

Alice Mabel Holdsworth (1878–1963)

MOIRA LONG

In 1958 the Library received a donation of four sketchbooks via the New Zealand High Commission in London. Our records indicated that the donor was a Mrs S. M. Holdsworth and, as the sketches were unsigned, she was presumed to be the artist. The books were the record of a trip to New Zealand, 1937–1938, and chiefly comprised delicate and accurate watercolours of plants and flowers with pencilled notes identifying and describing them. There are also scenes of the areas visited by the artist, in particular Havelock North and Wanganui. A number of the sketches are unfinished.

In 1980 it was decided to reproduce one of these watercolours, showing the New Zealand hibiscus, as a greetings card published



Friends' School, Wanganui, N.Z. Boys & Girls & Mr Monkhouse doing 'Public Service'. Clearing flax clumps near swimming bath. *watercolour 23 × 31 cm. Art Coll. E252*

by the Friends of the Turnbull Library, though nothing was known of the artist, who had been, we presumed, a visitor to New Zealand and had later decided to send the sketches back to the country where they had been drawn. One sketch, showing the Friends' School at Wanganui, proved to be the key to the identity of the actual artist.