

a background of yachts, reflecting one form of Turnbull's relaxations. Unique among his bookplates is one designed by the pseudonymous C. Praetorius. Its central motif is an elaborate Maori whare, complete with maihi, amo and whanau. Turnbull thus documented his own interest in Polynesian history, and reflected the increasing worldwide attraction towards aboriginal motifs. A full account of Turnbull's bookplates is given in Penelope Griffith's article 'Alexander Turnbull's Bookplates'.⁴

By the very nature of his bibliophile ambitions, Turnbull would have been in continuous contact with books which bore the insignia of famous former owners. In 1930, Johannes Carl Andersen, the first Librarian of the Library, revealed that 'the late Mr Turnbull took to noting the plates in his various volumes fifteen to twenty years ago. I came on so many loose plates that I made a collection of plates in old to-be-discarded volumes, apart from those in volumes on the shelves'.⁵ Indeed, Turnbull's collector's instinct may well have led to the purchase of books which had belonged to celebrities such as Alfred Austin (Tennyson's successor as Poet Laureate), Sir Robert Peel (politician and founder of the Metropolitan Police) and Arthur Wellesley, first Duke of Wellington, each bearing its owner's bookplate.

It is not surprising that the founding of a group collecting bookplates centred on the Turnbull Library. The New Zealand Ex Libris Society was founded in 1930, and owed a great deal to Pat Lawlor, an irrepressible bookman. By his own account, Lawlor had encountered P. Neville Barnett in Sydney. New Zealand born, Barnett was actively engaged in the study and design of bookplates, as a diversion from his employment as librarian of the Bank of New South Wales. Lawlor found his enthusiasm contagious, and welcomed the suggestion that a New Zealand society should be formed in association with the Australian Ex Libris Society, founded seven years before. Lawlor acknowledged later that 'his practical mind and generosity moved him to give us a fine collection of plates and a complete collection of brochures for the founding of such a society'. The warm connection with Barnett was to be maintained over many years, during which Barnett built up an international reputation as collector, writer and publisher of many books on bookplates, and as a patron of fine printing.

After one false start, the New Zealand Ex Libris Society was founded, and produced its first brochure in 1930. The names of its members are familiar as benefactors of the Library, among them Dr Scholefield, Johannes Andersen, Sir Joseph Kinsey, Sir Robert Anderson, Sir James Iloit, Elsdon Best and P. Watts Rule. It is noteworthy for the future of the Society that its constitution and rules were exclusively concerned with the promotion of bookplate use, design, collection and evaluation; in practice, this was to limit its life. Nevertheless, the foundation of the Society had an immediate impact in the substantial interchange