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CONTENTS

Cambridge Bookplate	1
A Slovenian Australiana bookplate: <i>Ex libris</i> Dusan Ogrizek	3
Earlwood and Canterbury (Sydney), 'Tomago' and Jane Windeyer	4
Notes and happenings	5
Recent publications	6
What is this?	6
Contributors for 2011	6
Editorial	6

Cambridge Bookplate

By James P Keenan, Laredo, Texas, and San Miguel de Allende, Mexico

(A shortened version of an article first published in ASBC&D *Ex Libris Chronicle*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 14-32)

The art of ex libris has been my passion and primary focus since 1977. At the Massachusetts College of Art my studies included graphic design and photography, and I went on to pursue an exciting career in the New England graphic arts field. What I mean to say is that there was rarely a dull moment during my three decades in this business.

It was late 1977 when I met Laurence R Cohen, a distinguished Boston attorney and bibliophile. I produced fine steel and copperplate engraved stationery for him. In his office one afternoon, we discussed his ideas for a personal bookplate. I accepted the challenge and my colleague Linda J Popper illustrated Raquel & Laurie Cohen's mark of ownership. It depicts the dual careers and interests of this couple, and is printed in a shade of burgundy ink on bright white 'Kid Finish' paper.

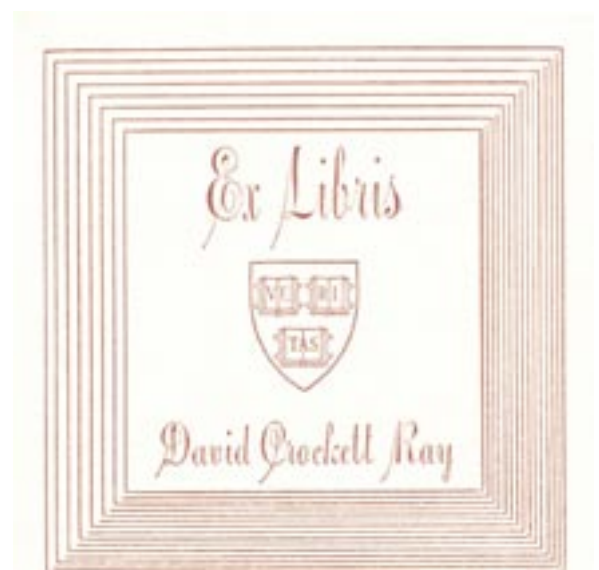
Exploring the bookplate art form, I discovered that many collections were held in institutions throughout the Boston area. I spent days, weeks, months visiting libraries, looking at bookplates, learning about the artists, compiling checklists and evaluating condition of the plates. My friends and I would schedule appointments to visit the Print Department at the Boston Public Library. We'd spend hours there looking at bookplates and talking about the designs. Librarians would generally offer me one or several of their library's bookplates as did bookbinders and printers that I worked with.

I found great pleasure in browsing through old bookshops in Boston and Harvard Square. While browsing I

searched for bookplates. In Cambridge one often found a box of old books sitting along the sidewalk usually with a hand lettered sign that reads FREE. This is where the obsession began. As a born collector, I was vulnerable and quickly succumbed to the disease of bookplate collecting.

In 1978, I organized the Cambridge Bookplate Company, to produce only custom-designed bookplates. I continued to introduce my friends to the art form and many of them designed and hand printed bookplates for our project. Our first small exhibition included more than a dozen contemporary artists. Our works were presented at the Cambridge Art Association, Concord Art Association, Saint Botolph Club (Boston), and Social Law Library (Boston).

So, I did not enter this field of collecting as a librarian, scholar or historian. I was not in



Typographic bookplate by
T J Lyons for D C Ray, 1984

search of a charming hobby interest. Like some of our members, I entered as a graphic artist, enthusiast and a would-be entrepreneur. Through simple test marketing and the strategic placement of classified advertising, Cambridge Bookplate took off like a rocket. It was exciting to see the dozens of inquiries that would arrive in the letter box every day.

Two years later I finally met with American Society of Bookplate Collectors & Designers director, Audrey Spencer Arellanes at her home in Alhambra, California. I promptly joined the Society and started enjoying exchanges and correspondence with such legendary members as Fridolf Johnson, Dan Burne Jones, Elmer Porter, Whitney McDermut, James Hayes, Nicholas Lippoczy, Ichigoro Uchida, Cliff Parfit, Richard Schimmelpfeng, Edith Rights, Klaus Roedel, Mario de Filippis, and many, many others. I am certain that nearly every member has examples of bookplates belonging to these important collectors. By the way, I must mention that commissioning bookplates, writing letters and EXCHANGING them is how we collect ex libris!

During the early eighties I took a job with the T J Lyons Press in Boston. Walking into his cluttered letterpress shop was like taking a step back into the late nineteenth century. Tom 'TJ' Lyons was a master printer and a world famous collector of antique type and ornaments — all of the Victorian era. Our hand-printed presswork was recognized everywhere. I kept my early bookplate collection, organized by country, in Tom's empty 'Blackstone Cigar' boxes. With guidance from Lyons, my interest in bookplates developed at his shop. I printed several designs for friends and for the numerous customers of Cambridge Bookplate.

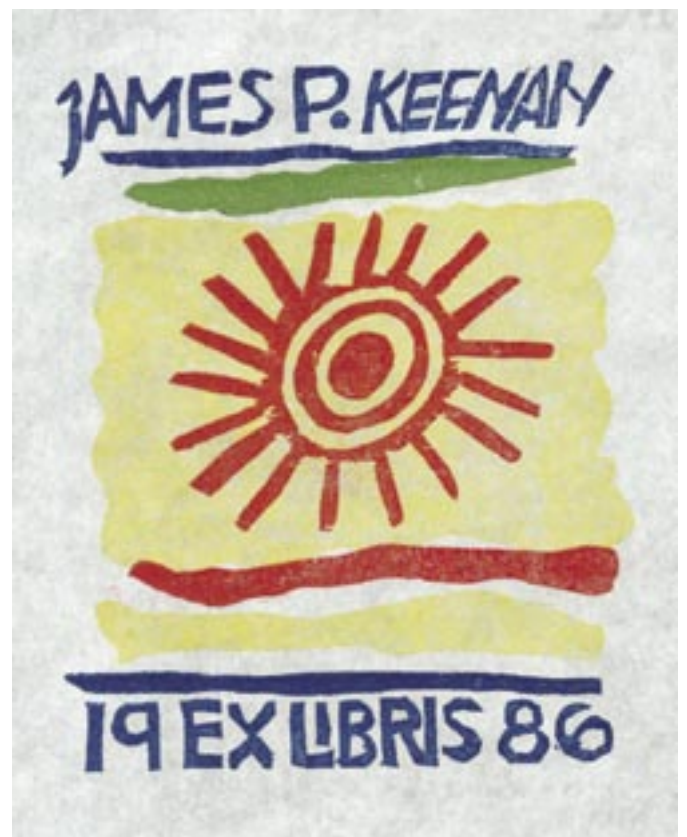
During the fall of 1984 I had my first major exhibition of contemporary ex libris at the Boston Athenaeum. Founded in 1807, the Athenaeum is a private subscription library, which has held membership with our society for many years. There are oriental carpets on the floors throughout and marble busts wherever you look. Here we displayed over 400 ex libris by artists from 28 nations.

Soon after this exhibition, I traveled around the States and Canada visiting libraries and bookplate collections. During this time, I organized several exhibitions of international bookplates in New England. These were presented at Harvard University, Boston Public Library, Social Law Library, University of Connecticut at Storrs, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and Providence Athenaeum, to name a few.

In 1992 Cambridge Bookplate published the first directory, *American artists of the bookplate*, with biographies of 75 artists. Determined to get the title into print and without any publication budget, I simply used my credit card. 1,000 copies were printed,

Top right: Typographic bookplate by T J Lyons & J P Keenan for Cambridge Bookplate, 1982

Right: Colour woodcut by Wang Hui-Ming for J P Keenan, 1986





Bookplate for McNeil Americana Collection by J P Keenan, 2009

but more than half of the edition was later sent to the recycle bin. Back in '92 every member of the ASBC&D received a complimentary copy and for bookplate collectors this material had never been documented before. In 1996, I published a second edition of this directory that provided more comprehensive text and showcased the work of 100 contemporary artists from the United States and Canada.

Collectors and libraries looking for custom bookplates still write to us through the ASBC&D website. Once again, it may be time for Cambridge Bookplate to publish a revised, limited edition catalogue to include contemporary artists from throughout the Americas, as there is so much fresh, new activity in Latin America.

Long before email, the web, Facebook, LinkedIn and Skype these books were marketed through classified advertisements. For years, we advertised in major library

publications, school magazines and used any free reviews or publicity I could get my hands on. These ads were targeted to both artists and collectors. Cambridge Bookplate participated in library trade shows generating scores of satisfied customers. Then continuous, repeat advertising in *American Artist*, *HOW Magazine*, *Print Magazine* and many others sparked interest with graphic artists nationwide. In my ongoing pursuit of free publicity for bookplate art I actively solicited various popular and professional magazines. Every day generated new letters, phone calls and proposals. *Library Journal*, *American Libraries*, *Antiquarian Bookman*, *Better Homes & Gardens*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Victoria Magazine*, *Bostonia Magazine*, *Print Magazine*, *American Artist*, *Bookways*, *Antiques & Collecting*, *Boston Globe* and dozens more. Stellar reviews were always received for our directories and exhibitions.

Today Cambridge Bookplate designs, prints or engraves bookplates for customers around the world. The ASBC&D's new, updated travelling exhibition of contemporary artists is in the works. The Society has already initiated regional meetings and soon a biennial national meeting. Thanks to the generosity of several of our members there will be an inauguration of the first bookplate museum in the Americas! This all started with the activities of Cambridge Bookplate more than 30 years ago.

A Slovenian Australiana bookplate: *Ex libris Dusan Ogrizek*

By Jürgen Wegner, Sydney

In one sense I do collect bookplates: as a collector of printed ephemera all sorts of things accumulate in my 'sampler' files ... including the odd bookplate as a representative of the genre! I can't remember ever specifically buying a bookplate—a bookplate on its own or even one attached to a book—for its own sake.

Another small footnote for me is books about Australia but in languages other than English. Not that I have had the urge to read Patrick White in Czech recently, but such books constitute an obscure but nonetheless interesting by-way of book production, design and, often, illustration. I don't think many people are aware of how popular Australia and Australian texts were in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. Particularly in the German Democratic Republic but no less so in the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia, to mention just a few. I recently acquired a small selection of Australiana from Slovakia and was surprised at the edition size of translations of writers such as Patrick White and Arthur Upfield ... not to mention Peter Corris.

In part this was no doubt due to the nature of Australia: exotic, remote and ... sunny! But no less so because the foundations of Socialism were an international outlook. This was in the sense of all peoples being

united across boundaries of nations, race, language and class—in Ogrizek's words, the original 'multicultural community'. Of course, only certain kinds of works were favoured, such as those dealing with a 'realistic' approach to working life, the struggles of working people in their daily lives but also the plight of indigenous populations ... in fact but equally in fiction. The traditional stories of the Australian aboriginal were ever popular. Recently acquired:

V sanjskem casu : bajanja in verovanja avstralskih rjavih ljudstev / [ilustracije Elizabeth Durack ; izbral in prevedel Dusan Ogrizek]. [Ljubljana] : Mladinska knjiga, 1978. 307 p. : ill. (Zlata prica).

The title of the book roughly translates as *In the dreamtime* with the series *The golden bird* being one of myths and legends from all over the world. Over 100 titles had been published in this series. The illustrations of *V sanjskem casu* are taken from the 1953 edition of K Langloh Parker's *Australian legendary tales*.

This copy of the book is of special interest as it contains a long presentation inscription by the translator, Dusan Ogrizek, dated Bled, 23.9.1982. Bled is a small town in northern Slovenia (then a part of Yugoslavia) bordering on Austria. The capital of Slovenia is Ljubljana, known as Laibach until the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Laibach was the birthplace of the famous Sydney printer, John Degotardi—the printer of Australia's first book on the art of printing. Ljubljana's Narodna in universitetna knjižnica (NUK) has itself had a long interest in Australian works. I used to send them Australian books regularly for many years!

It includes a fine, presumably wood-engraved, black and white bookplate: *Ex libris Dusan Ogrizek*. As far as I have been able to ascertain, Dusan Ogrizek was both a judge of the Supreme Court of Slovenia as well as a prolific translator (of *The hobbit*, for one). The bookplate shows Justitia putting down her scales.



Wood-engraved bookplate by Jiri Bouda for Dusan Ogrizek, 1981

She is no longer blind—perhaps due to the knowledge gained through the books shown on the table in front of her. Note especially the large open book showing a map of Australia. The illustration on the bookplate seems to indicate a deep interest in Australia by Ogrizek, if not a personal collection of Australiana. The bookplate measures 155 x 103 mm. (engraved area: 80 x 60 mm.), is signed 'Jiri Bouda' and dated '81'. I believe that Bouda is a well-known Czech bookplate artist but have no further information on him. [Born 1934, in 2010 the artist was awarded the Albin Brunovsky certificate for international excellence in bookplate design by FISAE – Ed.]

Earlwood and Canterbury (Sydney), 'Tomago' and Jane Windeyer

By Mark J Ferson, Sydney

During recent holidays I made my customary excursion to Mark's Book Barn, an excellent secondhand book shop in Earlwood (a southern suburb of Sydney) where I have always been able to find unusual bookplate related material – on this occasion, copper etching plates for bookplate designs by G C Ingleton. But this is not the subject of this short note, for from Mark's I proceeded to Out of Print Books in Canterbury. I had not previously been aware of this bookshop,



Photo of Jane Windeyer, Tomago House

but saw their stall at the Antiquarian Book Fair held in November at the State Library of New South Wales, and felt that I should visit.

From among the many interesting volumes there, I picked up a copy of James Russell Lowell, *My study windows* [London: Walter Scott], with no publication date, but inscribed 17 March 1892, 'Jenny Windeyer from Her loving Father' and containing Jane Windeyer's bookplate showing a view of the family home 'Tomago'. Oddly, on the last weekend of the same holidays my wife and I travelled to Nelson Bay, and on the way back we stopped at Tomago House, which after many years of disuse has been recently restored by the National Trust (NSW).

One of the displays inside the house is a frame titled 'Tomago House & Windeyer Family' showing the family tree

in photographs. Among the children of William Charles and Mary Elizabeth (née Bolton) Windeyer is Jane (Jenny) 1865-1950. Jane was one of Australia's earliest bookplate collectors and her collection of some 2500 examples was documented by the late John Fletcher, the passionate president and publications editor of the Book Collectors' Society of Australia, in his *The Jane Windeyer bookplate collection in the University of Sydney Library: A catalogue* (Sydney: BCSA, 1990). In the introductory matter, John relates how in 1901 Jane was presented with an album of library bookplates by her sister Margaret on her return from the United States where she had gained qualifications in librarianship (and an excellent reference from Melvil Dewey); and then how on her birthday in 1909 'Jane received a massive half-morocco "Book-Plates" album from her mother.' Thus might some of us start collecting.

Notes and happenings

Australian Antiquarian Book Fair 2011

I was able to spend only a couple of hours at the 2011 Book Fair, arranged beautifully and spaciouly in the Galleries in the State Library of New South Wales. There is always something of interest and I picked up a late nineteenth century 'Album for crests, monograms, coats of arms, ornamental dies, etc' which once belonged to Frederick Herbert Mendoza of Melbourne. Although it contained no bookplates, these albums fascinate me because I believe that the collecting of bookplates in England was a development of the genteel hobby of collecting examples of coats of arms. Of more direct bookplate interest, one of the nicely illustrated catalogues prepared specifically for the Book Fair, in this case Catalogue 123 of Kenneth Hince Old & Fine Books, listed one of the Australian Ex Libris Society annual reports and the *Bookplates of G D Perrottet*, illustrated respectively with the Olive Crane bookplate for medical researcher Charles Kellaway, and Perrottet's design for Sally.



Bookplate by N Bolton for Jane Windeyer

Bodio Lomnago Ex Libris Competition, Exhibition & Meeting, 12-13 May 2012

If you happen to be in Italy next May, why not drop into the bookplate meeting and exhibition at Bodio Lomnago organised by the Italian Ex Libris Association in collaboration with the Town Council. Bodio Lomnago is situated on Lake Varese in central Italy about 60km north-west of Milan. Further information can be obtained by email to Marco Franzetti at marco.franzetti@libero.it

Recent publications

MARK J FERSON. Collecting: pastime or passion. *RACP News*, vol. 31, no. 5, Oct 2011, pp. 42-3

The author was leant upon to wax lyrical about his leisure pursuits; with reproduction of two bookplates by M Ferson

JOHN CHAPPELL. Henry, his roses, four siblings and their francophile brother – a memoir on the Quinns' 52-year residency in Petersham, in, K Sutton, R Blair, L Beach (eds), *Marrickville: a past worth preserving*. Marrickville: Marrickville Heritage Society, 2011, pp. 54-60

A note on the Quinn family, with details of the career of John Joseph, who became NSW Parliamentary Librarian, and showing his bookplate by Lionel Lindsay.

NAOMI MILTHORPE. Evelyn Waugh His Book. *Script & Print*, Vol. 35, no. 4, Dec 2011, pp. 219-23, front cover

Describes and reproduces two bookplates, one armorial, and one typographic, in Waugh's personal library held in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, University of Texas at Austin.

What is this?

Some time ago, *Newsletter* no. 18 to be exact, I started a column with this title – really an editor's ploy to show the odds and ends of the world of the physical book. It is a home for those items that might or



Supralibros for the Union Club, Sydney

might not be bookplates, in that they are stuck into the front of the book and have some indication of ownership, or at least of the book's provenance in that many have indicated some intermediary between the book seller and the owner. Most of the images and discussion in these pages have been about bookplates themselves (or their designers), and in issue no. 19 Bryan Welch mentioned book stamps as another way in which the owner identifies his or her book.

A related form of owner's mark is the *supralibros* or *super ex-libris*, which GA Glaister, in his *Encyclopedia of the book* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 1996), defines as 'a mark of ownership stamped, usually in gold, on the front or rear cover of a book. Heraldic designs typify most, but portraits were not unknown, particularly in 16th century Germany.' David Pearson, on page 99 of *Books as history* (London: British Library, 2008) shows some delightful *supralibros*, armorial, decorative and typographic, enhancing similarly beautiful bindings.

The one shown for the Union Club Sydney is gold stamped on the busily marbled front board of my copy of George Moore, *The Brook Kerith. A Syrian story* (London: Heinemann, 1927); one that has been sitting on my shelves for almost 18 years among the piles of books with a bookplate waiting to be featured in this *Newsletter*!

Contributors for 2011

Editors of small magazines and newsletters must, necessarily, often write material themselves or borrow it. However, I am pleased to be able to say that the *Newsletter* has benefitted greatly from a range of interesting unsolicited articles on various, often unexpected, topics. Hence it is my pleasure to acknowledge and thank all contributors for 2011: Gael E Phillips, Mike Ferris, Matthew Fishburn, Ian Thwaites, Andrew G Peake, James P Keenan and Jürgen Wegner. Once again I would like to mention the *Newsletter* designer, Mary Keep, who must put up with the editor's vagaries and whose work has attracted praise from members for every issue.

Editorial

Since getting together in Istanbul in 2010 at the 33rd FISAE Congress, James Keenan, President of the American Society of Bookplate Collectors & Designers, and I have been exploring ways of sharing bookplate information across the Pacific. So as follow up, and a sort of proof, to my piece in *Newsletter* no. 21 on 'Australia-United States bookplate friendships', James has allowed me to reproduce his article from the *Ex Libris Chronicle* on how he started to design and collect bookplates back in Boston in the late 1970s and eventually go on to become the lynchpin of the American Society. One of the pleasant surprises of an editor was receiving a communication from former librarian and documenter of all things related to printing and the book arts, Jürgen Wegner, offering a note with illustration concerning the bookplate of Dusan Ogrizek, a Slovenian with an Australian connection. I trust that you will enjoy this issue and that you have indeed taken some joy in all the issues for 2011.

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