

Editor/President

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

Designer/Secretary

Mary Keep
PO Box 555
Dulwich Hill NSW 2203
tnabs_mkeep@hotmail.com



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The Society's fourth Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held on the evening of Wednesday, 1 June in the gracious setting of Hordern House antiquarian book dealers, Potts Point (Sydney). The President gave the highlights of the year and stated that membership remained in the seventies. The Treasurer gave his report, noting that the Society had accumulated funds which would enable it to produce some additional publications for members. The Members' Directory is well on the way to completion and the President would issue a final call for members to send images of their own bookplates for inclusion. Members have also been asked to volunteer a number of copies to tip into a 'special' edition of the Directory. A new proposal was discussed to catalogue the extensive and important John Lane Mullins bookplate collection in the Mitchell Library; it was agreed to pursue this idea in coming months, to be led by Richard d'Apice. The office bearers in 2010 were re-elected for 2011 and speaker Matthew Fishburn invited to join both the Society and its Committee. Other ideas were kicked around and as well it was agreed to schedule the next annual meeting for March 2012 and to hold an additional informal meeting around September.

On the evening, Society business was preceded by a fascinating talk by Hordern House associate, Matthew Fishburn on 'Some interesting Hordern House books and their bookplates' and Matthew has allowed us to reproduce some of his notes from this talk, below.

I'm terribly pleased to own my first one, the bookplate for David Scott Mitchell. I found it, in all places, in Germany, and it was sold to

me with a curious shrug – the only comment in the catalogue note was that someone had typed "Sydney" on the backing sheet, so it was dutifully shelved as Australiana. It features intertwined the Scott and Mitchell family crests, and is very much in the grand tradition of aristocratic bookplates from the nineteenth century. It seems a little dour, but I went to a recent talk by Paul Brunton which made me see the error of my ways. The secret is in the two family mottoes, which have two almost perfect lines for any book collector: 'Deo favente', By God's favour, to remind us to be humble, and 'Eureka', I have found it.

But there's more to the story of course. Mitchell was quite obsessed with bookplates, and continued to collect them even when he started to shut up shop on other types of acquisitions. In the last years of his life, Mitchell really worked on his bookplate collection, actively seeking for example one by William Nicholson, the extraordinary English artist. Eileen Chanin's recent book about Mitchell also tells of his delight in being sent the bookplates of King George and Queen Mary: 'I feel as if I had come greatly to London and been given the Garter!' One of the sadder aspects of this collection is that although he gave 4000 or more plates to the Library as part of his collection, they were not particularly well catalogued at the time, and the exact breadth of his collection seems unlikely to ever be known.

The odd part of the story is that the bookplate is not really his. Despite his known interests, he never commissioned one, so the

**The Society has a new website:
www.bookplatesociety.org.au/**



Above: Bookplate by James Berry for John Hadmar Sticht, 1947
 Right: Bookplate for Robert Carl Sticht, 1909



Australia – United States bookplate friendships

Mark J Ferson, Sydney

American Bookplate Society, Kansas City

No sooner had the Ex Libris Society been formed in London in 1891, than it attracted much interest from across the Atlantic, and within three years over 50 Americans had joined its ranks. In 1896, the Washington [DC] Ex-Libris Society was formed, renamed the American Bookplate Society in 1897 and then folded. In 1913, another American Bookplate Society came into existence through the driving force of Alfred Fowler of Kansas City, Missouri, although its first members were largely based in New York City. In 1915, the American Bookplate Society issued its first *Year Book*, which reprinted the Society's constitution, the editorial referring to the 'Society's program for furthering the art of the modern bookplate.' By this time, the Society had 115 members, and of eight foreign members two were Australians—Percy Neville Barnett, c/- Bank of New South Wales, Wollongong, and Mrs Ellen Middleton, of Sydney, both of whom had joined in 1913.

Whereas in the period leading up to the First World War, Australian collectors had looked to England, the *Studio* and the Ex Libris Society, in the 1920s the Australian movement was increasingly influenced by activities in the United States. By 1925, five Australians (P N Barnett, Robert Cutting, Mrs Ethelbert Falkiner, Blanche Milligan and J L Mullins) were included in the exchange list for the American Bookplate Society. In the same year, the Tenth Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Bookplates attracted a large Australian contingent. Twenty-three of the 205 plates shown were entered by Australians, P Neville Barnett (16 designs), L Roy Davies (3), H R Gallop (3) and Phillip Litchfield (1). It was reported in the American Bookplate Society's *Bookplate Annual* for 1925 as follows:

The Australian group is particularly interesting and obtained one Certificate of Merit [Davies] and two Certificates

bookplate was actually prepared by the staff of the library after the bequest was announced in 1898. The design dates from 1900 and met with his approval, although I gather that Mitchell never used the bookplate himself. To make things hazier, it was pasted into his books as they came in, well into most but not all of his books, and to make it even murkier, the evidence suggests that the library continued to stick it in some of their early acquisitions in the their first years of operation, perhaps signifying books that were purchased with his money after his death.

I've not seen it recorded who did the actual design, and it's not signed, although I imagine notes in the Library's archives would probably reveal the artist. It appears to have been printed in 1900, and it is possible that a reprint was done at some stage (although again this has never been clarified). The exact dimensions of the DSM collection have only become clear in the last few years, as countless Library volunteers have helped straighten out his collection, based on the manuscript notes DSM added to his books.

And here is an amazing book, privately printed on tin mining and export to the Far East, entitled *Letters, remarks, etc with a view to open an extensive trade in the article of tin, from the County of Cornwall to India, Persia, and China* (London, 1790). The binding is of the highest quality, and it is almost certainly a presentation copy, as the boards feature a Royal Armorial device. Given that the work was aimed at the then Prince of Wales (future George IV) there is clearly some connection. The book has an especially suitable provenance from one of Australia's finest private collections: that of the renowned mining engineer Robert Carl Sticht. Sticht's house 'Penghana' was set in the midst of the mining reduction works at Mount Lyell on Tasmania's west coast, and somewhat incongruously boasted a fine library of incunabula, Caxton Bibles, early editions of Shakespeare, and etchings by Rembrandt and Durer. Much of his collection is now held by the National Gallery and State Library of Victoria. Both his and another family bookplate here feature metallurgical images, Sticht's having a large woodcut from Agricola's *De re metallica*.

of Honorable Mention [Barnett]. Most of the Australian designs are woodcuts [correctly, wood engravings]. The fine group representing Australia this year is the definite result of a revival of interest in the Art of the Bookplate in Australia and of its furtherance there by the Australian Ex-Libris Society.

Bookplate Association International,
Los Angeles

By 1927, the American Bookplate Society had faded and its role was taken up by two societies which had recently formed on either side of the continent – the Los Angeles-based Bookplate Association International (1925-c. 1935), the main work of which was to organise annual international competitions; and the American Society of Bookplate Collectors and Designers (1922-).

Australians were represented in the Bookplate Association International's annual competitions from 1927 onwards, and gained some success. In the 1930 competition 'Adrian Feint ... put the Society well on the map in other lands by walking off with first award in the International Book Plate Exhibition of Los Angeles' and in the following year Eric Thake received an award of merit for a woodcut design. Feint gained international recognition for his designs, and this accelerated after he had taken the first prize for the wood engraved Raoul Lempriere plate in the 1930 competition. As a result he was invited to exhibit a one-man show 'The book plates of Adrian Feint' held at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC from 15 August to 14 September 1930. Shortly after, Ruth Thomson Saunders, the association's American vice-president, inscribed a copy of her *Bookplates by Ruth Thomson Saunders* (Saunders Press, Claremont, CA, 1930) 'to the Australian Ex Libris Society from the Bookplate Association International, October 1930 Los Angeles California'.

Victorian designer P Roach Pierson was appointed a vice-president in 1933 whilst Saunders in her *The book of artists' own bookplates* (1933) lists Garnet Agnew, Ella Dwyer, Feint, J B Godson, Litchfield, David

J Payne, Thake and E S Watson as Australian entrants in the recent competition. Saunders was in touch with Sydney artist Ella Dwyer; the latter's papers held in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, contain a copy of *The book of artists' own bookplates* inscribed to Dwyer by Saunders, with Dwyer's own bookplate, referred to in the text, laid in at the front.

American Society of Bookplate Collectors
and Designers

In 1929 a relationship sprang up between the Australian Ex Libris Society and the ASBC&D, probably as a result of approaches by P Neville Barnett the energetic secretary of the Australian society. That year, Carlyle Baer, the secretary and driving force of the ASBC&D, joined the Australian one, Barnett's paper 'The bookplate in Australia, its inspiration and artistic development' was published in the ASBC&D *Year Book*, and the Australian society resolved to pursue 'an exchange of literature and cooperation between the American Society of Bookplate Collectors and Designers and the Society.' Over the following 20 years, articles of Australian interest appeared in six further issues of the *Year Book*: 'Adrian Feint's book-plates' by John Lane Mullins, 1930; 'Lino-cut bookplates' by G D Perrottet and 'Bookplates of G D Perrottet' by Camden Morrisby, 1932; 'Adrian Feint' by Sydney Ure Smith, 1938; 'An Austral engraver, Gayfield Shaw and his bookplates' by R H Croll and 'Bookplate work of Gayfield Shaw' by F.C. Blank, 1939; 'Etched plates of Ella Dwyer' by G D Perrottet and 'George D Perrottet, designer and craftsman' by Albert Collins, 1942; and 'P Neville Barnett, a super bookman' by Alan P Rigby, 1949/1950.

The ASDC&D had taken out membership of its Australian counterpart in 1932 and apart from the benefits of an international collegiality, it was hoped that such articles would result in Australian artists receiving commissions from United States collectors. A short lived Sydney-based group, the New South Wales Bookplate Club (1932-35) also made contact with the ASBC&D to publicise its major event,



Wood engraving by Philip Litchfield
for Fred Z Eager

the International Bookplate Competition which was announced with a closing date of 31 January 1933. The competition was advertised internationally, with a notice appearing in the July 1932 *Bulletin* of the American Society of Bookplate Collectors and Designers, with the result that 11 entries were received from five United States designers, F C Blank, Thomas E French, Ruth Saunders, M E Webb and Leota Woy.

Australian societies and collectors

In the inter-War period United States collectors joined Australian societies and vice versa, leading to many strong friendships across the Pacific. Already a veteran Sydney collector of two decades standing, Blanche Milligan joined the American Bookplate Society, subscribing to the *Bookplate Annual* and providing Alfred Fowler with news of the formation of the Australian Ex Libris Society for the September 1923 issue of *Bookplate Chronicle*. By 1930 the Australian Ex Libris Society had five United States members, and nine by 1934.

When Australians joined the ASBC&D, they received an avalanche of correspondence seeking exchanges. Blanche Milligan's papers (held by the author) include many requests for exchanges from American collectors and a run of letters from Carlyle Baer spanning

the years 1930 to 1933. Sydney collector John Gibson received letters from perhaps a dozen US collectors, their message typified by this note dated October 1934 from Helen Parsons Malcolm (Pompano, FL):

My dear Fellow-Member of the A.S.B.C.&D.: I am happy to find your name in the exchange list of our Bookplate Society and to enclose, herewith, copies of my two bookplates, with the request that you will favour me by exchanging.

Although the Australian societies faded out during the years of World War II, contacts made before the War were resumed on the return of peace. This feeling of good will at this time between Australian and American collectors is perhaps exemplified by a March 1946 letter from Robert F Metzendorf of the University of Rochester Library to R H Croll in Melbourne:

Thank you very much for the bookplates which you sent me; I am always particularly glad to receive Australian plates, especially those of Perrottet, who is one of my favourite designers. ... Please let me hear from you again. With all our boys coming home (and some of your girls), we feel that we have very strong bonds with "down under."

Now that the New Australian Bookplate Society and the ASBC&D are in regular contact and exchanging their respective publications, we look forward to continuing the excellent relationship between lovers of bookplates in our two countries.

A visit to Taupo with notes from Auckland

Ian Thwaites, Auckland, and Mark Ferson, Sydney

A recent visit to family in Auckland with a side-trip to beautiful Taupo was, of course, punctuated at just-bearable intervals by visits to secondhand book shops. At Hard to Find Bookshop¹ in the Auckland suburb of Onehunga, my eye was caught by a booklet with art deco lettering on it – which turned out to be a *Pacific Affairs* (Honolulu) issue



Hand-coloured wood engraving by Adrian Feint for Carlyle S Baer, 1931

for June 1932 – inside the cover was pasted the bookplate shown here for Fred B Butler. There were other indications of provenance: a pencil note, presumably by Butler, that it had been acquired from the estate of Edgar Haydon on 1 April 1955, and another, that it was 'from Butler Collection, Thames, Jan. 1980.' But who was Frederick Burdett Butler (1904-82)?

Well, a timely letter arrived the other day from Auckland corresponding member Ian Thwaites.

How interesting that you bought the books with Fred Butler and A H and A W Reed [a subject for a future Newsletter – Ed.] plates. Butler was a fascinating character, and had several bookplates. John Webster and I have already been trying to seek out all Fred's plates and our very preliminary findings are as follows. And of course Jim McCready's article 'Some bookplates in the Hocken Collections' [in Bulletin number 52, Nov. 2005] is really helpful as it reproduces five Butler plates as well as supplying helpful comments.²

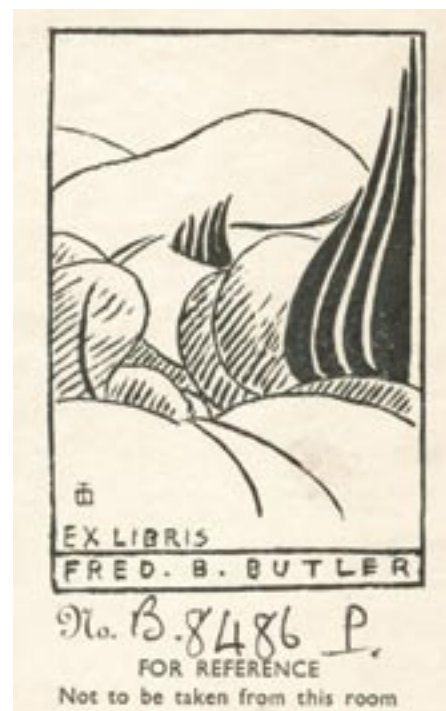
I have paraphrased Ian's listing of seven quite different designs, as follows:

Four pen-and-ink drawings by New Plymouth artist, Bernard F Aris, executed 1927, showing (1) a young

man reading in armchair, (2) Mt Egmont through ferns, (3) Kauri pine, (4) sunken galleon; an unsigned design (5) showing a shelf of books with inkwell and quill; two designs by A Smart, also of New Plymouth, only one of which has been traced, (6) showing a man reading under a tree by a stream; and (7) is an armorial dated 1922 by Auckland artist Arthur R Richards. And we can now add the Onetunga find of (8) a view of rolling hills with lines of pine and perhaps other trees.

Ian continues:

Butler's last years were spent at Thames and I remember visiting the house a year or two after he died. It was a huge old villa with a very large attic and it needed to be large, for there were massive collections throughout the house, of books, sheet music, as well as two grand pianos and all sorts of furniture. Everything was covered with newspapers. There was a small room with many interesting Taranaki books and manuscripts. I don't know what happened to this collection. The major part of his book collections went to Taranaki Museum.



Pen and ink design for Fred B Butler

Those of you who are interested in reading further about Fred B Butler should go the museum website to read his story by Sorrel Hoskin at www.pukeariki.com/Research/TaranakiStories/TaranakiStory/id/432/title/fred-butler-eccentric-man-of-mystery.aspx

We acknowledge the assistance of John Webster.

[1] According to its bookmark, the full name of this business is the Hard to Find (But worth the effort) Quality Secondhand Bookshop Ltd
2 See *Bulletin* 52, November 2005, of the Friends of the Hocken Collections, which can be downloaded at www.library.otago.ac.nz/hocken/guides.html#bulletins

'Not in Peake': Sir John Henry Butters

Neither the owner of this bookplate nor the artist are listed in Andrew Peake's *Australian personal bookplates* (Adelaide, 2000). The bookplate was in Freda Derrick, *Country craftsmen* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1945) a gift from a friend some years ago, and safely tucked away in our study awaiting the writing of its story. Sir John Henry Butters (1885-1969), according to the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* was an English-born and educated engineer. He came to Australia in 1909 to advise on a series of major electrical power projects in New Zealand then Australia, culminating in his bringing to fruition the construction of the Great Lake hydro-electric scheme, Tasmania. In 1924 Butters was appointed the Chief Commissioner of the Federal Capital Commission, which had been established to design, construct and administer the new Australian capital at Canberra. This included the completion of the provisional Parliament House, which was opened by the Duke and Duchess of York on 9 May 1927, and during their visit Butters was knighted in recognition of his achievements in creating the national capital. That year he was also elected president of the Institution of Engineers,

Australia. After a disagreement with the government over the future direction of the Commission, in late 1929 Butters resigned and moved to the Sydney suburb of Wahroonga.

The bookplate's designer C R Wylie was a heraldic artist who most likely was asked to draw the bookplate when he won the competition to design the coat of arms of the Commission and the new City of Canberra, announced by Butters in August 1927. I have not completely figured out the symbolism depicted; however, at bottom right the waratah, floral emblem of New South Wales, is accompanied by the rose of the house of York, a reference to the visit of the Duke and Duchess to open parliament house and to knight the bookplate's owner. The Butters coat of arms is shown at centre right, above the family motto of *Diriget deus*. I have not yet worked out the meaning of the symbols at top left and right, and the one at bottom centre, which seems to me to suggest electrical current. Any ideas about these symbols will be gratefully received. Incidentally, it was announced in the *Sydney*

Morning Herald issue of 27 October 1930 that New South Wales governor Sir Philip Game had commissioned Wylie to design a heraldic bookplate for him. This bookplate has not surfaced to date.

Further reading

Canberra Museum and Gallery, 'Armorial bearings,' at www.museumsandgalleries.act.gov.au/cmag/armorial_bearings.html

G J R Linge, 'Sir John Henry Butters,' *Australian Dictionary of Biography* on line version at adb.anu.edu.au/biography/butters-sir-john-henry-5454

C R Wylie, 'Heraldry and symbolism of Australia,' *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings*, vol. 16, pt 1, pp 1-22

Thanks are due to Stephen Szabo and Richard D'Apice for assistance in preparing this note.

Notes and happenings

GFL Online Shop for 'expensive' bookplates www.gflonline.com.au/shop/listings/Bookplates/

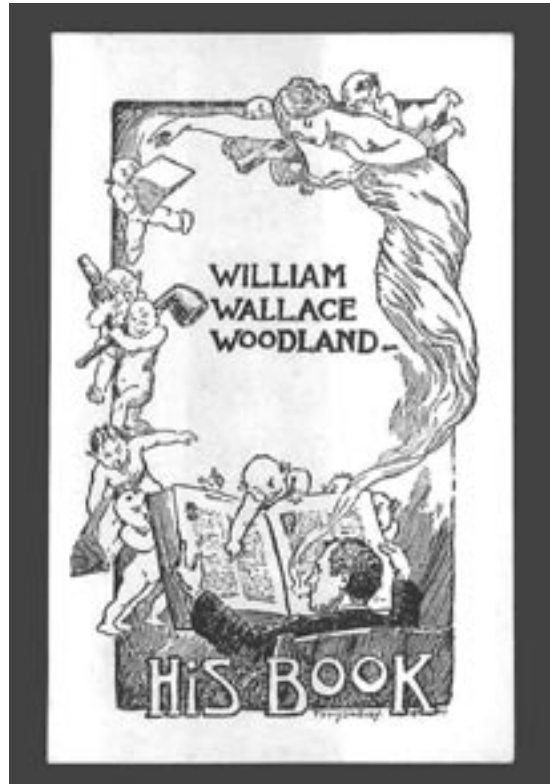
I stumbled across this website whilst 'googling' B W F Pratt whose bookplate I had just found in a book at UNSW Book Fair, 5 May 2011, in fact Archer Russell, *A tramp-royal in wild Australia: 1928-29*, London: Cape, 1934, inscribed by the author to B W Pratt, Esq with best regards. B W Pratt was husband of Pixie O'Harris, and the bookplate was by Pat O'Harris, Pixie's sister. The search threw up a website not previously known to me, for art sales business GFL, which has a 'Bookplate exhibition' online where individual bookplates by known Australian designers sell for from \$55 (L Roy Davies) to \$550 (Lionel Lindsay). One can only hope these are verified original prints, not an easy thing to do in view of the practice of Lindsay (and others) to have what originally were wood-engraved bookplates reproduced



Pen and ink design by C R Wylie for
Sir John Henry Butters, 1927



Above: Portrait by May Moore of Percy Lindsay, c. 1919
 Right: Pen and ink design by Percy Lindsay for W W Woodland, 1917



from well-made zinc line blocks. These copies are indistinguishable unless the artist has signed the bookplate in pencil, in which case one may be reassured it is an original wood engraving. A further, perhaps minor point to a knowledgeable collector, is the inexperience of the cataloguer: Robert Aubrey's design by N T Hope, 1934, is listed as by M J Hops.

Recent publications

SILAS CLIFFORD-SMITH. *Percy Lindsay, artist & bohemian.* Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2011; pp 46, 49-50

Shows previously unrecorded pen and ink bookplate for W W Woodland, dated 1917

MARK J FERSON. Harrie P Mortlock and the Beacon Press, Sydney. *Script & Print* (Bulletin of the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand), vol. 35, no. 2, June 2011, pp 80-98

Attempt to raise the profile of the little known proprietor of the semi-private press which printed Barnett's beautiful bookplate and Japanese print books as well as the Australian Ex Libris Society *Year Books*; cover image is Mortlock's own bookplate design

ROBERT C LITTLEWOOD. *Ex Libris: K Brian Stonier.* Lytlewode Press, Stoke-on-Trent, 2010. Edition of 275 copies signed by the author.

One of a series of booklets published by the author in England but on entirely Australian bookplate subjects; includes a copy of the etched design by Lionel Lindsay

CAS MIDDLEMIS. Finding Netherby and its custodian Robert Pulleine. *Australian Garden History*, vol. 22, no. 3, Jan-Mar 2011, pp 6-11

Thanks to Richard Heathcote for this item; shows Pulleine's bookplate by SA artist F Millward Grey

STEVEN MILLER. Art Gallery of New South Wales Research Library and Archive. *Imprint*, vol. 46, no. 2, Winter 2011, p 21
 Article on book and bookplate collections held, illustrated with Irena Sibley bookplate for Pat Corrigan

B Y O'DRISCOLL. Fling far the empire, a family odyssey. *Australian Antique Collector*, no. 51, Apr-Oct 1996, pp 220-2

Article on the Gell family, including John Philip Gell who spent 1840-8 in Tasmania and showing the armorial-pictorial bookplate of his English descendent Philip Lytton Gell

Editorial

This issue celebrates the Society's fourth annual general meeting and its guest speaker, Matthew Fishburn, who on a wintry night warmed his audience with tales of books and bookplates, some of which we recount on the first page. I have also taken the opportunity to print a short essay I recently wrote for *Ex Libris Chronicle*, journal of the American Society of Bookplate Collectors and Designers, on the subject of almost 100 years of association between Australian bookplate collectors and their counterparts in the United States. Continuing the international flavour of this issue, a New Zealand collector of books and many other objects, Fred B Butler, is noted as a result of his many bookplates, and I sincerely thank Ian Thwaites and John Webster for their 'behind the scenes' research. An item in the irregular series 'Not in Peake' focuses on the bookplate of Sir John Butters, knighted by the Duke of York in 1927 for his key role in establishing the Australian federal capital at Canberra; my thanks are due to heraldic experts Stephen Szabo and Richard D'Apice for assistance at very short notice in locating information on the bookplate's designer C R Wylie. I hope you enjoy these articles and the other odds and ends gathered in this issue of the *Newsletter*.

MF

NOTICE

The Society is seeking contributions to a planned members' publication "Some Australian colonial bookplates".

If you have a bookplate used in Australia in the period 1788 to 1848 suitable for reproduction,

please contact

Ronald Cardwell at
 cardwell@mcks.com.au
 (phone 02 9894 7326)

or the Editor at
 m.ferson@unsw.edu.au
 (phone 02 9428 2863).