Judging a book by its cover

Dust jackets in the Monash University Library Rare Books Collection
Introduction
The most immediately striking feature of a modern book is the dust jacket, or dust wrapper as it is also known. This is essentially an advertisement, meant to catch the eye at point of sale. When such features were first introduced in the mid-19th century they were meant primarily as protection for the often gorgeously decorated cloth covers underneath.

The earliest example in our collection is from 1860, a survival from the period when the dust wrapper itself, in black and white. Many early jackets are typographical, simply stating the title, the author and the publisher, but increasingly, from the Edwardian period on, we see jacket design reflecting current trends in commercial art. Many serious artists worked in the field. Included in this display are examples by Salvador Dalí, Wyndham Lewis, Vanessa Bell, Graham Sutherland, Edward Bawden, and Sidney Nolan, as well as accomplished and characteristic work by professional engravers and designers such as John Farleigh, E. McKnight Kauffer, Eric Gill, Robert Gibbings, Richard Chopping, Lynton Nolan, and English book designers. This is the dust wrapper image on the back of the book and is dated Sept 1, 1939, immediately before the outbreak of World War II. The pink tinge is from the colour of the paper. The image is also on the book itself, in black and white.

The earliest known example of a dust wrapper is on a copy of Friendship’s Offering 1830 (1829). The earliest in our collection is from 1860, a survival from the period when the wrapper extended around the text block to keep the dust from the gilt edges. It has a simple design, based on that used on the cloth cover. Such wrappers were not meant to be retained once the book was bought. The paper is very thin and easily damaged.

Many collectors are on record as rather perversely retaining such ephemera as not integral to the book. Most early jackets are typographical, simply stating the title, the author and the publisher, but increasingly, from the Edwardian period on, we see jacket design reflecting current trends in commercial art. Many serious artists worked in the field. Included in this display are examples by Salvador Dalí, Wyndham Lewis, Vanessa Bell, Graham Sutherland, Edward Bawden, and Sidney Nolan, as well as accomplished and characteristic work by professional engravers and designers such as John Farleigh, E. McKnight Kauffer, Eric Gill, Robert Gibbings, Richard Chopping, Lynton Nolan, and English book designers.

The most recent books on display are from 2006, the Penguin Designer Classics. These are limited edition artists books by such celebrities as Monolo Blahnik, and couturier Paul Smith whose book jacket for Lady Chatterley’s Lover in embroidered silk. Although built initially around a base of 17th and 18th-century books, the Monash University Library Rare Books Collection is also strong in 19th and 20th-century material, and can offer a wide range of examples to those interested in the history of the book a broad range of examples. In 2004 we mounted an exhibition of 19th-century cloth bindings; we now present a display of book jackets showing a rich cross-section of our holdings in this attractive field.

Richard Overell
Rare Books Librarian

Collecting Dust Jackets
Buying a book because you like its cover is a natural response and building your library based on attractive dust jackets is one of the most enjoyable ways of collecting books. All collectors need a holy grail, a goal to aspire to. In this field of collecting two jackets stand out. They are reproduced on the screens accompanying this exhibition. The Chatto & Windus first edition of Aldous Huxley’s Brave New World (1932), is a classic art deco period piece designed by Leslie Holland. The other iconic early jacket is the 1935 Scobie’s edition of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Great Gatsby, with the jacket in the surreal style by Francis Cugat (the band-leader Xavier Cugat’s brother). Although the images of these high-spot jackets are reproduced on the screens, we do not hold copies of them. The books in the display cases, however, are all from our Rare Books collection.

26 June – 30 September 2014
Level 1, ISB Wing, Sir Louis Matheson Library, Clayton campus, Monash University, Clayton, Victoria, for opening the exhibition.

Assistant Curator: Stephen Herrin

Curator: Richard Overell

LARGE UPRIGHT CASE

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As they were not meant to survive, 19th-century jackets usually only had typographical details of the author and title; if there was attractive art-work and design, it was on the cloth cover of the book itself.

The habit of throwing away jackets survived into the 20th century, well into the period when the jackets were quite attractive. Many collectors are on record as rather perversely advising anyone with taste to discard such ephemera as not integral to the book.

2. Farleigh, John, 1900-1965.
Graven image / John Farleigh (London : Macmillan, 1940)
John Farleigh was one of the best jacket designers. This is the dust wrapper image around the back of the book and is dated Sept 1, 1939, immediately before the outbreak of World War II. The pink tinge is from the colour of the paper. The image is also on the book itself, in black and white.

3. Poe, Edgar Allan.
The poetical works of Edgar Allan Poe / edited by James Hannay, (London : Charles Griffin & Company. [1874])
An early example of a printed jacket over a pictorial cover. The cover is very thin as it has always been protected, the gift is still bright.

4. Views of English society / by Mabel, a little girl of eleven. (London : Field & Tuer, the Leadenhall Press, 1886)
This example shows a patterned cloth dust jacket, which, we are told, the author, “Mabel” particularly requested in the Addendum, she describes the “home-made” cloth cover which she took to her publisher, so it could be duplicated two or three thousand times. “I feared I should have to put up with those uninteresting cloth things with gift letters, just like other people’s books, but the dark-eyed young man helped me out of my difficulty by saying that there were lots of girls in his factory who had to earn their bread-and-butter, and that they could make the covers quite as well as I could if I would leave the one I had made as a pattern for them to copy.” It has the books details on the label pasted on the front, and the cover is stitched on. The spine of the book has the same patterned cloth with a plain cardboard cover.

Japan and her people / by Anna C. Harthorne. (Philadelphia : John C. Winston, 1902)
Here is a cloth dust wrapper, plain except for the titles on the spine. It covers pictorial boards, with an elaborate gift design.

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Japan and her people / by Anna C. Harthorne. (Philadelphia : John C. Winston, 1902)
Here is a cloth dust wrapper, plain except for the titles on the spine. It covers pictorial boards, with an elaborate gift design.

References
6. Lawson, Henry, 1867-1922
   Selected poems of Henry Lawson / illustrated by Percy Leason. (Sydney : Angus and Robertson, 1918)
   This book was sold in a gift box and had a double dust wrapper. One consists solely of "fluff," extensive extracts from favourable reviews, the other was a colour pictorial design by Leason.

   The practice of printing a "Blurb" on the jacket began in the late 1890s but the term itself was invented in America in 1907 as part of the promotion of Are You a Bromide? by Galat Chargus.

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1920's

In general terms, by the 1920s the use of coloured cloth designs on the covers of books declined and the design efforts were put into producing attractive dust jackets wrapped around quite plain cloth covers. The jacket had to catch the attention, show a character or a scene from the novel and convey some flavour of the book's atmosphere and the author's style.

   The Kayles of Bushy Lodge; an Australian story / by Vera G. Dyer. (London : Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1922)
   This jacket design tells us immediately that the plot involves a young woman who has to decide between the life of a housewife and a career as a concert violinist.

   8. Bevan, Marjorie
   Five of the fourth / by Marjorie Bevan. (London : Sampson Low, Marston, 1926)
   Here is a good example of school fiction, another rich source of collectible jackets. This is also an example of sport fiction. Some people choose to collect jackets with golf or tennis scenes on them. The cover of this book shows the girl about to play lacrosse.

   This jacket on a novel about the art world is by Aubrey Hammond. We see the artist of the story, flambantly dressed, showing his latest work in the style of Picasso to a group of recognisably bohemian types.

   10. Fairchild, D. S. (Donald Stites), 1904-
   This jacket is by Jerome H. Jung. The artwork is in the style of Jean Cocteau and is repeated on a group of recognisably bohemian types.

   11. Adair, A. H.
       Dinners long and short / by A. H. Adair. (London : Victor Gollancz, 1928)
   This coloured dust jacket features a Wild West scene of a stagecoach on the front panel with Red Indians firing arrows at them on the spine.

Children's Annuals

   Children's annuals usually appeared with dust jackets but those have seldom survived. This copy features a design showing girls with bicycles, tennis racquets, and other sports equipment, taking among themselves and reading. Also on display is an Australian Girls Annual from the 1920s showing a girl with a hockey stick.

   The equivalent boy's annual has a similar sporting motif on its jacket, a scene of boys playing rugby.

   14. The Australian boy's annual (1925) (London: Cassell, [1925])
   This coloured dust jacket features a Wild West scene of a stagecoach on the front panel with Red Indians firing arrows at them on the spine.

       The flirt and the flapper: dialogues / by Elinor Glyn. (London : Duckworth 1930)
   This quintessentially post-war jacket design is by Barbara Ken-Smyer and features the "modern girl," feigning her own cocktails and smoking.

       One way song / by Wyndham Lewis. (London : Faber, 1933)
   Wyndham Lewis was an artist as well as a writer. This jacket is in his characteristic "vorticist" style.

       Sweeney Agonistes / by T. S. Elliot. (London : Faber, 1932)
   Faber jackets provide a good case study in changing design elements. They are best known for their poetry books with typographical covers. Here is an example on a T. S. Eliot work from 1932.

       Good potato dishes / by Ambrose Heath. (London : Faber, 1935)
   The brown and drab colours of this jacket, with the shadows and lamp-light, give the feeling of a still from one of the "non" thrillers so popular in the cinema of the period. This is by Cecil Bacon.

       The One-minute murder / by John G. Brandon. (London : Methuen, 1935)
   The brown and drab colours of this jacket, with the shadows and lamp-light, give the feeling of a still from one of the "non" thrillers so popular in the cinema of the period. This is by Cecil Bacon.

       A True tale of love in Tonga / told in 23 engravings and 333 words / by Robert Gibbings. (London : Faber, 1935)
   Robert Gibbings, an important wood-cut artist from the 30s, did most of his book illustrations for the Golden Cockerel Press, but he was also used by Faber. He produced a series of travel books; each was a tale told in engravings. This one from 1935, reproduces on the jacket the most striking illustration from the book. The design on the cover also has a South Seas flavour, a black palm tree set on a yellow background.

   The future was much in people's minds in this period, and the jacket for this work of Utopian fiction, shows an aerial view of "Dawn City," looking much like the art deco garden city designs favoured by town planners from the 1930s to the present. The illustration goes from the front to back of the wrapper.

   H. G. Wells was one of the established authors of speculative fiction and Harold Jones created this striking jacket image for his 1937 novel.

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23. De La Mare, Walter, 1873-1956.
   Behind this dreamer: of reverie, night, sleep, dream, love-dreams, nightmare, death, the unconscious, the imagination, the artist, and kindred subjects / Walter De La Mare. (London : Faber, 1939)
   This image by Barnett Freedman for Walter de La Mare's 1939 book about dreams, another Faber publication, combines psycho-analysis with futurism and surrealism. This image is repeated on the back panel.


33. Lindsay, R. Howard. 1910-1970. Foe! murder / by R. Howard Lindsay. (Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1941)"

34. Fontaine, Peter. 1893-1983. The last to leave Paris / by Peter Fontaine. (London: Chaterson, 1941)"


36. New writing and daylight, Winter 1943-44. (London: Hogarth Press, 1944). By 1944 the mood was more optimistic as we could see from Keith Vaughan’s design for this Hogarth Press anthology.

37. Malet, Oriel. 1923-1983. Great Gatsby / by Oriel Malet. (London: Faber, 1948) Barnett Freedman was still producing covers in the 1940s and 1950s. Here is a beautiful illustration he designed for another Faber title.

38. Bergstrom, Evangelina H. Oid glass paperweights / by Evangelina H. Bergstrom. (London: Faber, 1948) This is an unusual Faber jacket from the late 40s. The fine colour illustration does justice to its subject, but is far from typical of the Faber house style. In fact this is an American book, the details of the New York publisher, Crown Publications, have been over-printed with the Faber details on the wrapper.


Sandoz was by now part of the artistic zeitgeist. ‘This is a jacket designed by the master of Surrealism himself, Salvador Dalí, for Maurice Sandoz’ book of short pieces. One of the stories features a shrunken head, so the image used is not merely a gratuitous visual cliché.


Children’s books are an important field for jacket design – one of the legendary rarities is the dust wrappered volume. This copy came with a promotional touch. The design is on the front and the back of the jacket and has a more realistic touch. The dust wrapped volumes came in boxes, a concept incorporated here in the design.

42. Lancaster, Osbert. Façades and faces / Osbert Lancaster. (London: John Murray, 1952)

This is a very characteristic Osbert Lancaster design. The image refers to the sequence in the book. “Afternoons with Baedeker.” The woman reading the red volume open on the ground in front of her is a jacket designed by the master of Surrealism himself, Salvador Dalí, for Maurice Sandoz’ book of short pieces. One of the stories features a shrunken head, so the image used is not merely a gratuitous visual cliché.

43. Button, Billy. I married an artist / by Billy Button. (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1951)

The image refers to the sequence in the book. “Afternoons with Baedeker.” The woman reading the red volume open on the ground in front of her is a jacket designed by the master of Surrealism himself, Salvador Dalí, for Maurice Sandoz’ book of short pieces. One of the stories features a shrunken head, so the image used is not merely a gratuitous visual cliché.


The Hogarth Press is forever associated with Leonard and Virginia Woolf and we think of all their dust jacket art as being by Virginia’s sister, Vanessa Bell. But the cover for this Henry Green novel by Lorrie Lambs and has a more realistic touch. The design is on the front and the back covers. This copy came with a promotional wraparound band, which makes it more collectible.


This is one of Edward Bawden’s most intriguing covers.


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Richard Chopping is an artist famous for Ian Fleming covers. Here is one of his earlier works, the Saturday Book for 1956. The Saturday Books have always been very collectible, partly for their art-work. The dust wrapped volumes came in boxes, a concept incorporated here in the design.

48. Murdoch, Iris, 1919-. The flight from the enchanter / by Iris Murdoch. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1956)

Another posthumous Bond publication. Jan Fleming’s cover on Diamonds are forever from 1956. Richard Chopping’s James Bond covers are the best examples of this super-realist style, but before his designs there was this restrained but effective Pat Marriott cover on Diamonds are forever from 1956.


This is a Charles Jack jacket, on a novel set in Iceland, shows a contemporary interior with modern art on the wall.


Jack Kerouac’s On the Road is another cult book. The first English edition, by Andre Deutsch (1958) has a jacket design by Len Deighton, who later became famous as an author of spy novels. The blurb on the front flap reads, “This unusual novel introduces us to the ‘Beat generation’... Sometimes they buy cars and wreck them, sometimes they steal cars and abandon them.” It is not “price-clipped,” so it still has the price, “15s net”. Books coming into the Australian market regularly had the English price clipped from the bottom corner of the inside front flap. The back panel has a photo and bio of the author.


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The Muses are heard : an account of the Pongy and Bess visit to Leningrad / by Truman Capote. (London: Heinemann, 1957).

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In 1956 Ian Fleming commissioned Richard Chopping to do the iconic series of Bond jackets. As we saw from his 1955 Saturday book cover, Chopping was a natural history illustrator and these elements generally feature in his composition and execution.


The two short stories in this collection, published after Fleming’s death, had appeared previously in the Daily Express and the Sunday Times. The cover is an example of Chopping’s use of the fly motif, a legacy of his zoological background.


Another posthumous Bond publication. Jan Fleming has incorporated elements of Chopping’s cover art in his jacket design.
FLAT CASE 6

1970s

57. Neville, Richard, 1941- 
Play power / by Richard Neville. 
(New York : Random House, 1970)

This jacket for Play Power is possibly the best example of psychedelic cover design, typical of the late-60s/early-70s. The jacket for the Macmillan first edition is by Martin Sharp, and wraps around the front and the back of the book. The English edition has a board game, “Headopoly,” in a pocket in the back. In 1970 the game was banned in Australia for promoting drug use and was removed from all copies imported here, though it is present in this copy.

58. Neville, Richard, 1941- 
Play power / by Richard Neville. 
(New York : Random House, 1970)

The Americans felt the Martin Sharp cover was too busy and Random House used their own design by Wandell Minor for their 1970 edition. The jacket begins, “Youth, group grope, pop and pot…”

59. Greer, Germaine, 1939- 
Female eunuch / by Germaine Greer. 
(London : Paladin, 1971)

Another iconic book from 1970 was Germaine Greer’s Female Eunuch. It is best known in the 1971 Paladin paperback edition with the famous cover design by John Holmes.

60. Greer, Germaine, 1939- 
Female eunuch / by Germaine Greer. 
(London : Macgibbon & Kee, 1970)

The original edition however has a very plain design by Michael Head. This was Germaine Greer’s first book and, with all its polemics, it is very much an academic work, including sections on D. H. Lawrence, Simone de Beauvoir, Norman Mailer and Sylvia Plath, among many others, all footnoted. Macgibbon & Kee marketed it to a scholarly audience as part sociology, part literary criticism. Only later did it become a super-cult book, when published as a Paladin paperback, with the iconic cover.

The Wooden shepherdess / Richard Hughes. 
(London : Chatto & Windus, 1973)

The English tradition of fine cover-art continued into the 70s. This design is by John Ward, R.A.

62. The Brand new Monty Python book [sic]. 
(London : Eyre Methuen, 1973)

One of the functions of a dust jacket is to keep the book clean. The Monty Python crew played with that concept when publishing this book from their comedy series, printing smears of dirt on the dust wrapper. The typo is a bonus.

63. White, Patrick, 1912-1990. 
The living and the dead / by Patrick White. 

This design is by Edward McKnight Kauffer, one of the best commercial artists and book illustrators of the 1930s and 1940s.

64. White, Patrick, 1912-1990. 
The Tree of Man / by Patrick White. 
(London : Eyre & Spottiswoodes, 1973)

Not all of the White jacket designs are great artistic achievements and this one by Don Finley, used on the 1964 first English edition of The Tree of Man, was a cover White particularly hated.

The Tree of Man / by Patrick White. 
(New York : Viking Press, 1956)

The George Salter design on the US edition was much more professional.

Voss / by Patrick White. 
(London : Eyre & Spottiswoodes, 1957)

After The Tree of Man, Patrick White began to use Sidney Nolan to design his jackets. Voss is White’s first novel with a Nolan image. It occupies the front and back of the cover and shows the protagonist against a stark Australian landscape.

FLAT CASE 7

Australian Patrick White

Monkey grip / by Helen Garner. 
(Melbourne : MacPhee, Grébille, 1984)

The illustration on the cover is by Barry Dickins.

FLAT CASE 8

Helen Garner

68. Garner, Helen, 1942- 
Monkey grip / by Helen Garner. 
(Melbourne : MacPhee, Grébille, 1977)

Helen Garner’s Money Grip is an example of a jacket produced locally. The jacket was designed by Keith Robertson using a photograph by Porch Hawkins. It’s a largely autobiographical novel and we see the author riding a bike, as her character Nola does in the novel.

69. Garner, Helen, 1942- 
Honour & other people’s children : two stories / by Helen Garner. 

The jacket design is by Keith Robertson, with an illustration by Robert Isaac. Although they chose not to use the Robertson Monkey Grip design for their American edition of that book, Seaview Books did use the same jacket design for Honour & Other People’s Children as MacPhee, Grébille had commissioned for the Melbourne first edition.

70. Garner, Helen, 1942- 
The children’s Bach / by Helen Garner. 
(Melbourne : MacPhee, Grébille, 1984)

The illustration on the cover is by Barry Dickins.

71. Garner, Helen, 1942- 
Monkey grip / by Helen Garner. 
(Melbourne : MacPhee, Grébille, 1977)

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FLAT CASES 10 AND 11

Penguins


Penguins were renowned as paperbacks, but from their beginning in 1935, they had dust wrappers on their books. These were identical in design to the covers but had additional information about the book and the author on the flaps. Here is one from a series collectible in its own right, the Penguin Illustrated Classics.


Penguins thrived during the war but were not issued with jackets. The practice was taken up again in 1948, but by the 1950s jackets were only issued for special series. The King Penguins were the firm's most special series, attractive little books which were published from 1939 to 1959. The post-war titles all had jackets. Here is one from 1950. The Isle of Wight, illustrated by Barbara Jones. Other King Penguins are also on display.


The Penguin "Things we see" series ran for seven titles from 1947 to 1951. They all had dust jackets. Initially these were of a uniform design featuring an eye with a vignette of an object relevant to the topic, but the final one had a full pictorial design showing a garden. Some of the earlier titles are also on display.


We also have some 1940s Penguins for which the owner has made unique jackets, creating original cover-art in colour. It is possible that these are by the Melbourne journalist Pamela Ruskin, whose book-label appears in some of them. Here is a copy of Graham Greene's Brighton Rock, a 1948 Penguin with back and front cover art on the home-made dust wrapper. Other examples are also shown. At various times, Penguin has issued cloth and vinyl covers for readers to put around their books to protect them. We have some examples of these in the collection.
As we have seen, Penguins can be collected for their dust jackets. In 2006 they published a series of literary works, the Penguin Designer Classics, in limited editions of 1000 at £100 each. These came in perspex slip cases and three of them have jackets. On display is D. H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, an important title in the history of Penguin as they were taken to court over it in 1960 and charged with “publishing an obscene article.” Penguin won the case and quickly sold 300,000 copies. This edition has a cloth jacket with an embroidered design by Paul Smith. The Guardian published a piece on the series on 28 October 2006 when these books were released. This featured statements from the designers. Paul Smith commented, “As a designer of clothes, I work with fabric, so I had the idea of creating a silk cover. Every part of it is associated with my trade: the title, Lawrence’s name and the Penguin symbol are all embroidered. The pubic hair is made up of little silk-embroidered lilac and purple forget-me-nots.”

**84. Fitzgerald, F. Scott (Francis Scott), 1896-1940.**
*Tender is the night* / by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

The design is by Sam Taylor-Wood, using one of her photographs. In The Guardian article, she says, “My cover is a photograph I took of the writer Harland Miller, who features in quite a lot of my work. I know the photographs I could take of him would be very Dick Diverish. It is a simple black and white photograph of him in a cream Riviera-style suit, with his head hung low.”

**85. Flaubert, Gustave, 1821-1880.**
*Madame Bovary* / by Gustave Flaubert.

This is perhaps the most famous design in the series. Being by Manolo Blahnik, it features shoes. He had this to say, “My design was inspired by the golden era of English drawing typified by Cecil Beaton and Oliver Messel. I tried to remember the kind of illustrations that Beaton did in the 1940s to 1960s, like those for Nancy Mitford’s *Don’t Tell Alfred*, and this is what I tried to re-create.”

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The Rare Books Collection comprises material considered rare because of age, uniqueness or physical beauty. Housed in the Sir Louis Matheson Library on the Clayton campus, the collection provides a reading room for researchers and is supported by a team of rare books librarians. For more information visit monash.edu/library/collections/special/rare.

Cover: A dramatic dust wrapper designed by John Fairleigh in 1939 - see item 2.