

**Editor/President**

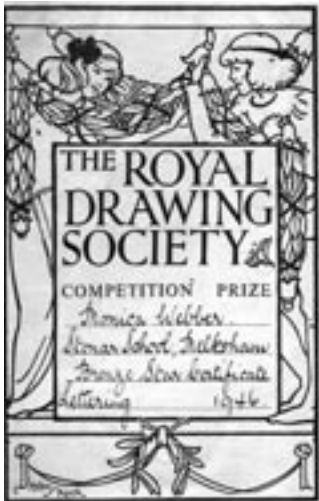
Dr Mark Ferson  
4 Sofala Ave  
Riverview NSW 2066  
02 9428 2863  
m.ferson@unsw.edu.au

**Secretary**

Bronwyn Vost  
59 Gladstone St,  
Enmore NSW 2042  
bronwynvost@bigpond.com

**Designer**

Mary Keep  
PO Box 555  
Dulwich Hill NSW 2203  
tnabs\_mkeep@hotmail.com



English prize plate by  
courtesy of Jean Anderson

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**Beautiful handmade bookplates, Ascham School, Sydney**

By Mark Ferson

At some recent bookfairs I came across two books with hand-painted inscriptions marking their presentation as school prizes to Dulcie Bull. Both date from 1916 and you will agree that they are strikingly beautiful miniature works of art. As one comes across from time to time a not uncommon Ascham prize plate by Sydney artist and art teacher, Albert Collins, I enquired of the school archivist, Marguerite Gillezeau, whether she thought these works might also have been by Collins. Marguerite's thoughtful reply was:

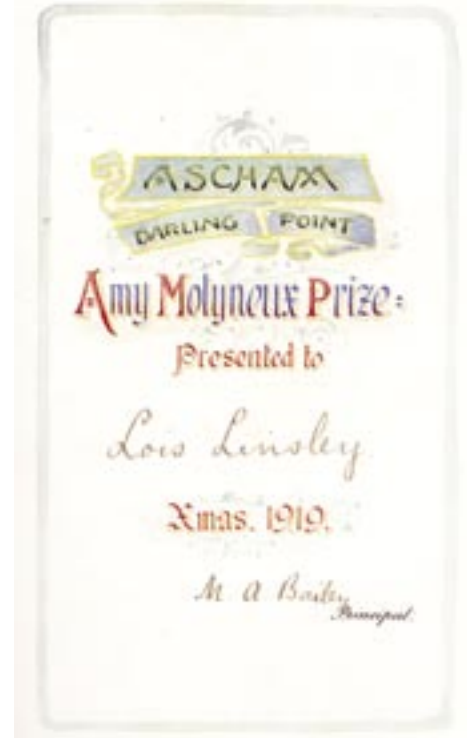
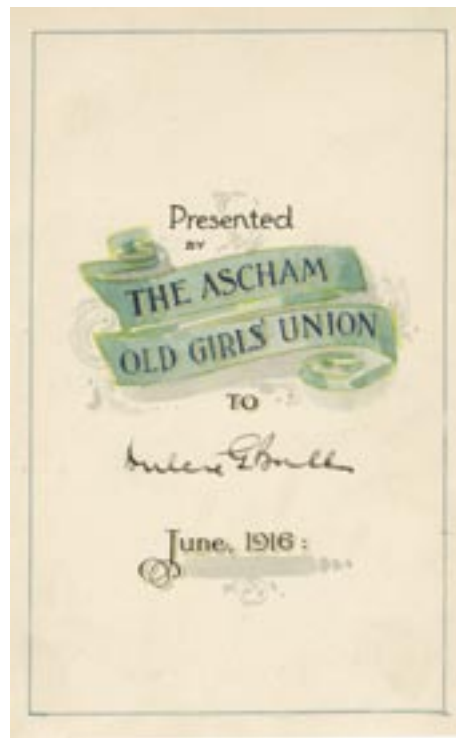
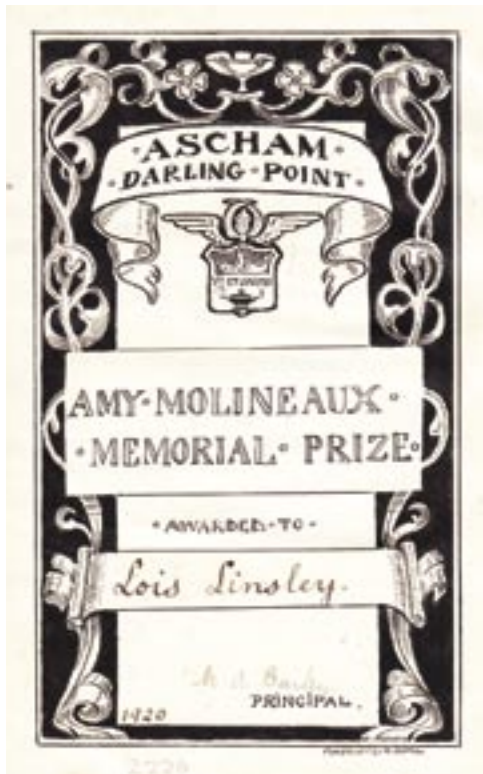
*As to whether the beautiful coloured book plates are the work of Albert Collins, I would have to say, probably not. Albert Collins was on staff at Ascham part time (as visiting staff as music and art teachers tended to be at the time) from about 1908 to 1915. He was responsible for designing the Ascham School crest in 1911 at the behest of the then Principal, Herbert Carter. Like other visiting teachers, he worked at a number of schools concurrently, and was certainly at Redlands (another girls' school) from 1913 to 1916.*

*However, by 1916, he was director of the advertising firm Smith and Julius which I am sure would have been close to a full time job. It therefore seems unlikely (although by no means impossible) that he was responsible for the hand-coloured bookplates on the books in your possession. On the other hand, the black and white plate bearing his name was printed and in use from at least 1919 until the 1940s, and probably designed before he left Ascham in 1915.*

Marguerite pointed out that the archive held some other hand-drawn bookplates and was kind enough to send me scanned images. The bookplate marking the presentation to Lois Linsley of the 1919 Amy Molyneux Prize is clearly the work of the artist who executed the Dulcie Bull plates, with strong similarities between them in the style of the lettered ribbon with 'Ascham ...' at top and the characters in 'Ascham' and in the year. Unfortunately we do not know the identity of the artist. The black and white plate marking Lois Linsley's receipt of the Molineaux [sic] Prize the following year



Hand-lettered presentation plate by unknown artist for Dulcie Bull, 1916



Left: Hand-painted prize plate by Madeline E King for Lois Linsley, c. 1920  
 Centre: Hand-painted presentation plate by unknown artist for Lois Linsley, 1919  
 Right: Hand-painted presentation plate by unknown artist for Dulcie Bull, 1916

### Thomas McCarthy Lane Mullins, 1865–1912

By Juanita Hattersley, Sydney

shows somewhat less attention to lettering but a wholly competent treatment of the organic plant-like border against its black background. This plate and a related design marking the award of the Old Girls' Prize to Miss Linsley the same year (not shown) are signed by Madeline E King who published a book of her own drawings *Sydney sketches* (1915); Marguerite's further reading in the Ascham School Archive uncovered (completely coincidentally) a mention of Miss King on page 9 in the Headmistress' report for 1918: 'Classes in drawing and design have been held in the upper part of the school by Miss King, assisted by Miss Rice, here some very good work has been in the special art classes.'

At almost a century's remove, information on the recipients of the various prizes is a little fragmentary, but the school archives and digitised on-line Australian newspapers available through the National Library of Australia's TROVE interface reveals some fascinating glimpses. Dulcie Bull (of Bingara, NSW) was a boarder from 1914 to 1916 and prefect. She played tennis and basketball and won a number of prizes, particularly in her final year, including music and singing prizes. She performed at

various concerts and her wonderful singing voice is reported in the school magazine. She even held a singing class at the school shortly after leaving. In June 1919 she married Lieutenant Victor Peacocke of the 1st Light Horse at St John's Church, Bingara. Their two daughters also went to Ascham. Marguerite writes that Lois Linsley had the distinction of being the first girl at Ascham to sit the school Leaving Certificate in 1919. The *Sydney Mail* of 19 November 1930 shows a photo of Lois in the capacity of bridesmaid at the wedding of her friend Gloria McFadyen. In July 1936 she wed Ross Wilkinson of Adelaide in a quiet ceremony held at St John's Anglican Church, South Townsville, the couple going on to honeymoon at Magnetic Island on the Great Barrier Reef. There is no doubt much more to learn of these two very talented women than can be found in the social pages of the newspapers of the time, and if any reader has information on either of them, or on the artist who executed the lovely hand-painted bookplates, kindly contact the Editor.

The Editor is most grateful to Ms Marguerite Gillezeau, Archivist, and the Ascham School Archives, Edgecliff, Sydney.

Thomas McCarthy Lane Mullins was the youngest child of James Mullins and Eliza Lane, both of whom had emigrated from Ireland. He was brother to John Francis Lane Mullins [sometimes referred to as the 'father of Australian bookplates'], James Joseph Lane Mullins and George Thomas Lane Mullins.

He was educated at Sydney Grammar School and by the Benedictines at Glebe until its closure in 1877. The Jesuits at St Kilda House later educated him in what was the forerunner of St Aloysius College, being one of 45 pupils enrolled on the first day. After finishing his schooling in Australia, Tom spent a year at the Stonyhurst Jesuit College in Lancashire, England, where he joined The Philosophers group.

He matriculated at Sydney University in 1885 and spent a couple of years studying law while working as an articled clerk. However, the military life was more to his liking and he accepted a commission in the Brigade Division Field Artillery.

Tom was a good all-round sportsman, excelling at horsemanship. This was to stand him in good stead when he volunteered to fight with the NSW Citizens' Bushmen's Contingent in the Boer War during the

years 1900 to 1901. Tom was awarded the Queen's Medal with six clasps. In all, he spent two tours of duty in South Africa, returning to South Africa in February 1902 and fighting with the 'B' Squadron of the 1st Australian Commonwealth Horse. He returned to Sydney in August 1902 and received the King's Medal and two clasps.

In August 1904, Tom married Florence Barlow who was one of the daughters of John Barlow of 'Airmount', Waverley. Florence had attended school at the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Rose Bay, as did her cousins Susan and Lizzie Hughes.

Tom was offered the adjutancy of the NSW Brigade of Australian Field Artillery and in 1906 was offered the position of Aide-de-Camp to Brigadier General Joseph Maria Gordon, the District Commandant.

Tom died of tuberculosis on 9 January 1912 and he is buried in Waverley Cemetery. He is commemorated at St Thomas Beckett Church, Lewisham (Sydney), with a stained glass window made by John Hardman and Co, Birmingham, England, and also by a window at Stonyhurst College, Lancashire, England.

This is an abbreviated version of an essay by the author on her great uncle Thomas Lane Mullins.

*A note on the bookplate: engraved by O Tarrant, presumably Owen Tarrant who appears to have arrived in Sydney in the 1880s. Sands Sydney directory for 1889 shows his occupation as a copperplate engraver at 208 George Street, and on 1 November that year he attended a meeting at 91/2 Oxford Street 'of lithographic artists, copper and wood engravers, die-sinkers, etc.' with a view to forming a society. Peake records that he engraved bookplates for Dr Charles Bickerton Blackburn, J Laurence Brown, May Forsyth (1909) and Robert Robinson (1913). He had his own bookplate engraved by Sydney stationer John Sands with 'O Tarrant, Drummoyne' presumably dating from the late 1890s when he lived in that suburb. He is listed in the 1913 Sands directory as engraver of 175, The Strand. Regrettably, disaster struck the following year, when the Sydney Morning Herald of 22 August reports 'Tarrant, lately of Wetherill Park, near Parramatta, engraver, but now a confinée at Long Bay prison; he lost a libel case and been arrested due to failure to pay the required £50 compensation. Sadly, the coronial register records his death on 25 November 1914 following self administration of 'opium' with 'no evidence to show whether accidentally or otherwise'. – Editor*

## The Graphic Arts Memorial Library bookplate

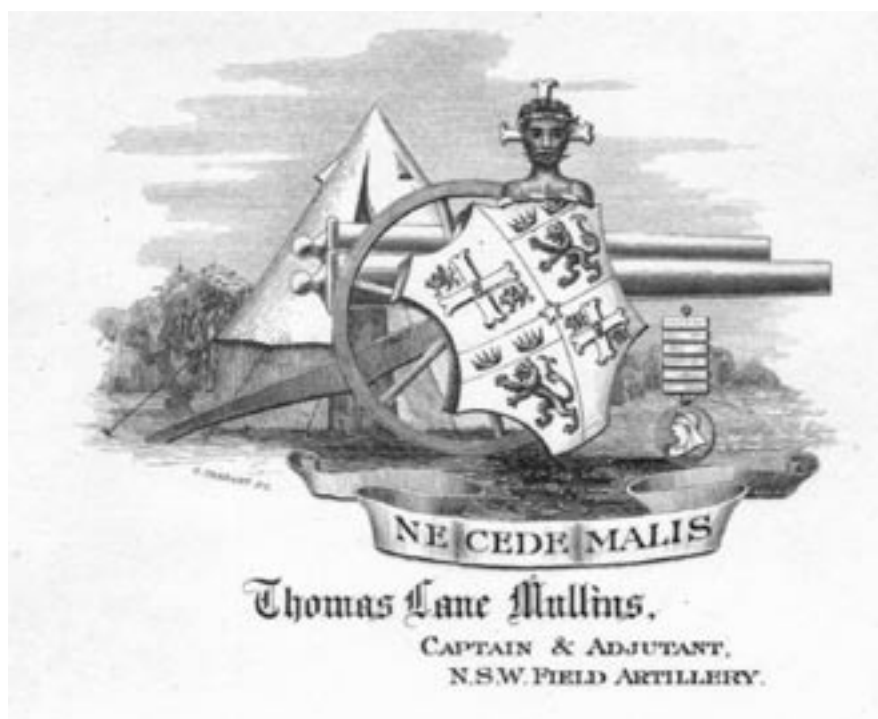
By Jürgen Wegner, Sydney

Libraries come in all shapes and sizes. In the more familiar national and state libraries, a collection of five million volumes is not uncommon. Public libraries also include the smaller versions conducted by local councils. If you have a larger collection yourself—especially if the books have their own bookplate—then you too are a library, a personal or private library. Some book collectors, especially from the past, amassed significant specialist collections, a few of which are still extant today as part of our great research libraries.

Forgotten are the many specialist private libraries associated with companies. Today information is everywhere and the day of the specialist library is mostly past. But such libraries used to play not only an important social and cultural role but also contributed significantly to commerce, industry and technological literacy ... and training. The number of such private special libraries even for such a small place as Australia was extraordinary. They represent an important part of Australia's library history which, like so much else, now has become part of our forgotten history. Many would also have had their own bookplates.

It must just seem such a small and obscure part of our history—printing libraries! By this I mean any sizeable collection of books which was held by any entity associated with the printing and allied trades. Some were extensive and elaborate with their own card catalogues and librarians, and even printed catalogues. Others would just have been a largish collection on some shelves in the company's lunch room. And perhaps they had their own bookplate or, if not, a rubber stamp, or an inscription. The number even of Australian printing libraries is substantial. Sadly, these almost always form part of Australia's libraries lost. Little if anything survives about them and they are mostly known through the odd book that surfaces in the book trade.

One of the larger and more important was the Graphic Arts Memorial Library in Sydney. Books in the collection had



Engraved bookplate by Owen Tarrant for Thomas Lane Mullins, c. 1901



bookplates affixed to them in the style of the library instructional bookplate. The bookplate here acts not only as a mark of ownership but also tells the library users the terms and conditions of use. Fortunately, I found in my own collection not a pristine and perfect copy of the bookplate but a working copy attached to one of their books. It has been heavily clipped so that it could be attached over the library lending card pocket in the front. The bottom half of the bookplate outlines the terms and conditions and here, importantly, they have been manually amended with additional information for students and staff. But, interestingly, the top part also gives some historical information on the history of the collection:

*Dedicated to the Men and Women of the Graphic Arts Industry who gave Service to their Country during World War 1939-1945.*

*Established under the Auspices and for the Use of Members and the Employees of Members of The N.S.W. Master Printers and Allied Trades Association.*

I now know that the Library was established and dedicated to all those who served – and died – during the Second World War. The bookplate is doubly

interesting in that it is in a book, *The German printing industry*, produced by the Australian government's Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction based on a publication by HMSO and the British Intelligence Objectives Sub-Committee. Being part of the Anglo-American sphere we sometimes forget the contribution which Germany made (and makes) to printing and printing technology. For example, almost every second offset printing press in the world is a Heidelberg. And there are and were other large German manufacturers of printing machinery and equipment. So the book is also evidence of the direct contribution that German war reparations in the form of technological know-how made to our printing industries here.

While the Graphic Arts Memorial Library was essentially a trade technical special library and the books were of a practical nature, it did also include more general material. Based on my photocopy of the original typescript *Author catalogue*, quite a number of printing historical works were listed and even a small number of books on the subject of bookplates—and even a small collection of specimens of bookplates themselves. And surprising [*perhaps not, as they were considered outstanding examples of fine printing at the time – Ed.*] to see that

there were two copies of several of the works of P Neville Barnett included:

- ◆ Australian Ex Libris Society. *Annual report* 1930
- ◆ P Neville Barnett. *Armorial book-plates* (1932)
- ◆ P Neville Barnett. *The book-plate in Australia* (1930). Two copies
- ◆ P Neville Barnett. *Pictorial book-plates* (1931). Two copies
- ◆ [A collection of 53 engraved Australian book plates]. No further details are given

Has anyone seen these five P Neville Barnett books with the Graphic Arts Memorial Library bookplate by any chance?

#### Further reading

J P WEGNER, *The Graphic Arts Memorial Library, The book ark*, 78 (2014), p. [15-23], (Libraries lost ; 3)

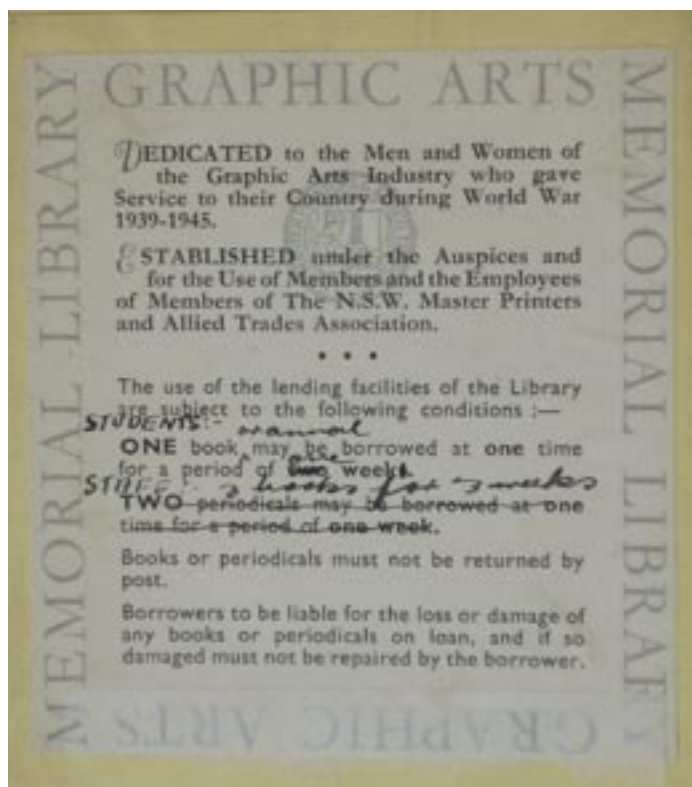
### Bookplate stories: Russell Francis Wright

By Robert C Littlewood, Melbourne

Bookplates from the past often serve as a window into an untold social history or neglected biography and personal achievement. Many of the pictorial bookplates created for Australians from the past have left us with a name and a rebus design riddle. Typical is the wood-engraved bookplate design for Russell Francis Wright (1948) by the Melbourne artist Allan Jordan ... the rebus consists of a broom, a Celtic cross and an open book. Little would the casual observer realise that this design encapsulates a story of great heroism and courage far beyond anything we would expect of a young man from a private school, fresh out of university, who set out to serve his country in its darkest hour at the beginning of World War Two.

Russell Francis Wright (1920-2012) was born on 28 September 1920, the son of Jessie (née McLean) and Charles Cecil Wright. Much of his secondary schooling was at Scotch College, Hawthorn, and he undertook studies in engineering at the University of Melbourne.

He graduated from his engineering course and, with the war in the Pacific intensifying, on 30 December 1941 he



enlisted in the Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps (RAAOC). But within six weeks of enlistment, he had been taken a prisoner of the Japanese Army. Wright was initially engaged at the Base Ordnance Workshop, awaiting posting to an active service unit. On 10 January 1942, he embarked at Sydney for service abroad with the 8th Australian Division, landing in Singapore on Australia Day, 26 January 1942. Lieutenant Wright was aboard the 'Mati Hari' when she left Singapore on 12 February 1942. She was captured by the Japanese 10 miles south-east of Muntok. The captain surrendered because the passengers were mostly women, children and nurses. Wright was subsequently imprisoned at Palembang, Singapore (Changi), Thailand (Death Railway) and Singapore (Syme Road and Changi).

In April 1943, Wright volunteered to join the force of 7,000 British and Australian PoWs ordered by the Japanese to leave Singapore to supplement the workforce on the Thailand-Burma railway. He marched 160 miles through the Thai jungle with a radio receiver concealed in a piano accordion which was to be used to entertain the Japanese guards. At Shimo-Songkurai camp near the Burma border, conditions quickly deteriorated. Faced with a shortage of food and medical supplies, the onset of cholera and an imminent collapse in morale, the senior medical officer, Major Bruce Hunt, asked Wright to begin radio reception with the words: 'You can do more to help save lives than I can.'

In 1944, Wright constructed a radio receiver within the head of a broom. It was tuned by screwdrivers and was listened to in Changi by monitoring BBC, All India Radio, South East Asia Command and Radio Tokyo transmissions. Other Allied and Japanese transmissions provided further information, which provided a significant boost to morale. He continued his wireless activity in Changi, and during his captivity he adopted a wide range of subterfuges for his radios, including the head of a broom used to sweep his hut, the legs of a table, a shooting stick and a harmonium. Discovery would almost certainly have resulted in his execution. A report written within days

of the Japanese surrender in 1945 by the Senior British Officer at Changi stressed the importance of radios. He wrote: 'Regular and reliable news was absolutely necessary to maintain the morale of all ranks' and added that the prisoners 'responsible for the actual working of the sets ... daily carried their lives in their hands.' In March 1947, Lieutenant Russell F Wright was appointed as a Member of the Order of the British Empire in recognition of his war service as a Prisoner-of-War.

The Wright family home was at 185 Auburn Road, Hawthorn (Melbourne) and, at the instigation of Mrs Jessie Carbines, the Hawthorn City Council requested that Wright allow the 'broom' and 'table' wireless sets that he constructed in the Changi Prisoner-of-War camp to be exhibited from 27 November to 1 December 1945. Lieutenant Wright spoke about his experiences in Changi during the opening ceremony. Earlier in 1945, Mrs Carbines had commissioned Melbourne artist Allan Jordan to produce a bookplate for herself and she also encouraged Lieutenant Wright's mother, Mrs Jessie G Wright to contemplate such a commission as a gift to her son.

After the war, following a long period in hospital, Wright was discharged from the Australian Army classified as 60 per cent disabled. He completed a degree in electrical engineering at the University of Adelaide and returned in England in 1953. He worked in the aircraft industry, notably on the Comet programme at De Havilland, and subsequently moved to the then fledgling nuclear industry.

In retirement in Surrey, Wright restored and flew two vintage wood and fabric light aircraft and maintained an active interest in vintage cars and model engineering. Russell Francis Wright died suddenly on 22 April 2012. He had married Irma Sanders in 1956; Irma and their two sons Colonel Iain Wright and Dr Stuart Wright survive him.

Allan Holder Jordan (1898-1982) was an art educator who made a significant contribution to graphic printmaking and the book arts in Australia. His oeuvre numbers some sixty graphic prints, twenty designed and illustrated small books and seventy-one bookplates, as well as countless drawings,



Wood-engraved design by Allan Jordan for Russell F Wright, 1948

paintings, pastels and small mosaics. The body of work is notable for its consistent quality of design and draftsmanship combined with the expert manner in which the works have been created. There are three notable areas of interest in Jordan's creative effort: linocuts and colour woodcuts in the 1930s; book design and illustration in the 1940s; and bookplate design for two decades from 1939 until 1958. As P Neville Barnett noted: 'Jordan was, I knew, a genial character in a quiet, ingrained, good-natured way' – a good summary of Allan Jordan's personality.

## Notes & happenings

A Melbourne meeting – first of many?

It is very pleasing to note that some of the Society's Melbourne members were able to get together informally earlier this year to talk of bookplates and, no doubt, of other topics. I am grateful to 'convenor' Bronwyn Parker for this short report:

*Earlier this year I received a telephone call from the Society's president to remind me that I had failed to renew for two years my subscription to the Bookplate Society, practice I certainly do not condone! Highly embarrassed, I pointed out how much*

I enjoyed reading the Newsletter, and made the comment that maybe members of the Society in Melbourne would like to meet.

So on Tuesday 5 August 2014, at 2pm at my house in Eaglemont, the first Melbourne gathering of the Bookplate Society took place with six enthusiastic members present [Denis Cahill, Charles Fletcher, Edwin Jewell, Carol Page, Lyn Roman and Bronwyn]. All had brought copies of their bookplates which were shared around; stories of their collections were told; afternoon tea was served; an inaugural photograph taken in my garden; and the members, all happy to have met, said goodbye at 4.30pm.

I feel that this was a most enjoyable day, and would be quite happy for it to be repeated with any Melbourne members.

#### News from the Firestation Print Studio

I first became aware of the Firestation Print Studio in the Melbourne suburb of Armadale a couple of years ago after stumbling across a notice of an exhibition of bookplates being held there. The Studio continues its interest in bookplates and this year became a member of the Society. The Studio's manager Edith May has allowed me to reproduce a short item about their May meeting of the Linocut Club, written by the Club's facilitator, Carmel O'Connor:

*Linocut club members gathered around the large table in the centre of the studio room. The focus of this meeting was to swap linocut bookplate prints, although not every member was expected to participate. Richard White had a variety of ex libris linocut designs printed in a few different coloured inks. He clearly had been onto this task with gusto. Richard even had a stamp made for the text, which he then positioned into the different designs before printing. Edith May printed a 'fun' version of Charlie (her puppy) in a coil design with text; Jan Liesfield's design was of her family village in Salzburg, Austria; and Cora Lansdell had two linocut designs both of owls and both equally haunting. My bookplate of*

*three figures intertwined was exhibited at the Studio last year in the bookplate exhibition. Sue Poggioli had sent an ex libris lino from Brisbane for Edith, showing Charlie, the toy poodle.*



Linocut bookplate by Sue Poggioli for Edith May, 2014

#### Recent publications

**DON DOHERTY.** Henry Lawson *My army* association collection. *Bibliotexts and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 382-383, Jun.-Sep. 2014; pp. 61-78.

Shows two bookplates by Lionel Lindsay for Harry Chaplin

[**ERICA HOCKLEY.**] December 2013 Show & Tell meeting in Sydney. Erica Hockley on Edgar Ederheimer. *Bibliotexts and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 382-383, Jun.-Sep. 2014; pp. 91-4.

Reproduction of three presumably German bookplates, two for Edgar Ederheimer; also mentioned by Brian Taylor in his 'By their books ye may [get to] know them (1): Edgar Ederheimer', in *Bibliotexts* no. 355-356, Sep.-Dec. 2007, pp. 128-141

**ELLE FREAK.** 'The modern medium: colour linocuts', in Tracey Lock-Weir, *Dorrit Black: unseen forces*. Adelaide: Art Gallery of South Australia, 2014; p. 144

Shows two previously unrecorded linocut monochrome bookplates by the artist, for Jessie H Black, and N H Shaw, c. 1926

#### Editorial

In the editorial to *Newsletter* no. 34, I may have been carried away with crying over

a supposed lack of contributors to the previous issue – and I apologise to the contributors to number 33 for so quickly forgetting their valuable efforts. Whether this had an effect or not, it is really pleasing to be able to say that contributions have flowed in to the 'editorial offices' of the Society to such an extent that I have had to hold two essays over to the next issue, due out next March.

I have opened the *Newsletter* by introducing what I feel are very beautiful examples of hand-painted presentation ex libris marking prizes awarded by Ascham School, Sydney, around the time of the First World War. Despite wonderful assistance from the school's archivist, Marguerite Gillezeau, I know that I have failed badly in my short accompanying essay to provide recognition to the unknown artist but also to adequately explore, and likely to celebrate, the lives of the highly talented young women who won these objects of beauty. Such bookplates give only the barest clues to what are surely vital slices of social history, and I regret the lack of time to allow proper documentation of these stories.

A small item hidden in the Notes & happenings section is really of 'stop press' significance, recording as it does the first Melbourne gathering of Society members. I am most grateful to Bronwyn Parker for convening this informal meeting, and hope this event presages other similar gatherings in Melbourne and perhaps also in other cities where there are a few members – could perhaps Brisbane be next on the list?

In addition to thanking Juanita Hattersley, Robert Littlewood and Jürgen Wegner for their fascinating articles, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved with the *Newsletter* during 2014 – other contributors and as always Mary Keep, our superlative designer, and our printer Siung Tan at Sydney Design and Print. And, of course, on behalf of the Society's officers, I wish all readers the best for Christmas/Chanukah, New Year and the holiday season generally.