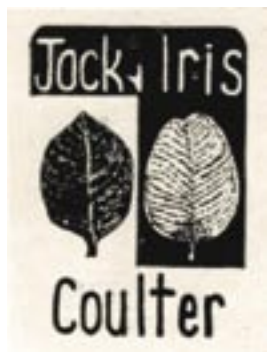


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A modern bookplate: Reardon

Richard Heathcote, Carrick Hill, Adelaide

This contemporary bookplate was created by Aaron Reardon, a 23-year-old graphic designer and animator, for his parent's library in their Melbourne home. The design reflects the primary elements of the bookcase which was commissioned in 2003 from Mark Burns, an architect who specialises in such design work. Burns is renowned for his fine hand-drawn designs and calligraphy work and the "ex libris" lettering in the bookplate was written by him.

The plate also draws upon some of the more noticeable elements of the library structure.¹ The central element in the bookplate is a drawer containing a fold-up lectern upon which display books can rest. It also uses the columns and shelf styles compressed into a smaller area to mirror the look of the library bookcase.

Aaron, whose style employs sharp visual humour for impact,² uses here the cloth book-mark to hide the second letter "r" of Reardon to produce the invitation to read on. His parents are avid readers and this was a most apt pun now found in every volume asserting their love of books and reading. Their book collecting stems from subjects for which they have a genuine interest. About a third are biographies and fiction, another third of history, popular science, psychology, personal development, gardening, quilting and crafts, explorers, travel, sport, WWII and childhood treasures. There are reference books to settle debates in the old-fashioned way and a final section of large format art volumes, particularly books about the works of the Early Northern Masters.

The design and production of a bookplate – what a wonderful gift from a talented son to his parents. One they enjoy every time they open a book and see the plate's clever observation and humour. One that will live on in the Reardon's books for generations to come expressing its



Hand drawn design by Aaron Reardon for Chris and Trish Reardon, 2003

recognition of love, reading, books and the most glorious way of displaying them on that necessity of extravagance – a bespoke library bookcase.

[1] The library was constructed by Steve Baughan of Salt & Pepper Cabinets, Lilydale.

[2] Aaron's work contains strong design elements and the influence of his work as an animator. In some instances, his work has been described as modern cloisonné.

Bookplate networks: lovers of the Sydney bush

Mark J Ferson, Sydney

In 1914 a number of young men with interest in exploring and preserving the New South Wales native forests, including Myles Dunphy and Herbert Gallop, formed the Mountains Trails Club. L Roy Davies and Alan Rigby joined in the subsequent decade and other groups such as



Above: Wood engraving by Herbert Gallop for Myles J Dunphy, 1924

Right: Wood engraving by L Roy Davies for himself, c. 1923

Below right: Bookplate for Robert Walter Savage, c. 1930s

the Sydney Bushwalkers (founded 1927) and River Canoe Club (founded 1934) were also formed to help preserve the natural habitat around Sydney. This close knit circle, with common interests in the 'bush' and in many cases in art and architecture, have left a number of bookplates which reflect their friendships: H R Gallop for Myles J Dunphy showing a campfire, pitched tent and towering sandstone cliffs; Roy Davies for M J D (ie Dunphy) depicting a bush scene with tent; two designs by Roy Davies for himself depicting camping scenes; bookplate for R W Savage, of the Sydney Canoe Club, depicting a canoe on a stream flowing through a sandstone canyon. Savage also joined the Sydney Bushwalkers and in 1932 when Dunphy formed the National Parks and Primitive Area Council to advocate for conservation of bushland in national parks, he was a member of the Council.

Alan Rigby developed a career as a commercial artist and designed a number of bookplates; he became close to P Neville Barnett whose work he promoted, including 'P. Neville Barnett, a super bookman' in the *American Society of Bookplate Collectors and Designers Year Book 1949/1950*. Both Gallop and Davies had studied art under Julian Ashton at his Sydney Art School and went onto teaching careers at the National Art School at the East Sydney Technical College, Davies eventually as its principal.

Further reading

Deborah Beck. *Hope in hell: a history of Darlinghurst Gaol and the National Art School*. Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2005

Graeme Smith. *H R Gallop, 1890-1958: retrospective exhibition held at Wagga Wagga City Art Gallery, 4 July-5 August 1990*. Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, 1990

Patrick Thompson. *Myles Dunphy selected writings*. Ballagirin, Sydney, 1986



The bookplate of Winifred Frances Craig

By Michael Taffe, Lake Wendourie, Victoria

Several years ago I had the good fortune to be working in an art gallery where I was privileged to enjoy many works from the estate of Australian artist Sybil Craig OAM. Sybil Craig was very close to her parents and her mother, Winifred Frances Craig, was an art collector and a collector of porcelain and first editions. Importantly for Australian bookplate collectors, she was also a subscriber to the Australian Ex Libris Society [Mother and daughter joined in 1933, and later were foundation members of the Melbourne-based Australian Bookplate Club, formed in 1942 – *Ed.*].¹

It was this interest that helped inspire her daughter to produce prints, especially linocuts, as bookplates in the 1930s and 1940s using Australian flora and fauna. Interestingly, Sybil's earliest art lessons were from John Shirlow who produced many well-known bookplates.² Shirlow went on to become a great family friend.³ For her own bookplate Sybil created a linocut of a palette and brush and despite my searching

I have not yet been able to locate one of her bookplates for myself.

While examining a box of material being assessed and documented, I was given permission to keep this scrap of paper that in truth was of no relevance to the work in hand. It is the bookplate of her mother, Winifred Frances Craig, and it still continues to reveal the character of its owner to me several years later. I have looked for other examples attached to books so that I may gather some insights into the further reading habits of the owner but, as with my search for her daughter's bookplates, this has not happened to date.

The Winifred Frances Craig bookplate proclaims that its owner had an extremely wide field of interests, for there are flowers, porcelain, stamps and letters. It suggests a love of history, the classics, as well as the collecting of stamps and flowers. The books depicted represent wide interests with many and varied titles. The pen and letters indicate Mrs Craig's love of writing and corresponding with others. In a word here was an abundance of diversity and interest.

The corner emblems of Tudor Roses and Shamrocks re-introduced in the vase proclaim her connection to England and Ireland. The use of Roman numerals instead of 1931 in dating the bookplate further recalls classic influences. However, as almost a century has passed such a date format was probably the norm for an educated writer, collector and enthusiast. Reading up on the artist, with particular reference to her mother, the assessment made on the basis of the pictorial elements in the plate seems to have been correct. Bookplates do tell us much about their owners but there remains the call to collect, the frustration often in the search and of identifying the originators of these miniature biographies/profiles.

Despite Mrs Craig's membership of the Australian Ex Libris Society and her association with the art fraternity, I have found nothing on

the artist/creator of the plate, E Mackenzie. Given the emblems of roses and shamrocks I wonder if the creator of the plate might not also have been English. As Winifred's husband, Matthew, was an architect with the firm Reid, Smart and Tappin, it is also possible that an architect or draftsman there could have created it.

References

- [1] Kirsten McKay. *Sybil Craig 1901 – 89 Modernist Painter*. Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum, Castlemaine, 2006; p27.
- [2] Andrew G. Peake. *Australian personal bookplates*. Tudor Press, Dulwich SA, 2000; p19.
- [3] McKay, *ibid*, p14.



Letter to the Editor

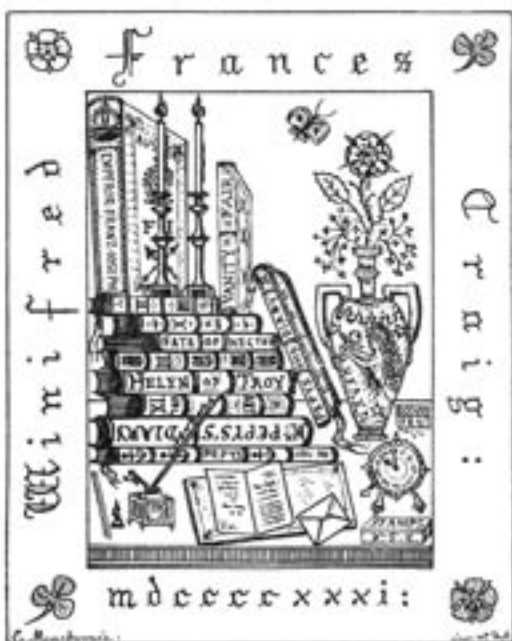
I was interested in your reference to the bookplate of A H and A W Reed Ltd (in *Newsletter* no. 22). You are probably aware that A H Reed was a serious book collector as well as one of NZ's great characters. There is a recent biography, as well as his autobiography (1967) – which has much about his collections (now in the Dunedin Public Library). Both he and A W (his nephew) had personal bookplates, which differed only in the initials.

David Skegg, Dunedin
25 January 2012

Notes and happenings

Ex Libris Competition, Lyuben Karavelov Regional Library of Ruse, Bulgaria

An international competition with the theme *Ex Libris – Ex History* is being conducted by the Regional Library in Ruse, Bulgaria, its



Above: Pen and ink design by E Mackenzie for Winifred Frances Craig
Top right: Linocut by Sybil Craig for herself, c. 1933

eighth annual event. The closing date is 31 May 2012 with the exhibition to be held in October 2012. Awards include the Grand Prix of 250€, Sponsors' awards and Special awards for children and students. Rules and applications forms are available from the Editor, and further information is available from the library at libruse@libruse.bg

Recent publications

BRIAN HUBBER. Leading by example: Barry in the library. *La Trobe Journal*, no. 73, Autumn 2004, pp.68-74

Describes the requirement for each book of the Melbourne Public Library to have a stamp on the cover (supra-libros) and shows images of two versions

JAMES FERGUSON. *John Alexander Ferguson: preserving our past, inspiring our future.* Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2011; pp. between 64-5, 154

Shows Ferguson's bookplate by Lionel Lindsay (1914); describes commission of design for the NLA Ferguson collection by G C Ingleton

STUART KELLS. *Rare: a life among antiquarian books.* Sydney: Folio, 2011, pp.265-83

A biography of Melbourne bookseller Kay Craddock who handled a number of important collections of bookplates and associated material, including those of John Gartner and James R Dickson; image of Gartner catalogue featuring his bookplate by Allan Jordan

BRIAN McDONALD. George Mackaness: an intriguing insight. *Bibliionews and Australian Notes & Queries*, no. 371/372, Sep-Dec 2011, pp.134-40.

Mackaness as a promoter of Australian historical writing, particularly in reference to the First Fleet; image of Mackaness 'Bountiana' bookplate by G C Ingleton

KENNETH W PARK. 'Thrusting forward': a note on the armorial bearings. *La Trobe Journal*, no. 73, Autumn 2004, pp.108-11
Armorial bookplate of Redmond Barry

A salutary quote or two about the 'Bookplate collector'

In 1995 the US National Library of Medicine mounted an exhibition of medical

ephemera, 'Here today, here tomorrow: varieties of medical ephemera.' The introduction to the bookplate section of the on-line exhibition (available at www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/ephemera/bookplates.html) includes the curatorial comment:

Collectors not only paste their own bookplates in their books, they also frequently have copies made to trade with like-minded colleagues. Later, free of associations with their original owner, such bookplates become ephemeral objects.

Bevis Hillier, in writing of bookplates in his *The new antiques* (Times Books, 1977), cites a somewhat blunter comment along the same lines in an article in the *Daily News* (London) of 3 January 1895, published at the height of the bookplate collecting craze consequent on the foundation of both *Studio* magazine and the Ex Libris Society:

The book-plate collector is the worst of all. ... The amateur of book-plates divorces the plate from the book, whereas what interest book-plates have entirely depends on their connection with the volume and its original owner. A plate of Pepys or Garrck on a book from their libraries makes a literary relic. The collector sponges off the plate, and gums it into an album.

Does this re-ignite the debate on whether collectors should or shouldn't remove bookplates from books?

Editorial

The present issue contains contributions from South Australian and Victorian members and so I am grateful to Richard Heathcote for his lively note on the Reardon bookplate, and indeed for interest expressed by its designer Aaron Reardon and owners Chris and Trish Reardon – the Reardons have been generous in providing copies of the bookplate itself for distribution to members with this *Newsletter*. I would also like to thank Michael Taffe for his interesting and well researched article on the previously unknown Winifred Frances Craig bookplate.

In the last few months most members should have received a copy of the *Members' Directory*; and we must apologise for the delay in getting this to you as there were misunderstandings between printer and binder, as well as interruptions to the supply of the chosen paper, which led to the production of the *Directory* in two separate print runs. The 'special copies' are still on their way to those who contributed multiples of their own bookplate – please contact the Editor if you'd like to know where this overly protracted process is up to.

I should also mention the very interesting project being undertaken jointly by the Society and the Australian Heraldry Society, under the leadership of Richard d'Apice AM. Those of you who attended our Annual General Meeting may remember Richard's proposal to catalogue the very extensive John Lane Mullins Bookplate Collection held in the Mitchell Library. Having begun with a meeting with Library staff including the Mitchell Librarian, and discussions on the standardisation of information to be collected on each bookplate, the project is now well underway with the project team having paid a number of visits to the Library to capture digital images of the bookplates.

Whilst I have your attention, I wonder whether any reader can shed light on the Jack & Iris Coulter bookplate (on the front page) which I snared in Taupo, NZ, and which is pasted into Oliver Duff, *New Zealand now* (2nd edition, Allen & Unwin, London, and Paul's Book Arcade, Hamilton, 1956).

It is overdue for us to organise the Society's 2012 Annual General Meeting, and so we hope to be in touch with details shortly.

Whilst on Society business, may I remind those members who have not yet renewed to send in their cheques for \$30 – electronic funds transfer is also available. I have enclosed a 2012 membership renewal notice for those for whom I have no record of payment.

And so it remains for me to wish you the best in bookplate terms and generally for 2012.

MF