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**Edwards & Shaw, bookplate printers**

By Jürgen Wegner, Librarian, Sydney

Like a great many of Australia's printers, the Sydney printing and publishing firm of Edwards & Shaw printed not only books, pamphlets and serials but also a great deal of general ephemeral material. From the more substantive such as folded brochures and posters to the truly ephemeral such as letterheads and invoice books for companies ... and even bookplates. Little of this material would ever have been systematically recorded or kept. Samples of ephemeral printing are rarely kept beyond the immediately current customer's job folders. Nor would these ever bear an imprint — so once printed, impossible to attribute.

I have several bookplates printed by Edwards & Shaw on file here. Two are from their earliest period when they were establishing themselves as printers of note in Sydney just after the war. The bookplates are:

*Ex libris Percy Rofe* / CS. [Sydney, 194-?]; overall size 12.6 x 8.5 cm; size of printed image 10.9 x 7.2 cm. Bookplate signed above name: CS. Bookplate shows an assortment of musical instruments (bassoon, curved horn, piano, lute, clarinet and flute) in front of a backdrop of a stand of trees and with an open book with the words *Ex libris* above collector's name at the bottom; b&w executed in a woodcut manner and printed letterpress.

Trove has a copy of a photograph from 1969 called 'Mr and Mrs Percy Rofe in the terminal, before leaving, Mascot Airport' by Jack Hickson. No further details provided but the photograph has the subject heading

'Solicitors' and therefore it would seem — the name is a very distinctive one — that Rofe was of the legal profession but with a love of music and books. The photograph is of an elderly couple and so the bookplate would have been done perhaps while he was in his thirties. I have been in touch with Dr Mark Ferson who added the life dates 1910–2000 and that he lived in Turrumurra, Sydney. But could not shed any light on the identity of CS, the bookplate's creator. The illustration is really very well executed and so he must have been an artist — or graphic designer — of some accomplishments.



Bookplate by 'CS' for Percy Rofe, c. 1940s

**CONTENTS**

Edwards & Shaw, bookplate printers	1
The Armorial-Pictorial Bookplate of Trevor and Mary Thomas	3
Review: 'A lot on their plate', <i>Country Life</i> , 1 June 2022; pp. 84–6	4
Obituary: Michael Kino, 1951–2022	5
Editorial	6



**Bookplate by Harold Byrne for Rose Lands, 1948**

*Ex libris Rose Lands.* Overall size 11.2 x 9.4 cm; size of printed image 10.8 x 8.9 cm. Signed at bottom: Harold Byrne 1948. Romantic classical bookplate shows an idyllic garden scene with woman in flowing period dress on a swing; image surrounded by frame of roses with classical vase in foreground depicting a nude nymph and with the words *Ex libris Rose Lands* on ribbon bottom left; b&w executed in an etched manner and printed offset.

The bookplate for *Rose Lands* is by the very well known Sydney bookplate artist Harold Byrne, 1899–1966, who seemed to ‘always be penniless and at times supported by art/bookplate patron John Lane Mullins’.

And, in a miscellaneous box of later printed papers, a small bundle of a presentation bookplate for use with books donated to the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) Library in Melbourne. I’d always assumed that these were printed by Edwards & Shaw — their unmistakable house style — but could I be sure? I contacted the NGV to ask whether they by any chance had any records or notes on file that this was the case? Note, the bookplate would have been printed about forty years ago! Back the next day, a message that they have a design for the bookplate in their collection and that this can be seen online

The link is not actually to an image of the bookplate itself but of the printer’s proof sent to their customer the National Gallery

of Victoria. This would then have been used to make a negative for the offset plate from which the bookplates would then have been printed. The pictorial element of the bookplate is a sketch called *Sleeping woman* by the famous Australian artist Fred Williams. The details from their Collections online website are that it was executed in Melbourne by Williams in ‘reed pen and ink’. Dimensions of this printer’s proof are 17.1 x 12.1 cm, and so the bookplate has been reduced by about twenty percent. It is part of their Australian Prints and Drawings collection and it was donated by Williams to the gallery in 1978 — so the bookplate must date from about the mid-Seventies.

*NGV Library* / [sketch] / Presented by. Bookplate designed by Roderick Shaw using Fred Williams’s *Sleeping woman*. Overall size 16.5 x 11.6 cm; size of printed image: 15.7 x 10.7 cm; printed charcoal on beige lightly embossed paper.

There is also some correspondence from Roderick Shaw, the artist and designer half of the firm, relating to the bookplate. In addition ‘we have as adjunct records three copies of the bookplate, which Lyn Williams gave to us: one a rejected layout, one a colour variant, and the one that was used’. So more information than I could ever have hoped for.



**Bookplate by Fred Williams, set and printed by Edwards & Shaw for the NGV Library, c. 1977**

There are just so many interesting connections and interconnections in the work of Edwards & Shaw, not least with the Sydney (and Australian) art community. One of their major printed works is *Fred Williams. Etchings* (Woollahra, NSW: Rudy Komon Gallery, 1968). The Rudy Komon Gallery was for many years a regular customer of Edwards & Shaw who printed their catalogues as well as ephemera. So they would have known both Komon and Williams.

A fourth bookplate is from the University of Sydney and produced for their Graduate School of Planning’s Denis Winston Book Fund. Again unattributed, but the style and printing are unmistakable. And Edwards & Shaw did print on a regular basis even large works for the various departments of the University of Sydney, including the *University of Sydney 1850–1975*. I have been able to identify material possibly from between 1963 and 1973 but as Winston died in 1980 perhaps the bookplate dates as late as the early Eighties.

Arthur Denis Winston (1908–1980) was born in Liverpool (UK) and became a famous Sydney architect. In 1949 Winston was appointed the first Professor of Town and Country Planning at the University of Sydney. His life revolved around the university: he was honoured by various memorial lectures, prizes, by the architecture library which bore his name, as well as this book fund.

*University of Sydney. Graduate School of Planning. Denis Winston Book Fund.* [University of Sydney: Graduate School of Planning, University of Sydney, early 1980s]. Bookplate shows the name of the book fund and graduate school around the crest of the University of Sydney in the centre; perhaps designed by Roderick Shaw. Overall size 10.8 x 10.8 cm; printed image 7.0 by 7.0 cm; printed on brown laid paper watermarked [B]eckett.

Finally, another modern bookplate, this time for Ronald Minton-Taylor.

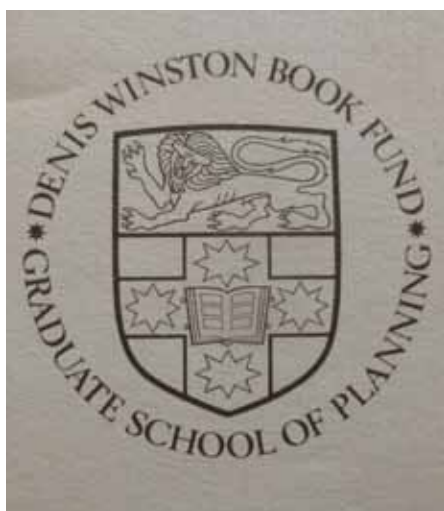
*Ex libris Ronald Minton-Taylor.* [Sydney?, 1978?]. Bookplate, within a rope border, shows, above the words

*Ex libris* and name, a crown from which a hand holding a cross is emerging; across this within a ribbon the motto *In hoc signo vinces*. Overall size 9.9 x 7.9 cm; printed image: 9.2 x 7.3 cm; cheap offset printing in sepia.

This was given to me by Edwards & Shaw in 1978 and so dates from around then. The bookplate is not a very well executed one — functional rather than artistic — with little thought given to proportions. With it I was also given another, older, bookplate for Harold Minton-Taylor, possibly his father? The Harold has been crossed through and I assume that it was intended as a model for the new bookplate.

Ronald Minton-Taylor is recorded as a first year undergraduate at the University of Sydney in the *Calendar* for 1920. *The Argus* for 23 August 1937, has a Ronald Minton-Taylor, 'of Sydney', marrying in London in a society wedding. He was also the author of *Outlines for young Anglicans* (Sydney: Church of England Information Trust, 1963). The electoral roll has him living in Potts Point that same year. His father, Harold, was a noted Sydney solicitor who, in 1925, built the iconic Minton House, a landmark then as now of bohemian Kings Cross.

Edwards & Shaw undoubtedly printed many more bookplates for the arts community.



Bookplate by Edwards & Shaw for the University of Sydney Graduate School of Planning Denis Winston Book Fund, c. 1980s

## The Armorial-Pictorial Bookplate of Trevor and Mary Thomas

By Stephen Michael Szabo, Sydney

Recently our President brought to my notice a bookplate which included both pictorial and armorial elements, and asked what I made of the arms, which he described as being 'obviously an amateur effort.' Despite the naive style, I immediately recognised the arms, which were quite legitimately those of Trevor Thomas, who had inherited them from his father Azariah Thomas (1855–1943), a Welsh-born mining engineer.

The achievement of arms was granted to Azariah Thomas by the College of Arms in London via Letters Patent dated 30 August 1924, and are blazoned (heraldically described) as:

Shield: *Azure a pale cottised between two bull's heads caboshed Argent armed Or on a chief of the last a miner's pick and spade in saltire Sable between two ram's heads caboshed Gules*

Crest: *On a wreath of the colours in front of a lion sejant Gules charged on the shoulder with a cross coupé two estoiles or.*

Motto: *Cynt ewrdd dau ddyn na dau fynydd*



Arms granted to Azariah Thomas by the College of Arms, London, 1924 (from Fox-Davies, *Armorial families*, London, 1929)

In plain English the arms may be described as 'on a blue field a thick vertical white/silver stripe overlaid near each vertical edge with a thin vertical blue stripe in turn flanked on either side by a red bull's head with gold horns, the top third of the shield covered by a horizontal gold stripe with a black miner's pick and black spade crossed in the shape of an "X" flanked on either side by a red ram's head'. The crest can be described as 'on a wreath of six alternating white/silver and blue twists a red lion seated on his haunches with his tail raised and his forepaws on the ground and a gold cross on his shoulder, with two gold stars with six wavy arms slightly obscuring his front and rear paws.' The motto is apparently a Welsh proverb which is rendered in English as 'Two men will meet sooner than two mountains', and is used sometimes by way of a farewell.

Azariah Thomas was the only son of Zephaniah Thomas (1831–1906) and Elizabeth, née Hopkins, both of Mynyddislwyn, Monmouthshire, Wales. He spent some time in the United States of America, and also worked as an engineer on the Panama Canal, coming to New South Wales in 1893 to take up the position of general manager of the recently established East Greta Coal Mining Company. On 12 March 1898 he married Deborah, née Rees. Their twin sons, Trevor Maitland Thomas and Ivor Gwynne Thomas were born on 31 October 1901. They also had a daughter named Bronwen.

The design of the arms is clearly intended to refer to Azariah Thomas's career, and possibly to his children and the family name as well. The crossed pick and spade allude to his position as general manager of the East Greta Mining Company. The rams' and the bulls' heads are allusions to his interests in pastoralism. The thick white or silver vertical stripe may be taken to be an allusion to a mine-shaft as well as to the Panama Canal, and the gold top portion of the shield as a recognition of his prosperity. The 'twinning' of the charges such as the rams' and the bulls' heads in the arms, as well as the two stars in the crest, might allude to Azariah Thomas' twin sons, and to the name Thomas itself, deriving as it

does from the Greek *Didymus*, 'The Twin'.

The twins undertook their secondary education at Maitland High School. Trevor Thomas went on to qualify as a pharmacist in 1931, and his brother Ivor took the degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (1929) and Bachelor of Science (1931) at the University of Sydney. They shared a keen interest in heraldry and local history, with Ivor Thomas being a founder and first President of the Campbelltown and Airs Historical Society and Trevor Thomas serving as President of the Parramatta Historical Society in the early 1960s.

On 14 March 1939 Trevor Thomas married Mary Constance Acland Farquhar at St Philips Church, Sydney. Mary was the step-daughter of Barclay Wallace Farquhar of Queanbeyan, and it was in this town that the couple were living when Azariah Thomas died in 1943. In the same year they moved to Sydney, where they were to spend the rest of their lives.

Turning to the bookplate again, and the depiction of the arms in particular, it would seem that these were modelled on an illustration in Arthur Charles Fox-Davies, *Armorial families: a directory of gentlemen of coat-armour*, seventh edition (London, 1929), although they may also have been sketched directly from the original granting document. The elements on the shield are accurately if crudely depicted, but the lion in the crest has the right forepaw raised and



Bookplate reproduced from pen-and-ink for Trevor and Mary Thomas

it lacks the gold cross and stars that ought to be there.

The pictorial elements of the design show a largely nautical theme. One can speculate that the ship between two headlands may be taken to depict arrival or departure from Sydney Harbour, but there is nothing distinctive to confirm this. A ship under full sail and the columns flanking the pictorial and armorial elements might also allude to the owners' interest in history, but again that is simply speculation, although the fact that it appears in a book titled *John Knatchbull. From quarterdeck to gallows*, as well as in Frank Clune, *Scandals of Sydney Town*, CET Newman *The spirit of Wharf House*, and David S Macmillan, *A squatter went to sea*, seems persuasive.

The bookplate was rendered in pen and ink and commercially printed. I feel that what it might lack in sophistication it more than makes up for in charm, and I thank our President for bringing it to my attention and asking me to write about it.

### Review: 'A lot on their plate', *Country Life*, 1 June 2022; pp. 84–6

Reviewed by Dr Gael E Phillips, Brisbane

An interesting article about bookplates, 'A lot on their plate', appeared in *Country Life* in the issue published on 1 June this year, with blurb: 'Lord Byron chose his coat of arms, Sigmund Freud the riddle of the sphinx and Walt Disney Mickey Mouse, but, be they miniature works of art, or merely a chance to show off, John F Mueller finds all bookplates to be fascinating.'

Written by John F Mueller — director of studies in history at one of the University of Cambridge colleges — the article outlines the nature and purpose of bookplates and deals with their history. He explains that the earliest bookplates dated from the 1480s and originated as 'gift plates' in German monastic libraries. Mueller claims that the earliest known English bookplate is a gift plate marking a donation made in 1574 to the University of Cambridge by Sir Nicholas Bacon, who was the Lord Privy



Bookplate by Rex Whistler for Osbert Sitwell, 1928 (Rex Whistler, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons)

Seal from 1558-1579. [See an article by David Pearson on an even earlier English bookplate in Newsletter no. 63 — Ed.]

The professional and mercantile classes had embraced bookplates by the end of the sixteenth century, at which time heraldic devices predominated. The bookplates not only assisted in books being returned to their rightful owners but helped to advertise the fact that the owner had a large library.

By the nineteenth century printing and engraving techniques were more easily accessible. The design of bookplates diversified and although some generic bookplates were being printed the bookplate as a work of art developed. Pictorial bookplates became common but heraldic bookplates were still very popular. The nineteenth century also saw the rise of the bookplate collector.

Mueller describes the intaglio method of engraving to produce bookplates as being the gold standard, but he also states that bookplates may be created by other means.

As Mueller outlines, bookplate enthusiasts formed the Ex Libris Society in 1891, now re-formed in the 1970s as the Bookplate Society, which engages in research to identify the owners of bookplates, their biographies and family histories. The Society holds auctions and produces publications.

Bookplates featured in the article include those of Sir Osbert Sitwell, designed by Rex Whistler in 1928, featuring a fanciful dolphin, a crumbling classical folly, and spiral staircases, and one created by Carl S Junge for Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of the United States, showing the President sitting at his desk with Notre-Dame de Reims in the background. Also illustrated are a complex heraldic bookplate for A R Clarke-Williams, of traditional type, and a more restrained bookplate drawn for Richard Wycliffe Spooner Inge comprising an heraldic crest in the centre surrounded by the names of the owner embellished with calligraphic-like flourishes.

As always, characteristic of *Country Life*, the article is informative, scholarly, and beautifully written and illustrated. Published by Future Publishing Ltd, Paddington, London. *Country Life* is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year and is a wonderful read each week.

The website of the Bookplate Society (UK) can be found at [www.bookplatesociety.org](http://www.bookplatesociety.org)

### Obituary: Michael Kino, 1951–2022

By Mark J Ferson, Sydney

Society member Michael Kino passed away on 2 September 2022 after a long illness. Born on 12 August 1951, he grew up in the heyday of boyhood stamp collecting, which was his great and ongoing passion. He focussed this interest on the 1932 Sydney Harbour Bridge stamp issue, and then became a fanatical collector of all things associated with the Sydney Harbour Bridge: art, books, plans, magazines, memorabilia and anything else that featured the iconic arch, including bookplates.

A retired lawyer, Michael joined the Society in June 2019 after seeing my talk listed in the Melbourne Rare Book Week program, stating that his interests were ‘Australian Art and Artists, Sydney Harbour Bridge, Adrian Feint and Philately.’ In



Michael Kino in front of ‘The Bridge’, 2013

the best lawyerly fashion, Michael went on to quiz me about both my work and my artistic interests, but was equally happy to tell me about himself. At one stage, stating that COVID was causing a great strain for everyone, including healthcare workers, he ‘adopted’ me as a way of showing concern for my wellbeing.

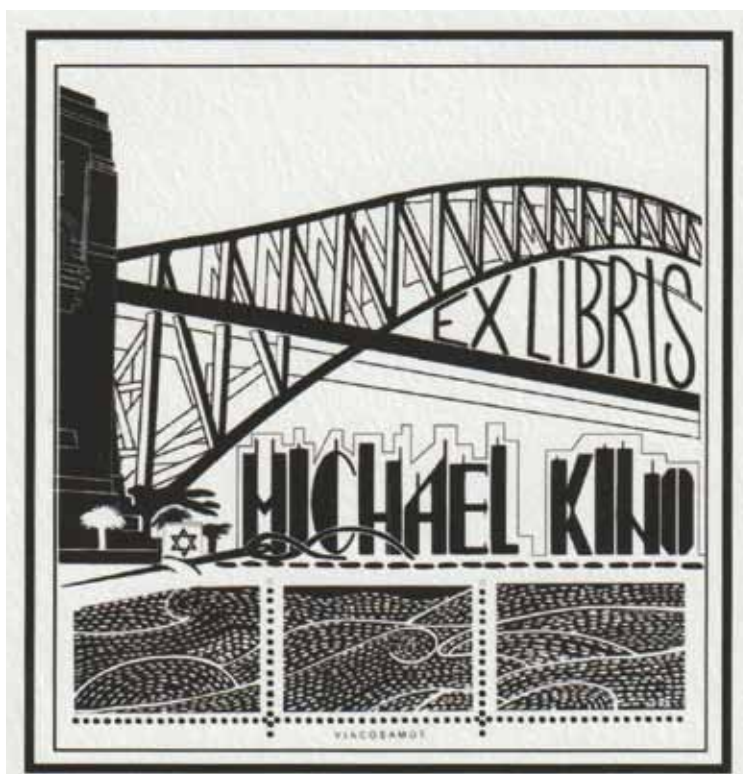
Predictably, he was most enthusiastic about bookplates featuring ‘The bridge’ and contributed an article to the September 2020 edition of the *Newsletter* on Adrian Feint’s etched bookplate for Thelma Clune which featured the Harbour Bridge under construction. Despite illness, Michael continued to correspond regularly by email with ‘Dear Adoptee’ and on several occasions offered to contribute — once he got over his illness — an article on his perhaps unique copy of one of the P Neville Barnett booklets.

Michael’s son Jacob Kino, in his eulogy, recalled one of his earliest vivid memories of visiting a John Brack exhibition with Michael. In Jacob’s words:

*Art was a shared passion and every Saturday we would have a ‘boys day’ visiting galleries, going out for lunch, visiting the lapidary to build my burgeoning rock collection or countless other activities. Dad inspired in me a curiosity in the world and introduced me to the peculiarities of the world of collecting, a family tradition I am proud to continue.*

Jacob was kind enough to inform me of his father’s death, and also expressed the hope of continuing his father’s interest in bookplates.

With thanks to Jacob Kino for information on his father’s life and for a copy of Michael’s obituary by David Coath in the October 2022 issue of the *South Pacific Perfin Bulletin*.



Bookplate by Wil Dim for Michael Kino, 2021

## For sale: original bookplate artwork by Will Mahony (Australian, 1905–1989)

Josef Lebovic Gallery, Sydney, has available for sale a collection dating from the 1930s of eighteen (18) items comprising various states of five wood-engraved bookplate designs and several preparatory ink and gouache drawings.

Some signed and dated or initialled in block, some signed or annotated in pencil in lower margin; sizes range from 8.3 x 3.4cm to 10.3 x 7.8cm.

Some with old folds, creases, pinholes to margins or slight foxing.

The five collectors who commissioned the bookplates were: Allan McClure [featuring Don Quixote], W Stewart Page [drover with sheep], Jean Faris [comedy and tragedy masks], JB Higginson [Australian light horseman] and Fred C Britton [printer with etching press]. Provenance: Will Mahony estate.

Price \$6600 the collection.

Contact **Josef Lebovic** at [josef@joseflebovicgallery.com](mailto:josef@joseflebovicgallery.com) or on 02 9663 4848 or 0411 755 887.



### Editorial

As editors of publications of volunteer-run organisations have to do from time to time, I must start by apologising for the lateness of this issue of the *Newsletter*, which of course was due out in December 2022 but is actually going out in January 2023. And in a further, time-honoured tradition, my next duty — and in fact pleasure — is to wish you Compliments of the Season and hope that you had a peaceful and happy Chanukah or Christmas as appropriate and a jolly New Year. And may we all have a better year in 2023 than the previous few.

My thanks go to the contributors to this issue: Jürgen Wegner, who has become a regular supplier of varied and fascinating copy, for his article on Sydney-based Edwards & Shaw who printed a number of bookplates designed by others as well as

doing their own; Stephen Szabo who brings a keen knowledge of heraldry to bear on our understanding of previously unknown bookplates; and Dr Gael Phillips, who always has an eye out for bookplate articles and on this occasion provides a review of a recent article published in the English magazine, *Country Life*.

As always, my immense gratitude goes to our publications designer Mary Keep, who has developed a 'house style' for the *Newsletter* which attracts plaudits from far and wide; and to Siung Tan at Sydney Design and Print for the consistently high production values of our publications.

I am very sad to record the death on 2 September of Melbourne member, Michael Kino, a passionate collector of many things including bookplates. Michael had only been a member for a few years, but kept in regular touch with your Editor and also

contributed an article on an Adrian Feint bookplate depicting his primary 'object of desire', the Sydney Harbour Bridge

It is great to welcome new members Deanne Ashford (NT), Vickie Hearnshaw (NZ), Karon McGrath (NSW), Lea Simpson (NSW) and Colin South (Vic.), and I am pleased to report that Michael Szabo (NSW) has rejoined the Society.

**Could all members please note the 2023 RENEWAL FORM is enclosed with this issue of the *Newsletter*. Your Committee would be grateful if you could renew your subscription by 31 January 2023.**

And don't forget, if you have any ideas about how to celebrate the CENTENARY OF BOOKPLATE COLLECTING IN AUSTRALIA later in the year, please 'drop us a line' at [newaustralianbookplatesociety@gmail.com](mailto:newaustralianbookplatesociety@gmail.com)

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