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Ex libris for Anthony Walker, artist unknown

CONTENTS

Some memories of Pixie O'Harris	1
Auckland report: the bookplates of Tara McLeod	2
Australian bookplate bibliography, 2006	3
Memorial bookplate for Rhys M Jones	3
Letter to the Editor	4
Notes and happenings	5
Editorial	5
Books/bookplates/provenance	6

Some memories of Pixie O'Harris

By Edwin Jewell, Warragul, Victoria

A few years after I started collecting bookplates, the thought very slowly entered my mind that I should have a couple of personal plates. The question was, how do I go about this?

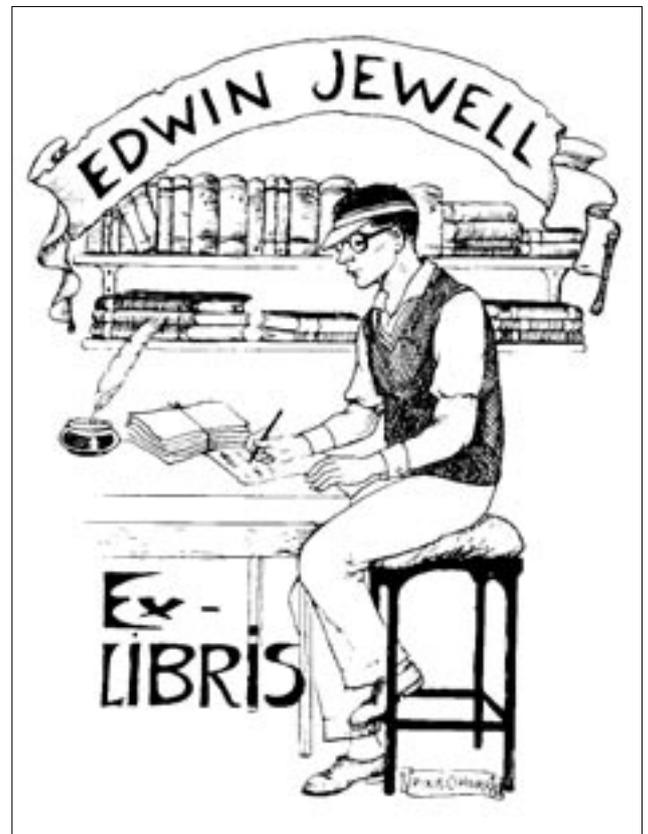
The prominent bookplate collector, John Gartner, was an old family friend, so whom better to talk to. His advice was to approach artists and ask if they would design a plate for me. John provided the names and addresses of some of his overseas contacts which included great bookplate artists such as Mark Severin, Pam Rueter and Wim Zwiers; he also advised on what I should say when asking for a plate.

At that time I had a reasonable collection of Australian children's books, and a favourite artist was Pixie O'Harris (1903-1991). The problem was how to contact her. With a little bit of thought I had a look at the blurb on the dust jacket of her recently published autobiography. It identified her as Mrs Bruce Pratt of Vacluse, Sydney. With the help of the *White Pages* telephone directory I obtained an address which I hoped was correct, sent off a brief note on 7 August 1983 and sat back anxiously to await a reply.

A response was not long in coming, and in her letter dated 11 August 1983, the artist said she would like to do a bookplate for me as soon as she had time,

and asked me to suggest a theme for the design. I thought, as I was an accountant, that maybe an old-fashioned accountant at a high desk with a quill pen would be suitable. The idea appealed to Pixie and so we proceeded with that theme. The idea of adapting an illustration from her book *Pearl Pinky and Sea Greenie* (1935) as my second plate came in a later letter. The cost of a black and white drawing was quoted as \$150 and a coloured drawing \$200. Printing of course would be in addition to this. A small number would be signed.

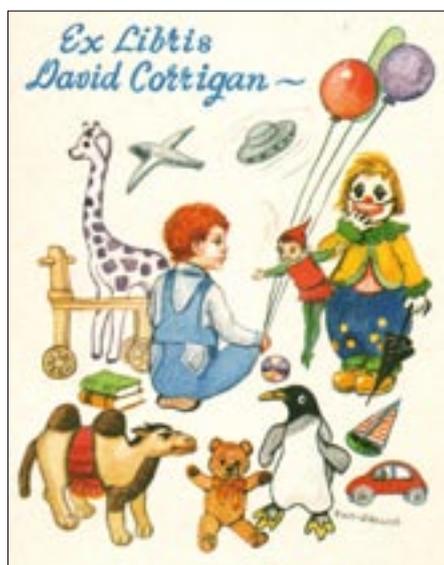
In her letter of reply to me she said that her interest in bookplates was started by Percy Neville Barnett in the 1920s. She also said that Neville Barnett's sister had hand coloured the Pixie O'Harris bookplates in Barnett's 1951 book *Australian bookplates and bookplates of interest to Australia*.



Bookplate reproduced from a pen-and-ink design by Pixie O'Harris for Edwin Jewell, 1983

In the years before she died we visited Pixie and her husband Bruce a few times. I wish we had seen her more often, but she was in Sydney and we lived just outside of Melbourne. I have fond memories of each visit and especially the hospitality extended to us and the gentleness of both Pixie and Bruce. They were extremely welcoming to strangers, as we were at first, allowing us into their home and making us all feel at ease. To meet such a famous person and a personal favourite artist could have been a bit stressful for a young collector, but Pixie made us feel at ease with just a few kind words. The hours of discussion about her books and the bookplates she had produced are memories to be treasured. On one visit she insisted on taking pictures of my wife and me, and then of our daughters. Looking at these pictures and a picture of Pixie and Bruce all these years later brings back wonderful memories.

One of the good things is that when a bookplate is commissioned the artist usually does a couple of rough designs. I find these preliminary drawings fascinating. I also highlight in my collection all the printer's roughs and colour separation plates. My advice is that if you are commissioning a bookplate, keep everything connected with it. It certainly brings back fond memories when you look over your files many years later.



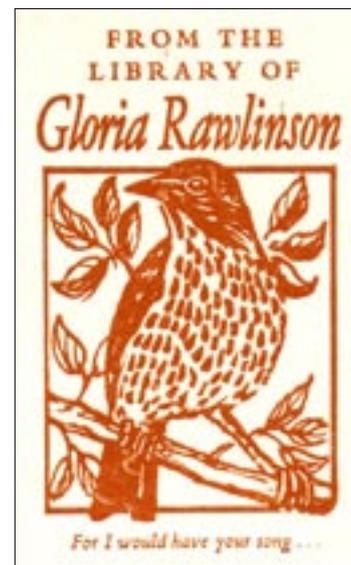
Bookplate reproduced from a pen-and-ink design by Pixie O'Harris for David Corrigan, 1970

Auckland report: the bookplates of Tara McLeod

By Tara McLeod, Auckland

Tara McLeod, one of New Zealand's best known fine printers, has conducted the Pear Tree Press, Auckland for over two decades, and is the designer/printer with the University of Auckland. In 2000 he became a member of the Auckland Ex Libris Society, and was a tutor at the Society's seminar 'The art of wood cut and wood engraving', for which Tara designed the poster, and which was held at Parnell, Auckland on 14-15 August 2004. When I attended the Society's 2005 annual general meeting, Tara showed his generosity to a fellow ex libris lover, though a stranger, by handing me an envelope containing bookplates he had designed. For this issue of the *Newsletter*, Tara has kindly provided some notes on his own bookplate designs, which appear below.

- 1 TMcL, c. 1965. My first attempt at a personal bookplate was one of which hopefully no copies are still in existence. It was a monogram – TMcL – cut in lino. I have carefully removed all I can find! [I've had that experience as well, as I'm sure have many others – Ed.]
- 2 TMcL, 1972. A few years later, a revised version of the same, this time in Letraset, reversed out and made into a metal block. Trimmed into an oval shape. – Much more satisfactory.
- 3 EX LIBRIS Tara McLeod, 1985. The acquisition of an Albion Press became a focal presence in the house, moved with great effort into the front room with the floor reinforced. So naturally it should feature on a bookplate. Ex libris is Letraset Delphin, the rest is hand drawn, my lettering skills much improved by this time. Photopolymer plates have now replaced metal (illustrated).
- 4 FROM THE LIBRARY OF Gloria Rawlinson, 1995. The bookplate is a mixture of photopolymer and metal type. The thrush drawn by myself. Gloria Rawlinson (1918-1995) was a well established New Zealand literary figure, writer of short stories and poetry, whose work appeared in NZ and abroad. The bookplate was produced in 1995 just prior to her death,



Design by Tara McLeod for Gloria Rawlinson, 1995

commissioned by one of her friends who was cataloguing her library in preparation for its presentation to an institution (illustrated).

- 5 *Ex Libris, Tara McLeod, 1995.* The next variation is with a wood-engraved image (my own) of a fantail, printed from the wood block. The type is 24pt Blado, an italic type first produced in 1923 and based on a 16th century italic script. I had at this time just found in a junk shop a small hand guillotine which cut an imitation deckle edge.
- 6 *ex collectione typographica, T McL, 1999.* Next effort, smaller – still black on white with a printer's leaf ornament.



Design by Tara McLeod for his own use, 1985

The lighter weight, laid paper allows a coloured endpaper to show through and soften the overall effect. The type is 14pt Garamond italic with Roman initials. This goes in books on graphics, print history etc.

- 7 **Ex Libris, Tara McLeod, 2006.** Getting smaller. This is something to do with Swiss modernism. Optically square 34 x 32mm, once again critical trimming. 12pt Univers medium and bold. Black and red on bright white paper. This is used in contemporary books ... and generally asymmetrically positioned on the page (illustrated).

The PERFECT BOOKPLATE has not been arrived at yet.



Ex libris by Tara McLeod, 2006

Further reading

Ian Thwaites and Rie Fletcher, *75 years of bookplates: Auckland Ex Libris Society 1930-2005*, The authors, Auckland, 2005, p.295

Jürgen Wegner, 'Tara McLeod at the Pear Tree Press', *Brandywine Bookman's Vade Mecum*, no. 8, Feb. 2007 and no. 9, Apr. 2007

Australian bookplate bibliography, 2006

Some of you may be aware of one of the Editor's earlier projects, his *Australian literature on bookplates: a bibliography (1899-1988)* published in 1988 by the Book Collectors' Society of Australia. I have long had plans to produce a second edition, and it WILL happen one day, but in the meantime it seems an obvious matter to use the *Newsletter* as a vehicle for periodic updates to the *Bibliography*. So, rather in the manner of movie trilogies, sequels, prequels and such like, whilst the sequel (ie the second edition) is awaited, I have travelled forward

in time and present to you, the reader, the first supplement to the non-existent sequel comprising bookplate literature published in Australia in 2006. The bibliography is organised alphabetically by author name and is annotated specifically to identify designers of any bookplates reproduced and to record any other information of bookplate historical interest. This exercise will be repeated in a 2008 issue of the *Newsletter* in respect of literature published in 2007. If you are aware of any material that might be included in this listing, you are earnestly encouraged, nay begged, to contact the Editor.

- 1 **CLOSE, Cecily.** Arthur Greening, publisher of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. *La Trobe Journal*, no. 78, Spring 2006, pp.39-55

Shows the bookplate for Arthur Greening by David Whitelaw, 1906

- 2 **[DALBY, Alyson.]** Physician leaders in the *History of Medicine Library. RACP [Royal Australasian College of Physicians] News*, Aug. 2006, p.17

Mentions Sir Edward Ford as benefactor of the Library (located in Sydney) and shows his bookplate by N. Lindsay

- 3 **FERSON, Mark J.** Bookplates of Lena Cohn in *Das kleine Schmetterlingsbuch. Biblionews and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 350, Jun. 2006, pp.62-3

Note regarding a European émigré to Australia via Palestine and the two (unsigned) bookplates adorning one of her books dating from the 1930s and 1947

- 4 **[FERSON, Mark J.]** New Australian Bookplate Society. *Biblionews and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 352, Dec. 2006, pp.136-7

Draws attention to the meeting to found the Society which had been held in Sydney on 22 October 2006; Mark Ferson elected President and Mary Keep, Secretary, with contact details

- 5 **KRAAL, Diane.** *The print world of P Neville Barnett* [exhibition catalogue]. La Trobe University Art Museum and Collections, Bundoora, Victoria, 6 Jun. – 14 Jul. 2006

Mainly an essay by the curator with a series of sub-headings: 'Bookplate art', 'Changing themes',

'Barnett's Japanese contacts' and 'Barnett's legacy'; the latter draws attention to the beautiful books he left and the new scholarship (for the Western world) on Japanese woodblock art. Inserted is a listing of works in the exhibition

- 6 **LIGHTBOURNE, Ruth.** Bookplates, book labels, and handwritten inscriptions in a New Zealand colonial library. *Bibliographical Society of Australia & New Zealand Bulletin*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2004, pp.62-77 (but published 2006)

Refers to bookplates as marks of provenance in books donated in the second half of the nineteenth century to the General Assembly Library, forerunner of the N.Z. Parliamentary Library, and now in the Mangaroa Collection of the National Library of New Zealand. Most were donated by English owners, and are marked by armorial plates or labels dating from the eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries. Four designers are identified: J. Cross & Son (for Felix Wakefield), Huntly of 74 Bond Street (for Sir Stamford Raffles), Henry Hays of 168 Regent Street (for Marmaduke Constable Maxwell) and Cleghorn (for James Heywood Markland)

- 7 **STRUVE, Walter.** 'Dedicated to the promotion of international understanding': a memorial for Kurt Offenburg at the State Library. *La Trobe Journal*, no. 78, Spring 2006, pp.56-70

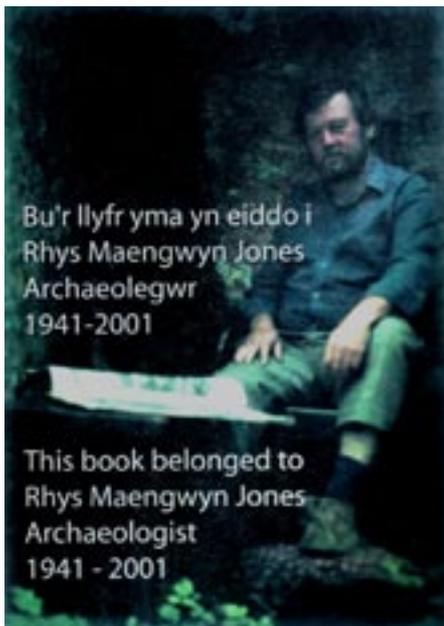
Typographic bookplate from 1950 marking the 'Kurt Offenburg Memorial Collection' in the State (then Public) Library of Victoria

M F

Memorial bookplate for Rhys M Jones

By Mark J Ferson, Sydney

A fortuitous discovery in an autumnal mid-March of a lovely Canberra secondhand bookshop, Book Lore, located at 94 Wattle Street, Lyneham Shopping Centre, on the way home from a rather technical, but enthusiastically conducted, workshop held at the Australian National University on the mathematical modelling of infectious diseases, netted me an example of that somewhat unusual category of ex libris, the memorial bookplate.



Tim Flannery's obituary for Rhys Maengwyn Jones (1941-2001) records his birth in Wales and his arrival in Sydney aged 22 years, his steep academic trajectory beginning at Cambridge University and ending at the Australian National University, and in Flannery's words, his 'central role in providing a chronological framework for the human settlement' which 'was to revolutionise archeology in Australia.' He spent much time in Tasmania and his unravelling of the story of the Aboriginal inhabitants of that state was recorded in the documentary narrated by Leo McKern, entitled *The last Tasmanian* (1978), and shown around the world.

Memorial bookplates are not a particularly common category of the artform, although a

'Google' search revealed examples from many countries. It also served to remind me of the various memorial bookplates commissioned by John Lane Mullins, who initiated the Australian bookplate movement, and who tended to have bookplates designed for many occasions and not just for his own books. The most touching of these are perhaps the 'Brendan Lane Mullins Memorial Plate' recording the death of Mullins' only son on the First World War battlefield of Arras, France on 14 June 1917, and that 'in memory of his wife JANE LANE MULLINS, a child of 31 Boulevard des Invalides, Paris' (1926). Both were executed by D H Souter and mark books donated by Mullins to the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Rose Bay, Sydney.

Other bookplates mark donations or are placed *in situ* prior to sale, although it may not be possible to tell retrospectively, from the bookplate itself, whether this was before or after death. Of literary interest may be the label worded 'From the library of CHARLES DICKENS, Gadshill Place, June, 1870', recording the month of his death, and, closer at hand in both time and place, one (illustrated below) that says: 'This book is from the Library of the late C. J. DENNIS', who died in 1938.

To return to the beginning, I encourage you to visit Book Lore in Lyneham, ACT, as it has a wonderful, gentle, quiet, bookish atmosphere, and there, as I did, you may find copies of the Rhys Jones and other bookplates.

Further reading:

Tim Flannery, 'Brief life of clarity and compassion: Rhys Maengwyn Jones' [obituary], *Australian Archeology* no. 53, 2001, pp.39-40

Tom O'Regan, *Documentary in controversy: the last Tasmanian*, 1984 <http://www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/film/Tasmanian.html>

Mark Ferson, 'John Lane Mullins, father of the Australian bookplate movement', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* vol. 89, pt 1, Jun 2003, pp.38-52

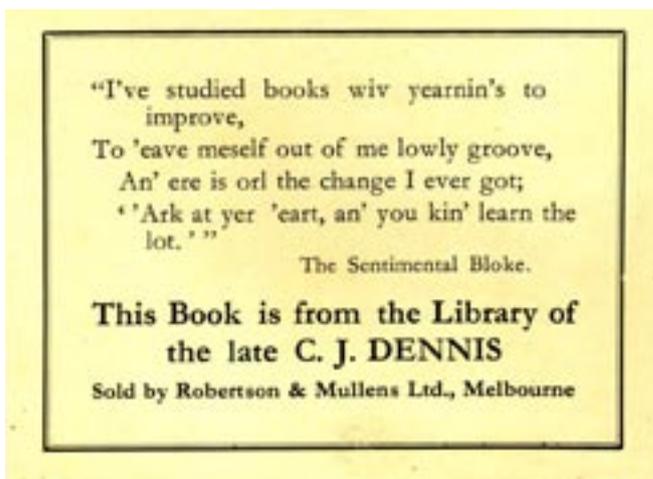


Armorial design, reproduced from a colour painting, for himself by Jim McCready

Letter to the Editor

Ian Thwaites is not quite correct in placing Ronald Holloway as the second most prolific bookplate artist in New Zealand. He has in the last year been eclipsed by James McCready whose output by early in 2007 was 117 (plus a number of differenced bookplates and four bookplates copied from the designs of others, which he does not include in his opus). Given that he created 21 bookplates in 2005 and 20 in 2006, he is likely to eclipse Hilda Wiseman later this year! [Andrew attached a checklist in his email – Ed.]

Andrew G Peake, Adelaide, 5 April 2007



Notes and happenings

Exhibition: Pictorial bookplates from the Corrigan Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales

A unique and extensive collection of over 4,000 Australian bookplates and associated material is held by the Art Gallery of New South Wales and access can be obtained to it through the Gallery's Research Library. Not only are there the bookplates in their ultimate forms, but frequently correspondence with the owner to be, preliminary sketches and different print states before the artist settled on a final design. The collection is the result of a donation under the Taxation Incentives for the Arts program by businessman, philanthropist and art patron, Patrick Corrigan, who divides his time between Sydney and the Queensland Gold Coast. Pat gave the bulk of the collection in 1995 and adds to it periodically as suitable material comes his way and is snapped up. For those who are interested, Pat was profiled by John Wade in the July-December 2002 issue of the *World of Antiques and Art* (pp. 100-103).

A mouth-watering sample of the collection was selected and placed on display in the Research Library at the end of January. The exhibition, which was due to close on 26 June, was interrupted by the need for urgent building works affecting this area of Gallery, and so will resume later in the year, possibly in July or August. Readers who are interested in seeing this exhibition should check the Research Library web site from time to time at www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/lib/intro

Recent articles on bookplates

1 Antony Davies, 'Telling a book by its (inside) cover', *Australian*, 14 Mar. 2007, Wealth 8

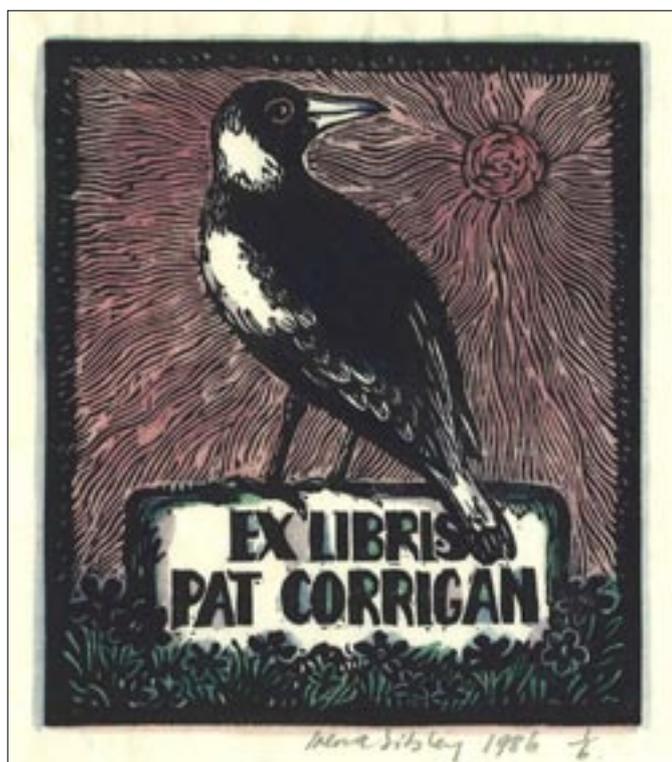
Jeff Bidgood recently drew my attention to this article, which tends to concentrate on the market value of some Australian bookplates at what, I have to say, seem to be inflated prices. But perhaps they are not, when they are viewed as original and perhaps rare prints by desirable artists such as Norman Lindsay and Adrian Feint.

2 Ann Nugent, 'Ex libris' stories to tell ...', *National Library of Australia News*, vol. 17, no. 8, May 2007, pp.3-6

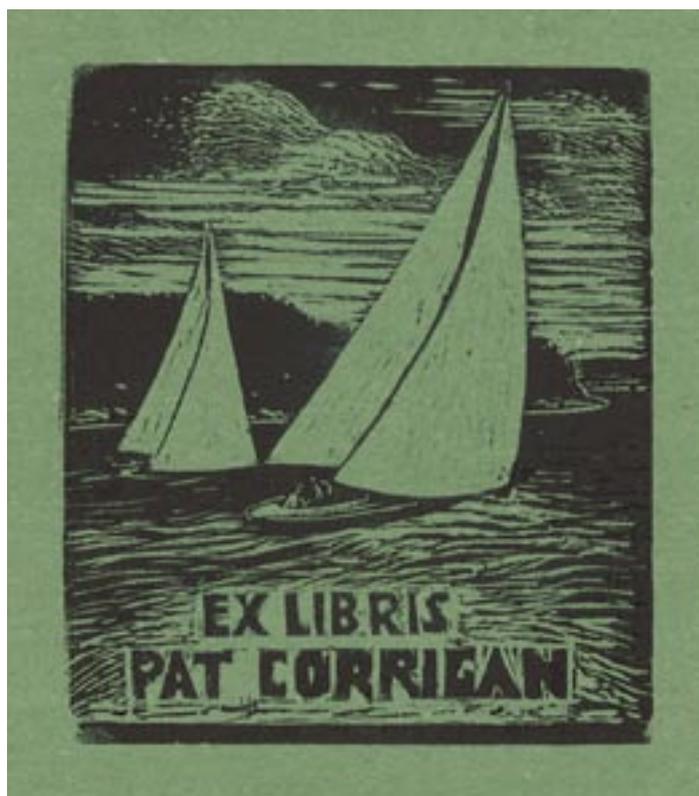
Dr Neil Radford kindly passed on to me his copy of the *NLA News* containing this beautifully illustrated and written article. The writer draws examples from the large bookplate collection of the National Library and really brings to life the colourful owners of some of these plates.

Editorial

May I begin by thanking the contributors to the current issue of the *Newsletter*: to long time collector and happy correspondent Edwin Jewell, who has provided a delightful reminiscence of his contacts with author, artist and bookplate designer Pixie O'Harris; and to New Zealand master printer Tara McLeod who has written with fascinating details of his own bookplate designs, information I have cheerfully pressed into use as the issue's Auckland report. We have also introduced an innovation – a Letter to the Editor – the result of an interesting email from Andrew Peake. Andrew has also written that his uncle, Jack Peake, who was profiled in the September 2006 edition of



Linocut bookplate by Irena Sibley for Pat Corrigan, 1986



Wood-engraved bookplate by L Roy Davies for Pat Corrigan, c 1978

the *Newsletter*, died on 8 September 2006. Our condolences go out to Jack's family and friends.

Other news to report is that membership of the Society is on its way to 40, and a Directory of Members is still very much on the cards once your Committee finds the time to produce it. The Society's Secretary (and Designer of the *Newsletter*) Mary Keep was enthusiastic enough to locate some extra copies of the May 2007 issue of the *National Library of Australia News* (containing Ann Nugent's perceptive article on bookplates) on a recent visit to Canberra; if you would like a copy and are quick enough, please send me a note or email and I will post it to you.

I have heard from Robert Littlewood that the bookplate exhibition planned for August in Melbourne has been postponed. Robert writes: "The Australian Bookplate Exhibition has been rescheduled to 4 December 2007 to allow students, artists & designers further time to enter the Keith Wingrove Bookplate Design Award."

As Editor, it gives me great pleasure to say that there are promises of articles for upcoming issues – Richard King on his recollections of that giant of the Australian bookplate world, Adrian Feint; architectural historian Dr Tessa Morrison

on her own computer aided bookplate designs; some mid-nineteenth century school of arts bookplates; and a survey of that often charming oddity, the manuscript bookplate. I have entered into some pleasant negotiations with Vane Lindsay to produce a note for the *Newsletter* on his own clever and humorous bookplates, and am keeping my fingers crossed. So, till next time ...

Books/bookplates/provenance

Provenance is the past ownership of an object and the evidence thereof; when it comes to books, evidence of provenance comes as: the simple handwritten owner's name, more complex inscriptions, coded marks, rubber, embossed or impressed stamps, and the various types of ex libris. Provenance is of greater significance for a rare object than a common one, but marks of provenance for the collector may add considerably to the interest of the object, even if not to its financial value.

Two examples from my library may be worth describing. The first is copy no. 821 of the Nonesuch Press edition (1929) of *Graziella* by A de Lamartine, printed in an edition of 1600 copies with illustrations stencilled in colour by the Curwen Press. This beautiful book is remarkable to me because it contains two bookplates: on the inside front cover that of the first owner, naval hydrographer, artist and bookplate designer G C Ingleton, dated 1931; and on the front free endpaper, a plate dated 1948 for Rose Lands by Harold Byrne. Picked up for \$8 at a garage sale in Artarmon (Sydney) perhaps fifteen years ago, this limited edition book and its marks of provenance was a bargain. Another pertinent example is my copy of P Neville Barnett's *Woodcut bookplates* (1934); it originally belonged to Adelaide secondhand book seller and bookplate promoter Harry B Muir and has his bookplate by Eric Thake laid down on the inside front cover.

My main reason for writing, however, is to turn provenance on its head by using books to tell me about the bookplates found

inside them. Please consider the bookplate for Lucy Frances Lowry, illustrated. The design captured my attention because the subject appeared to me to be a girl of the 1920s. I have not succeeded in finding any information about her, but the book in which it reposes is James Elroy Flecker, *Collected prose*, Heinemann, London, 1922. I bought the book in 2006 in Newport (Sydney) and perhaps 80 years earlier Ms Lowry had bought it from "The Roycroft" Book & Art Shop, which was established in Rowe St, Sydney in the early 1920s by Mrs Frances Zabel. I know something of what Ms Lowry liked to read and where and when she bought her books. If anyone knows anything more about Lucy Frances Lowry, please drop the Editor a line.

M F

RELATED WEBSITES

<http://bookplate-jvarnoso.blogspot.com/>
Reflections on books, bibliomania, bookplates and the art of engraving – featuring libraries of a Sultan and a Swiss soprano.

<http://www.bookplate.info/Bookplate/>
A cyberjournal of heraldic bookplates.

<http://www.jvarnoso.com/exlibris/index.html>

The art of the Ex Libris – dedicated to Bookplates/Ex Libris collecting.

<http://www.vialibri.net/index.php?pg=home>
vialibri – resource for bibliophiles – search through more than 15,000 antiquarian booksellers.

<http://www.kikkerland.com/books.htm>
A page on a site that sells Moleskine notebooks – a treasure by Max Ernst.

If you have bookplate-related website suggestions, please email the Secretary: 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

