorial and political cartoonist. A Book Collectors' Society member from South Australia, Keith Wingrove, had bookplates by both Lionel and Norman Lindsay, as well as by a number of other artists.

Another artist regularly featured in the collection is Vane Lindesay, who was not only a cartoonist, illustrator, writer

and book designer, but also an Australian cartoon historian. A notable collection item is a Lindesay bookplate for Robert C Littlewood, a collector of Australian art and graphic prints produced between 1895 and 1940, designed on the occasion of his fortieth birthday. This bookplate includes a jester motif, inspired by a famous Lionel Lindsay self-portrait, with the design itself showing a great understanding of the elements required in a bookplate and executed with warmth and humour. Littlewood used the jester frequently, including as part of his business logo and it therefore had increased significance beyond the initial homage to Lionel Lindsay.

Nancy Lambert Johnson, former Sydney treasurer for the Book Collectors' Society of Australia, also had a design by Vane Lindesay. She commissioned his design for his understanding of and interest in 'Lindsayana', an interest that contributed to Johnson's desire to begin her own bookplate collection. Her love of both books and art was fanned by frequent visits to the galleries, museums and libraries of Cologne, during her time working there in 1939.

The bookplate collection at Monash is a testament to thoughtful design by artists that understood, as well as played with, the elements of the tradition of the bookplate itself. Other well known artists represented in the collection are Kenneth Jack, children's author and environmentalist Irena Sibley, wood engraver David Frazer, as well as those from an earlier period, Allan Jordan and J B Godson. Each of these artists brought their own style, melded with the personality of the owners, in order to create something that is not only striking and beautiful, but personal and unique.

Monash University's digitised collection also includes an album, made of a Sands & McDougall 'Returns' ledger, containing the bookplates (101 designs on 19 pp.) and booksellers' tickets (46 pp.) collected by Neil Swift (1890–1960), a Footscray bookseller. It was purchased by the Library from book seller John Dean in 2004.

View the complete **bound album**

<http://hdl.handle.net/1959.1/1300184>

or browse its **individual bookplates** <http://bit.ly/neil-swift>

*Clare Presser is a staff member in the Digitisation and Research Repository team at Monash University Library. Beth Pearson, Research Infrastructure Librarian, Monash University, originally approached the Society regarding the existence of the collection.*

### **A nice little business**

By Jane Gibian, State Library of NSW, Sydney

(This article, which first appeared in *SL Magazine*, Autumn 2020, is reproduced courtesy of the Editor, Cathy Perkins)

Part of daily life in the mid-twentieth century, circulating libraries have left charming traces.

If you walked down a suburban Sydney street in the 1930s or 1940s it's likely you would have passed a small privately run library. Hundreds of 'circulating' or subscription libraries operated from the early twentieth century to the 1960s.

Many smaller libraries charged a one-off joining fee, while larger libraries had a recurring subscription. The Booklovers' Library in Caringbah, for example, had a joining fee of 3 shillings 6 pence (about \$14 today) and a small fee starting at 6 pence (about \$2) to borrow each book. Others, like the Paragon Library at Matraville, had a simple weekly hire rate per book, with no joining fee. Either way, it was much cheaper than buying new books, especially in the Depression era between the Wars.

I was recently drawn into the world of circulating libraries by a request from a reader who was trying to find information about the Viking Library on Sydney Road in Balgowlah. He sent a photograph of an undated label that had been affixed to a book. It stated that the Viking's quarterly subscription rates ranged from 6 shillings for one book at a time to 16 shillings for three books (approximately \$14 to \$39 today). Alternatively, you could pay an entrance fee of 2 shillings and 6 pence, and 3 pence per book (about \$0.64).

I was disappointed to find no mention of a Viking Library in Trove's digitised newspapers, so I did some wider research on circulating libraries. An early example can be seen in a photograph in the Library's Holtermann Collection, which depicts Donald McDonald's Circulating Library in Gulgong in the early 1870s. The number of these libraries increased steeply in the 1930s and peaked in the 1940s. By the end of the Second World War, according to book historian John Arnold, there were around 527 in Sydney.

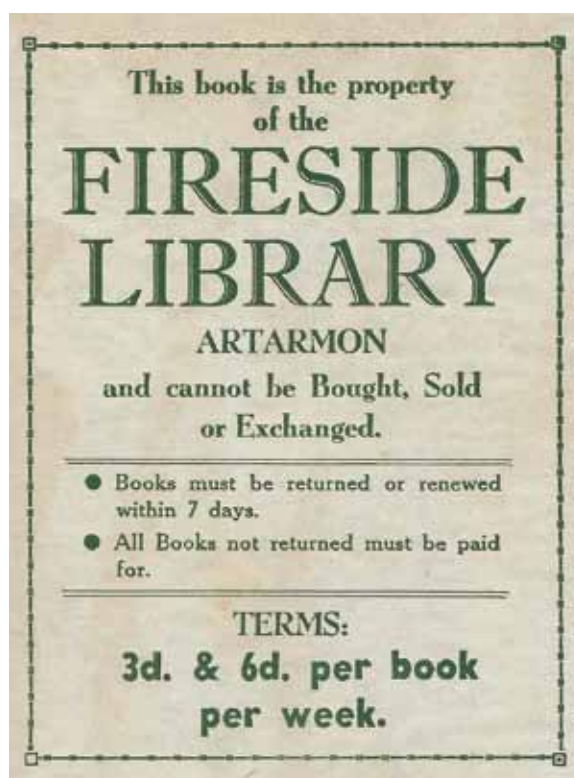
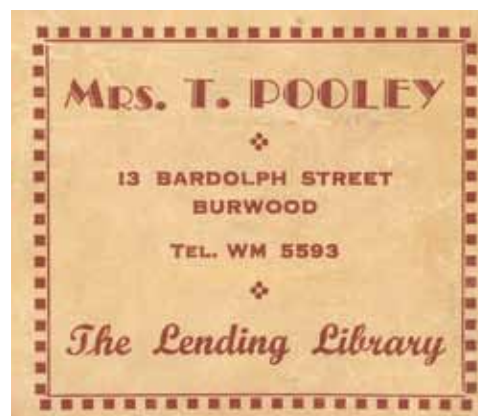
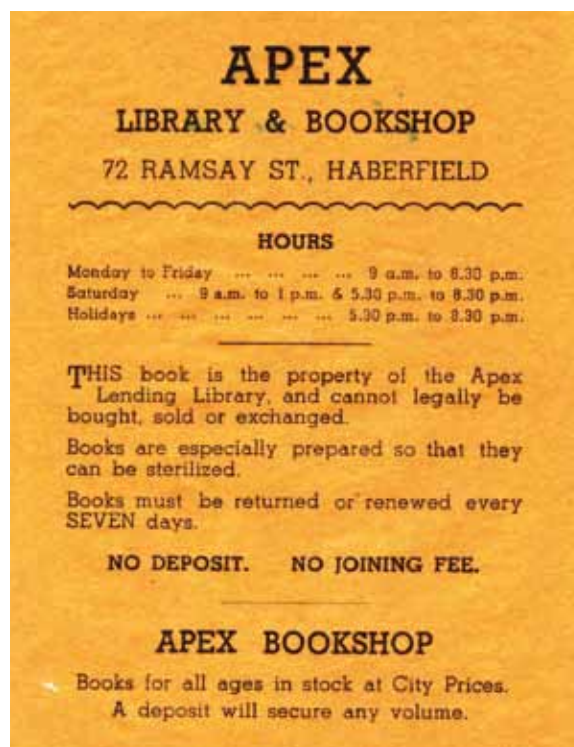
Many of the small circulating libraries dotted through the Sydney suburbs and in regional NSW are represented in a collection of bookplates that was donated to the State Library by Albert Jeffrey (Jeff) Bidgood. A member of the Book Collectors' Society of Australia, Bidgood compiled this collection of more than 1500 bookplates from nearly 1000 libraries of all types across Australia, dating from about 1900 to 2015.

Some of the more evocative names represented in this collection include the Seagull Library in Dee Why and the Pixie Book Inn in Coogee. Other records uncover Roseville's Pagoda Tree Library, and Randwick's Ding-Dong Library. But many small libraries had no other title than the proprietor's name, such as Mrs T Pooley's Lending Library in Burwood, or the suburb name, like Stanmore Lending Library.

Annotations on some of the bookplates give us glimpses of individual reading lives — such as a plate from the Booklovers' Library in Caringbah that shows handwritten borrowing records, and a note to a member with thoughtful suggestions for further reading on a bookplate from the Reader Library in Neutral Bay.

The Viking Library is not represented in the bookplate collection, and my next port of call for tracking it down was *Wise's New South Wales Post Office Directory*. Published from 1886 to 1950, the *Directory* lists businesses and services by area, and is digitised on Trove. By searching within individual directories (though not all years are searchable), you can view listings for libraries by suburb. Libraries in the Bankstown area in 1947, for example, include the Beverley, Moderne, Ideal and Mrs Edna Burton's.

Many circulating libraries were run by married couples or women on their own, and it was clearly considered an appropriate



business for a woman to manage. A 1930 advertisement for a business for sale — ‘Stationery, Library, Fancygoods. £135. In a beautiful and select suburb’ — suggests it is ‘a great chance for 2 ladies’.

I found no mention of the Viking Library in a Wise’s *Directory* until 1940, when it is listed at 83c Condamine Street, Balgowlah. At this time there were 14 libraries in the Manly area, six of them in Balgowlah alone!

In the following year the Viking Library is listed at 290 Sydney Road, Balgowlah, the address on the reader’s label. It appears to have been short-lived, as the 1943 *Directory* has no Viking Library, though it does have a Penguin Library nearby at 291a Sydney Road. But in 1950 the Viking Library is back again at 290 Sydney Road. [*Somewhat coincidentally, I have found a Viking Library bookplate in my collection, and show it here — Ed.*] Some libraries may not have paid for directory listings every year, especially when the proprietors and premises changed frequently. Among the Library’s collection of Australian library bookplates are several for the Penguin Library, one showing the street number altered by hand from 281a to 351 Sydney Rd. Some small circulating libraries moved around frequently due

to changes in ownership, availability of premises and rent increases.

According to Arnold, cheap book reprints meant that a proprietor with limited means could afford a reasonable stock, but the business model of small circulating libraries still had a high failure rate. The turnover is reflected in the frequent changes in the names and number of libraries in Wise’s different *Directory* editions, and in the many advertisements for circulating libraries in newspapers under ‘Businesses for sale.’

These ads show the large number of mixed businesses that included libraries, such as my favourite in Concord in 1924: ‘FOR SALE, NICE LITTLE BUSINESS, BOOT REPAIRING, LEATHER, GRINDERY AND CIRCULATING LIBRARY’. This model was probably sensible, given the rates of competition and failure. Some businesses offered complementary services like stationery products and newsagency stock, and the wide range of combinations included unlikely partners such as employment agencies, florists and pharmacies.

Circulating libraries promoted themselves on book labels and flyers, and larger libraries also advertised in newspapers. Some

trumpeted the value of reading, while others emphasised hygiene. This was sometimes featured in the library’s name: New Vogue Hygienic Library Broadmeadow, Bartrop’s Hygienic Library Adamstown and the Piccadilly Hygienic Library in Coogee. The Booklovers Library (‘Home Delivery Service in Maitland, Kurri, Cessnock town areas’) detailed its book care and hygiene practices on its label, under the motto ‘Clean Books for Clean People’.

A new branch of the Lomax Libraries opening in Parramatta in 1938 emphasised its devotion to hygiene in an advertisement:

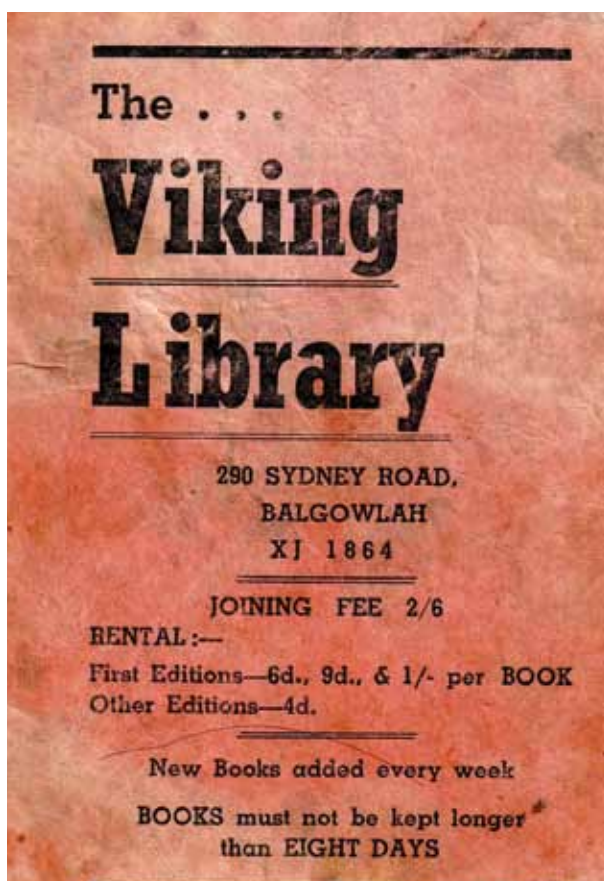
*One notable feature of this library is the manner in which the books are prepared. These books are covered with a preparation that enables them to be washed with a disinfectant if necessary, thus eliminating any risk of infection.*

As well as providing insights into the germ phobia of library patrons, the records of circulating libraries also reveal reading tastes. A survey of loan transactions from an unnamed library in a working-class suburb of Melbourne, quoted by John Arnold in 2001, shows the following breakdown of genres: Romances 25%, Westerns 22%, Mystery 21%, Adventure stories 15%, General literature 10%, Better-class novels 7%.

The stamped front page of *The Scarlet Bikini* by Glynn Croudace, preserved with a bookplate from the Bookery Nook in Neutral Bay, certainly suggests popular fiction. But it is difficult to determine membership, loan figures and readership of circulating libraries’ stock.

The NSW Library Act, passed in 1939, would eventually lead to the provision of free public library services for the people of NSW. No doubt these publicly funded libraries created competition for circulating libraries and hastened their demise. But this effect was not immediate: because of the War, the act was not fully proclaimed until 1944, and some councils took decades to adopt it. The advent of television and cheaper paperback books were other causes for circulating libraries’ decline in the 1950s and 60s, according to Arnold.

Now that these small libraries have disappeared, bookplates, newspaper



advertisements and directories give us fascinating glimpses into a significant aspect of Australian library and social history. As a bookplate for the Paragon Library in Matraville puts it:

*From year to year and day to day,  
Wherever you may be,  
A book is a friend that lightens your way  
And sets you fancy free.*

Further reading

John Arnold. "Choose your author as you would choose a friend": Circulating libraries in Melbourne, 1930–1960.

*La Trobe Journal*, no. 40, Spring 1987; pp. 77–96

John Arnold. 'The Circulating Library Phenomenon', in Arnold J & Lyons M.

*A history of the book in Australia*

1891–1945, St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 2001; pp. 90–99

## Of libraries lost

By Jürgen Wegner, Sydney

As a librarian I guess I should be more interested in libraries — and in book reading. Quite the contrary. My passion is print culture (as distinct from book culture) from the design of typefaces and the manufacture of paper. But it stops once

the printed items have been produced and distributed. Little interest in writers, readers and even libraries. But with one exception — libraries lost.

As is the case with the books themselves, far more libraries have been lost than survive today, now. Libraries were established, flourished for a brief time, and then disappeared totally from sight. Occasionally you see remnants from these "libraries lost" in the form of a bookmark, a flyer or ownership marks such as a bookplate or, more humbly, a rubber stamp. My interest is again in these libraries lost from the printing and related industries. A few examples are the PICA Library in Sydney, the Burnie Mill Library of Associated Pulp and Paper Mills just outside of Hobart, the Graphic Arts Memorial Library at Sydney Technical College, the many Free Lending Libraries from the state branches of the paper merchants B J Ball and the Employees' Library of Websdale Shoosmith, printers in Sydney.

Less well-known than the public and subscription libraries and those of educational institutions are the great many libraries established within Australian companies. Occasionally a remnant of these libraries resurfaces in the form of the odd book in a bookshop or charity book fair like some poor lost soul given up by the sea. Many of the books in these libraries would have been related to their branch of industry and commerce. However, there would also have been collections of recreational reading.

The Australian Gas Light Company is still with us as AGL Energy and this was one such company which provided such a library for its employees. AGL was established in Sydney in 1837 and was the supplier of gas for our first public street lighting in 1841. At a book fair some years ago, I bought a couple of books from their Recreational Section, i.e. Recreational Library.

What did this library contain? How many books? What was its eventual fate? I suspect most would have been destroyed — on its closure and then progressively through attrition — with only the big "L" for Literature books surviving. For these books are two of the longer plays written by T S Eliot. Was the stock of the employees'

choosing or perhaps, and more probably, part of an edifying culture by management? The first is his *The cocktail party* in the first edition by Faber (1950). The book has the shelf number L104 — L for Literature — and was borrowed just four times. (Hardly recreational reading, I would have thought). The second is Eliot's *The confidential clerk* also in the first by Faber (1954) and here the card is full with twelve readers. Though the dates lack the year and so there may well have been earlier cards.

What is unusual is the fine and large special bookplate which they produced just for this collection. Which cannot have numbered more than a few hundred titles. So, evidence of a bookplate culture in industry or at least one within this company? Who was it at AGL who was so interested in bookplates as to have one specially commissioned for such a small in-house reading collection?

Better known is the fine and splendid bookplate that was done for the company, i.e. the company library, as a whole. This is of a hand holding a symbolic large torch — think Statue of Liberty — and is signed Lucas. The bookplate was produced in a standard size but they went to the extent of also producing a smaller one for the smaller books. There is no mention on this of any library although, of course, these bookplates must have been created for the books in their company library — books relevant to the company's work.

And so, the bookplates in the T S Eliot books must have been specifically created for books catering to the company employees' light reading. Hence the name: Recreational Section, i.e. the recreational section of the main library collection. This has a large open book centre stage with a galleon in full sail on the high seas behind. There are figures from adventure, romance and history (historical fiction). There is a knight of the realm, pirate, a cowboy — and is that Falstaff and Mata Hari? This bookplate is signed Werry as in Tom Werry (see *Newsletter* 45, p. 5) who looks to have had a liking for ships in sail. And is a survivor from one of the many hundreds of such Australian special libraries — our libraries lost.



## Notes and happenings

Exhibition: 'This Book Belongs To...',  
De Beer Gallery, Central Library,  
University of Otago, Dunedin,  
21 February to 10 July 2020  
Kindly provided by Dr Donald Kerr,  
Special Collections Librarian.

This exhibition features a wonderful array of bookplates, book labels and inscriptions that assert ownership. Marking ownership or provenance by inserting bookplates, book labels, stamps or inscriptions into a book is part of a long tradition, begun in the period of the first printing presses (1450s), when multiple copies of books were produced. Book collectors started to amass libraries, either as a resource for their own intellectual pursuits, or just for show. It became *chic* to have a library, a collection of books and manuscripts. In later times, it was doubly *chic* to have a prominent artist design your bookplate. Many of the first bookplates were based on coats of arms that aristocrats and landed gentry had the right to bear. Mottoes dominated. As time progressed, and book collecting developed, an increasing number of owners did not have coats of arms to adorn their books. Consequently, they developed their own bookplates, pictorial ones that often contained symbols or objects that reflected some personal aspect or interest. Traditionally, bookplates were engraved, or were produced through wood or linocuts. As the modern era progressed, the use of photography and colour has increased. Some book collectors are more circumspect. They use small, often unadorned labels, or specially made stamps, to affix in their books. Others just simply inscribe their name in their books.

Special Collections does not have its own bookplate collection; nevertheless, numerous bookplates, labels and inscriptions are evident in the thousands of books held. On display is a small fraction that offer a wide variety of armorial, pictorial, and modern designs that represent an equally wide range of book collectors. What is pleasing are the number of bookplates and labels that belong to women book collectors,

who have traditionally not figured greatly in the field of book collecting. In addition, examples from the collection of Professor David Skegg have been included, and are particular to the South Island, featuring Otago and Southland bookplate owners.

Often found pasted on the front endpaper, these individual design and provenance statements have their own distinct beauty. Please do come along and enjoy them.

Readers can see images from the exhibition on the Special Collections facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/otagospecialcollections/>

*The Editor has a small number of copies of the exhibition flyer and display list; please email me if you'd like a copy.*

Exhibition: Prize Books and Politics: Rethinking Working-Class Life in Edwardian Britain. Digital exhibition launched 5 March 2020  
Kindly provided by Dr Lauren O'Hagan, School of English, Communication and Philosophy, Cardiff University, Wales.

At the beginning of the Edwardian era (1901–1914), the British working classes, who represented 75% of the country's total population, were one of the most literate and politically active in the world. This was the result of more than twenty years of free and compulsory education, as well as the development of the labour movement, characterised by widespread trade unionism and socialism.

Book inscriptions offer a unique opportunity to explore the lives of working-class Edwardians, standing as important first-hand evidence of their reading habits, social circles, jobs, hobbies and political and religious beliefs. While some provide the formative voices of future Labour members of parliament or trade union leaders, most capture the voices of forgotten 'everyday' Edwardians who toiled as servants, seamstresses and miners. *Prize Books and Politics* is a new digital project that brings to life many of these untold stories, encouraging fresh understandings of working-class life in Edwardian Britain.



**Pen-and-ink bookplate by Rita Angus for Bruce Godward (Collection of David Skegg, Dunedin)**

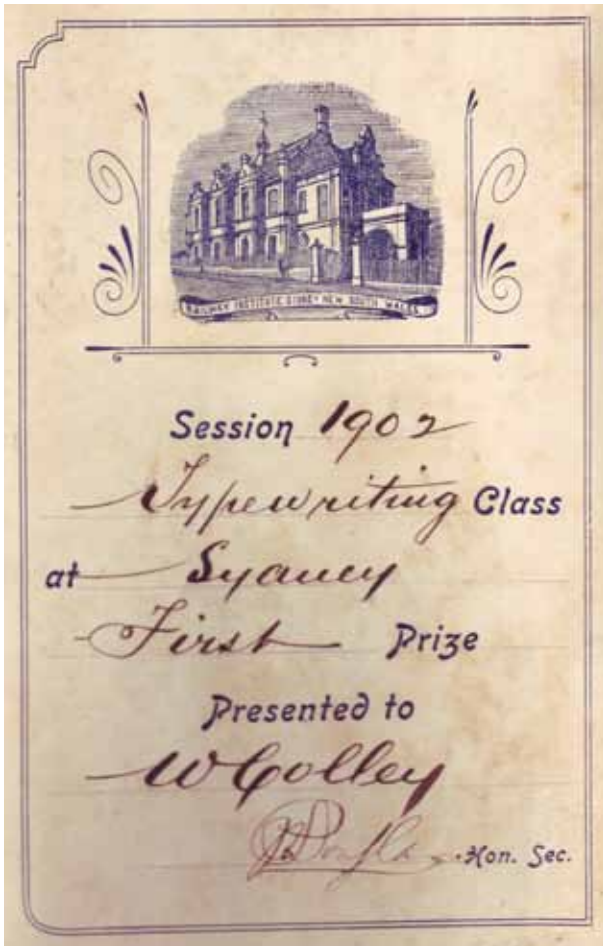
Each day, Lauren will post an image of one book inscription that encapsulates an aspect of working-class life in Edwardian Britain accompanied by a short written reflection exploring its sociocultural context.

The account can be followed on Instagram see <https://www.instagram.com/prizebooksandpolitics> and on Twitter @prizebooks

*[Although not usually considered of artistic value in the 'pictorial bookplate' mould, prize plates are full of interest as a reflection of social history about schools, pupils and reading habits, if selected by the prizewinner, or what was considered 'suitable' reading, if selected by the school. And their design is generally a reflection of the typographic fashion of the times – Ed.]*

## Publications

**ERIC AHEARN.** *Ephemera. Tasmania 40°South*, no. 74, Spring 2014; pp. 79–80  
Short piece about 'ephemera' to be found in old books, one example being the circular bookplate for 'Francis Abbott, Hobart Town' dated after 1849 when he obtained his ticket of leave from a sentence of seven years' transportation for fraud.



**Plate marking prize awarded by NSW Railway Institute, 1902 (Collection of Mark Ferson)**

**JAYNIE ANDERSON.** Celebrating Harold Wright's legacy to the Antipodes. *University of Melbourne Collections*, no. 24, June 2019; pp. 7–15

Mentions Wright's friendship with Lionel Lindsay, and shows the artist's wood-engraved bookplate for Wright.

**JOHN ARNOLD.** The Joneses, John Kirtley and Jack Lindsay's *Fauns and ladies*. *BibliNews and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 404, Dec. 2019, pp. 164–7

Shows H N Barker's bookplate for Janet [Lindsay] in a copy of *Fauns and ladies* inscribed from Kirtley to Jack Lindsay.

**[RICHARD BLAIR].** Notes & queries. *BibliNews and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 404, Dec. 2019, pp. 193–6

Includes images of the calligraphic bookplate of late member R Ian Jack (p. 194) and the pictorial design by G C Ingleton for G & N Ingleton, The Grange, Parramatta (p. 196).

**MICHELLE DICINOSKI.** Digital archives and cultural memory: Discovering lost histories in digitised Australian children's literature 1851–1945.

*Papers: Explorations into Children's Literature*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2012; pp. 110–20

Promotes the benefits of digitisation if all 'extra-textual material' such as inscriptions, bookplates are included, thus making this additional material accessible to researchers; shows image of Rex Nan Kivell's bookplate.

**JANE GIBIAN.** A nice little business. *SL Magazine* (State Library of NSW), Autumn 2020; pp. 14–17

Features 12 images of circulating library bookplates from the Albert Jeffrey Bidgood collection donated to the State Library of NSW (PXA 2172) and some brief stories about the libraries from the author's research.

**CAROL HINCHCLIFF.** Redmond Barry and the University of Melbourne Library. *University of Melbourne Collections*, no. 24, June 2019; pp. frontis, 31–41

Frontispiece is the bookplate of Alexander Henderson, in *Onomasticum Graece et Latine* (Amsterdam, 1706) the oldest title in the University Library.

**CATHERINE E STOREY AND KAREN MYERS.** The RACP History of Medicine Library. *RACP Quarterly*, Dec. 2019–Jan. 2020; pp. 42–3

Promotes the re-opened historical library and reproduces the College's A E Mills Foundation bookplate by Lionel Lindsay.

**JÜRGEN WEGNER.** The first Sydney Rare Book Week 2019: a post mortem. *BibliNews and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 404, Dec. 2019, pp. 167–71

Includes a critique of the talk on bookplates by Mark Ferson which was held as part of the Rare Book Week event at Cornstalk Bookshop on 29 October 2019.

## Editorial

What can one say about bookplates in the time of coronavirus? Believing that topicality often adds interest, I had a passing thought to write an article featuring medical bookplates with various depictions of viruses and plagues. But as my regular job concerns the public health response to this new pandemic, working on the *Newsletter* is naturally an attempt to get away — as far as one can — from the one subject that is dominating all our lives.

In any case, what I would like to suggest is that you take this issue of the *Newsletter* and curl up on your favourite chair or sofa exploring a variety of interesting articles and lovely images (whether in hard copy or digital form), and forget the woes of the world around us for half an hour or so.

One might have suspected that almost fifteen years of articles might have exhausted both contributors and subjects, but the contents of this number clearly put the lie to that proposition. I am grateful to Jean Burke for passing on notes penned by her mother Janet Robinson when a member of the Society many years ago, and which it seems Janet had intended to send to me at the time; to Library staff at Monash University for a description of the bookplate collection; and to Jürgen Wegner for yet another contribution, this time on the AGL staff library and its bookplate. In addition, it is a treat to have been permitted by the State Library of New South Wales to reprint an article, originally published in *SL Magazine*, on their collection of lending library bookplates formerly belonging to member Jeff Bidgood.

And to finish on the original theme, as we more or less need to entertain ourselves at home, it is great to be able to point you to two bookplate exhibitions which have an online presence, one by intention and one, now, by default. And don't forget to look at the Society's own Instagram page, where Jess Le, our Social Media Secretary, is posting lovely images of bookplates from all around the world, see [www.instagram.com/newaustralianbookplates](http://www.instagram.com/newaustralianbookplates) and our Facebook page, where I am somewhat slower at posting great bookplates and related material <https://www.facebook.com/NewAustralianBookplates/>

MF

