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James Mullins (1826–1879), the Father of the Father of the Australian Bookplate Movement

By Juanita Hattersley, Sydney

John Lane Mullins is considered the father of the Australian bookplate movement. He was born in Sydney in 1857 to James Mullins and Elizabeth (known as Eliza) née Lane, both Irish immigrants. James had been educated at home in Ireland by a private tutor and later became paymaster on the Cork and Bandon railway works.

When James arrived in Australia from Ireland in January 1851 with his mother Catherine and brother Michael on board *The Roman Emperor*, he brought with him a letter of introduction from a priest, Michael Field PP to the Rev J Therry, Hobart Town, NSW. Father Field said in his letter, 'the common vicissitudes of life (which are more disastrous in ill-fated Ireland, than in all the world beside) have forced [James] to look for an asylum more congenial to his feelings than this land of bondage,' and went on to say of James,

... he is a lad of most exemplary conduct and strict integrity, deserving of any position of trust which he would fill with attention and fidelity ... From his smartness, his intelligence and strict integrity, he would be most invaluable to superintend mercantile business or take charge of a tract of land or care of stock, being thoroughly conversant with the new system of farming and feeding of cattle.

Much of the information below is taken directly from family papers. After arriving in Australia the gold fever hit James and off he went to the field of Major's Creek, near Braidwood (NSW), where he found gold alright but mixed up with too much earth and so he decided to go back to the bright lights of crowded Sydney town.

In 1855, in St Mary's Cathedral, James married Elizabeth, youngest daughter of John

Lane and Mary Hickie, of Bandon ... where the young paymaster had evidently noticed more than the railway workers. Sadly, their married life was a brief fifteen years duration as Eliza died on 2 March 1870, aged 40. James's sister, Ellen Stanfield née Mullins, took over the care of the young family after the loss of their dear mother. Ellen had no children — her husband had been killed in a riding accident after only one year of marriage. The Mullins boys took the Lane into their names to preserve their mother's memory.

The business hub of the thriving metropolis of Sydney was largely centred on a famous institution, 'The Labour Bazaar'. The property of the three Moore brothers, it was a two-storey building occupying five blocks to the west of Pitt and Market Streets. Its sign read: 'Auctioneers, Furniture Brokers, Importers and



Photographic portrait of James Mullins

General Commission Agents' and, between 1861 and 1863, possibly at the suggestion of the now part proprietor, James Mullins, thirteen papers from all parts of the state were happy to devote feature articles to the wonders of the Labour Bazaar. In May 1863 he became sole owner, following the departure of two of the brothers and the death of another. Weekly newspaper, *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, of 29 December 1866, says that Moore's Bazaar was established in ...

1840, for the labouring classes hence the title of Labour Bazaar. They sold household furniture, cabinet-ware, ironmongery, plated-ware, jewellery, saddlery, glass, china, porcelain and crockery ware, of every conceivable design, of every colour and pattern, and at prices to suit either the millionaire or the humble peasant.

In 1873, his then partner Timothy Maher bought out James who retired to his home in Macquarie Street, where according to family papers, spent his time pursuing, '... his religious, family and philanthropic interests.'

James from the start had never reserved his talents to business alone; and although feeling no call to civic or political affairs, he excluded no other sphere from his capable and keen participation and became one of



Engraved armorial bookplate for James Mullins

Sydney's best known and respected citizens. No call either public or private failed to appeal to his generous heart and he soon established the family tradition of giving a large part of his free time to work for good causes charitable and philanthropic, as well as to private compassion for he could resist no appeal from the needy.

For sixteen years as a Trustee of the Catholic Orphanage at Parramatta his purse was open and saw the need of helping the working man to build his home and so helped found the St Joseph's Building Society.

While his eldest son John attended Lyndhurst College, Glebe, as a weekly boarder, James would send a horse so that John could ride it back home to Macquarie Street. On Sundays, John was either driven back to school in the family carriage or James would escort John in the Glebe Point omnibus and leave him at the school gate.

James died at his residence on 21 January 1879 at the age of 53. An obituary in the *Town and Country Journal* of 1 February 1879 says,

The deceased gentleman was a highly esteemed member of the Catholic Church, and has occupied the position of treasurer to the cathedral building fund since it was established ... He was a magistrate of the territory, and his decisions always gave satisfaction to both sides. Mr Mullins was a widower, and leaves five sons, the eldest of them just coming of age, all being well provided for, as their father died a wealthy man.

An unnamed newspaper article held in family archives said that on the day of James's funeral,

most places in the city were partially closed, and a cortege, the largest and most respectable that ever followed a private citizen here to the grave, paid the last mournful tribute of respect to the remains.

A description of James Mullins's armorial bookplate has been kindly provided by Stephen Michael Szabo, Secretary of the Australian Heraldry Society Inc.

The bookplate consists of a crest (that

portion of a coat of arms that sits above the shield on a wreath, often but not always affixed to a medieval helm) above a belt and buckle bearing the motto **NE CEDE MALIS** ('Yield not to evil') on the upper part of the belt, which encloses the initials **J.M** in an elaborate 'Old English' font.

James Mullins died in 1879, as noted above, but it was not until about 1892 that his eldest son, John Lane Mullins, petitioned the Earl Marshal for a grant of arms 'to be borne and used hereafter by him the said John Francis Lane Mullins and by the other descendants of his father the said James Mullins, deceased'. The Letters Patent granting the arms, which were signed and sealed by Garter and Clarenceux Kings of Arms on 21 July 1892, recite that the petitioner 'being desirous of having the Armorial Bearings hitherto used by his family duly registered in the College of Arms', had sought the Earl Marshal's warrant for the Kings of Arms to make a formal grant, and this was duly done.

The arms themselves included a cross moline, which is a representation of a mill-rind (an iron clamp which holds a mill-stone in place), and so is a cant on the name Mullins. While the bookplate is in monochrome, the cross is stippled with small dots, which are used by heraldic illustrators to indicate the cross is gold.

The crest is blazoned (*blazon* being the formal descriptive language of heraldry) as 'In front of a Cross moline Or a Saracen's head afrontee couped at the shoulder proper wreathed as in the Arms' (ie, wreathed round the temples Argent and Gules). In lay terms this would be described as in front of a gold cross in the shape of a millrind a Saracen's head face-forward cut off neatly at the shoulders all in their natural colours with a wreath of alternating strands of silver and red around the temples.

There is no indication in either the Letters Patent from the College of Arms in London or later issued by Ulster King of Arms in Dublin how long the family had been making use of arms, but the bookplate certainly suggests that they had been doing so at least during James Mullins life-time. Part of the crest, but not the arms, appear to be derived from the arms of De Molyens,

borne by Lord Ventry, whose crest recorded in Burke's *General armory* is described as 'A savage's head affrontée, couped below the shoulders proper'.

(Thanks go to Richard d'Apice for providing transcripts of the Letters Patent)

Bookplates in the Ron Graham Science Fiction collection

By Charlotte Kowalski, Fisher Library, University of Sydney

Ronald E Graham had a successful career as an engineer and later directed his own company. He was also an avid sci-fi fan with nearly encyclopaedic knowledge of early science fiction. He published the *Vision of Tomorrow* magazine and was the co-owner of the first science fiction bookshop in Australia, Space Age Books (originally named The Space Age Bookshop) in Melbourne, until his death in 1979 at the age of 70. He collected science fiction for more than 50 years and his collection comprises almost complete holdings (up to

1979) of commercially published American, English and Australian science fiction magazines. During his lifetime he housed his vast collection in a temperature and humidity controlled library in his Roseville home. Graham left his collection to the University of Sydney Library in his will and Rare Books and Special Collections is very fortunate to now be the custodian of Graham's extensive private library.

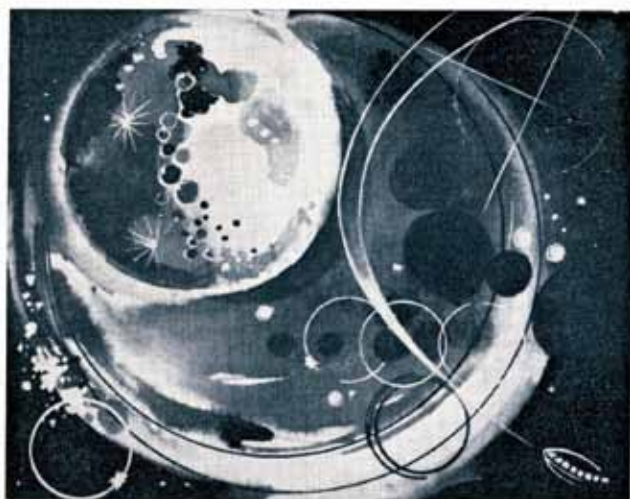
Bookplates are markers of ownership and the variety found in Graham's collection indicate he acquired his books from a great range of sources. It is known that he embarked on a substantial acquisition program using friends, contacts, writers, and second-hand dealers to gather as much material as possible from England, Australia and the USA. A search of the library catalogue indicates that there are 5638 items with bookplates in Graham's collection of over 18,000 items catalogued so far. That is a substantial number! So who were these previous owners? Aside from Graham's two bookplate designs, those belonging to famous historical or

literary figures were also identified.

The first of Ron Graham's personal bookplates is a lunar-themed design by an unknown artist. The other better known bookplate for Graham was designed by Virgil Finlay. Finlay was one of the most popular illustrators for pulp magazines, particularly *Weird Tales* and *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*. Virgil's bookplate illustration below was also used as the cover of the fanzine *The Mentor*, number 19.

Not only is the bookplate (in T Mundy, *Black light*, 1930) for David Lloyd George aesthetically pleasing with its view of London but it reveals that a book previously belonging to the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom made it into Graham's collection. Lloyd George was one of Britain's most well-known figures of the 20th century, particularly for guiding Britain through the First World War during his term of 1916–1922. He also had a personal library and part of that collection is now housed at the University of Kent.

The royal looking bookplate (in R Riordan & T Takayanagi, *Sunrise stories: a glance at*



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RONALD E. GRAHAM



EX LIBRIS
RONALD E. GRAHAM

Above: Process bookplate for Ronald E Graham

Right: Process bookplate by Virgil Finlay for Ronald E Graham



the literature of Japan, 1896) belonged to Lieutenant-Colonel Sir William Gordon-Cumming 4th Baronet who was a friend of Edward, Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII). Interestingly, Sir William was involved in the great baccarat scandal of 1890 that ultimately changed the course of his life. Accused of cheating at cards, he was brought to trial, bringing the Prince of Wales as witness. He was convicted and ostracised from polite society.

Several bookplates appearing in the collection were from fellow sci-fi lovers or literary figures. The bookplate of John Carnell is one that appears frequently, this copy in L Engel & EA Piller, *World aflame: the Russian-American war of 1950*, 1947. Carnell was a British editor, especially known for *New Worlds* (1946–64), *New Writings* (1964–75), and *Science Fantasy* (1951–64). Carnell was known to many of his friends as Ted and many author's inscriptions in books in Ron Graham's collection, address him as such.

The charming bookplate (in AH Burgoyne, *The war inevitable*, 1908) for Frank C Bowen speaks of his lifelong love of the sea. The artist of the bookplate is only acknowledged as EMH. Bowen was raised in the English port town of Ramsgate, and his interest in ships began as a young boy. During WWI he fought at the Dardanelles as a member of the Royal Naval Brigade and later used his considerable maritime knowledge in Naval Intelligence. On his return to London he became a full-time maritime journalist and writer. In the course of his work he acquired a large maritime library. He authored over 20 books on ships and maritime travel including classics like *The sea: its history and romance*.

The lovely Venetian palazzo design (in Lord Dunsany's *The story of Mona Sheehy*, 1939) belonged to Mary Landon Baker who was a rich American socialite known for her parties, scandalous love affairs and

her collection of self-portraits with her dogs. She is also famous for leaving the same man Alister McCormick at the altar four times. It is unknown how two of her books ended up in Graham's collection.

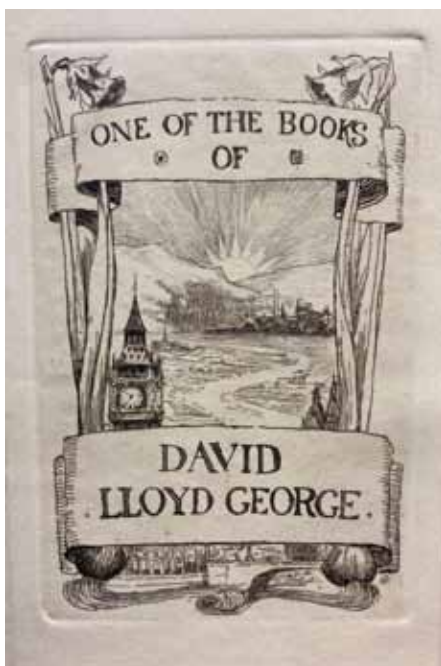
This is just a small sample of bookplates in the Ronald E Graham Collection at the Fisher Library. I wish to thank the Rare Books and Special Collections cataloguing team for much of the research that appears in this article. With the Graham reference and serials collections still in the process of being catalogued who knows what further discoveries will be made!

General meeting to revise the Society's Constitution

By Mark J Ferson, Sydney

A special meeting was held by Zoom on Saturday, 13 September with the main purpose of adding provisions to the Society's Constitution, originally drafted in 2006, to enable it to be registered with the Australian Charities and Non-profits Commission. This is necessary for the Society to be able to retain the .org.au domain name. I have applied to the Commission for the Society to be registered as a non-profit in the 'Advancing culture' category, which means that the Society has to demonstrably provide a cultural benefit to the public, not just to members.

We should be proud of the range of



Left from top:
 Pen-and-ink design for John Carnell
 Etched bookplate for David Lloyd George
 Bookplate for Frank C Bowen
 Right: Bookplate for Mary Landon Baker

activities to which the public already has access, including the website with much information on bookplates and all but the most recent issues of the *Newsletter* as well as Facebook and Instagram pages, access to publications through the various libraries which receive copies, a series of public talks, the 2016 competition open to all tertiary art and design students, two exhibitions to date in 2014 (Kogarah, Sydney) and 2016 (Art Gallery of NSW), and links with kindred organisations, eg Print Council of Australia, Australian Heraldry Society, art societies and printmaking groups.

The proposed changes, previously advised to members, were that the word 'public' be added to the *Aims*, and that the two paragraphs required by the Commission be added to *Financial arrangements*, ie

'The assets and income of the Society shall be applied solely in furtherance of the above-mentioned Aims and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the organisation except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation'; and

'In the event of the Society being dissolved, the amount that remains after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be transferred to another organisation with similar purposes, that is charitable at law, and which is not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members.'

A vote was taken of the 7 members present and the vote was unanimous in the affirmative that the proposed changes be accepted. In addition, 11 members who were unable to attend submitted votes by email, and these were also unanimously in the affirmative. Hence the proposed changes to the Constitution were carried unanimously.

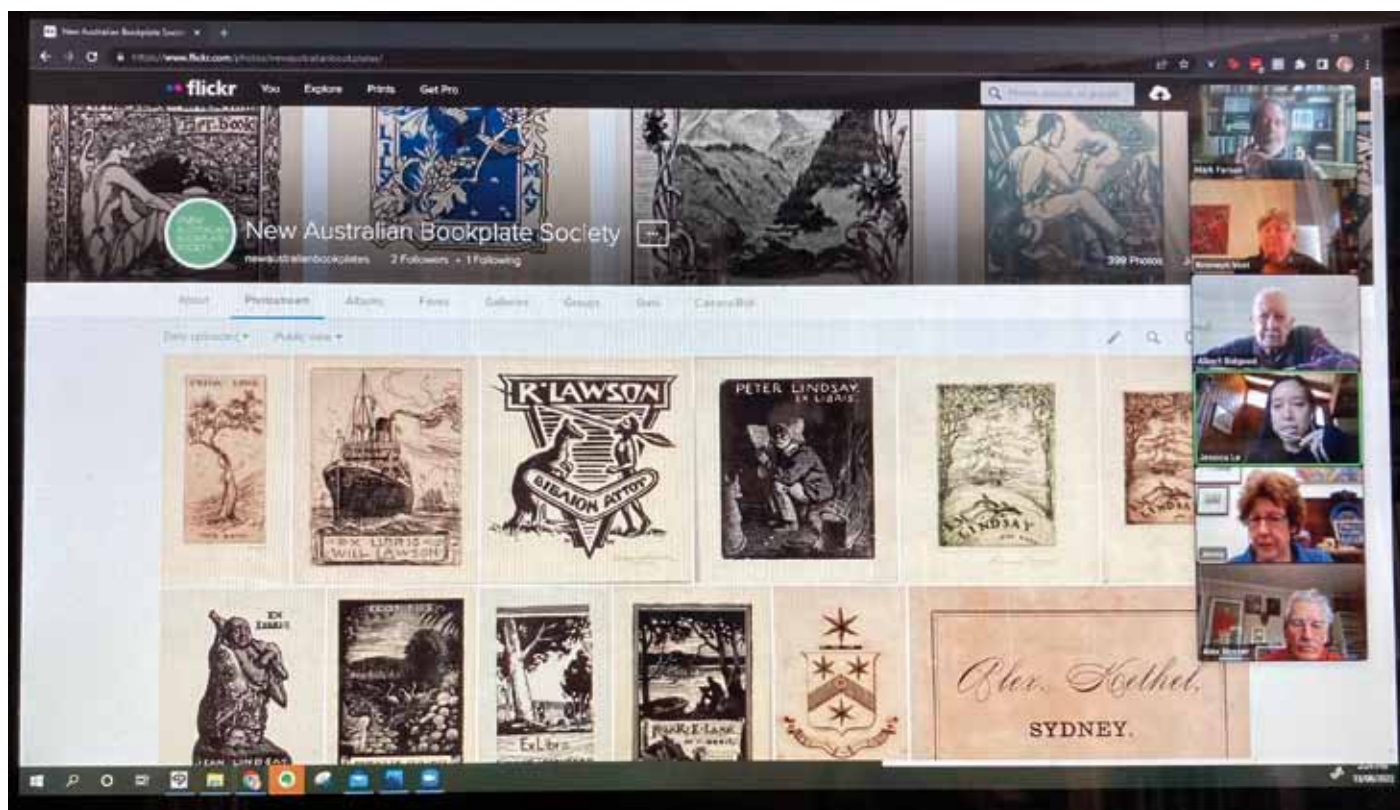
Once the formal business of the revised Constitution had been concluded, some lighter discussion took place. To start off, the Society's Social Media Secretary, Jess Le, gave a demonstration of the Flickr online database to which all the ~1000 bookplates from the Eirene Mort Bookplate Collection have now been uploaded, together with brief details of the bookplate (owner, artist, technique, year, subject, location in the Collection). Over half of the bookplates

have had keywords of elements of the design added, which allows searching of bookplates by image content. This will be an excellent resource, which is publicly available free of charge, for people doing research into Australian bookplates, as Flickr is much more suited to this task than the various social media platforms where some Mort Collection (and other) bookplates are posted. The URL is <https://flickr.com/photos/newaustralianbookplates>

Jess, Bronwyn and Jenny were congratulated and thanked for this terrific work.

This was followed by a Show & Tell, with contributions from four of those present. Alex Rosser led off and showed the original artwork for two bookplates he had commissioned from artist-member Kathryn Lovejoy, one for his own use and one for the Rosser family library.

Vickie Hearnshaw, who hails from Christchurch, is interested in Sydney bookplate designer Ella Dwyer with whom her grandmother, Florence Rodie, had a close friendship, and they met up in Sydney after the Second World War. Vickie's research has raised a number of questions which she will forward to us.



Jess Le presenting some of the digitised Eirene Mort Bookplate Collection on flickr.com during the Society's virtual General Meeting, 13 August 2022

Jenny Rees commented that late member, Trevor Kennedy (1942–2021), donated most of his famed Australiana collection, including his bookplates, to the National Museum of Australia. It includes the only portrait of Esther Abrahams, a convict and the first Jewish woman transported to New South Wales with the First Fleet, who later married Major Johnston (leader of the ‘Rum Rebellion’). Jenny and Bronwyn are descendents.

Mark reported that his paper on the topic of manuscript bookplates has been accepted for presentation at the ‘Embellished’ conference of the Bibliographical Society of Australia & New Zealand, to be held at the State Library of NSW on 28–29 November 2022. He showed two of his favourites, ‘To William Harold King, on his Sixth Birthday and to commemorate the Measles, 7th October 1881’, unfortunately removed from its book prior to purchase; and a pen-and-ink sketch inscribed ‘To Sydney [Ure Smith] from V[iola] A Q[uaife], Xmas 1905, Ye Artist’s Modelle’ in Ure Smith’s copy of *Velasquez* in the Newnes Art Library series.

The meeting seemed a successful one, combining essential business and some interesting presentations and worthwhile discussion. The revised Constitution and minutes of the meeting have since been submitted to the Australian Charities and Non-profits Commission for their consideration.

Notes & happenings

Publications

STELLA M BARBER. *The pride of Prahran. A history of the Prahran Library 1860–2010*. Melbourne: City of Stonnington, 2010; pp. 17, 39 and endpapers

Depicts various bookplates for the main library and children’s library dating from 1877 and 1919

RONALD CARDWELL. *The George Garnsey Cricket Bookplate*. Cherrybrook (Sydney): Cricket Press, 2022

Garnsey, a cricketer, amassed a very large collection of cricket-related books. He had several bookplates, including two illustrated here, one by Norman Lindsay, and an earlier one from 1908 signed JJ.

NOTICE

Celebration of the centenary of bookplate collecting in Australia 1923–2023

August 2023 marks the centenary of the founding in Sydney of the Australian Ex Libris Society in August 1923, and the Committee is looking at ways to celebrate this exciting anniversary.

We have a number of ideas including the launch of the digitisation of the Eirene Mort Bookplate Collection — Eirene Mort forms a link between our Society and the Australian Ex Libris Society, of which she was a foundation member and its first Honorary Treasurer. Other thoughts include a reissue of the Society’s 1923 booklet containing its Constitution and List of Foundation Members; our own updated *Directory of Members 2023*; and an Exhibition of the Bookplates of Members of the two Societies, 1923 and 2023.

We would love to hear members’ suggestions of how we might celebrate this event – please send your ideas to us by email on newaustralianbookplatesociety@gmail.com or phone Mark on 0401 141 890

GAVIN FRY, DAVID FREEDMAN & DAVID JACK. *Harold Freedman. The big picture*. Melbourne Mural Studio, 2017; p. 193
Harold Freedman, war artist, designer and illustrator, made an undated bookplate for his brother Lionel Freedman.

MIKAYLA VAN LOON. Visit Mirka Mora display. *Mount Evelyn Star Mail*, 28 June 2022; p.13

Brief description of the Montrose (Vic.) Library display, arranged by member Marzena Walicka, which focuses on Mora’s bookplates: ‘Most commonly known for her work as a painter and sculptor, her bookplates and autobiographical work are less well known.’

JOHN WADE. An American in the East. *Australiana*, vol. 44, no. 3, Aug. 2022; pp. 6–7

Article on American merchant Charles I Manigault showing his bookplate engraved by convict artist Samuel Clayton on a visit to Sydney in 1820. [This bookplate was discussed in the Society’s *Newsletter* no. 31, Dec. 2013, and was dated to 1818]

Editorial

This issue presents an interesting variety of contributions. My thanks to Juanita Hattersley for a further fascinating chapter in the story of the bookplate bearing Mullins family — whose member John Lane Mullins I once labelled the ‘father of Australian bookplates’ — on this occasion regarding John’s father James, an Irish emigrant who achieved great things in Sydney in the

middle years of the nineteenth century. And my thanks are also due to Stephen Szabo who kindly provided an analysis, using both the *blazon* of heraldry and plain English, of the James Mullins bookplate.

Having stumbled across on online mention of some bookplates found in the Ronald E Graham Collection within the University of Sydney’s Fisher Library, I contacted the library and was gratified to receive an article from Charlotte Kowalski, who is involved with digitisation within the Rare Books & Specialist Collections at Fisher. One of the beauties of such a collection is that they include books gathered from all around the world, many of which have bookplates not otherwise seen here.

I have used this issue of the *Newsletter* to record the General Meeting held in August to update our Constitution in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Charities and Non-profits Commission; the rationale and details are explained therein.

Finally, I would like to thank Andrew Peake of Adelaide for providing copies of his bookplate by Marie Claire Ralph, dated 2002, for inclusion with this issue.

And we welcome our new members who have joined the Society since June: Cameron Broome (Vic.), Catherine Burn (NSW), Michelle Butcher (Qld), David Carment (NSW), Faith Casley-Porter (NSW), Nari Clarke (NSW), Kimberley Cornick (WA), Zyta Cwalinska (Tas.), Stuart Murnain (ACT), Sue Richards (Vic.), Emily Shaw (NSW), Alice Tonkinson (NSW) and Clayton Tremlett (Vic.). MF