Coloured Cloth Bindings

Highlights from the Monash University Rare Books Collection.
14 October 2004 - 28 February 2005
Exhibition room, level 1,
Sir Louis Matheson Library
Clayton campus

Image: taken from the cover of "Observations on the transit of Venus, 9 December 1874" by Henry Chamberlain Russell, published in 1892.

Exhibition and catalogue by Richard Overell, Rare Books Librarian, Monash University Library, Box 4, Monash University, Victoria, 3800 Australia. An electronic version of this catalogue, with additional illustrations, is available at the Monash University Library website. Electronic catalogue prepared by Iris Carydias.

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www.lib.monash.edu.au/exhibitions/
Coloured Cloth Bindings

Introduction

The display of Coloured Cloth Bindings from the Monash University Rare Books Collection draws our attention to a feature of books which we commonly take for granted. Unless the cover of a book is outrageously inappropriate to the volume’s contents, we do not usually bother to make special mention of it. Yet if we enter a bookshop just to browse, it may well be that the book we find ourselves purchasing is one to which we were drawn mainly by its cover.

The word “book” is derived from the same root as “beech”, and reminds us that there was a time, some fifteen hundred years ago, when the contents of a book and its cover could be one and the same: beechen boards which had been inscribed with runes. Wooden boards continued in use as covers long after the written part of the book was inscribed on parchment. In some distinguished but comparatively rare instances the boards were covered in vellum and inlaid with jewels. Much more commonly the boards were unadorned.

With the coming of printing and the consequent increased production of books more informative and distinctive covers were needed, but even so it was only infrequently that covers drew attention to themselves as items of interest in their own right.

During the nineteenth century, however, it gradually became customary for covers to do more than merely protect the contents of the book. In a competitive market, they advertised the contents and were in a sense an important sample of them.

This Exhibition, with its one hundred and fifty one items, furnishes a very detailed account of the growth and development of book covers from about 1780 to about 1920. Item 18, where the cover is a plain cloth-covered board with a simple label attached, is typical of publishing style in the early part of the period.

But from the 1830s there are many covers, such as Items 83 and 89, which give delight as works of art in themselves.

It is notable that the last third of the nineteenth century is the part of the period most strongly represented in the exhibition. Also notable is the extent to which the more ambitious designs are for later editions rather than firsts, indicating that publishers were more willing to spend lavishly on marketing established classics than on newcomers. Outstanding covers for works which were already well-known can be seen in Item 13, the set of novels by Thomas Love Peacock, whose surname inspires their spectacular gilt design. The novels were first published in the early nineteenth century; this edition is from the 1890s.

Of special interest in this Exhibition are the covers for scientific books. One of these, item no. 1, *The Transit of Venus*, has been reproduced on the Exhibition poster. Entitled “Observations on the Transit of Venus, 1874” and published in 1892 by the Government Printer in Sydney, its cover is in exquisite colour.
Towards the end of the period books produced for the Christmas trade and appealing to the tastes of boys and girls are numerous. The Annuals shown here form a small part of the many such items held in the Rare Books Room.

The books in the Exhibition offer a wide range of topics – cookery, sport, gardening, topography, housekeeping, anthropology, science, engineering – as well as poetry and fiction. Correspondingly, the range of styles in covering is broad.

It should be noted that in support of this exhibition, an earlier presentation, the Yellowbacks Exhibition of 1991, is now available on-line. The Yellowbacks were aimed at a particular niche of the market, and imposed a uniform tone on books of very different tendencies. The books in the present exhibition were aimed at a broader range of readers, and a much longer period of production is encompassed. While the books are mainly from Britain, there are some important items from Australia, America and Continental Europe.

Considering the two exhibitions together, it is manifest yet again that the resources of the Rare Books Room will support valuable in-depth research into nineteenth-century culture. The History of the Book, Book Illustration, Popular Taste, the History of Science, Children's Literature, the Literature of the Imperial Moment, are some of many topics illuminated by this Exhibition.

It should be noted too that just as the Yellowback collection has been supplemented since 1991, so too will the collection of books with interesting covers.

As a member of the English Section of the School of Literary, Visual and Performance Studies, a section which continually benefits from the acquisitions policy of the Rare Books Room, I thank Richard Overell for mounting this delightful and informative exhibition, which is sure to enhance the scholarly reputation of Monash University.

Alan Dilnot,
School of Literary, Visual and Performance Studies,
Faculty of Arts,
Monash University

The
NEW TAY BRIDGE
by
Crawford Barlow

Item 31
(reduced)
Preface

The publishers of the nineteenth century produced some very beautiful books. At the beginning of the century books were still being produced in much the same way as they had been since Caxton’s time. A bookseller would purchase the copy for a book and arrange for it to be printed. He would sell it through his shop either in sheets or bound in paper boards or in a simple leather binding. The purchaser would then have the sheets or the book bound in leather in a style to match the other books in his library.

The early decades of the century saw great changes in the printing and book trades. Iron presses replaced wooden and the role of the publisher came to the fore. With the rise in literacy there was a greater demand for reading matter. Books could be produced more quickly with the new presses but there was a bottle-neck at the bindery. By the 1820s books were being cased in cloth rather than fully bound in leather.

At first cloth bindings presented problems. It was difficult to obtain a cloth which would be durable and would take the glues necessary to fix it to the boards without becoming marked and discoloured. There was also a problem in choosing a suitable cloth to take the inks.

Books in the 1820s tended to appear with a paper label pasted onto the spine or front cover, but by the 1830s a suitable variety of cloth was found and the title could be printed on the spine. Metal blocks, formerly used to stamp designs on leather, began to be used on the cloth bindings. We see from the late 1820s books with designs stamped in blind or ink, or more impressively in gilt.

These began as stylistic devices, rules, stock ornaments etc., but the publishers could see the importance of producing books which were attractive to the public, and figurative designs began to appear on the cover, and especially on the spine, as that was the part of the book displayed on the shelf.

Each decade of the century saw the rise of fashion in lettering and design. There were examples of their adaptation of designs already familiar to book buyers from those used on leather bindings; so we see the Grolier strap-work (e.g. Humphries, item 42)

We also see designs derived from Persian models (e.g. item 91), floral designs (e.g. the romance novels, items 107-109) and, by the end of the century, art nouveau was the latest style to be appropriated (e.g. items 13, 104)

Dust-wrappers had made an appearance in the mid-Victorian period (Item 17) and gradually replaced the need for ornaments or illustrations on the cloth. The First World War saw the end of coloured cloth as the general rule in book production, although some books, particularly children’s books, continued to be produced in the style into the 1930s, surviving longer in the US than in England.

There is a strong interest in the “history of the book” at Monash University. We have a Centre for the Book attached to the English Department. The Rare Book Collection has ample resources for tracing the development of nineteenth-century cloth bindings
decade by decade. However, I have chosen to arrange the material on display partly by the designs themselves and partly by the type of book. So we have in the main case striking examples of the nineteenth century book-designer’s art. These are mostly English but there is some Continental material and some nineteenth-century Australian productions (e.g. items 1 and 2)

The other cases contain books grouped by subject: scientific, domestic, literature, travel etc. There is also a grouping of nineteenth-century bound volumes of magazines, and, in the corridor cases, examples of children’s books from the period.

The idea with these exhibitions is to give people the opportunity to see books from the collection. This exhibition presents a slice of our holdings, of books chosen for their covers.

Richard Overell,
Rare Books Librarian.

Large Upright Case

In this case we have placed some of the best examples of coloured cloth bindings in our collection, as well as books significant in the development of this binding style.


Cover printed on red cloth with black and gilt. The design shows moments in the transit of Venus across the face of the Sun.

2. Walch, Garnet, 1843-1913. Victoria in 1880 / by Garnet Walch ; illustrated by Charles Turner. (Melbourne : George Robertson, [1880])

This de-luxe production was published to coincide with the Melbourne International Exhibition held in the new Exhibition Building in 1880. The building is featured in gilt on the cover, seen through foliage printed in black, on a blue cloth background. We see a gilt Southern Cross among the stars in the night sky.

3. La Fontaine, Jean de, 1621-1695. The fables of La Fontaine : translated into English verse by Walter Thornbury ; with illustrations by Gustave Doré. (London : Cassell Petter & Galpin, [1871])

Blue cloth with black and gilt. The design shows a scene from the fable of the hare and the frogs. Gustave Doré was an immensely popular book-illustrator in the second half of the nineteenth-century. He produced illustrations for editions of Dante, Balzac, Milton, Tennyson, the Bible, and Perrault as well as the La Fontaine we see here.

THE MANNERS OF POLITE SOCIETY

COMPLETE ETIQUETTE FOR LADIES, GENTLEMEN, & FAMILIES.

Item 14
Black, green, grey and cream colours on blue cloth, with gilt blocking. This is an example of the design wrapping around both covers and the spine of the book. It shows the stork and the frogs from the fable, “The frogs desiring a king”.

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Punch and Punch-related publications.

The satirical magazine, *Punch*, was the pre-eminent centre for comic writers and cartoonists in the Victorian era.


Vol. 1 (July-December 1841) is on display. It is bound in blue bead-grain cloth with a blind-embossed, patterned border. The gilt vignette shows Mr. Punch kicking aloft a globe labelled “The World.”


Blue cloth with black and gilt. Volume 1 is on display.

The scene blocked in gilt on the cover shows Queen Victoria and her court. We see Prince Alfred to her right, and among the courtiers to her left stands Mr. Punch.


Red cloth with black and gilt. On display is volume 2 of the set. Each volume has a different illustration on the cover.

Volume two has a scene from the sea-side, where wind-swept figures are taking the air. The courting couple in the foreground catch our eye. The original cartoon has two panels. The first shows a couple battling against the wind on a walk towards a lookout, with the caption reading, “Some like one thing, and some another – For example, Jack likes a blow on the north cliff.” The caption to the second panel, the one shown on the cover, reads, “While Charles prefers a quiet corner out of the wind.” (p. 204)


Blue cloth printed in black and gilt.


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Blue cloth printed in green and gilt.


Green cloth printed in black and gilt.

Here we see a set of natural history books and a set of books on applied technology, both published in the early years of the twentieth century by Gresham Publishing Co. Both show stylised art nouveau designs, with an Egyptian flavour.

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Green cloth with gilt blocking showing a design of gum leaves and blossoms with a parrot in the centre; the design repeated on the back cover in blind.


Brown cloth with black and gilt. The design is of Australian flora with gilt rustic lettering.

Mrs. Meredith came to Australia in 1839. She had previously published gift books in England under her maiden name, Louisa Anne Twamley. These typically combined hand-coloured botanical engravings with poetry. After settling originally in Sydney, Mrs. Meredith and her husband Charles moved to Van Diemen's Land in 1840. There she published a variety of works including some large format natural-history books such as *Our Island Home* displayed here.

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Blue cloth with a gilt peacock design.

This is a classic example of gilt cloth book design. It was used on a set of Peacock's works published by Macmillan in the 1890s.

Blue cloth with black and gilt.

This is a beautifully bright example of a gilt cloth cover from the 1880s. The lettering is typical of the period and the vignette in the centre shows a gentleman being introduced to two ladies.


Green cloth with black and gilt.

This is a spectacular example of the use of the simple gilt vignette in the middle of a plain cloth cover. The vignette is of a tumbler, upside-down, half-way through his manoeuvre.


These two books by Falkener are both bound in red cloth with gold blocking. *Daedalus* has a gilt medallion printed in relief in the centre, with white figures, giving the effect of enamel. *The Museum of classical antiquities* comes with its dust-wrapper, one of the earliest known survivals. The dust-wrapper repeats the cover design, but interestingly was attached across the top of the book to keep the dust off the upper edge.

**Early cloth bindings**


19. *The Apocryphal New Testament: being all the Gospels, Epistles, and other pieces now extant, attributed in the first four centuries to Jesus Christ, his apostles, and their companions, and not included in the New Testament by its compilers; translated, from the original tongues and now first collected into one volume.* (London: Printed for William Hone, Ludgate Hill, 1820)

21. Coghlan, Francis. *A guide to Paris : by Dover and Calais, Brighton and Dieppe, Southampton and Havre, Margate and Ostend ...* / by Francis Coghlan ; illustrated with plans of Paris, and routes. (London : Published by H. Hughes, [1834])


The volume of *Ancient mysteries described* is bound in a blue moiré cloth with a paper label on the spine; the *Apocryphal New Testament* is bound in a canvas cloth with the title-page details stamped in black on the cover. Early attempts to bind in cloth were not satisfactory because it was difficult to fine a cloth which could take the wear, not show staining from glues and take the ink for lettering or designs.

In the study of early cloth bindings, the *Apocryphal New Testament* has long been a problematic example. Although it has the date of 1820 stamped on the front cover, and this matches the date on the title-page, there is another title-page stamped on the back, for the *Apocryphal New Testament* dated 1823. This particular issue of the book is probably at least 1830, despite the date on the title-page and the dates on the covers.

The volumes of *The Keepsake* are from the years 1829, 1831 and 1834. This was one of the literary gift annuals and appeared each year in a variety of bindings. The 1831 and 1834 volumes are bound in silk which are showing definite signs of wear especially on the edges and on the spine; the binding on the 1829 volume is still quite sound although it would have been a cheaper option at the time. It is a plum-coloured bead grain with gilt rules on the front and gilt lettering on the spine.

It was not until the late 1820s and 1830s that a suitable cloth was found, and the paper labels were generally replaced by lettering and designs printed directly onto the cloth binding. This is shown by Coghlan’s *Guide to Paris*. It is bound in a brown tendrill-patterned cloth, and has the short title, the date and the price stamped on the front cover in gilt. Both styles continued to be used in the 1830s; Clark’s *John Noakes & Mary Styles* is bound in a blue fine bead-grain cloth with the title details and the price on a paper label pasted to the front board.

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23. Witt, Henriette Elizabeth, 1829-1908. *La petite maison dans la forêt / Mme de Witt (née Guizot); ouvrage illustré de 49 gravures d'après Robaud.* (Paris : Librairie Hachette et Cie., 1890)

Blue cloth with black and gold. The cover shows a gilt cherub blowing a trumpet, sitting between two cornucopias. This is one of the brightest examples of nineteenth-century gilt cloth in the collection. The book has additional significance as it includes a prize inscription to the poet Dorothea Mackellar. It was given to her as the French prize for topping her class in 1894. She was then nine years old. She wrote her famous poem, "My country" ten years later.
NEW TESTAMENT

The Gospels, Epistles,
and
other writings

translated
from the original language

and brought

JESUS CHRIST,
the apostles, and their companions.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

of its original

translated from the original language

and brought

1837

PRINTED IN LONDON.
24. Gibson, G. Herbert, 1846-1921. *Southerly busters / by Ironbark* ; profusely illustrated by Alfred Clint, with additional illustrations by Montagu Scott. (Sydney : John Sands, 1878)

Blue hexagonal-patterned cloth with gilt. This is an early example of an Australian gilt ornamented cloth. The cover design shows the title with seven sets of bellows blowing up a storm. The "southerly buster" is the local name for a sudden squall which hits Sydney from the south during summer.

25. Brassey, Anna Brassey, 1839-1887. *Sunshine and storm in the East, or, Cruises to Cyprus and Constantinople / by Mrs. Brassey.* (London : Longmans, Green, 1880)


27. Radau, Rodolphe, 1835-1911. *Wonders in acoustics, or, The phenomena of sound / from the French of Rodolphe Radau ; the English revised by Robert Ball.* (London ; N.Y. : Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, [1875?])

28. *Which is best : being Stories about the five divisions of the world and Stories of the five senses.* (London : Thomas Dean and Son, Threadneedle-street, [1849])


These are examples of the use of multi-coloured cloth for book designs. Mrs. Brassey's *Sunshine and storm* is bound in brown cloth with black and gilt, but it has an on-lay of red cloth printed in gilt, the whole design running across the front and back boards and the spine.

*The Journal of the Household Brigade* for 1878 is bound in blue cloth with gilt design, and has a red cloth stripe from front to back. The royal coat-of-arms is stamped in gilt on the front while the Prince of Wales insignia of three feathers is printed in gilt on the back cover.

*Wonders in acoustics* has red and green cloth cut diagonally with a design in black and gilt. The floral background design differs from the green to the red sections, and the gilt vignette showing a man preforming an acoustic experiment with scientific equipment. There is overlap in the designs across the different coloured cloths, and the design is carried across the spine onto the back cover.
*Which is best* is bound in blue and pink striped cloth with a gilt design and the title printed in gilt on the front cover. The design is repeated in blind on the back cover with a gilt vignette in the centre.

The set of “Peter Parley” travel volumes is bound uniformly in red cloth with a blind stamped design on the front and back covers, and horizontal black stripes running across the cloth. The title of each volume is printed in gilt on the spine. *Tales about America and Australia* is vol. 5.

Pissar’s *Magic* is bound in calico with multi-coloured diamond checks, with the title printed in a green hexagon in the middle of the cover.


Brown cloth with gilt lettering and vignette of the bridge. This folio volume is notable for the landscape vignette of the bridge itself.


These three volumes are bound in green cloth with gold blocking. The designs on Swinburne’s *Songs before sunrise* and Christina Rossetti’s *New poems* are by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and the motif on Hall Caine’s memoir is based on his design. They are restrained in style. Rossetti is thought to have been influenced by Japanese designs.

Christina’s book has gilt rules with small circles in the corners. The Swinburne book has gilt circles with designs of the sun, moon and stars to reflect the subject matter of the book. The design is repeated on the spine and back cover.


*Goblin Market* is Christina Rossetti’s best-known work. It was first published in 1862. This edition is bound in green cloth with a gilt floral design in the art nouveau style on the front and back covers. *Speaking likenesses* is a children’s story in the vein of *Alice’s adventures in Wonderland* (1865). It is bound in blue cloth with a gilt reproduction on the cover of one of the illustrations.
37. Zola, Emile 1840-1902. *The "Assommoir", (the prelude to "Nana")*: a realistic novel / by Emile Zola; illustrated with 80 engravings from designs by French artists. (London: Vizetelly, 1885)


The Zola novel is bound in pale blue cloth with the design printed in dark blue and gilt, showing a scene from the novel. This was part of Vizetelly’s large format illustrated edition of Zola’s works.

Grousset’s adventure novel is an example of a French coloured cloth binding. This is bound in red cloth with a full cover pictorial design in grey, yellow, black and blue with gilt, showing an explorer on the moon looking back at Earth through a telescope.


Bound in white canvas with gilt design. This is an example of a *de luxe* production on large paper. The book is a volume of German thrillers from the period just before the First World War.


Green cloth with gilt ornamentation. The gilt designs on the covers and spines are based on Blake’s illustrations.


The various Exhibitions, Expositions and World’s Fairs from the second half of the nineteenth-century produced some spectacular books, including this three-volume set bound in red cloth with design in black and gilt. The two views, printed in gilt, show at the top, a view of the Seine, where we see the Eiffel Tower, the Sacré Coeur basilica, and in the foreground, opposite the Pont Alexandre III, the Art-Nouveau style steel and glass dome of the Grand Palais, built for the 1900 Exposition Universelle, the arch at the entrance to the Exposition, and, at the bottom, the view of the main entrance to the Exposition.

42. Humphreys, Henry Noel, 1810-1879. *A history of the art of printing: from its invention to its wide-spread development in the middle of the 16th century: preceded by a short account of the origin of the alphabet and the successive methods of recording events and multiplying ms. books before the invention of printing / by H. Noel Humphreys; with one hundred illustrations produced in photo-lithography by Day & Son, Limited, under the direction of the author*. (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1867)
Red cloth with black and gilt. The design uses the Grolier strapwork and ornaments in a style usually found on fine leather book-binding; this would have been familiar to the bibliophile, and is suitable in a work on the history of the book.


This translation of a work first published in French in 1783 is included to allow us to show the metal dies cast for the cover vignette and title. They are modern examples of the dies used to decorate the nineteenth-century cloth-bound books on display. The dies are on loan from the binders of the book, M & M Binding Pty. Ltd., Mount Waverley, Victoria. The loan was organised by Dr. Travers. The book forms part of the Travers Collection in the Rare Book section at Monash.

Wall Cases

Annuals and magazines

Art

44. Art journal. (London: George Virtue, 1849-1912)

1867 vol. on display. Bound in green cloth with gilt decorations. The cover ornamentation shows an artist’s equipment, including an easel, palettes and paints.


Vols. 1-4 (April 1894-Jan. 1895) on display. Yellow cloth with cover illustrations printed in black. There were thirteen volumes of The Yellow Book from April 1894 to January 1897. It is most closely associated with Aubrey Beardsley who was the art editor for the early numbers. He designed the covers for the first four volumes before leaving to work with Arthur Symons on The Savoy. Beardsley’s art-work epitomises the 1890s with its art nouveau style and air of decadence.

Satire

46. Diogenes. (London : Piper Brothers for the Proprietors, 1853-1855)

47. Judy. (London : The Proprietor, 1867-1907)

48. The Idler magazine : an illustrated monthly. (London : Chatto & Windus, 1892-1911)

The most important Victorian satirical magazine was of course Punch, but there were others who sought to tap the market. Judy was the most obvious rival.

Diogenes and The Idler are bound in green cloth with gilt ornamentation, while Judy is in red cloth with gilt. On the covers we see in gilt, Judy looking censorious and about to rap someone over the head with her fan; Diogenes the cynic sending his
The Yellow Book
An Illustrated Quarterly
Volume I April 1894

London: Elkin Mathews & John Lane
Boston: Copeland & Day

Price 5/- Net
AN EASY GUIDE
TO THE
SOUTHERN STARS
enemies scurrying; and The Idler relaxing in a hammock with a book. Diogenes and Judy both feature the rustic lettering popular in the mid-Victorian period.

Family

49. The Welcome: a magazine for the home circle. (London, S.W. Partridge, 1876-1888)

On display we have the volumes for 1880, 1883, and 1885. The 1880 volume is bound in blue cloth while the other two are in red cloth. All have black and gilt borders surrounding chromo-lithograph flower illustrations.

Children


52. Young Australia: an illustrated magazine for boys throughout the English-speaking world. (London, Pilgrim Press, 1892-1930?)

The Boy's Own 1880-81 volume is bound in red cloth with black, gilt and silver ornamentation showing boys playing cricket, fishing, skating, climbing the rigging of a boat, and riding a penny farthing.

The Girl's Own (1894-95) is bound in a light green cloth, printed in dark green, brown yellow and gilt. The design of vines and espalier lemon trees is influenced by William Morris.

The volume of Young Australia on display is a wartime publication, from 1917, bound in green cloth with the design printed in black, brown and white. The illustration is of two men in an aeroplane with one of them dropping a bomb. The spine shows a soldier with a trenching tool.

Flat Case 1

Science

The popularity of books on science in the nineteenth-century was one of the distinct developments in the book trade. Many scientific books, not only those for the mass market, appeared with coloured cloth covers.


54. Orr, Mary Ackworth. Southern stars: a guide to the constellations visible in the southern hemisphere. (London: Gall and Inglis, [1896])

Astronomy was one of the more controversial fields of scientific research in the nineteenth-century, mainly for its link with theories of creation. Our only concern here is that it lent itself to striking cover designs. The three astronomy books on display are all blue cloth with gilt illustrations incorporating the sun and the constellations.


Green cloth with black and gilt. This book deals mainly with elements of the terrestrial atmosphere, e.g. meteorological phenomena. But there are also chapters on bird-life, flying machines and balloons. The cover shows a rainbow, and a hot-air balloon. The spine shows two men in the desert looking at a mirage, a ship upside-down in the air, apparently sailing in a sea with icebergs.


Roscoe's book is bound in brown cloth with a black and gilt design incorporating a strip of coloured paper on which is printed the spectrum. Schellen's is in purple cloth with the design printed in black and gold, showing an eclipse of the sun.

Flat Case 2

Technology


Green cloth with design in black and gilt. The design is of an underwater scene, in the green depths of the ocean, with the telegraph cable, gleaming in gilt, lying on the seafloor.


Blue cloth with gilt design showing a cross-section of a ship in a dock.

Brown cloth with the design in gilt of an elaborate lightning conductor in the shape of a crusader holding aloft his sword.

62. Eissler, Manuel. *The metallurgy of argentiferous lead: a practical treatise on the smelting of silver-lead ores and the refining of lead bullion, including reports on various smelting establishments and descriptions of modern smelting furnaces and plants in Europe and America* / by M. Eissler. (London: Crosby Lockwood, 1891)

Grey cloth with the design printed in silver. The colours chosen reflect the subject of the book, being the colours of lead and silver. The design is of a furnace.

63. Frith, Henry, b. 1840. *The romance of engineering: the stories of the highway, the waterway, the railway, and the subway.* (London: Ward Lock & Bowden, 1895)

Light brown cloth with design in dark brown and gilt. The centrepiece is a steam train with panel illustrations including the Forth Bridge and the Rigi railway, the first cogwheel railway in the world.

64. Reynolds, Michael, b. 1840. *Engine-driving life, or, Stirring adventures and incidents in the lives of locomotive engine-drivers.* (London: Crosby, Lockwood and Co., 1881)

Grey cloth with design in black, gold and silver, showing the Tay Bridge accident of 28 December 1879. This incident features in William McGonagall’s poem, “The Tay Bridge disaster”.

Beautiful Railway Bridge of the Silv’ry Tay!
Alas, I am very sorry to say
That ninety lives have been taken away
On the last Sabbath day of 1879,
Which will be remembered for a very long time.

Flat Case 3

Natural History


Green cloth with design in gilt of a lyre-bird, with a bower-bird building its bower under palm trees on the spine.

66. Turner, Frederick, b. 1852. *Australian grasses (with illustrations) Vol. 1.* (Sydney: [Dept. of Agriculture], 1895)

Brown frond-patterned cloth with design in gilt. As can be seen from many of the items on display, Australian publishers were able to produce fine coloured cloth designs on their books when occasion warranted.
This is volume one, but no further volumes appeared.


Guilfoyle took over from Von Mueller as Director of the Melbourne Botanical Gardens. He carried on his predecessor's interest in botanical education. These two editions of his school text-book are quite different in format and design.

The first edition is bound in green cloth with a gilt full-cover design of a "scene in a Gippsland forest." The second edition is in blue cloth with black rules and a gilt design of a banksia.


Blue cloth with design in black and gilt showing prehistoric animals, lizard-like creatures on an island and in the sea. This is a reproduction of the illustration in the book entitled, "Carboniferous reptiles", (p. 146)

The study of palaeontology was the most controversial scientific pursuit of the Victorian era. Dawson was a Canadian geologist. Despite being one of the foremost palaeontologists of his day, he was an anti-evolutionist, and strove, particularly in his more popular books such as this, to reconcile science with religion.

70. Cumberland, Charles. *The guinea pig or domestic cavy for food, fur, and fancy.* (London : L. Upcott Gill, [1894])

Blue cloth with design in gilt, black and grey. The vignette shows a guinea pig.

Perhaps to us the most interesting part of this book is Chapter IV, "The cavy as food." This makes the point that in Peru, where the guinea pig originates, he is eaten, but the author is realistic enough to observe that, "It is easy to imagine the horror of the Anglo-Saxon when he is asked to eat a new kind of food." (p. 34) The author provides recipes for preparing the cavy, in stews or curries, and remarks, "I have good reason to hope that, at a time not far distant, Cavy, in some of its savoury and delicious preparations will be considered a requisite in a good menu." (p. 34)

Flat Case 4

Ethnography

71. Lang, Andrew, 1844-1912. *The secret of the totem.* (London : Longmans, Green, 1905)

Blue cloth with gilt design showing two Aborigines and the totem creatures including a kangaroo, a dingo, and an emu. Lang's book is largely a study of the Arunta tribe and forms a commentary on J. G. Frazer's article, "The beginnings of religion and


Red cloth with design in gilt reproducing one of the illustrations in the book. The photograph is of “Maoris draining a swamp”. With the white overseers standing above the natives, looking on, it is a perfect example of “the colonial gaze.”

73. Bonwick, James, 1817-1906. Daily life and origin of the Tasmanians. (London : Sampson Low, Son, & Marston, 1870)

Brown cloth with design in gilt showing “Lalla Rookh”. Lalla Rookh was another name for Truganini, the last of the Tasmanian Aborigines. Truganini died in Hobart on 8th May, 1876, so she was still alive, though quite elderly, when Bonwick wrote about her.

On the spine is a gilt figure of a “Queensland native.”


Green cloth with gilt design. The design on The northern tribes is of a “Ground drawing associated with the Wollunqua totemic ceremony of a place called Tikomeri.” (p. 737) It is in the style now familiar to us in Aboriginal dot-paintings.

The cover of Native tribes shows an armlet from Melville Island.


Green cloth with design in gilt. The vignette on the cover shows “The bret, or dead hand.” This was a dried hand from a corpse which was worn on a string of twisted opossum fur around the neck, slung under the left arm. The belief was that the hand would warn the wearer of danger if an enemy should approach. It would push or pinch him.

Flat Case 5

Food and Wine

Brown cloth with the design in black, white, blue, red and gilt. Mrs. Beeton’s cookery and household management books were the most popular publications in their line in mid- to late-Victorian England. The design on this edition of her Every-day Cookery, showing a maid laying a table for dinner, is continuous from the spine onto the front cover.

78. Clark, Georgiana Charlotte. Serviettes: dinner napkins and how to fold them. (London: Dean & Son, [1875])

Light brown cloth with blind-stamped borders and design in gilt, of a folded table-napkin on a plate. You may notice the elaborately folded napkins at each place on the table in the cover design to Mrs. Beeton’s book. There were many, novel ways to present napkins and this book shows you how.

79. Lake, Nancy. Menus made easy, or, How to order dinner and give the dishes their French names. 13th ed. (London: New York: Frederick Warne & co., 1901)

Light brown cloth with design in dark brown and gilt, with a paper menu onlay. The design shows a menu, a hanging pheasant in gilt, and a steaming pig’s head on a platter.


Brown cloth with black and gilt. The design is of a wine glass and a willow-pattern plate. The cover of the Mrs. Beeton book has a set of willow-pattern crockery on a shelf along the top.

81. Shaw, Thomas George. Wine, the vine, and the cellar. (London: Longman, 1863)

Green dot-and-line grain, with border in blind, and design in gilt. The design shows a man seated on a barrel drinking a toast, within a circular frame of vine leaves and grapes.

82. Etiquette of the dinner-table: with the art of carving. (London: F. Warne, 1867)

Blue cloth with design in gilt. This is a miniature book (95 mm.) and forms part of Warne’s “Bijou Books” series. The design shows a man and a woman seated, eating at a table.

Flat Case 6

Recreation
The Whist-Player

By Colonel Blyth.

Item 86
83. Apperley, Charles James, 1778-1843. The chase, the turf, and the road / by Nimrod; with illustrations by Henry Alken, and a portrait by D. Maclise. (London : J. Murray, 1837)

Green horizontal-ribbed cloth with gilt design and a blind-stamped border, repeated on the back cover. The gilt vignette on the front cover shows a horse-racing scene. The blind-stamped border features a fox-hunter waving a brush, and a coach and four.

84. Inglis, James, 1845-1908. Tent life in Tigerland; with which is incorporated, Sport and work on the Nepaul frontier: being twelve years' sporting reminiscences of a pioneer planter in an Indian frontier district / by James Inglis ("Maori") (Sydney : Hutchison, 1888)

Green cloth with design in black, red, yellow and gilt. The cover design shows hunting scenes in India. Big-game hunting was very popular in the Victorian era, and well into the twentieth-century.


Plum cloth with gilt design showing mountaineering equipment. Tourism was already a factor in New Zealand in the nineteenth century and this book had as one of its aims to inform "Swiss and Caucasian climbers, few of whom are perhaps aware of the extent and nature of the New Zealand Alpine chain." (Preface)


Green cloth with design in black and gilt showing a hand of whist.

87. Australian etiquette, or, The rules and usages of the best society in the Australasian colonies: together with their sports, pastimes, games and amusements. Rev. ed. (Sydney : D.E. McConnell, 1885)

Blue cloth with black and gilt design. This book is well-known as a source of information on the manners of colonial Australian society, but it also has extensive chapters on the outdoor sports and indoor amusements of the nineteenth-century colonists.

88. Jones, Stanley. The actor and his art: some considerations of the present condition of the stage. (London : Downey & Co., 1899)

Bound in canvas with black and red design of an actor and actress taking a bow.

Flat Case 7

English Literature

Green horizontal-ribbed cloth with gilt design and a blind-stamped border, repeated on the back cover. The design shows Dr. Syntax on his horse, passing a sign-post, pointing to London, and to the publishers of the work, Ackermann and Co. On the spine is a gilt vignette of Dr. Syntax under a tree, with his wig hung on one branch and his hat on another.


Dark blue cloth with design in red, black and gilt, showing a drum surrounded by cannons. This is one of Thackeray’s poems, published here in a *de luxe* illustrated edition. There is a prefatory note, “This ballad was written in Paris, in 1841, at the time of the Second Funeral of Napoleon.”


Blue cloth with bevelled edges and an elaborate Persian design in gilt.

92. Swift, Jonathan, 1667-1745. *Travels into several remote nations of the world* / by Lemuel Gulliver ; with a preface by Henry Craik ; one hundred illustrations by Charles E. Brock.

Blue cloth with gilt design showing a scene of Gulliver in Lilliput, with other scenes from the novel in gilt on the spine.


Grey cloth with design in black, brown and gilt. The designs show scenes from the poems. This collection of comic verse was enormously popular in its day. Gilbert is now best-remembered for his collaboration with Sir Arthur Sullivan in their series of comic-operas.


John Davidson’s works appeared in a uniform binding of black cloth with an art nouveau design in gilt of intertwining flowers and birds.


OLD CHRISTMAS

WASHINGTON IRVING
Red cloth with designs in gilt. These are examples of Dickens’s Christmas books. *The Christmas Carol* is the best-known of them, but the two on display have been chosen for their gilt vignettes. *The Battle of Life* shows fairies riding into battle on dragonflies; and *The Cricket on the Hearth* shows a kettle boiling on a hob while a cricket sits on the hearth-stone.

**Flat Case 8**

**American Literature**


Green cloth with black and gilt design, with the word “American” across the front in black letters against a hatched gilt background.


Fawn cloth with design in brown, black, white and gilt, showing Eva and Tom writing a letter to Tom’s wife.


Blue dotted-line grain cloth with design in black and gilt.

100. Alcott, Louisa May, 1832-1888. *Comic tragedies / written by "Jo" and "Meg"; and acted by the "Little Women".* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Company, 1893)

Grey cloth with a design in black, brown, green and gilt.

Louisa May Alcott is best-known for her novel, *Little Women* (1868), and its sequel, *Good Wives* (1869). The characters were based on the author and her sisters; she was “Jo” and her sister Anna was “Meg.” They wrote and performed amateur theatricals, which were collected in this posthumous publication.


Blue wave-grain cloth with design in gilt, of a deer, foliage and feathers.

*The Song of Hiawatha* was one of the best-known nineteenth-century American poems, beloved of reciters for its sing-song rhythm and the relative ease of committing it to memory.

Dark green cloth with gilt design showing a Christmas dance, and a Christmas cake within a border of holly.

Washington Irving's works helped create the traditions of the modern Christmas.


Red cloth with a design in gilt of the "golden plates" as presented by the angel Moroni to the prophet Joseph Smith on the night of September 22, 1827. The characters on the plates are believed by Mormons to be in a language they call "Reformed Egyptian."

104. Van Dyke, Henry, 1852-1933. *Fisherman's luck, and some other uncertain things*. (London : Sampson Low, Marston, 1899)

Light green cloth, with a design in dark green and gilt, of fish swimming among the stems of water hyacinth. The design is signed HVD, i.e. the author. It is a beautiful example of art nouveau style.

Flat Case 9

**Romance**

As is still the case now, light romances made up a great proportion of the publishing output in the nineteenth century. They usually had bright, attractive designs, often using a flower motif.


Both books are bound in green cloth with designs printed in black, silver and gilt.


Bound in red cloth with a design in blue, black, yellow and gilt. The design incorporates pansies, a flower much favoured by the artists of the coloured bookcloth.


These are romances in the "Primrose stories" series. They have uniform designs in black, green, yellow, red and gilt.
110. Stuart, Esmé, b. 1851. Tangled threads. (Melbourne: Wesleyan Book Depot, [1897])

Blue cloth with design in red, black and gilt, featuring a tangled thread.

Flat cases 10 & 11

Travel

111. Round the world from London Bridge to Charing Cross, via Yokohama and Chicago: an album of pictures from photographs of the chief places of interest in all parts of the world. (London: George Newnes, 1895)

Brown cloth with design by Alan Wright in black, red and gilt. The design shows a woman working a camera, the selling point of this book being that all the views are photographs.


Dark blue cloth with gilt design showing the sun and the sea, with a tropical island on the spine. This is an account of a round the world tour via Honolulu.


Green cloth with gilt, showing a scene on a beach. The frontispiece shows "The colossal stone statues at Easter Island" and there is a section describing them, with an account of their origin as related by a native to the author.

114. Skertchly, J. Alfred. Dahomey as it is: being a narrative of eight months' residence in that country, with a full account of the notorious annual customs, and the social and religious institutions of the Ffans; also an appendix on Ashantee, and a glossary of Dahoman words and titles / by J.A. Skertchly; with illustrations from sketches by the author. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1874)

Green cloth with a design in black and gilt showing "The tail dancers."


Green cloth with gilt design showing a bullock cart and its driver. Each volume has a different scene stamped in gilt on the cover.

117. Hale, Edward Everett, 1822-1909. *A family flight through France, Germany, Norway and Switzerland* / by Rev. E.E. Hale and Miss Susan Hale; illustrated. (Boston: D. Lothrop & Co., Franklin Street, 1881)

Green cloth with design in red, black and gilt. The Egyptian account has a design featuring a band of hieroglyphics across the front board, behind a figure riding a camel; the sphinx is in the background. The French account has an illustration of the Hale family’s luggage inside a red circle.

Edward and Susan Hale were brother and sister. They collaborated on a series of six travel volumes between 1881 and 1886, all giving accounts of Susan, her brother and his family travelling to different holiday destinations.


Light blue cloth with design in black and gilt, showing two Riviera scenes against a background of flowers and grasses.


Dark blue with design in black and gilt showing the Aurora Borealis.


Volume one bound in light brown cloth with design in black and gilt; volume two in dark brown cloth with the same design. The design shows the author being carried in a palanquin.

**Small Upright Case**

**Australiana**


Red cloth with design in black and gilt. This was a publication meant to appeal as a cheaper option for those interested in buying the *Picturesque Atlas of Australasia*. The rustic lettering, made to seem as if hammered together from pieces of wood, has a suitable outback feel. The vignettes form an interesting reflection on the values of the period, particular the central one which shows a stand of dead, ring-barked trees ready for clearing.

DOCTOR
NIKOLA

GUY
BOOTHBY

WARD LOCK & CO.
LIMITED

Item 124
Purple cloth with design in black and gilt, showing vignettes of occupations such as shearing, mining, and harvesting, with a harbour scene to represent trade.


Green cloth with design in black and gilt showing an Aborigine, a kangaroo, an emu, and a platypus, under a palm tree.


125. Boothby, Guy, 1867-1905. The beautiful white devil / by Guy Boothby ; illustrated by Stanley L. Wood. (London : Ward, Lock, [1897])


127. Boothby, Guy, 1867-1905. On the wallaby, or, Through the East and across Australia / by Guy Boothby ; illustrated by Ben. Boothby. (London : Longmans, Green, 1894)

All are bound in blue cloth with gilt designs; Doctor Nikola has a colour illustration printed on paper pasted on the cover and spine. Doctor Nikola was Boothby’s most famous character, and the sinister image of the man in the fur coat, with the black cat on his shoulder remains a powerful one.

The gilt portrait of “the beautiful white devil” is also striking. It takes over most of the front cover and shows the woman standing, with one hand on her bull-dog, while in her other hand she holds a fan. The unfurled fan is reproduced in gilt on the spine.

128. Hare, Francis Augustus. The last of the bushrangers : an account of the capture of the Kelly gang. (London : Hurst and Blackett, 1892)

Red cloth with gilt design, a vignette of Ned Kelly in his armour.


Light brown cloth with design in dark brown and gilt, featuring a kangaroo, kookaburra and a bird of paradise, with a background of a boomerang, a shield and spears.


Blue cloth with design in brown, black and gilt, showing a hat, whip and spurs.

Corridor cases
Children's Books

We have a large collection of children's books, the "Lindsay Shaw" Collection, named for the donor of much of the Australian children's books in the collection. We also collect English children's material and many of the items on display are nineteenth century London publications.

Corridor Wall Case 1


Blue cloth with design in gilt. The design, similar to those of Rossetti, is clearly influenced by Japanese motifs. We see the chrysanthemums, the stylised representation of the sea, and the dolphins skimming above the waves, all in the manner of Japanese wood-cuts. On the spine is a representation of the labyrinth.

132. Golden thoughts from golden fountains : arranged in fifty-two divisions / illustrations by eminent artists ; engraved by the Brothers Dalziel. (London : Frederick Warne, [1867?])

Red cloth with design in black and gilt. This is a collection of uplifting extracts from the Bible, and the poets. The cover design shows a cross, with a crown. There are two cherubs at the top, and, at the base of the cross, in Latin, the words Faith, Hope, and Charity.

133. The Royal picture gallery of the kings and queens of England, from the earliest times to the reign of Queen Victoria. (London : Cassell, Petter, & Galpin, [1864])

Blue cloth with design richly gilt, incorporating the royal motto.


On display are the volumes for the years 1860, 1880, and 1884. All are bound in red cloth. The 1860 volume has a design in gilt, repeated on the back cover in blind. The later volumes have more elaborate designs in black, blue and gilt.


Blue cloth with design in red, black and white, showing a snow scene, with a child riding a reindeer. This French translation of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen", was presented as a prize by the Alliance Français in Hobart to Isobel D. Travers in 1909 as the best in the "classe au dessous de 12 ans."

Corridor Wall Case 2
Item 139
136. *The picture scrap book; or, Happy hours at home: Scripture scenes, etc.* (London: Religious Tract Society, [1859?])

Green wave-grain cloth with blind-stamped borders and design in gilt, showing a family around a table, looking at a book. This is a collection of engravings presumably meant to be cut up for pasting into scrap books. Many of the pages are devoted to *Bible* scenes but there are also illustrations of a more general kind, even an engraving of a book-shop, among the “wayside pictures”, p. 110.

137. Eltze, Frederick, fl. 1860-1870. *The new table book, or, Pictures for young and old parties* / by Frederick Eltze; with "a copy of verses" to each picture and a page for "everybody's favourite"; edited by Mark Lemon. (London: Bradbury, Evans and Co., 11, Bouverie Street, 1867)

Green morocco-grain cloth with design in blind and gilt on front and back covers. The design on the front cover shows a group around a table; the man sitting at the table has a copy of the book in front of him and is about to write in it. The caption reads, "My favourite! – is ***.”

The book contains many hand-coloured engravings, and has pages ruled with the headings, “My favourite song”, “My favourite poet”, “My favourite artist”, etc. Many of these have been filled in. Landseer features as favourite artist, although one person has written “Nature.”


Blue cloth with designs in gilt. The cover of *The jungle book* has a vignette of elephants, that of *The second jungle book*, a vignette of a cobra.

Kipling’s *Jungle Books* are still among his most popular works. They tell the adventures of Mowgli, a boy who is raised by wolves and is taught the lore of the jungle by the animals.


Green cloth with design in black and gilt after the illustrations by the author. This book was first published in 1872. Lear is best known for his limericks, many of which appear in this volume.

141. *Little folks: a magazine for the young.* (London: Cassell, Petter & Galpin, 1871-1933)
On display are three volumes 1887, 1893, 1902. 1887 is bound in brown cloth with a design in black, green and gilt. 1893 is bound in blue cloth with a design in red, green, black and gilt. 1902 is bound in red cloth with the design in black, blue, red and gilt.

142. *The Pictorial museum of sport and adventure: being a record of deeds of daring and marvellous escapes, by field and flood; with an account of various countries of the world and their inhabitants, the whole forming a compendium of natural history.* (London: John G. Murdoch, [187-?])

Green cloth with design in black, silver and gilt showing various scenes of adventure.

143. *The pictorial treasury of famous men and famous deeds: comprising naval and military heroes, discoverers, inventors, statesmen, philanthropists, artists, authors, and others: embellished with about one hundred first-class wood engravings and a series of full-page portraits, printed in the best style of chromolithography from photographs and other authentic sources.* (London: James Sangster, [1880?])

Blue cloth with design in black, silver, and gilt, showing the recording angel with his "book of gold". The silver portraits show Newton (waiting for his apple to fall), Giotto, Wellington and Nelson; on the spine we see Caxton and Shakespeare.


Dark green cloth with design in light green, black, red and white, showing a board game and an optical apparatus. This book comes with board games loosely inserted in a pocket in the back.


146. Bell, Catherine D. (Catherine Douglas), d. 1861. *Home sunshine.* (London: Collins Clear-Type Press, [1921])

Red cloth with design in black, green and orange.

These books have been included to show how the same design was used on different books. In this case the front cover shows a girl playing tennis, while the spine shows another girl playing golf.


Blue cloth, with the design in brown, dark blue, and gilt, featuring a chauffeur showing two boys the motor in his car.

Cream cloth, with the design in black, green, yellow and red showing two girls talking on a bench under a palm tree. The title of this Dutch novel for teenagers is, “In the background.” It is set in the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia.


Dark green cloth with design in black and gilt. This is an extract from Kingsley’s *Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* (1859). The author has slightly re-written it for its separate publication. The theme of the child “lost in the bush” is one which runs through much of nineteenth-century Australian literature. Having a child wander into the surrounding bush was an ever-present danger for the colonists.

150. Romer, A. *Anecdotal and descriptive natural history.* (London : Groombridge, 1872)

Green cloth with design in black and gilt, showing a lion and ape in the foreground, with a giraffe in the background, surrounded by tropical vegetation. The ape was of course the centre of the evolution controversy in the late nineteenth century. Romer, alludes to this in his introduction where he writes, “Among these ‘Beasts of the field,’ some startle us by forms and actions so much resembling our own as to excite unpleasant comparisons.” (p. 4-5)

151. *Lullabies of many lands* / collected and rendered into English verse by Alma Strettell ; with seventy-seven illustrations by Emily J. Harding. (London : George Allen, 1894)

Bound in canvas cloth with a gilt design showing an angel dropping petals. The design in gilt on the spine shows a poppy.

And so to sleep!