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**Bookplates and art teaching between the Wars**

One indicator of the pervasiveness of the bookplate between the Wars is its repeated use as an exercise at all levels of teaching. The *School Arts Magazine* (Boston, 1912-35), known to Australian educationalists, included articles in which bookplates were promoted as a teaching tool. For example, the September 1924 issue relates successful efforts by a year seven teacher to encourage boys to draw, using the exercise of designing bookplates. The success was put down to vanity, the boys liking to see their names in print, and also the fact that they were asked to draw a single interest or hobby (and all had one). Many were encouraged to look further, bringing in volumes from home that had a bookplate inside. Other articles capitalise on this principle to teach design, dry point and linocut, whilst the September 1930 issue links a bookplate design competition for both primary and high school children to a library promotion week.

Australian school teachers replicated these ideas. Isabel Mackenzie, senior lecturer in art method at Sydney Teachers' College, in her *Art for children* used a child's bookplate to demonstrate the linocut. Eileen Brooker recalls designing a linocut bookplate (depicting a kookaburra) for herself in one of her first art classes in high school in Tasmania when she was 14 in c. 1937. Dorothy Riddle, organiser for school libraries in the South Australian Department of Education encouraged all school librarians to use bookplates in their books, and as well conducting during the 1940s an annual state-wide student competition for bookplate design. Kenneth Jack, when a student at Melbourne High School in 1941, took part in a bookplate design competition held by the senior art master and won first prize for a scraperboard plate, which brought him a commission from the school principal. The first prize was a copy of Barnett's *The bookplate*

*in Australia* signed and presented personally by the author. His design and those of the runners up were reproduced in the school magazine *Unicorn*.

Australian art schools showed a similar interest, sometimes promoted by established collectors. The first number of the Melbourne magazine *Art student* contained a well-illustrated article by Neville Barnett on the pictorial bookplate, which coincided with the release of his book of the same name. The third issue included an article on the linocut, illustrated with examples, including a bookplate design, by students of Prahran Technical College. Fashion illustrator Florence Lear, daughter of Melbourne printer and bookplate collector V.S. Hewett, recalls in the mid-thirties studying commercial art at Swinburne Technical College under Allan Jordan, and also making bookplates around this time. The linocut bookplate she designed for



Linocut bookplate by a school child, from *Art for children*

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Above left: Linocut by Florence Lear for W H Lear, 1930s

Above right: Linocut bookplate by Jessie Digby for herself, from *Art in Australia*, Sept. 1927

Below: Linocut by Rex Wood for Dorothy Kirk, from *Forerunner*, Oct. 1932



her future husband bears an unmistakable similarity to Jordan's bookplate style. The 1932 issue of the *Forerunner*, magazine of the South Australian School of Arts and Crafts, carried its first reproductions of linocut and pen and ink bookplates. An article by Adelaide barrister and Australian Ex Libris Society member Edward Morgan and illustrated with a linocut design by Rex Wood, was published in 1933; and an unreferenced pen and ink design appeared in the November 1935 issue.

In the Australian Ex Libris Society Report for 1927, Neville Barnett noted 'the awakening of interest in bookplates of the Art instructors at the East Sydney Technical School and the Sydney Art School.' At the Society's December 1928 meeting, bookplates by East Sydney Technical College students were commented upon by Herbert Cole and Harry Weston. Member and printer Fred Lane offered to have line blocks made of the six best designs and presented to the successful students. Following his demobilisation from the Second World War, artist Alan Waite undertook art training at East Sydney Technical College. His teachers included bookplate designers J B Godson and H R Gallop, and under the tutelage of Gallop he remembers designing a bookplate as an etching exercise in 1948.

Students of Julian Ashton's Sydney Art School were exposed to the art of the bookplate; 'The importance of design and its relation to the student' in *Art in Australia* (Sept. 1927) showcased Thea Proctor's design class, with reproductions of a bookplate and other linocuts. The School's magazine, also titled *Art Student*, made reference to bookplates. In its first number, the editor congratulates 'Joshua Smith, for designing the bookplate for the [Sydney Art] School Library', and a later issue comments on recent work: 'This month's Sketch Club produced a number of works of good standard, particularly... some book-plate layouts by Brendon Leo.' The importance of the Sydney Art School to the bookplate world continued to grow, as Ashton's students, such as Sydney Ure Smith, Lloyd Rees and Adrian Feint, fueled the inter-War bookplate boom in Sydney and beyond.

References are available from the Editor.

## A handpainted bookplate for Allaster McDougall

By Peter Thomas, Nambucca Heads, NSW

Allaster K McDougall was born in 1924 in Walgett, NSW. He is currently the senior elder of an old free-settler family, the McDougalls, here since 1798.

He attended The Armidale School and in 1942 during World War Two joined the Royal Australian Navy Volunteer Reserve. He attained the rank of Lieutenant and served on the sloop HMAS Warrego and minelayer HMAS Bungaree in the East Indies (now Indonesia), Timor, New Guinea, Manus Island and into the Pacific. After the War, he married Mary Cooling and they recently celebrated their 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. He joined the staff of the Bank of New South Wales (now Westpac), as had his father and grandfather before him. He remained with the bank all his working life, some 40 years, retiring from head office in 1979.

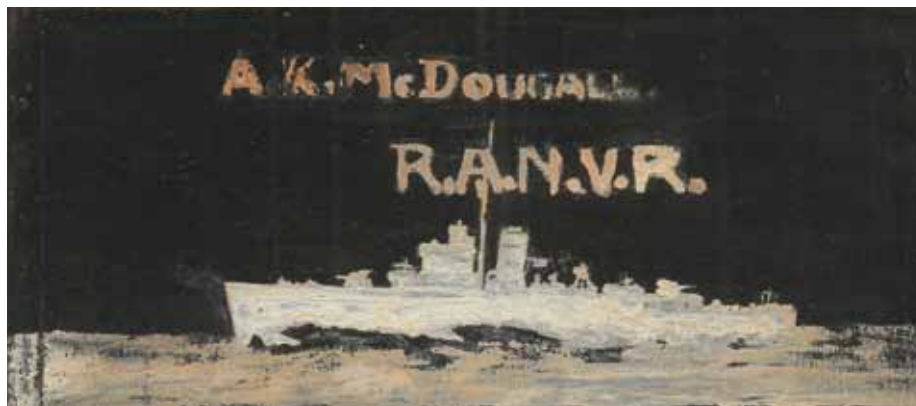
A talented watercolour artist — some of his paintings are in the Australian National Maritime Museum — he painted this bookplate of HMAS Warrego on the front endpaper of *Practical navigation for the professional and the amateur* by Master Mariner Thomas Gilchrist, published in Melbourne by Robertson & Mullens in 1943.

Recently, Allaster recalled buying the book in port in Brisbane or Cairns, while escorting Coral Sea convoys. He commented that 'A lot of blokes on board wanted to read it, so I painted my name and the ship in the book so it would always come back to me.' Surely the true purpose and mark of a bookplate!

## The chase

By Ronald Cardwell, Sydney

For the collector of books and the somewhat associated area of bookplates, there is the ever present 'chase' to run down a sought-after book and perhaps a bookplate. My interest in bookplates was aroused near on 35 years ago when I acquired one that depicted a Norman Lindsay 'cricket bear' that had been commissioned by book collector George Garnsey (1881-1951), a former member



Watercolour by A K McDougall for himself, c. 1943

of the NSW state cricket team (1904-07). Since that time I have acquired near on thirty bookplates of Australian cricket book collectors, with some eminent collectors among them.

Recently I was on 'the chase' on the internet for some cricket books. The vendor bookseller was in the United States of America and was known to me, as I had made a few minor purchases from them over the years. Having secured my purchases and paid for them they duly arrived a few days later in the post. I was delighted with my acquisitions and replied to the book seller.

*Dear Cathy,*

*Thanks for the parcel that arrived yesterday. I was absolutely delighted in the books, the cricket game and the postcards.*

*If you come across any other interesting cricket items please let me know.*

*Kind Regards,*

*Ronald Cardwell*

The following day came an emailed reply.

*Dear Ronald,*

*We are so pleased you are happy.*

*This has recently come in, thought you might be interested in hearing about it.*

*It is Ranji's copy of 'The life of Dickens'.*

*We've attached some images.*

*Kind Regards,*

*Cathy*

A full description of the books followed. It was John Forster's two volume edition of his *Life of Charles Dickens* published in London by Chapman & Hall in 1890. What followed in the post was priceless. Volume one revealed his engraved bookplate on the front end free paper, and,

on the facing page, the signature 'Maharaja Jam Sahib of Nawanager, February 1923, Staines'. Volume two, inside the back cover, held a different engraved heraldic bookplate reading 'Maharajah Jam Sahib of Nawanager Jamnagar'.

So who was Maharaja Jam Sahib of Nawanager?

Wikipedia records that Ranjitsinhji GCSI GBE (1872-1933), often known as Ranji, was the ruler of the Indian princely state of Nawanga from 1907 to 1933, as Maharaja Jam Saheb. He had been educated at prominent schools in India and later studied at Cambridge. He played first-class cricket for Cambridge University, and county cricket for Sussex, and was a noted English Test cricketer in the late 1890s and early 1900s.

He was known in England and India for the lavish functions he organised at his properties and for the 'extensive library that



'Ranji' bookplate

he maintained and showed off to guests'. He was the author of a highly regarded book *The Jubilee book of cricket*.

As for his bookplates, they are armorial, reflecting perhaps the status of the man. Having a bookplate certainly identified him amongst his peers. His close friend, the English cricketer W G Grace, also a book collector, did not have a bookplate.

The cost of the two volumes with the rare bookplates and signatures of the owner 'Ranji' was US\$300. A month later a cricket catalogue crossed my desk advertising Ranji's signature for sale. The price for the signature alone was £350.00 — the chase, if one could call it that, had been more than worthwhile!

## Bibliography of Australian bookplate literature, 2016

By Mark J Ferson, Sydney

**William E Butler.** Review of Charles Stitz (ed.) *Australian book collectors: some noted Australian book collectors & collections of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*. Vol. 1, 2 and 3. *Bibliotexts and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 390, Jun 2016; pp. 78-9

Reprinted from the *Bookplate Journal* (UK), Spring 2015; shows image of A Feint's bookplate for John Gartner

[**Mark Ferson.**] The New Australian Bookplate Society (NABS). *Newsletter* (of the Australian Society for Miniature Art (NSW) Inc.), Jul.-Aug. 2016, p. 3

Watercolour design for the author by Nilavan Adams, 2013

**Mark Ferson.** Notes & Queries. [Manly Literary Institute]. *Bibliotexts and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 390, Jun 2016; p. 91  
Colour reproduction of the bookplate of the Manly Literary Institute, c. 1930s

**Lesley Harding.** *Margaret Preston. Recipes for food and art*. Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 2016; pp. vi and 73

Shows the wood engraved bookplate by A Feint for W & M Preston

**Richard Overell.** John Emmerson collection. *Bibliotexts and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 390, Jun 2016; pp. 51-63

Shortened version of talks presented at the Book Collectors' Society of Australia (Victorian

Branch) and State Library of Victoria, both April 2016, regarding the significant historical book collection donated to the SLV; image of John Emmerson's book label.

**Jürgen Wegner.** An Edwards & Shaw/Fred Williams bookplate (NGV). *The Shadowland Newsletter*, no. 59, Jan. 2016  
Gives evidence that Edwards and Shaw printed the Fred Williams bookplate; an artist's draft is shown at <https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/79609/> catalogued as 'Sleeping woman: Design for NGV Library bookplate (1977)'

**Jürgen Wegner.** 62.8. Dr Claus Gerhardt, his bookplate. *Shadowland newsletter* #62, Apr 2016

Perfectly valid musing on where to place a bookplate in the book prompted by the example of the subject's bookplate located — most unusually — at the centre of the right-hand edge of the front free endpaper.

**Emily Wubben.** John Shirlow: the pioneering traditionalist. *University of Melbourne Collections*, no. 19, Dec. 2016; pp. 30-37 [thanks to J Wegner for putting me onto this item]

Short section on the artist's bookplates and images of etched designs for R H Croll and R M Chirnside

## Notes and happenings

### Publications

**AIRLIE BLACK** (comp.), 'Thomas Thornton Reed: Anglican Archbishop of Adelaide: Essays and reminiscences', Adelaide: Peacock Publications, 2015.

It includes TT Reed's two bookplates. [With thanks to Andrew Peake for this item]

**MARK FERSON**, 'Own your own', *Imprint* vol. 52, no. 1, Autumn 2017; pp. 30-1

Short overview of bookplates in Australia with focus on the New Australian Bookplate Society and its Bookplate Design Award 2016, featuring black and white designs by Sydney Long, Cate Benardout, Catherine Nacion, Jamie Alexander and Marissa Watson

**LESLEY HARDING.** *Margaret Preston. Recipes for food and art*. Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 2016; pp. vi and 73

Shows the wood engraved bookplate by A Feint for W & M Preston

**GARRY WOTHERSPOON.** *The Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts. A history*. Sydney: Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, 2013; p. 168

The institution's bookplate with rules and fees, possibly from the 1940s

**EMILY WUBBEN**, 'John Shirlow: the pioneering traditionalist', *University of Melbourne Collections*, no. 19, Dec. 2016; pp. 30-37 [thanks to J Wegner for putting me onto this item]

Short section on the artist's bookplates and images of etched designs for R H Croll and R M Chirnside

## Editorial

As part of my ongoing researches into the development of the linocut and its use in book illustration and related arts, it became evident that the linocut and the development of the pictorial bookplate in the twentieth century and more particularly during the inter-War bookplate boom were closely intertwined. This led me to explore the use of the bookplate as a design example or exercise in the teaching of art, the product of which is the feature article in this issue of the Newsletter.

I was gratified to be given two unusual stories to publish. Bookseller Peter Thomas submitted his uncle's unique watercolour bookplate with a charming potted biography; and Ronald Cardwell relates an interesting story of an unusual bookplate captured after an unexpected chase.

It has become traditional to include in the first issue of the year a bibliography of bookplate material published in Australia during the year just ended. The list for 2016 is not long but once again it has revealed the breadth of fields where bookplates turn up as either the central focus or more as a decoration, but whichever it is, appreciated by the devotee of the art form.

I wish all members and other readers continuing enjoyment of the *Newsletter* and send out a reminder that anything of bookplate interest, whether short or long or in between, is worth considering for inclusion in its pages.

MF