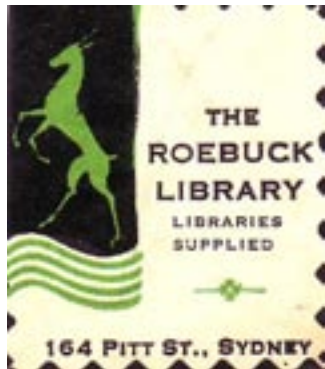


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**Society holds its first AGM**

Ten members gathered on Saturday, 3 November, in the pleasant atmosphere of the bookshelf-lined Globe Bar, Observatory Hotel at Miller's Point (Sydney) to mark the end of the first year of the Society. The formal part of the program, the Society's first Annual General Meeting, was capped off by some passing around of bookplate items, a light lunch and the entertaining and relaxed reminiscences of Peter Tinslay, member and respected antiquarian book seller, of books, bookplates, art and bookplate artists. The draft minutes of the meeting are reproduced below, thanks to the recording pen of Society secretary, Mary Keep.

1. Welcome

Those present introduced themselves. Mark welcomed and thanked everyone for their attendance. He presented apologies for members who were unable to attend.

2. Present & apologies

Present: Mark Ferson, Peter Tinslay, June Sanderson, Mike Carter, Brenda Heagney, Ronald Cardwell, Pamela Horsnell, Mary Keep (minutes), Thomas Hodgson, Roy Howard.

Apologies: Kay Craddock, Richard King, Nick Ingleton, Rie Fletcher, Glen Ralph, Jeff Bidgood, Robert Scoble, Ann Nugent, Andrew Peake, Alex Ferson, Norman Hetherington, Brad Stone, Edwin Jewell, Mark Hildebrandt.

3. Minutes of 2006 meeting

Mark distributed copies of the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2006 to form the Society, to those who did not already have them. The minutes were confirmed.

4. President's Report

Mark commented on the success of the Society's *Newsletter*, which has been positively commented on by a number of members and non members. He thanked Mary Keep for her tremendous effort in designing the *Newsletter* to such a high standard on every occasion, Ronald Cardwell for his management of the memberships and Society finances, Lis Bastian and Ian Dalkin for hosting the website and providing technical support, and the many members who have contributed to the *Newsletter* and in other ways to the life of the Society.



Members at the Society's Annual General Meeting on 3 November, (l-r) Roy Howard, Mike Carter, Pam Horsnell, Mary Keep, June Sanderson, Brenda Heagney, Thos Hodgson, Ron Cardwell, Peter Tinslay, Mark Ferson.

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Mark mentioned the various articles he has written to promote bookplates, in particular, an article in the *World of Antiques and Art* and an upcoming one in the December issue of *Good Reading*. He has also contributed to *BibliNews*, the journal of the Book Collectors' Society of Australia. He noted that he will be giving a talk in Brisbane in January 2008 at the State Library of Queensland exhibition, 'Ex Libris: Bookplates from our Collections,' and distributed the exhibition leaflet to those present.

#### 5. Treasurer's Report

Ronald explained the reasoning behind our fees and passed around the Finance Report. He gave out Membership cards to all present. He spoke about the Bookbinders' Guild having ads in their newsletter. A discussion on various ways to raise money proceeded, with Pamela Horsnell suggesting contacting W H Thorpe, the producers of what is known in the publishing industry as 'The Blue Newsletter' as well as the Galley Club to see if they would be a suitable vehicle for letting other 'book-minded' people know about our Society and encourage them to become members. Mike Carter suggested getting a regular column in a publication such as *The Letterpress Journal*. Ronald asked Thos Hodgson if barristers used bookplates. We spoke of the AGNSW library and the Corrigan Collection. June thinks more bookplates should show humour. Roy Howard arrived and we discussed the Melbourne-based bookplate society and the UK society.

#### 6. Election of Office Bearers

The current Office bearers were elected unopposed:

President – Dr Mark Ferson

Vice President – Mike Carter

Treasurer – Ronald Cardwell (also acts as Membership Secretary)

Secretary – Mary Keep

#### 7. Nomination of Committee members

No committee members were nominated and the Executive retains the right to

appoint Committee members as needed to assist in the carrying out of specific tasks or projects.

#### 8. Ideas for activities for 2008

A lunch for members.

Visit to a printing museum, Mike Carter suggested Queanbeyan rather than Penrith, possibly produce a Society typographic bookplate during the visit (with prior notice).

Ronald talked of publishing our own book of members' bookplates.

Suggestion of members sending in their own bookplates.

Mike and Pamela both talked of the Australian Society of Miniature Art, suggested Mark talking at one of their meetings or exhibitions?

#### 9. Other business

Talked again of the UK Society, its historical bias.

It was suggested that the Newsletter promote members who design bookplates (although individuals are already the subject of designer profiles), and that they be listed on the Society website with examples of their designs. Brenda thought we should state the preferred medium of each artist. People who contact the Society and ask about how to commission a bookplate could then be referred to this section of the website. Ronald is interested to research, and write about, the earliest bookplates in Australia.

#### 10. Talk by Peter Tinslay

Mark introduced member Peter Tinslay who is the President of the Australian and New Zealand Association of Antique Booksellers, has handled many bookplates and bookplate collections over the years, and is always supportive of bookish activities. Peter gave a very interesting and varied talk and a brilliant show of bookplates and associated items!



Bookplate by Tessa Morrison.

## Designer profile

No. 4: Dr Tessa Morrison

Your Editor first became aware of the computer assisted bookplate designs of Tessa Morrison when he received a copy of Andrew Peake's handsome and monumental work *Australian Personal Bookplates*. Andrew's book lists 21 of Tessa's designs, including one for a Peake family member, and reproduces a number of them. In his short notes on the main bookplate artists, Andrew reports that Tessa's bookplate 'for Graham Pascoe was selected for reproduction in the catalogue for the World of Ex Libris artists' competition held in Belgrade in 1995.' Tessa has kindly provided images of a selection of her bookplates and some autobiographical notes which are reproduced below.

*I enrolled in art college at Mitchell College of Advanced Education, now Charles Sturt University, in 1984, where I majored in Printmaking and trained in all the traditional forms of printing. However, it was etching that appealed to*

*me the most; I found that it was a very flexible medium. I experimented with the textures of the surface of the plate building up as well as down, which created a mixture of print and emboss. But the most satisfying thing about etching is the number of different ways that the plate can be inked; intaglio, block or a mixture of both. However, sometimes my experiments in inking led to an edition of one! I continued studying etching at East Sydney Technical College in 1987. Throughout this time I exhibited in joint shows in Sydney.*

*My first interest in ex libris prints was in 1991. The small format was and still is my favourite format and that year I produced a print for the biannual competition at the Het Stedelijk Museum at Sint-Niklaas, Belgium. The print for the exhibition was a very traditional etching and aquatint. It was created for a friend, Jacobus Doeleman, was of musical instruments on a wavy chessboard, and combined his strong interests of chess and jazz.*

*The topics of my work had been largely*

*about the theatre and the circus but this began to change when I began a Bachelor in Arts at the University of New England majoring in mathematics and philosophy. Puzzles and geometry become an ongoing theme. I began to experiment with different forms of printing and photographic emulsion, but in my studies I had begun to use and program computers. In the 1990s computer graphics were very slow and in hindsight quite crude, but it was a very exciting new medium and was perfect for my topics.*

*Computers programs have improved greatly in the last few years and as a drawing tool they have many advantages for the designer. Although getting detailed drawings can still be slow, even with modern computers, being able to zoom in and add more detail makes it a unique medium. The richness of the colours and their range makes for endless possibilities and the lines can be as fine as you like – in short, there are no limitations.*

*I have been using computer graphics in my ex libris prints since 1995. I regularly submit ex libris prints to international competitions and they have been exhibited in Italy, Belgium, Scotland, China, Ukraine, Romania, Poland, Korea, Chile, Japan and Australia.*

*In 2003 I was awarded a Doctorate in Philosophy, at the University of Newcastle; the topic was 'The Topology and Iconography of the Labyrinth: Towards an Integration of Philosophy, Mathematics and History'. Currently I am a research fellow in architectural history in the School of Architecture and Built Environment at the University of Newcastle, specialising in seventeenth and eighteenth century architecture. Unfortunately I do not have as much time to do my art work as I used to, but I find the ex libris international competitions extremely valuable. They are a wonderful opportunity to see the vast array of ideas, styles and techniques that artists can apply to the small format of the ex libris print.*

*Although I do intend to return to etching one day I find the computer a*



Bookplate by Tessa Morrison.



Bookplates by Tessa Morrison, 2003 (left) and 1997 (right).

*wonderful and powerful drawing tool that is extremely versatile, particularly for ex libris prints.*

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## Notes and happenings

Auction of books from the library of Sir Barry Humphries

The book auction held by Bonhams and Goodman on Monday 10 December at their new Waterloo (Sydney) rooms included 67 lots of books belonging to Barry Humphries. Humphries, an internationally renowned comedian and entertainer, with many alter egos including Dame Edna Everage and Sir Les Patterson, is one of Australia's most successful cultural exports. His two autobiographies, *More please* (1992) and *My*

*life as me* (2002) make many references to his passion for buying secondhand books, whether in his home town of Melbourne, in Sydney or other cities where he found himself performing and entertaining. This love started during his school days, and he makes reference in *My life as me* (p.48) to producing a bookplate on his friend's printing press after seeing the prototype in books belonging to his friend's father, which:

*... all bore on their inside pastedown a bookplate showing a field of waving corn in a rather English landscape, in the style of an Ethelbert White wood engraving. Beneath the vignette were the words 'Harold Braithwaite Tipping. His Book'. I imagine that Mr Tipping – the first bibliophile in my acquaintance – must have chosen the cornfield in homage to the cereal from which he derived his Krunchies fortune.*

Although I left absentee bids on a small number of items, including lot 1149, a rare exhibition catalogue produced by the New

South Wales Public Library, and which has a bookplate connection whose story must wait a future Newsletter, I was successful with only one lot. Lot 1106 comprised 'NOVELS H-K. Including HARRIS Frank ... + others (1 Box)', and although I do encourage any reader who knows this, I think, now obscure, writer to enlighten me, I was attracted by what the auction house described as Humphries' exlibris stamp (illustrated below). I was also much gratified when one of these books, Frank Harris, *Shakespeare and his love* (London, Frank Palmer, 1910) revealed its docket of sale for 10/6 by Angus & Robertson Ltd, dated 17 August 1956. I presume that this was a record of the transaction which put the volume into the hands of a 22-year-old Barry Humphries on one of his many book-buying excursions. Thus are the small pleasures of a bibliophile!



*Dispersal of a fine bookplate collection: The Bookplate Collection of Brian North Lee, FSA (1936-2007). From Ex Libris//Bookplates, the blog of José Vicente de Bragança, <http://bookplate-jvarnoslo.blogspot.com/> Posted Sunday, 25 November 2007 (Reproduced with permission)*

Collections, built during a lifetime with patience, cunning and wit, in a never-ending pursuit of wanted and missing items, sometimes with sacrifices, and enriched by the collector's research and eventually with items duly catalogued and archived, usually end up in Public Museums or Libraries – more or less hidden – or are sold on the market. For other collectors a chance is then open to augment and improve his collection but in this case purchasing power and a bit of luck is paramount. But the collection will be inevitably dispersed, which is always sad to watch. Brian North Lee's books and bookplate collection met this fatal destiny.

Part of his fine bookplate collection was sold at Bonhams, at New Bond Street, London on 13 November 2007, divided in lots 51-73 of the Auction Sale's catalogue. Especially rich in Jacobean and Chippendale British armorial bookplates, the collection was arranged for sale by albums, in some cases with more or less 500 items each, fetching prices which ranged from £450 - 6,200.

But the high point of the collection was lot 71 – (ROYALTY Seventeen albums, containing approximately 800 bookplates for members of the Royal family, British and European aristocracy and related figures) as described in Bonhams fine catalogue. Fetching £6,200! Another lot – with very sought after, rare bookplates – was lot 64 containing 350 Indian bookplates, sold for £1,800.

Lot 65 containing bookplates and sketches by John Lawrence sold at £1,400. Let's hope that those fine bookplates ended up in good hands.

The auction results can be seen at: [www.bonhams.com/cgi-bin/public.sh/pubweb/publicSite.r?sContinent=usa&screen=catalogue&iSaleNo=15232](http://www.bonhams.com/cgi-bin/public.sh/pubweb/publicSite.r?sContinent=usa&screen=catalogue&iSaleNo=15232)

## Recent articles on bookplates

**1** Mark Ferson, 'Bookplates for book lovers', *Good Reading*, Dec. 2007 to Jan. 2008, p.22.

Short history of Australian pictorial bookplates with a 'plug' for the New Australian Bookplate Society; illustrated with bookplates by Telma Dufton, Mary Keep, Tessa Morrison, G D Perrottet and D H Souter.

**2** Mark Ferson, 'Preview – At home in the library: book arts in Australia between the Wars', *Spirit of Progress* (Journal of the Art Deco Society, Victoria), vol. 8, no. 4, Spring 2007, pp.17-20.

Selected text and images from the author's talk at the 9th World Congress on Art Deco, Melbourne, April 2007; reproduces bookplate designs by A Feint and G D Perrottet.

## The University of NSW book fair

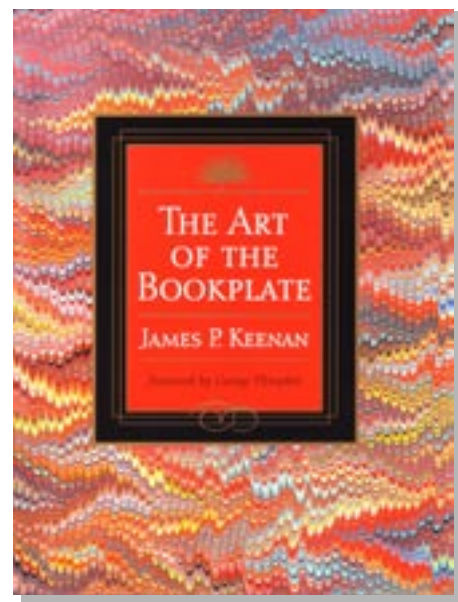
Book fairs, with their stores of dusty, often unloved, ageing novels and works of non-fiction, are generally happy hunting grounds for the patient bookplate seeker. None is as reliable a source as the annual UNSW Book Fair, held at the University's Kensington campus each year in April. Next year marks the 40th anniversary of the UNSW Book Fair and I would strongly recommend you visit it over the 4-day period. Exact dates are yet to be announced and can be checked on [www.bookfair.unsw.edu.au](http://www.bookfair.unsw.edu.au)

A site for Australian book fairs is also well worth checking at [www.collectingbooksandmagazines.com/fairs.html](http://www.collectingbooksandmagazines.com/fairs.html)



Bookplate for Adelaide Circulating Library, c.1920s

## Book review



*The art of the bookplate*, by James P Keenan, Barnes & Noble, Inc., New York, 2003.

You might wonder why I would feature in these columns a book published four years ago. There are a number of answers to this question, the most obvious being that copies are now available at a good price in Sydney, from the Old Church Bookshop, Carlingford (email: [oldbooks@oldchurchbookshop.com.au](mailto:oldbooks@oldchurchbookshop.com.au)). It is doubtless also available elsewhere. The second reason is that it is an attractive and well-illustrated book which provides a good overview of bookplates around the world. It necessarily concentrates on designs from the United States and Great Britain, with a smattering of Continental plates. The book would make a very nice Christmas or New Year's present to a friend just starting out in bookplates or to yourself if at the same stage of knowledge of our beloved subject.

The author, James Keenan, appears to have single-handedly taken over the reins of the venerable American Society of Bookplate Collectors & Designers (founded 1923) after the death of Audrey Spencer Arellanes who had, in turn, taken over from the founding Secretary, Carlyle S Baer on his death in 1969. I have been in touch with James who offers some wishes and

comments about the book's genesis and value:

Dear Mark

*Congratulations on your new group. There was some buzz about your new association at Nyon [the location of the 2006 international bookplate congress]. I'm delighted that you would like to present The Art of the Bookplate in your journal. This out-of-print book is no longer sold through Barnes & Noble, but it is still available through institutions that host our travelling exhibition or where our Society has regional meetings. I have only a few cases of books remaining that are signed and include an original Anatoli Kalashnikov wood-engraved bookplate "ripped-in" (USD25.00). Of course, this exclusive edition is not available in any store.*

*The Barnes & Noble book is not a scholarly edition. "The Art of the Bookplate" was produced in just a few months to serve as an inexpensive "impulse" purchase or "stocking stuffer" for Christmas shoppers back in '03. We still receive inquiries regularly about commissioning bookplates or joining the Society as the result of the publication. It has served our Society well as we have dozens of new members who discovered their passion for bookplate collecting through this mighty edition.*

*I hope that you are receiving copies of the Ex Libris Chronicle. We have a new research center in Tucson, Arizona and would like to have a complete run of your publication for our visitors to enjoy. Please consider an exchange of publications. Every good wish for the holidays!!*

James P. Keenan,  
*American Society of Bookplate  
Collectors & Designers,  
P.O. Box 14964, Tucson, Arizona, USA  
85732-4964. [www.bookplate.org](http://www.bookplate.org)*

This homile offers some food for thought regarding a publication program for our own Society. M F

## Editorial

My intention has been that this issue of the *Newsletter* be ready for posting out during December, although it may turn out that early January is the allotted time. In any case, may I take this opportunity to wish members and other readers a merry Christmas or Chanukah as appropriate, a wonderful new year, and however and wherever celebrated, compliments of the season. The Society's presents to you, thanks to the State Library of Queensland and the generosity of members Claude Dany and Robert Littlewood, are enclosed with this issue.

You will note that the Society recently held a successful Annual General Meeting which is reported on the front page, and a number of possible activities were canvassed, of which members will hear more in 2008. Suffice to say, we hope to produce a members' book to which you will be invited to contribute a bookplate and some small details about yourselves, aim to upgrade the presence of member-artists on the Society's website, and will pursue a number of ideas about informal meetings and perhaps even excursions for members and friends.

The membership of the Society now stands at 43. I am pleased to report that we have been able to generate some publicity through the website and articles in magazines, and as a result of the State Library of Queensland exhibition, which runs until the end of January 2008. The latter has prompted email enquiries from some potential Brisbane members, and I have hopes that interest in the Society will continue to gain momentum over the coming 12 months. I have recently heard that the National Library of Australia is thinking of issuing a booklet featuring bookplates from its collections and I hope that this project comes to fruition.

It only remains for me to thank Dr Tessa Morrison for her fascinating contribution in this issue to our 'Designer profile' series and to give my profuse thanks to Mary Keep for he truly remarkable and much remarked upon design and laying out of the four *Newsletter* issues in 2007.



Typographic prize bookplate for Collège Libre de Pézenas, France, c. 1860, gift of John Gain.

## RELATED WEBSITES

[www.bonhams.com](http://www.bonhams.com)

Even if you're not buying, browse through these treasures in the Book, Map and Manuscript Department of Bonhams fine art auctioneers and valuers.

[www.bookfair.unsw.edu.au](http://www.bookfair.unsw.edu.au)

Check details closer to the date of the next fair in April 2008.

[www.collectingbooksandmagazines.com/](http://www.collectingbooksandmagazines.com/)

Links to fairs and swaps and meets for collectors of all kinds, especially books.

[www.bookplate.org](http://www.bookplate.org)

American Society of Bookplate Collectors and Designers website has a history of bookplates and many interesting examples to view.

If you have bookplate-related website suggestions, please email the Secretary: [marykeep8@hotmail.com](mailto:marykeep8@hotmail.com)

Any bookplate designer wishing to be the subject of a Designer profile or to have work reproduced in the *Newsletter* should contact the Editor on 02 9428 2863 or by email. The Society's website may be found if you go to [www.stoplaughing.com.au/bookplatesociety](http://www.stoplaughing.com.au/bookplatesociety)