営NEW AUSTRALIAN BOOKPLATE SOCIETY collecte

SOCIETY collectors, bibliophiles, artists and others dedicated to promoting bookplates

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Bookplates printed from photopolymer plates - Agave Print Studio

Dr Dianne Longley, Trentham, Victoria

I discovered printmaking during my studies in fine art at Newcastle College of Advanced Education in the late 1970s. I grew up on a sheep and wheat farm in central NSW and moved to Newcastle to study art when I was eighteen. In 1979 I moved to Adelaide which was my home until 2014 when I relocated to Trentham, Victoria and opened an access printmaking studio - Agave Print Studio - in a 1970s A-frame. Agave Print Studio offers workshops and studio access for printmakers, printmaking collaborations and editioning services, shortterm residencies, and craft classes including on-glaze porcelain, letterpress stationery and artist books. My love of printmaking embraces many aspects including the beautiful handmade papers we use and how the ink sits into the paper surface. I get great satisfaction from the graphic qualities inherent in the printed image, and the look of multiple prints drying after a successful session of printing.

My 'Nicholas Tsaktsiras' bookplate was commissioned by Emma Homfrey for her partner. I remember Emma saying that she had looked at my artwork on Google Images and then contacted me regarding the bookplate. Emma gave me a range of visual resources which I could use to compose my image. I combined graphic elements including regional landscapes in Greece, plants and animals and books. I used a photopolymer plate to create the bookplate because you can achieve very fine detail and the plate is water-washable. The plate is very stable, and many prints can be made from the plate, using either a bookpress or a platen press.

Making the photopolymer plate for the bookplate

I began the commission process by combining visual elements on drafting film, which was

printed through my laser printer with the silhouette animals and the name only. I then drew the other elements with a fine-tipped pen. I scanned the drawing, and in Adobe Photoshop I reduced the size of the image and did a little image correction. I inverted the file so that a film negative was created.

The film negative was printed on an Epson Artisan 1340 inkjet printer onto Agfa Copyjet film. The film has to be very opaque. The film is trimmed to the size of the plate. The plate I use for letterpress is Miraclon DS94 photopolymer plate. The film negative is placed image-side towards the plate and exposed in a UV exposure unit for about 60 seconds. You can also put the film/plate in a contact frame and expose using the sun. After exposure the



The planned bookplate drawn on draughting film

www.bookplatesociety.org.au/



The negative of the design

plate is washed in tap water with a sponge or a natural bristle brush. Washing the plate by hand takes time and attention. The soft, un-exposed emulsion has to be washed away, leaving good depth and detail. After washing, the plate is dried with a fan-heater, and then post-exposed in the UV unit or to the sunlight to harden it.

Printing from the photopolymer plate

A thin layer of rubber-based ink is rolled out onto glass. You require a roller which is larger than the plate, and with a medium to hard dura, as you want to apply ink to just the top surface of the plate. The ink is rolled across the surface of the plate ensuring that the plate is inked evenly but that none of the fine detail is filled-in. Position your plate and printing paper onto your registration board. You can use a piece of offset blanket (used on commercial offset presses) on top of your paper to give a little more impression when you are printing, or a piece of woolen felt, depending on the type of paper. When I use Japanese paper for printing in relief from photopolymer plates I don't dampen it. If I use a western paper I do slightly dampen the paper.

If using a bookpress, place your printing paper and registration board and felt/ offset blanket between two sheets of heavy



Exposing the photopolymer plate through the negative



The plate after exposure and washing

cardboard. Carefully slide the cardboards into the bookpress and tighten, then unwind and take out. If you use a platen press to print — I use a wonderfully restored 'Improved Albion Press' from the 1860s — you need to add a backing sheet over the paper and registration board (no need for the cardboard 'sandwich'), then wind through your printing press. Reveal your

print, check that the detail is clear, the ink coverage is good, and place in a print rack to dry.

Clean up

Cleaning the plate and inking area is easy. I scrape all the ink from the glass bench with a sharp blade. The small amount of ink left is removed with a rag and a mister



Placing the felt backing over the paper



Revealing the freshly printed bookplate after removal from the press

with a mix of 80% methylated spirits and 20% eucalyptus. I clean the roller with bio-thinners (made from citrus oils) and cotton rags.

The great advantage of using photopolymer plates is that you can make a plate from a drawing. It can be bold or finely detailed. With guidance the process is fairly simple. I run classes and workshops at Agave Print Studio and students can explore making and printing bookplates, cards, business cards or relief prints on a range of Japanese or Western papers. The photopolymer process is relatively safe with the water-washable plates, and I endeavour to use environmentally-friendly cleaning products. If you are in the Central Highlands of Victoria, call in to my studio and say hello, or stay a day and make a bookplate edition!

More information on Dianne's work can be found at www.agaveprintstudio.com.au and www.diannelongley.com.au

Appropriation, bookplates and the Lindsays

Mark J Ferson, Sydney

An article in a recent issue of the Print Council of Australia journal *Imprint* discussed the impact of digital reproduction techniques on the ability for someone other than the original artist to make unlimited identical or altered copies of an artwork. The

term 'appropriation' is generally defined (for example by Wikipedia) to mean the re-use of objects or images with little change to the original. Digital techniques have now made the process easier, but there has been a strong motif of appropriation in the visual arts running throughout the twentieth century, an example being the collages created by Picasso and Braque. Whilst appropriation may concern inclusion of older images within a larger design, in the case of bookplates I have stumbled across three designs which comprise solely the modified or redrawn version of earlier designs — in all cases the original bookplates had been executed by Norman or Lionel Lindsay.

Ex Libris Robert Chesney

This bookplate was given to me by an anonymous woman who appeared to know I was giving a talk on bookplates at the Paper Contemporary show held at Sydney's Carriageworks on 16 September 2018. I didn't have the presence of mind to ask in the few moments available her name or phone number (!) but she mentioned — if I remember correctly — that her father, who had had a large book collection, had just died and this was his bookplate.

It is an adaptation — and appears a relatively modern one — of the Lionel Lindsay wood-engraved bookplate for New South Wales Parliamentary Librarian, John Joseph Quinn, dated 1940. Close

examination of the two bookplates shows that Chesney's is a direct reproduction of the J J Quinn design which has been modified by the blacking out of the name panel at the base and the addition of 'Robert Chesney' in an old English font to simulate the original hand-drawn font of the words 'Ex Libris' engraved at the top by Lionel Lindsay.

Ex Libris T F M Naughton

Close to 30 years ago I was approached by the owner of this bookplate, perhaps before it had been created, and perhaps — my memory is hazy after this length of time — regarding the question of how to adhere bookplates to books. Incidentally, that is the question I am most commonly asked by people who happen across details of the New Australian Bookplate Society. On digging through my file of bookplate related letters for this article, I found Mr Naughton's 1991 letter to me, with which he had enclosed a copy of the finished bookplate, saying:

... recently drawn by an artist friend of my daughter. It is actually a copy of that of Sir Frederick Jordan, a past Chief Justice of New South Wales, drawn by Lionel Lindsay ... I am sure the late Judge would like to know that the design is being perpetuated in another lawyer's library.

The original design was engraved on wood in 1940 after Lindsay was introduced

to Jordan by the poet Christopher Brennan when the latter was an attendant at the Public Library (now State Library) of New South Wales. A close comparison of the original and modern bookplates reveals that the new design was meticulously redrawn in pen and ink to appear as similar as possible to the original. Many of the detailed lines are maintained, but the books on the shelves to the right of the image tend to show a lesser density of stippling than the wood-engraved original. In addition, the modern version has been commercially printed on glossy paper with a 'peel and stick' self-adhesive backing.

Ex Libris Philip Marnie (after the drawing by Norman Lindsay)

At Lifeline book fairs held in parts of Sydney during 2018 and 2019, I picked up two books which contain the Philip Marnie bookplate: Christoper Milne, *The enchanted places* (Newton Abbot: Readers Union, 1975) and *Albrecht Durer. Paintings, drawings and prints* (London: Folio Society, 1969).

The original of this bookplate is a penand-ink design made by Norman Lindsay for J E Tremearne around 1898–1900 and reproduced commercially from a line block. Tremearne was a life-long friend of Norman from their boyhood days in Creswick, and later became music critic for the Melbourne *Age*.

The design for Marnie was drawn in pen and ink by Halcyon Evans, an artist who is the daughter of famed children's

Top row:

Left: Wood engraving by Lionel Lindsay for John Quinn, 1940 Right: Bookplate for Robert Chesney after Lionel Lindsay

Middle row:

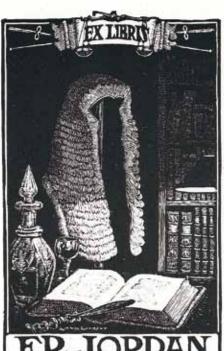
Left: Wood engraving by Lionel Lindsay for Sir Frederick Jordan, 1940 Right: Pen-and-ink design for Terry Naughton, c. 1990

Bottom row:

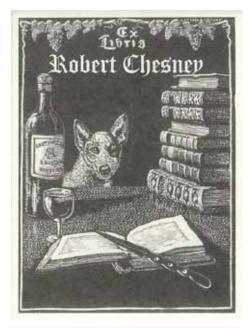
Left: Pen-and-ink design by Norman Lindsay for John Tremearne, 1898-1900

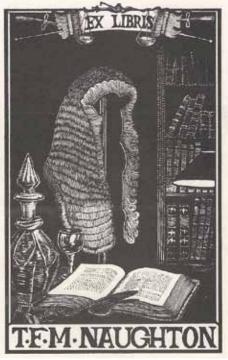
Right: Pen-and-ink design by Halcyon Evans for Dr Philip Marnie













book illustrator Pixie O'Harris. Close examination of both Tremearne and Marnie designs shows that Evans has carefully and convincingly replicated as far as possible Lindsay's pen strokes to bring about a very close image, excepting the name of the new owner. In this instance, the artist has clearly indicated her appropriation of the earlier design by writing at the base of the bookplate 'after the drawing by Norman Lindsay' and including her own name within the design itself. I believe that Marnie was a Sydney orthopaedic surgeon who died in 2008, although his occupation is not — and does not need to be — reflected in the design of the bookplate.

Is it a coincidence that the three examples of appropriated bookplate designs that have fallen into my lap are based on originals by Lionel and Norman Lindsay? Contemporary and modern commentators alike have asserted the high position that the two brothers held in black and white illustration in the early part of the twentieth century. And both played key roles in the rise of interest in bookplates as art from the earliest years of the pictorial bookplate movement which had been initiated in Sydney by John Lane Mullins in 1892. Norman was the subject of the first Australian publication (in 1900) on bookplates; he was the first Australian artist to produce a series of pictorial bookplates, starting in the late 1890s and continuing at irregular intervals into the 1940s.

Lionel Lindsay was Australia's foremost exponent of wood engraving in this period and gained an international reputation for his printmaking. His wood-engraved bookplate for Camden Morrisby, featuring Dr Johnson, gained Morrisby literally thousands of bookplates as he swapped the famous design with collectors from around the world (see Newsletter 32, March 2014). A number of modern bookplate collectors, myself included, were initiated into the pursuit of bookplates through an interest in the artists of the Lindsay family, and many bookplate collectors and bibliophiles remain fascinated by their work. Perhaps it is no surprise that modern book collectors have chosen to re-work Lindsay designs for their own libraries.

Further reading

Robert C Littlewood. *The ex libris of Sir Lionel Lindsay* 1874–1961. Melbourne: Privately printed, 1978

Ursula Prunster (ed.). *The legendary Lindsays*. Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1995

Kirsty Grant. Thumbs up or thumbs down? The trials and tribulations of Norman Lindsay's Pollice verso. *Art Journal* no. 42, 2 June 2014. Available at https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/thumbs-up-or-thumbs-down-the-trials-and-tribulations-of-norman-lindsays-pollice-verso-2/

Douglas MacDiarmid, Colours of a life, with a bookplate

Anna MacDiarmid Cahill, Brisbane; and Director, MacDiarmid Arts Trust, www.douglasmacdiarmid.com

In November 2017 the Society was contacted by Anna Cahill who wished to source in New Zealand some gummed archival paper suitable for bookplates, with the intention that they be pasted inside copies of a book on the work of a NZ artist, planned to be published the following year. I suggested that Anna contact our Auckland member and friend, Ian Thwaites, who has published a series of books on bookplates and other historical subjects, going to great lengths to have them finely printed. Anna, the artist's niece, says of herself that:

I too was born and grew up in New Zealand, but have spent much of my adult life in Australia as a journalist and writer. This is my labour of love to a wonderful old man and mentor.

Late last year I made contact with Anna to find out how the project had gone, and to ask for an image of the resulting bookplate. Anna's reply appears below.

Yes, Colours of a life: The life and times of Douglas MacDiarmid has been published in NZ to excellent reviews. Douglas, now 96 years old, is little known outside art circles in his homeland, despite being named a NZ living cultural treasure in 1990. He has lived in France since 1950, and travelled widely,

forging a successful international career as an outstanding colourist with a diverse output — figures, portraits, landscapes, semi-abstract, abstract, still life, and every shade in between. Charismatic, inquisitive, highly articulate and erudite, with a great love of the classical world, he continued to paint and exhibit until he was 92.

Making the book has been a huge fouryear marathon, and tremendous learning curve, after rashly promising a very old man he would hold the story of his life in his hands. Actually, I had no idea what I was letting myself in for but wouldn't have missed a minute of it.

We were thrilled with the bookplate as it turned out. It was quite a lengthy performance, mainly trying to find the right paper stock. We never did locate a gummed archival grade paper to use, even the national archives in New Zealand at Alexander Turnbull Library said they usually glued them in once made. The stock Ian's retired printer in Auckland suggested was no longer in production, so we settled for 100 bookplates in 120 gsm Goats Skin Parchment, trimmed to 100 x 130 mm which turned out to be just the right size, weight and finish. The ivory paper looked excellent against the black inner cover pages of the book.

You might be interested in the circuitous trail these well-travelled little plates took to completion. Thankfully I am persistent (even dogged, perhaps) as it took a good three months to sort out across three countries, but we were blessed with the help and advice of many people, including your good selves, along the way. First the plate was designed by a New Zealand friend, Margot Korhonen, of Spruce Design and Marketing, Christchurch. She oversaw the printing and despatched the plates, snug in a small box with her researched choice of signing pen, to a diplomatic friend of Douglas' in Wellington — who sent the package in a government bag to the New Zealand Embassy in Paris, for delivery by another friend to Douglas' home in Montmartre for signing.

Since he no longer leaves his apartment, let alone travels across the world to sign books, the plates were our way of tangibly including Douglas at the launches of his biography. At that time he was having regular little strokes; with increasingly shaky hands, there was no certainty he would even be up to the task. He was anxious about his diminishing vitality in the time it took to get the plates made. I assured him there was no hurry - the book launches were a couple of months away - we would be happy with just one or two signatures, but privately thinking we'd missed the boat. He practised his signature every morning as a warm-up exercise and, within a week, had signed every one of the 100 bookplates. My wonderful subject continues to astonish me with hidden reserves of strength for things that truly matter to him. The precious package was whizzed back to us in Brisbane for safe keeping while the book was being printed in China.

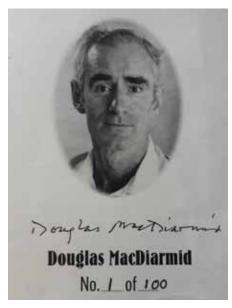
Douglas's biography was launched at the New Zealand Portrait Gallery in Wellington on 12 July 2018, in the company of about 100 guests — supported by a two month exhibition of some of his portraits and figurative paintings. A week later we held a second launch of similar size in Auckland at the James Wallace Arts Trust's The Pah Homestead — a magnificent old manor turned gallery in Hillsborough. Since then I have been in the South Island delivering successful public book talks at the Dunedin and Christchurch Art Galleries.

As a cautionary note, this was not a cheap exercise, with the design and printing of 100 little plates amounting to almost NZD\$600. Rather more than we expected, but ultimately well worth while, as the plate has added immeasureable value to the book. Douglas' art collectors love the signed bookplate edition and didn't baulk at paying NZD\$100 — this was the version we sold most of at the book launches and talks, so that we only have a handful of bookplates left.

The book continues to sell slowly but steadily in bookshops throughout New Zealand — a 470-page, hard-cover biography, illustrated with 150 paintings and photographs is a weighty 1.4kg brick — and, priced at NZD\$80 for the standard edition, could never be anything other than a beautiful niche product. We have sold

a number in Australia, Britain and France but distribution of all 1,000 copies will definitely be a 'slow burn', as our publisher says. They are excited enough by the book to have nominated it for the 2019 New Zealand Book Awards, and I plan to have a Queensland launch of some kind in Brisbane in 2019, to test the local market further.

Thank you again, Mark, for your wise counsel in setting me on the right track to produce our bookplate. Douglas was tickled pink with it.



Portrait bookplate by Margot Korhonen for Douglas MacDiarmid, 2018

Obituary: Ian Ronald Stubbin, 10 December 1942 to 10 December 2018

Mark J Ferson, Sydney

Booklover, reader, librarian, sometime Society member and lover of all things cultured, Ian Stubbin died recently in Sydney from failure of the bone marrow, a complication of the aggressive treatment of the lung cancer he had suffered over twelve years earlier.

I first met Ian when he was Medical Librarian at the Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick, where I worked, and we formed a friendship based on our mutual love of books. I must have been one of his circle of friends to whom he regularly directed material of bookish interest. Whilst still at Randwick, he would from time to time give me packages containing documents of public health history, which he knew was one of my 'hobbies', as well as envelopes containing the pleasant surprise of a bookplate of some or other medical library. After retirement, envelopes would turn up in my office or the letterbox at home stuffed with book reviews and articles on library history cut out from the *Times Literary Supplement*, and again with occasional bookplates he knew would pique my interest.

Over the years, I have kept some of Ian's short communications. From October 2000, prompted by my email asking whether I should read Boswell's life of Johnson, was his response:

Most definitely. What goes particularly well as an after read is Boswell's account of their journey to Scotland and Johnson's account also. I think they are classics not to be missed. You will for instance enjoy Samuel Johnson as a kangaroo.

The note now resides in my copy of *The life* ... which I picked up not many weeks later at a Lifeline book fair. A more recent note refers to both his friends' seeming reliance on Ian's 'parcels' and his interest in the Society:

You will be amused to know that I have a friend in Melbourne who is Professor of Banking at Monash. I cut out most of the stuff on finance from The Economist for him. Recently I did not send anything for a while and received an anguished note: 'Where is my stuff on finance?' So I will have to be more diligent won't I? How is the bookplate society going. Whilst I don't collect them, the idea is close to my heart, and your management of the society is a great public work. I commend you for it and you have my best wishes.

At the start of December, not long before he died, Ian sent me a letter — a lot longer than the usual note included with the packets of newspaper cuttings — which seemed to be prompted by my gift to him of a copy of the Book Collectors' Society of Australia journal, *Biblionews*. My gift was for the year's subscription, but sadly



Ian Stubbin in Queenstown, NZ, 2008

(courtesy Jane Lovett-Cameron) Ian only survived long enough to receive the one issue. I don't think Ian would have minded my reproducing his letter (with a trifle of judicious editing), because he speaks eloquently about his love affair with

books, where it began and where it led him.

Thank you for sending me a recent issue of Biblionews. I thought you might be interested in my way of collecting. I never set this down before, but will make a rough attempt to do it here before I die, for your amusement. A literate youth in the country and high school teachers (no library) who would lend you books. At Brisbane University the library was a cornucopia and I did bibliography/linguistics: honours four years, fascinating and useless. Collected books and a roomful of them, but the costs of entertaining girlfriends kept me selling them. Finally, the deputy warden of college came up to see me, telling me not to sell more books but to borrow money from him. He emphasised how valuable books, when carefully chosen like mine, actually were. When I arrived in Sydney I had two cases, one of books and a second of clothes. It really was a collectors' nirvana and I met Walter Stone. As you know, he was a printer, and there was a certain emphasis about fine printing in his collection, most of which was Australiana. He just revelled in his collection, and a lot of that rubbed off on me. So, being a graduate student of Dame Leonie Kramer, I could not help



Typographical bookplate by lan Stubbin for his own use

but study the literature of the golden age in England, and she taught me to think clearly: for instance to see the difference between opinion and judgement. You could say that I have three collections, all mixed together and overlapping and with a few outsiders. First I suppose is the reading collection (few novels), mainly in history, exploration, verse and 'literature' whatever that is. Being a librarian, I spent much more than I should have on reference works, encyclopaedias, dictionaries (something of an authority on these) and encyclopaedic reference works on history, politics and the Australian Dictionary of Biography. Most of these latter are now quite redundant because you can look up all you need on line. My favourite bits are the beautiful books including those which are facsimiles of illuminated manuscripts. Also fore-edge paintings of which there are quite a few, and fine bindings. I, like many collectors, learned bookbinding here in Sydney and have a diploma in that from South Australia. I only sold my hand binding equipment a couple of years ago. I tried to 'dispose' of my collection, but not needing the money there was not much of an incentive. Hope you find this interesting. Best from Ian Stubbin.

Born in Brisbane, Ian grew up in Bundaberg; one of the books he gave me, 'courtesy of the publisher' was a 1977 reprint from his Dryden Press, Darlinghurst, Sydney, of The history of

Bundaberg (Bundaberg: W C Aiken, 1890). A brief sketch of Ian's life shows that in the 1960s he came to Sydney and took up a position at Basser College at the University of New South Wales, and around this time studied librarianship, became a journalist and then an academic. After a period in the United States with the National Library of Medicine, Ian returned to Sydney in 1971 and took up a post as Hospitals Librarian with the NSW Department of Health. Ian was still with the Department of Health when he met Jane Lovett-Cameron, librarian with the NSW Department of Agriculture. After half a lifetime together they married at Jane's insistence in 2006 when Ian was diagnosed with lung cancer.

He had a small collection of about 80 bookplates and some publications, joined the New Australian Bookplate Society in 2010 and remained a member for three years as a way of showing support. He had designed two bookplates for his own use some years earlier and also made one as a Christmas present for Anne Taylor. He made friends in many walks of life; the notice in the Sydney Morning Herald spoke of his being a confidant, and correspondent to many. The words of Francis Bacon were chosen to represent his philosophy of life: 'Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man.'

Acknowledgement: with thanks to Jane Lovett-Cameron, and to Don and Brenda Stubbin for additional information.



Bookplate by Ian Stubbin for Anne [Taylor], 1970

Notes and happenings

Publications

Norton, Torv. Geoffrey Chapman Ingleton (1908–1998): a great collector. *Antiques in New South Wales*, Dec. 1998–April 1999, p. 35. [from Jürgen Wegner 30 Dec 18]

MORRISBY, CAMDEN. What is a bookplate and why is it? (reprinted from *Biblionews*, nos. 8 & 9, Nov. & Dec. 1947). *Biblionews and Australian Notes & Queries*, Dec. 2018, no. 400, pp. 177–9

Russell, Eric. A mixed bag of bookplates (reprinted from Biblionews, no. 266, June 1985). *Biblionews and Australian Notes & Queries*, Dec. 2018, no. 400, pp. 206–7

Ferson, Mark. The Australian bookplate collector: a vanishing species? (reprinted from *Biblionews*, June 1988, no. 278). *Biblionews and Australian Notes & Queries*, Dec. 2018, no. 400, pp. 207–8

Includes a reproduction of pen and ink bookplate design by Michael FitzJames for the author, 1986.

WARD, GILLIAN. Olive Pink: artist, activist, gardener. Melbourne: Hardie Grant Books, 2018; p. 34

Image of A Feint's bookplate for Olive Pink, 1929

Editorial

We present a variety of offerings this issue, including, sadly, the obituary for Ian Stubbin, librarian and man of culture. On a brighter note, the 'Secrets of bookplates' session offered at the Paper Contemporary show held last September at Sydney's Carriageworks (see the report in Newsletter 51) has led to a lovely and useful article written by my co-presenter at that workshop, printmaker Dianne Longley, on how to make bookplates using photopolymer plates. This technique is one of the latest in the long line of forms of relief printing which include the woodcut, wood engraving, linocut, metal cut and probably many more; and who does not remember the potato cut from infants school?



Adrian Feint's etched bookplate for Olive Pink, 1929

In an article from your Editor's pen (or keyboard), I have gathered three examples of bookplates which have been adapted or copied by modern artists from their original designs, to be used by new owners. It seems on the face of it odd that the artists whose works were appropriated were on each occasion one of the Lindsay brothers, Lionel and Norman; my take on it is that it's less a coincidence than the unequivocal reflection of the esteem in which they were and continue to be held as designers of bookplates.

The final piece describes the production of a bookplate to mark special copies of books just published on the life's work of revered New Zealand artist, Douglas MacDiarmid, now in his nineties and living in France. You will find it of interest because it relates the modern travails — and possibilities — of bookplate design involving parties on both sides of the world, and because it marks a continuing love affair with the bookplate

artform among those in the know. A flyer for the book is included with this issue.

Finally I would like to thank Ronald Cardwell who has provided enough copies of his latest commission to include with this hard-copy issue of the *Newsletter* as a gift to fellow members, and Jane Lovett-Cameron, who has given 70 copies of the self-designed bookplate belonging to her late husband, Ian Stubbin, to accompany his obituary in this issue of the *Newsletter*.

