

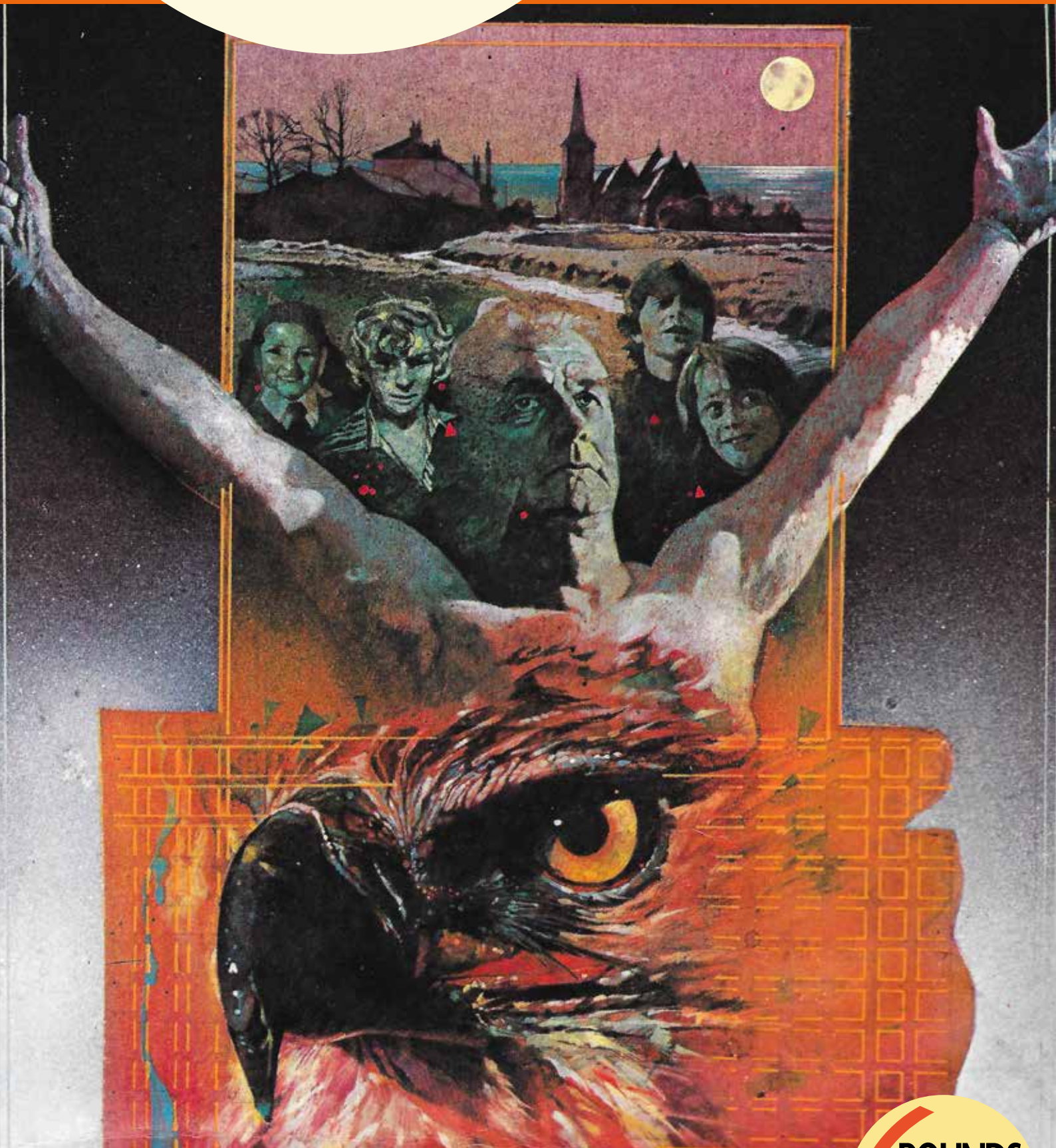
ILLUSTRATION

SUMMER 2019 ISSUE 60

POWER OF THREE: THE MYSTERY ARTIST WHO DREW *THREE MEN IN A BOAT*

PLAIN JANE: PAULA REGO'S POWERFUL DEPICTIONS OF *JANE EYRE*

CAREFUL OWNERS: THE ART OF THE PERFECT BOOKPLATE



FRONT MAN: MICHAEL HESLOP'S COVERS

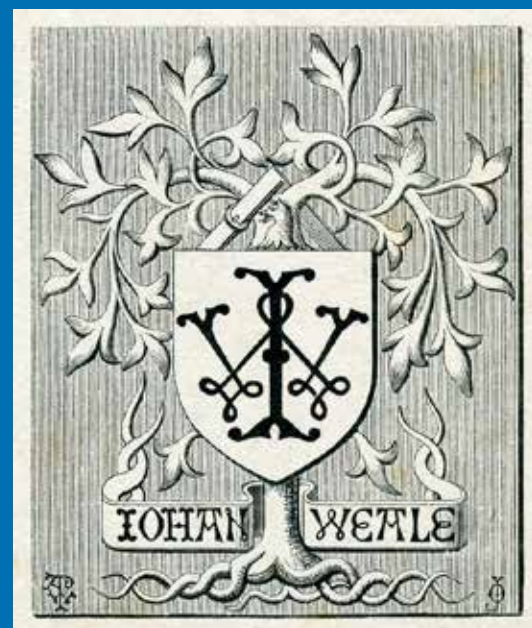
6 POUNDS

EX-LIBRIS FOREVER

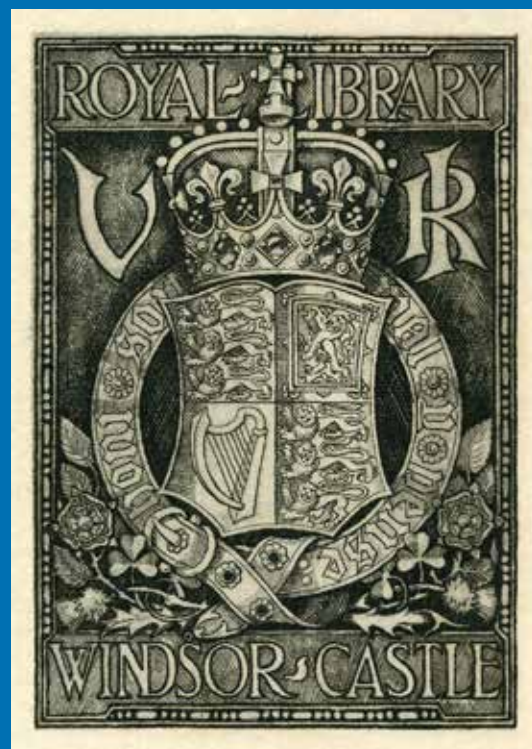
Anthony Pincott explains why we should all take a closer look at any bookplates we find in our collections, and points to two current competitions for budding bookplate artists that demonstrate the art is alive and well today



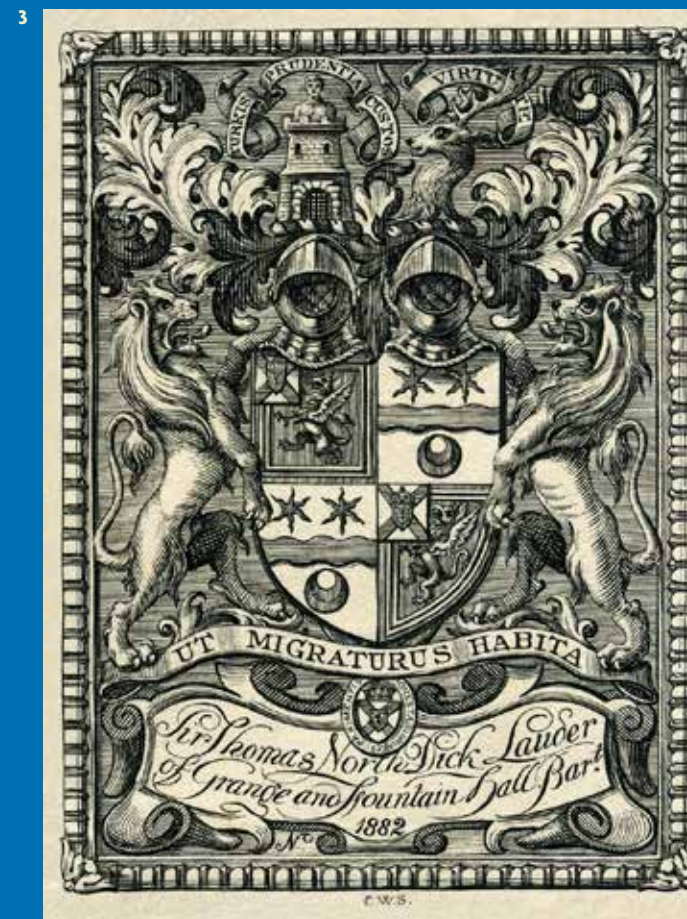
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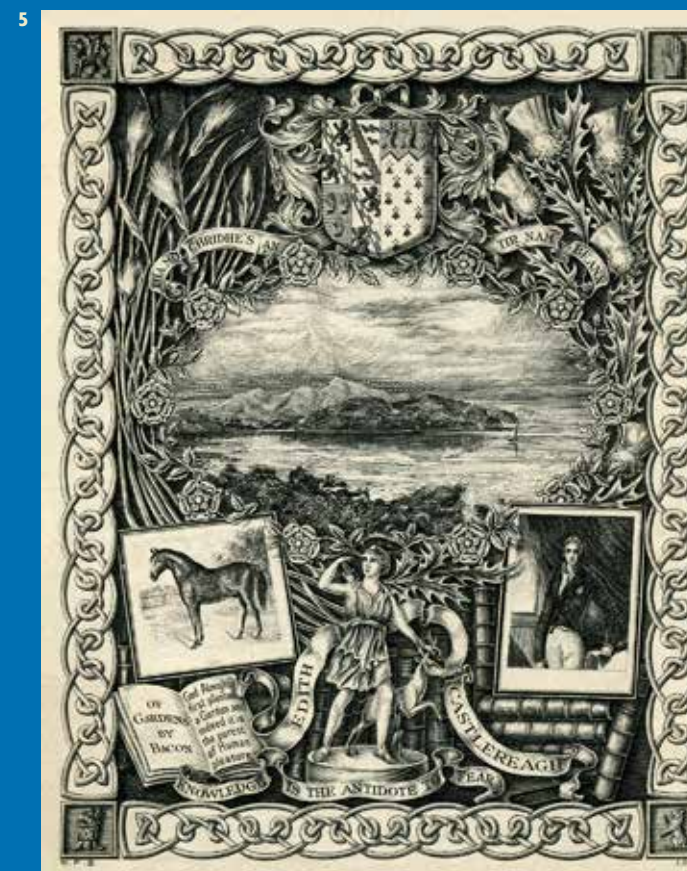
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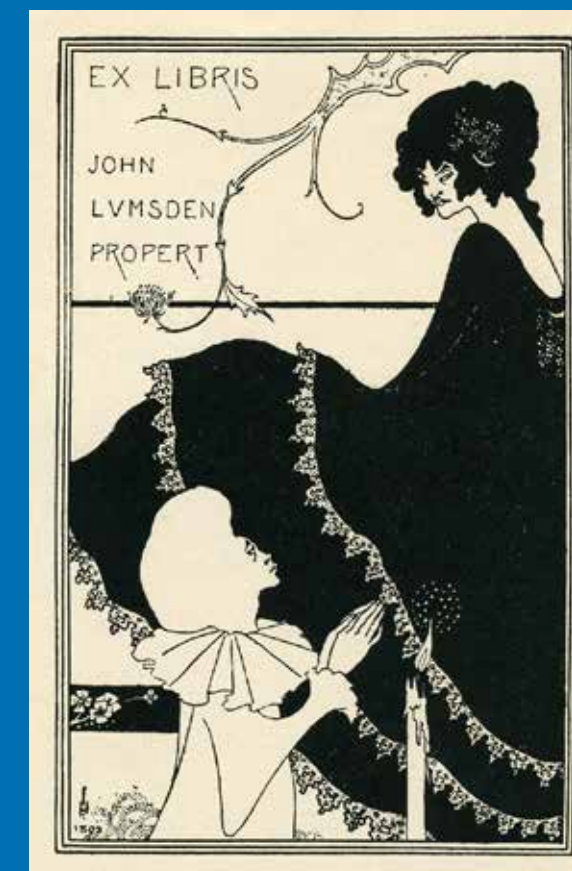
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- 1 A simple armorial for clergyman, historian and novelist Charles Kingsley (1819-75) fulfils its function, but affords no decorative interest
- 2 Initials 'JW' on a shield for publisher John Weale (1791-1862), designed by Augustus Welby Pugin (1812-52) and engraved on wood, perhaps in the 1840s, by Orlando Jewitt (1799-1869)
- 3 Sir Thomas North Dick Lauder, ninth Bart (1846-1919), had a full armorial engraved on copper by C W Sherborn (1831-1912) in 1882
- 4 The Royal Library Windsor Castle VRI, an armorial by George W Eve (1855-1914), whose initials and year of etching, 1897, are placed each side of the garter ribbon
- 5 Edith Castlereagh (1878-1959) became Marchioness of Londonderry in 1915 when her husband Charles Stewart Henry Vane-Tempest-Stewart succeeded as seventh Marquess. Her bookplate is signed 'WPB 1910', but was engraved by Robert Osmond (1874-1959)

6 Margaret Florence Pole (1879-1951) had a bookplate by leading bookplate and postage stamp engraver J A C Harrison (1872-1955)

7 Bookplate drawn in 1893 by Aubrey Beardsley (1872-98) for physician and art critic John Lumsden Propert (1834-1902)

Some of the illustrations shown here are not depicted actual size.

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8

William McMillan's bookplate by Jessie M King (1875-1949). Splitting 'Ex' from 'Libris' seems strange

9 Bookplate for Sarah Nickson by book illustrator Kate Greenaway (1846-1901)

10 Used by William Neish by Georgie Cave France (1866-1934), a pen and ink drawing dated 1894, the year she married artist Arthur Joseph Gaskin (1862-1928)

11

James Hoy's imperious and forbiddingly aloof female figure is by Henry Osprovat (1877-1909)

12

For Olga Jones (perhaps a relative of the artist) by [Alfred] Garth Jones (1872-1955)

13 Bookplate for Sir John Duncan (1846-1914), Cardiff newspaper proprietor, by Robert Anning Bell (1863-1933). This exists also in a larger size, an advantage of photographic reproduction

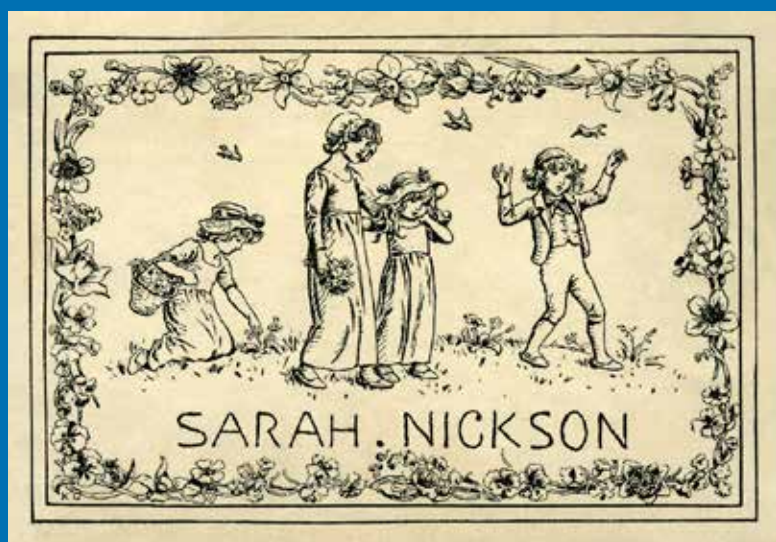
14

Bookplate for Mabella Hoskyns (possibly the person who died at Chard, Somerset, in 1947, aged 86). It is dated 1901, so is not by engraver and heraldic artist Thomas Moring (1819-84), but is perhaps by his wife Jane (1830-1917), who in the 1891 census described herself as a seal engraver

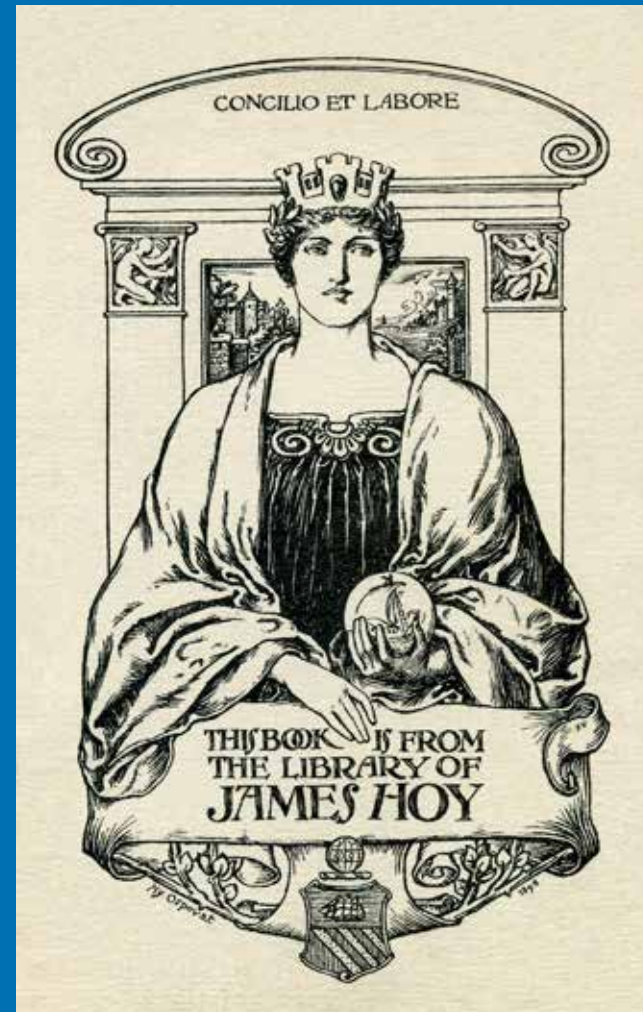


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bookplates, which I promptly steamed out (it was only later that I realised that these are best left in situ). I got in touch with a couple of leading collectors and discovered that there existed an exchange club of similar enthusiasts as well as a huge literature on the subject, most of it written after 1891 when bookplate collecting came to public attention through the founding of the Ex Libris Society. Similar societies were established in other countries, and the following decade saw great productivity and achievement in the creation of bookplates.

Throughout the 19th century there were antiquaries and others who collected bookplates, but this was mostly a side-interest to books and heraldry. Few of their collections have survived. These collectors are identified in a comprehensive article in the Spring 2018 issue of *The Bookplate Journal*. The typical 19th-century bookplate had plain, flat heraldry, such as that of the novelist Charles Kingsley (fig 1), author of *The Water Babies*. His is one of the several hundred ex-libris in *Famous in their Time*, a book illustrating the bookplates used by well-known people that will be published next year. A few Victorian plates displayed rather more skill, such the work of Orlando Jewitt (fig 2), who engraved so finely on wood that, at a quick glance, it could be mistaken for copper engraving.

Total proficiency was also achieved by Charles William Sherborn, the leading Victorian engraver of heraldic bookplates, and by George William Eve, a master of etched armorials, who produced his best work in the Edwardian years. A typical Sherborn armorial is shown here (fig 3), one of a huge output of over 500 bookplates (plus many variant states), including some he made for the royal family, as did Eve (fig 4), whose checklist runs to over 250 items.

Exhibitions and personal recommendations made these two artists widely known, but the names of the engravers employed to create bookplates ordered through a heraldic stationer or superior London bookshops J & E Bumpus and Truslove & Hanson were kept closely secret. If not armorial, the typical Bumpus bookplate might include a view of the owner's house, with symbols of his or her interests scattered around. These misleadingly bore the initials WPB (fig 5) and FGH of the Bumpus and Truslove shop managers Barrett and House. The true engravers for Bumpus were principally John Augustus Charles Harrison (fig 6) and Robert Osmond, who in their careers engraved over 350 and over 500 ex-libris respectively. Eve and Harrison also worked for Truslove, as did Alfred James Sparkes, Frederick Henry Tebay and several others.

Popular interest in bookplates during the 1890s coincided with the flourishing of Art Nouveau, the encouragement of book arts and a golden era of book illustration. There was an upsurge in ex-libris designed for women and bookplate design switched from heraldic to pictorial. Many were by the same artists who were making names for themselves as book illustrators. On the A-list are Aubrey Beardsley and Jessie M King of Glasgow, whose instantly recognisable bookplates are hard to collect because they are both expensive and scarce.

In his short life, Beardsley produced only a handful of ex-libris (fig 7). Some were reworked from his other designs, but his influence meant that many pastiche bookplates were created by later artists. About two dozen finished ex-libris plus some unused designs stand to King's credit, several with her favoured depiction of sailing ships on a windy sea (fig 8).

In most of the 10 bookplates by Kate Greenaway it is the distinctive children who are central to her characteristic style (fig 9). Another woman artist, represented here by a pictorial bookplate she designed for William Neish (fig 10), was Georgie Cave France of the Birmingham School of Art, which at the end of the 19th century was a centre for the Arts and Crafts movement.

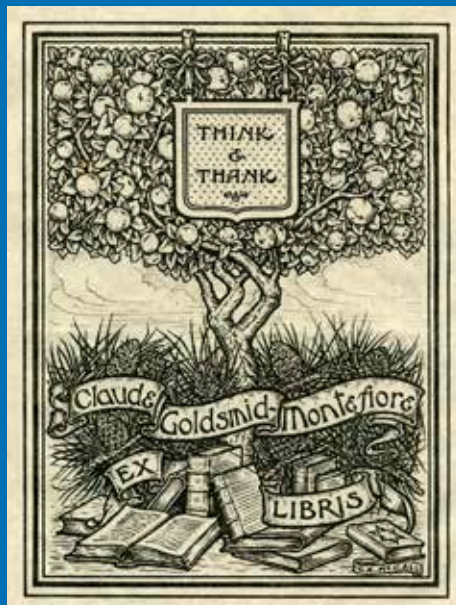
Russian-born Henry Osprovat (fig 11) created bold book-

15



15 Bookplate that Mary Caroline Lawson (1884-1912) designed for herself, dated 1906, but she was not the engraver
16 Bookplate for Benjamin Martin Chandler (d.1948, aged 76) of South Littleton, Gloucestershire, by Frederick Landseer Maur Griggs RA RE (1876-1938), one of the most respected etchers of his time

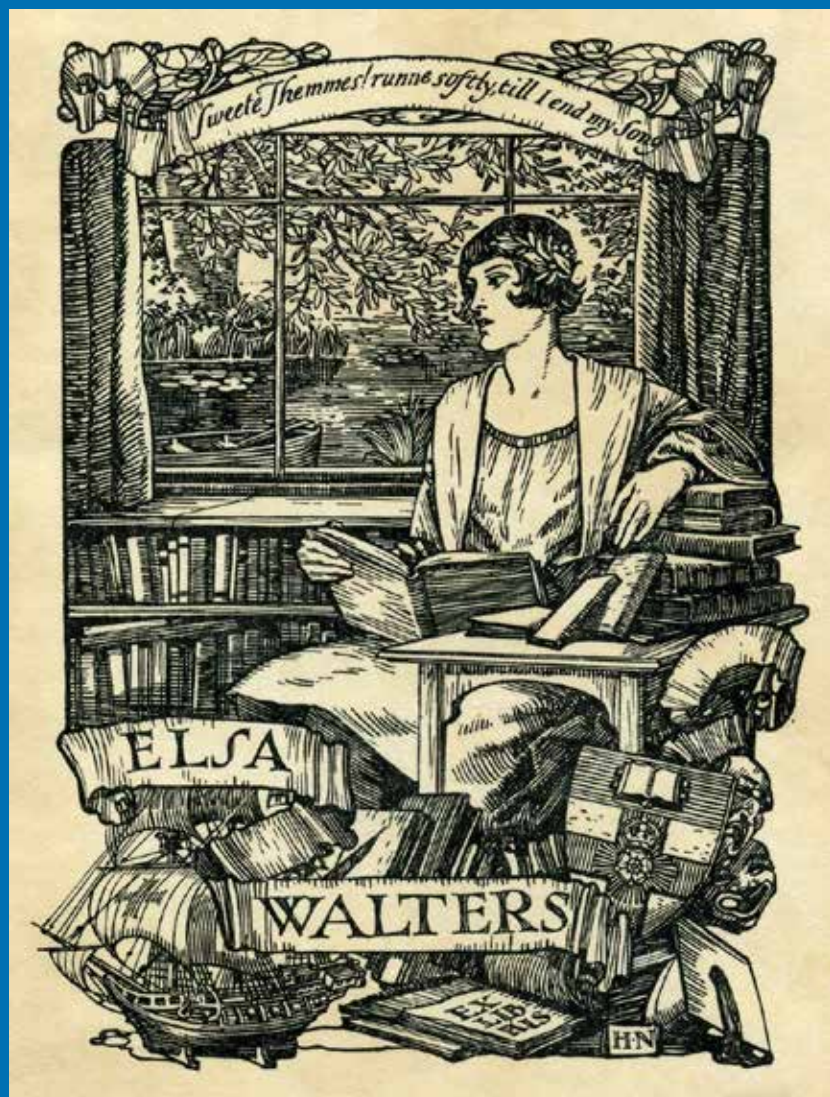
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plates, as did Garth Jones (fig 12), but their work mostly eludes collectors and they created far fewer than Art Nouveau designer Robert Anning Bell, who produced more than 70. He spent five years up to 1899 as an instructor at the Liverpool University school of architecture. His design for Sir John Duncan's bookplate (fig 13) is only a quarter of the size of some of the others he made. The curious paradox is that, whereas the competent bookplate artisans (Sherborn, Eve, Harrison, Osmond, Bell etc) turned out good quality ex-libris in large quantities, we look to the book illustrators, who produced far fewer bookplates, to determine whether such work merits the accolade of "fine art".

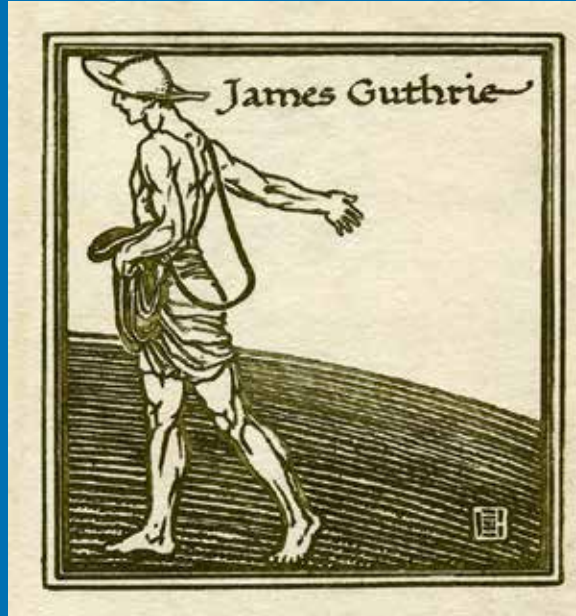
Bookplates are not always large or imposing – Mabella Hoskyns (fig 14) and Mary Lawson (fig 15) had modest examples. Nor need they be pictorial or armorial – Martin Chandler's decorative name label by Griggs (fig 16) serves well enough to proclaim his book ownership.

Some subjects, such as the medieval scholar in his library (fig 17), trees bearing fruit (fig 18), or the sowing of seed (fig 19) are favourite themes well-suited to appear at the front of a book. Four further illustrations (figs 20-23) are the work of Henry Stacy Marks, Thomas Erat Harrison, Harold Nelson, and Henry Justice Ford. There lies behind these, as for so many other bookplates, a personal story for both owner and artist, which keen researchers can unearth.

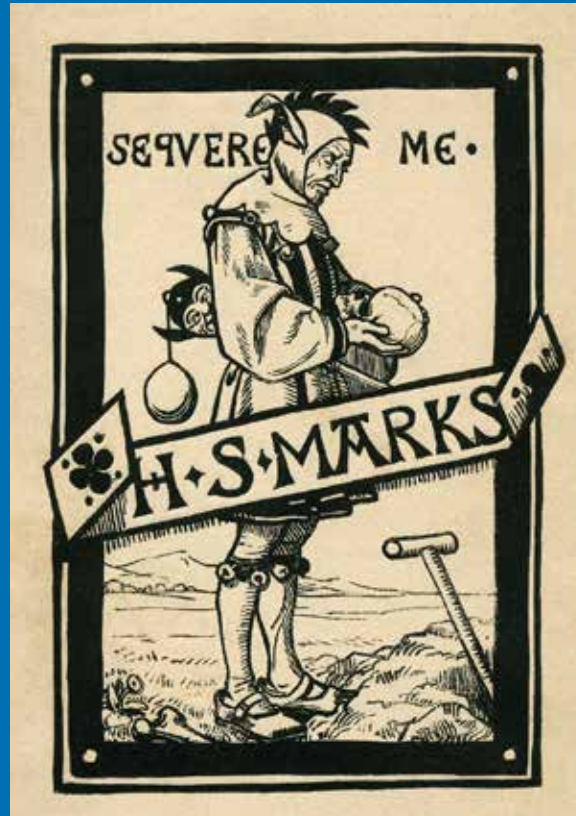


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17 Frederick Augustus Page-Turner (aka Blaydes, 1845-1931) of Ambrosden, Oxon, local historian and twice mayor of Bedford, proudly includes a chart showing his pedigree and the arms of related families in his library, depicted in 1908 by Joseph Blake Hadlow (1860-1932) of Brighton

18 Scholar and founder of Liberal Judaism, Claude Goldsmid Montefiore (1858-1938), used a bookplate by George Henry McCall (1873-1954), librarian of Limehouse Public Library

19 Glasgow-born painter Joshua James Guthrie (1874-1952) became a print-maker in 1899, established his Pear Tree Press and sought to re-establish an English bookplate society in the 1920s

20 Jester pictorial by Henry Stacy Marks RA (1829-98) for himself
21 Thomas Erat Harrison created this bookplate in 1898 for Philip Lyttelton Gell (1852-1926) of Hopton Hall, Derbyshire, who was an editor for OUP, then director of companies with interests in South Africa

16



Cash prizes for newly created bookplates

Bookplates continue to be made today, and competitions for contemporary work are held frequently. Visit www.bookplatesociety.org/2020competitionLondon.htm for details of the competition that is being run by The Bookplate Society as part of its hosting of the 2020 FISAE International Exlibris Congress in Central London on 12-15 August 2020. This is an open competition for artists worldwide, but to encourage young artists one of the prizes is restricted to students in the UK and Republic of Ireland, and another will be awarded to an artist aged under 35 at the deadline entry date of 31 March 2020.

The website also includes entry details for the Australian Bookplate Design Award. The deadline for entries for this is 15 November 2020.

23



It might be imagined that, with more than a century elapsed, little remains to be discovered about bookplate history post-1890, but this is far from the case. Collector and prolific author Brian North Lee FSA (1936-2007) wrote *British Bookplates A Pictorial History*, published by David and Charles in 1979, and this remains readily available secondhand and is the best text for anyone new to the subject. Yet for Laurence Housman, younger brother and literary executor of the poet A E Housman, Lee records only three bookplates. One of these was for journalist Hubert Bland (fig 24), illustrated in *The Studio Winter Number 1898/99*, but recently two more have come to the knowledge of bookplate collectors – a sprig of rosemary, appropriate to the name of its owner Rose Mary Paul, and one for author Edith Nesbit (fig 25) who remained Bland's wife until his death in 1914, notwithstanding his offspring by other women. Lee's checklists were often made possible by reference to family-held archives of work by particular artists, but myriad designers remain to have their work recorded in comprehensive manner.

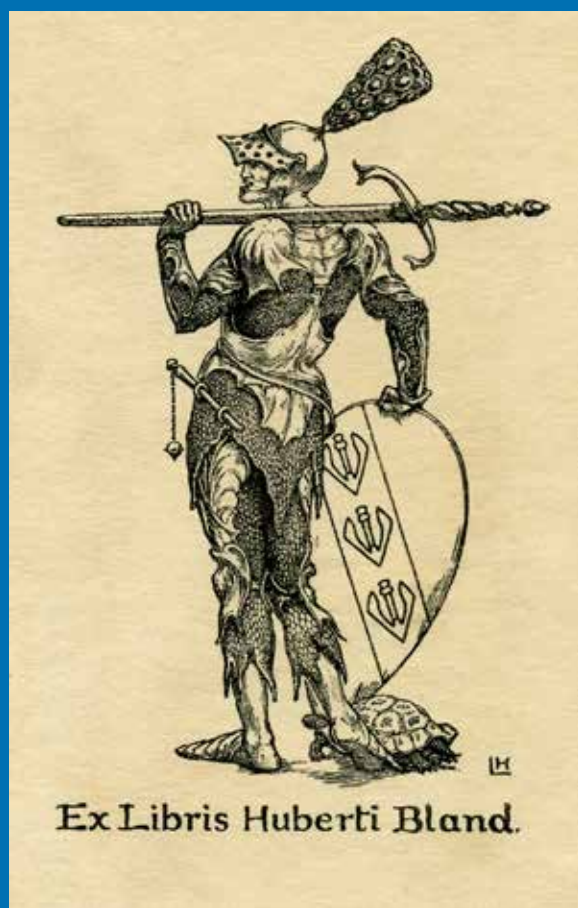
There may exist up to about 100,000 British bookplates created before 1900, and many more were produced during the following century, so the images presented here, mostly from a couple of decades, are an arbitrary selection, giving only a brief taste of this huge field of graphic art. Yale University claims to hold more than a million bookplates. It used to be said that the best days for collecting bookplates were long over, but there remain enough in circulation for this still to be a most rewarding hobby. The study of bookplates draws in those with adjacent interests in heraldry, graphic art, biography and family history. After all, a personal bookplate may be one of the few pieces of property tangibly remaining of one of your ancestors.

Anthony Pincott is president of FISAE and Hon treasurer and membership secretary of The Bookplate Society (www.bookplatesociety.org)

25



24



22 (previous page) Elsa Walters (born c1895) of Teddington, by Harold Nelson (1871-1948)

23 Bookplate for Lionel George Bridges Justice Ford (1865-1932) by his brother Henry Justice Ford (1860-1941)

24 Playwright, writer and illustrator Laurence Housman (1865-1959) designed this for journalist Hubert Bland (1855-1914) in the 1890s

25 Bland's wife was the writer Edith Nesbit (1858-1924). The initials LH are again for Laurence Housman

The Bookplate Society publishes a journal twice a year. The Autumn 2017 issue included an article on identifying English bookplates. Visit the society's website for more details.



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