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Bronze Southern Doors of the Mitchell Library, Sydney
A Hidden Artistic, Literary and Symbolic Treasure
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Abstract

Title: Bronze Southern Doors of the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

The building of the major part of the Mitchell Library (1939 - 1942) resulted in four pairs of bronze entrance doors, three on the northern facade and one on the southern facade. The three pairs on the northern facade of the library are obvious to everyone entering the library from Shakespeare Place and are well documented. However very little has been written on the pair on the southern facade apart from brief mentions in two books of the State Library buildings, so few people know of their existence.

Sadly the excellent bronze doors on the southern facade of the library cannot readily be opened and are largely hidden from view due to the 1987 construction of the Glass House skylight between the newly built main wing of the State Library of New South Wales and the Mitchell Library. These doors consist of six square panels featuring bas-reliefs of different early printers’ marks and two rectangular panels at the bottom with New South Wales wildflowers. Because the southern doors were constructed in 1942 as part of a building with neo-classical architecture they reflect the culture of the time and are an artistic, literary and cultural treasure of the State Library of New South Wales and are being neglected when they should be cherished.

The three areas of research I have followed are the invention of printing in Europe including early printers’ marks, late 19th and early 20th century library building architecture, and bronze doors. These all intersect on the bronze southern doors of the Mitchell Library.

I have followed the two main personalities in the production of these doors. Firstly the benefactor, Sir William Dixson, who donated money for the three northern doors in memory of David Scott Mitchell with sufficient residual funds for the southern doors. Secondly, William Ifould, Principal Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales 1912 - 1942, who was the driving force behind...
the construction of the main part of Mitchell Library during changing times with conflict between traditionalism and modernism. He was a confirmed traditionalist who selected the artists and images for all the bronze doors and personally designed the southern doors.

In my conclusion I offer a resolution to the problem viewing these doors with a plan for the readers and visitors to the library to be able to see the heritage listed southern doors and understand their significance.
Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the following people who helped me on my exciting path through this thesis: my wife, Gae Southwell, who encouraged me all the way and was my first line editor; my supervisor Dr Anita Callaway, Nelson Meers Foundation Lecturer, Department of Art History, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Sydney who guided me while gently pointing out the weaknesses in my arguments; Dr David J Jones, formerly of the State Library of New South Wales who was my mentor during the early stages of my research; Dr Alex Byrne, New South Wales State Librarian, 2011 to 2016; Dr John Valance, New South Wales State Librarian from 2017; Richard Neville, Mitchell Librarian; the whole team at Records Management, Special Collections Area and many other staff at the State Library of New South Wales; the very helpful staff at the libraries of the University of Sydney; Russell Doust, New South Wales State Librarian 1973 to 1987; Francesca Hillier, Archivist, British Museum; finally the several international librarians I have contacted especially Karen Nipps, Head Rare Book Team, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Melissa S. Mead, University Archivist and Rochester Collections Librarian, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester; Kimberly Reynolds, Curator of Manuscripts, Boston Public Library; Meredith Mann, Electronic Resources Librarian, New York Public Library and several staff members of the Library of Congress, Washington DC.
Chapter One

Introduction and Literature Review.

**Introduction**

The Mitchell Library is one of the finest classical style sandstone buildings in Sydney along with the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the General Post Office and Sydney Central Railway Station. At the time of construction the Mitchell Library was the Public Library of New South Wales. This thesis provides the first detailed description of the southern doors and is subtitled *A Hidden Artistic, Literary and Symbolic Treasure*. The Mitchell Library southern bronze doors have been literally hidden since 1987 because construction of skylight, and metaphorically hidden as part of the Macquarie Street wing of the State Library of New South Wales and metaphorically hidden, because, prior to this thesis, little had been written about them, artistic as they have cast bronze bas relief panels and surrounds, literary as six panels are of early printers’ marks celebrating the invention of the printing of books and symbolic as they and the other decorations of the library building refer to the cultural traditions of this nation. In this thesis I elucidate on the hidden shortfalls and offer a resolution. Little has been written on the pair of bronze doors on the southern
facade of the Mitchell Library (ML) apart from brief mentions in two books and the 1943, 1944 and 1945 impressions of *Public Library of New South Wales*, publications on the State Library of New South Wales (SLNSW) buildings, so very few people are aware of their existence.²

In early 2011 while walking through the Dalgety walkway which joins the Mitchell Wing of the State Library of New South Wales to the Macquarie Street Wing, I observed one of the changing

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displays. It included some early architect’s drawings of the Mitchell Library building including the 1940 final plans for the ‘Bronze doors to Southern Entrance’.  

![Architect’s drawing of southern doors. 1940. SLNSW.](image)

“What Doors”? I thought. I was intrigued to see those plans. Because, unfortunately these excellent bronze doors, on the southern facade of the library, are largely hidden from view. Library staff allowed me to use the difficult outside access to the southern doors in order to commence analysis and photographs. I was not alone in not knowing the existence of these doors. I had a meeting with the State Librarian Dr Alex Byrne in 2014 with several senior staff, some of whom are responsible for the heritage of the building. Dy Callaway and the library staff we met know the

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library well most were also unaware of the doors’ existence. After the meeting we visited the Mitchell reading room and the doors were unlocked for the first time in many years for all present to see. The response to this new discovery was astonishing. My supervisor and library staff responded very positively to my discovery of the southern doors and expressed support of my writing about this important feature of the library.

Central portion of the Southern Facade and Glasshouse skylight. Photo author taken from a high viewpoint in the Macquarie Street Wing.

Glasshouse skylight obscuring southern doors. Photo author taken from Domain Walkway.
From the late nineteenth century motile 1942 New South Wales (PLNSW) stood on the corner of Bent Street and Macquarie Streets. In 1905 David Scott Mitchell offered his great collection of Australiana to the library on condition it be housed appropriately. This offer was accepted by the government and work started on a wing of the new building to be known as the Mitchell Library. In 1988 this building became the Mitchell Wing of the SLNSW after the opening of the Macquarie Street Wing. It is still generally referred to as the Mitchell Library. Between 1929 and 1942 a new State Library building was at a new location adjacent to the Mitchell Library in Macquarie Street. Work on the Mitchell Library involved the installation of four pairs of bronze entrance doors, three on the northern facade and one on the southern facade. The three pairs of bronze doors on the northern facade are well documented and anyone entering from Shakespeare Place. This thesis concentrates on the little known southern doors.

There are three main interesting areas of discussion in this thesis. These areas are the invention of printing in Europe with particular focus early printers’ marks; late nineteenth and early twentieth century library architecture and decorations; and bronze doors from antiquity to 1940.

The southern doors of the Mitchell Library consist of eight panels. Six of these are square and feature early printers’ marks celebrating the invention of printing with moveable type. This invention allowed multiples copies of books, reading to the spread of knowledge. Printers’ marks, which appear on the first or last page of books dating from 1457, signify who was the printer, usually with the date and location of the printery; in effect claiming fifteenth century intellectual property rights. Below the six square panels displaying printer’ marks are two rectangular panels with New South Wales wildflowers, signifying the library belongs to all the people of New South Wales. The casting of the doors are in bronze demonstrates the library’s importance to the people of New South Wales and particularly to library users.
Of particular importance to my discussion are the personalities of Sir William Dixson, a major donor to the library, and William Ifould, Principal Librarian of the State Library of New South Wales from 1912 to 1942, whose enthusiasm and drive were the main reason for the Mitchell Library being finished in its final form.

Chapter two examines the invention of printing with movable type. Chapter two also discusses the introduction of printers’ marks, the significance of these marks and their importance to libraries. Chapter three details late nineteenth and early twentieth century library architecture particularly in America, and considers influence on the construction of the Mitchell Library building. Chapter four focuses on the close supervision of the design and construction of the bronze doors including the selection of printer’s marks for the southern doors. Chapter five explores the symbolism of decorations of the Mitchell Library’s especially decorations of the southern facade, and the relevance of printers’ marks in the digitisation processes of the twenty first century. Finally there is consideration of how public access to the southern doors might be achieved.

The southern bronze doors can be thought of in the other library buildings around the world. Major public libraries have an imposing main facade highlighting the importance of the building and have one, two or three pairs of main entry doors, some in bronze. However, available evidence suggests there are only two public libraries in the world with four pairs of bronze entrance doors, the Mitchell Library, Sydney and the New York Public Library (NYPL). Both of these libraries have with three pairs of main entrance bronze doors and a fourth pair on another facade.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the plans of library buildings were generally left to the designing architect, then the librarian designed the fit-out as best he could.4 There were two opposing designs for reading rooms for major public libraries in this period, one being rectangular and the other circular. The Bibliotheque Sainte Geneveive, Paris (1851) has a

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rectangular reading room which design was followed by the architects of the architects of the
Boston Public Library (1895), the New York Public Library (1911) and the Mitchell Library,
Sydney (1942). The idea of a circular or octagonal main reading room for libraries arose from the
circular reading room of the British Museum (1857) which until 1997 was the main reading room of
the British Library. Its influence was felt as far as the Thomas Jefferson Building (1897) of the
Library of Congress (LOC), the State Library of Victoria (1913) and the Manchester Central
Library (1934). Circular and octagonal reading rooms have proved to be impractical with pie
shaped stacks and offices radiating out in ever increasing distances from the centre and poor lift
service to upper and lower levels. A circular reading room with a central librarian’s desk has
overtones of the centralised power in Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon, which is detailed in chapter
three.

The idea of a circular reading room was rejected during the construction of the New York
Public Library (1911) and the Mitchell Library (1942) in favour of a rectangular main reading room
as I expand on it in later pages. Because of the generous philanthropy of the Carnegie Corporation,
there was a large increase in library building construction and a shift to American library design in
the early to mid twentieth century allowing librarians a far greater design input as discussed in
chapter three. With the passage of time, ideas of library design change and it is interesting to note
the 1987 extension of the State Library of New South Wales has one large two level reading room
including several study rooms and the new (1997) British Library has eleven separate reading
rooms.

The Free Public Library in Sydney opened in 1869 and became the PLNSW in 1895. The
Mitchell Library building was first the Public Library then became the State Library of New South
Wales in 1975. As early as 1885 there were grand plans for a monumental library building

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5 Ellsworth. op.cit. 67.
complete with a large dome. The 1905 design of Blair and Vernon was accepted and the first part, to accommodate the David Scott Mitchell collection, commenced in 1906 and that wing opened in 1910. The next part of the Mitchell Library to be completed was take the Dixson wing, opened in 1929. The design of the central portion was changed and the dome deleted in the early 1930s at the insistence of William Ifould, Principal Librarian. The New York Public Library opened in 1911 as a completed building and had an important impact on the redesigning of the central section of the Mitchell Library. These issues are discussed in chapter three.

1440 is the year accepted as the year of the invention of printing in Europe by Johannes Gutenberg in Mainz who continued to improve his press and produced his forty two line Bible in 1455. Printing in China, Japan and Korea with wood blocks started in the 700s, with ceramic letters about 1100 and with sand cast moveable type from 1300.\(^7\) It reached its highest point in Korea; however, because of the large number of characters needed and the fact the small print runs were kept within the nobility, it was not extended to the general public until the 1400s.

Gutenberg had obtained several loans from Johann Fust, who thus became a partner in the printing firm. In 1455, when Gutenberg was unable to make a repayment Fust took him to court and won the case. As a result Fust and his other partner, Peter Schoeffer, obtained almost all of Gutenberg’s printing presses and tradesmen including all copies of his forty two line Bible, now known as the Gutenberg Bible.

A printer’s mark is a unique symbol which was printed on the first or last page of a book to denote exactly who printed it. It is a tradition which is still used, though in the publisher’s name rather than the printer’s. In 1457 Fust and Schoeffer printed the Mainz Psalter with the first printer’s mark, which appeared on only one Psalter. It then appeared in all of their copies of their thirty six line bible in 1462.\(^8\) The reference to the number of lines on a page is tied to the size of the type, the

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larger the type the fewer lines. Gutenberg’s bible is referred to as the forty two line bible and several years later a forty line bible was produced. The printers’ marks appearing on the Mitchell Library south doors are those of Jan Veldener, Luc Antonio Giunta, Johann Fust and Peter Schoeffer, Aldus Pius Manutius, Jean Petit and William Caxton.

Mitchell Library Bronze Southern Doors. Photo author.

The only other bronze library doors with printers’ marks, on the available evidence, are a pair to the Special Collections and Rare Books area of the Thomas Jefferson Building, Library of Congress, Washington DC.
Bronze entrance doors have been on European buildings since ancient Greek and Roman eras, usually associated with temples and churches, though the Curia Julia (Senate Building) in Rome was built by Julius Caesar in 44 BC. Its large bronze doors were removed to the Archbasilica of St John Lateran, Rome in 1660 AD, where they can still be seen. There was a strong tradition of casting bronze doors in Constantinople and many were exported to Italy, including those of the Amalfi Duomo of St Andrew in 1066, which are the first bronze doors in Italy since Roman times. The pinnacle of Italian bronze door construction came with the Florence Baptistry doors: South doors by Andrea Pisano started in 1329 and completed in 1336, North doors by Lorenzo Ghiberti taking from 1401 to 1424 and the East doors, the “Gates of Paradise” also by Ghiberti from 1425 to 1452. From the mid nineteenth century bronze doors have been placed on buildings other than churches signifying the importance of those buildings. Some examples in Sydney are Rural Bank Martin Place, State Theatre Sydney with three pairs of bronze “Florentine” doors and Transport House, Macquarie St. Public buildings around the world such as libraries, art galleries and museums have also been adorned with bronze doors. Other examples of library bronze doors are Boston Public Library, Library of Congress, New York Public Library, British Library, Vilnius University Library and Johannesburg Public Library.

The successful completion of the Mitchell Library is largely due to the persistent efforts of William Herbert Ifould, the Principal Librarian of the Public (State) Library of New South Wales from 1912 till 1942. With the support of the Library Trustees he convinced his Ministers, the State Treasurer and the Premier of the importance of completing the building. With some difficulty, he convinced the Government Architect to alter the plans to build a library better suited to librarians’ ideas and he solicited large contributions from various donors for decorations including the three pairs of northern bronze doors and the southern bronze doors. He and the trustees decided on the

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concepts for the northern doors. Ifould appointed the sculptors for the northern doors, approved their designs and designed the southern doors himself with the research help of his staff.

In one of his rare interviews Ifould gave details how he proposed to closely supervise design and construction of the three pairs of doors on the northern facade. At this time the southern doors were not publicly discussed.

Three double bronze doors costing more than 4000 pounds, are to be erected at the new Public Library building in Macquarie Street. At least four sculptors will cooperate in designing 48 panels, showing life and habits of aborigines and portraits of famous navigators and explorers. The artists have been selected by the Chief Librarian (Mr W H Ifould) who has decided the design and subject matter of the doors. The cost will be paid from a gift made to the library trustees of 4000 pounds by Sir William Dixson several years ago. ‘The doors will be somewhat of a luxury’ said Mr Ifould yesterday ‘and I want to make
them unusual. It has meant two years of solid thinking and working for me already, selecting
the subjects and trying to get artists experienced enough to carry out the work.’ 10

William Dixson. 1930s. Photo SLNSW.

The southern bronze doors are composed of six square and two rectangular panels with
surrounds attached to metal framework. The square panels consist of cast medallions of fifteenth
and sixteenth century printers’ marks while the rectangular panels are castings of flowers and
acanthus leaves. The surrounds are also cast with New South Wales wildflowers and acanthus
leaves. To my knowledge they have not been opened in more than twenty years except for
maintenance, until on two occasions in 2014 for senior library staff and delegates to the Library
History Forum to view at which I was present.

There are inner glass and bronze doors with etched printers’ marks. Further details will be
elaborated in chapter four. Outside the doors are a square platform and two stone plinths each
supporting a cast bronze candelabrum with imbricated acanthus leaves and a spherical globe. 

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10 Sydney Daily Telegraph. 4 October 1940. I don’t have a page number. This came from the William Ifould Papers.
the platform are six steps leading to a semi-circular viewing platform which, alas, is not accessible to the public. The southern doors are very important but are being overlooked by the Library, the very institution which should cherish them. There are only five small references to them in the library literature, as mentioned, as mentioned on page one, and are not available for viewing during the walking tours of the library treasures. In reviews of heritage issues several firms have emphasised their importance. “All bronze doors on the north and south facades have high significance.” It is important for the public of New South Wales to be able to see the southern doors and understand their relevance. A plan is proposed in chapter five on how this might be achieved.

**Literature Review**

While researching details of the construction of the Mitchell Library, bronze doors and printers’ marks I have read or perused over 300 books, journal articles and newspaper articles in addition to letters and archives from the New South Wales State Records Office. I have been privileged to have received over 300 items from the SLNSW archival records. I have also researched and have had email contact with overseas libraries, particularly the New York Public Library, the Boston Public Library, the Houghton Library at Harvard University, the Rush Rhees Library at the University of Rochester, the Library of Congress and the British Library. There is much information on library architecture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. There is also ample literature on the history of printing but little on printers’ marks and it has been necessary to rely heavily on late nineteenth century and early twentieth century books, along with a few recent journal articles and researchers interested in this area.

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Little information on printers marks is available in the literature, especially recently. Project Gutenberg was very helpful in this area as it was with the invention of printing. The most informative were: Patricia Cost, *Printers’ Marks in History* (1985) in her article showed images and discussed the importance of sixteen printers’ marks from Fust and Schoeffer (1457) to William Morris’ Kelmscott Press (1896). Hugh William Davies, *Devices of Early Printers 1457 - 1560* (1974); John Gartner, *The Craftsmen’s Emblem, the story of the 1457 device* (1941) which was written for the Mitchell Library in 1940 celebrating 500 years since Gutenberg’s invention of printing. Karen Nipps, *Printers’ Devices as Decorative Elements in Library Architecture* (2013)
wrote a journal article showing and discussing twelve printers’ marks decorating libraries in America. The most recent articles are by Cost and Nipps yet William Roberts, *Printers’ Marks* (1893) which is the oldest, is still the most definitive publication in this area. Robert’s book of 263 pages shows images and has detailed analysis of 227 printers’ marks.

Literature on library buildings abounds especially American, which influenced the final design for the Mitchell Library. It emphasises with reference to the way libraries use architecture to signal the importance of the building. Amongst the most significant of those read include: Henry Hope Reed and H Stafford Bryant: *The Library of Congress* (1997); Henry Hope Reed and Francis Morrone, Anne Day Photographs: *The New York Public Library* (2011). These two excellently produced books give expansive accounts with many images of the architecture and decorations of these two major library buildings. They also added debate to the arguments of late nineteenth and early twentieth century library architecture about the preferred design of the major reading room; be it circular or octagonal as is the Thomas Jefferson Building or rectangular as the New York Public Library. This aspect is discussed in chapter three. Herbert Small, *Handbook of the New Public Library in Boston* (1895) has detailed discussion of this important building which was modelled on the Bibliotecque Ste Geneveive including the many printers’ marks carved onto the facades of the building. The design of the the main facade of New York Public Library had a huge influence on the final design of the main facade of the Mitchell Library. William Ifould, during his long tenure as Principal Librarian, had the ear of his minister and managed to have him to override the Government Architect to change the 1905 plans to, in 1940, produce a facade similar to NYPL. There is much information on church bronze doors, although little on library doors. Reed and Bryant, also Reed, Malone and Day were helpful, as was Small.

In the literature about the New South Wales State Library in general, especially the Mitchell Library and more particularly the four pairs of bronze doors, there was little relevant information on
the ML southern doors. In searching the literature for other’s ideas of the importance of the cultural symbolism of the bronze doors I have found information sparse, though some was included in Harold Bayley, *The Lost Language of Symbolism* (1912). Aldus Pius Manutius (1449 - 1515) whose printer’s mark (1502) is a dolphin and anchor. A dolphin was an ancient Greek symbol for the saviour of the shipwrecked and an anchor symbolises hope. Instead the focus of the Mitchell Library collections has been on the design, collections and efficient running of a library. The following proved to be the most useful: David J Jones, *A Source of Inspiration and Delight* (1988) which is a comprehensive account of the history of the designs of the State Library buildings from the mid 1850s until 1987 and his PhD thesis: William Herbert Ifould and the Development of Library Services in NSW 1912 - 42, 1993 gives a close insight into the personality and drive of William Ifould. Fred Schlipf, *The Dark Side of Library Architecture, The Persistence of Dysfunctional Designs* (2011) shows that while major library buildings have imposing facades denoting it as a building of importance, inside many of them are poorly planned as in the past the architect often left it to the librarian to work out the functional areas in the best possible way. This aspect of design problems of the Mitchell Library is analysed in chapter three. State Library of New South Wales Records were an excellent source however it required much time to extract the relevant information.

It has proven difficult to obtain details of William Ifould and of his ideas for the Mitchell Library. He did not keep a diary or notes. He lived and worked in an era of “old boys” networks and was a traditionalist during changing times when modernists were the rising influence. He belonged to golf clubs and Rotary, had the ear of his ministers and was in close contact with Sir William Dixson, the major donor during Ifould’s connection with the building of the major part of the Mitchell Library from 1939 to 1943. Dixson’s generous donation of 4,000 pounds to fund

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12 Bayley. op.cit. 28, 49.

bronze entrance doors on the northern facade to honour David Scott Mitchell lay dormant for five years fortunately gathering interest creating sufficient funds to pay for other major decorations of the library including the southern doors also made of bronze. The southern doors, while being the subject of my thesis, are part of the many decorations, embellishments and artwork of the Mitchell Library which have their own symbolism. They were all funded by generous donations. As it has been necessary to analyse the importance and artistic merits of all of these, I thus needed to research literature on these items. It has been most important to continue reading more than 300 State Library of New South Wales archival Records, each containing many files, which were retrieved for me, especially Out-letters 1922 to 1942 and the Trustees’ minute books.

I hope this thesis will help to fill some of the deficiencies in the literature, also drawing attention of library scholars, of architectural scholars, of the Sydney populace, of the library readers to the doors. Several staff members of the State Library of New South Wales have expressed an active interest in reading it, as have some American librarians with whom I have corresponded.
Chapter Two

Invention of Printing and Early Printers’ Marks

History of Printing

In his excellent book on Johann Gutenberg, John Man states there were four turning points in human contacts “each recording moments at which communication flicked to a new level of speed and outreach”. These were firstly the invention of writing, secondly the invention of the alphabet (in which most researchers would include those languages where the written word is in characters), thirdly the invention of printing with moveable type and fourthly the arrival of the internet.14

One of the main focal points of this thesis is the invention of printing which is discussed in this chapter together with printers’ marks, panels of which are on the southern doors of the Mitchell Library. These are a celebration of the invention of printing, hence books which are the backbone of libraries. Johann Gutenberg was the first person in Europe to print books with moveable metal type, producing cheap multiple copies all exactly the same, effecting one of the huge changes in European civilisation which needs to be continually acknowledged. Asian printing with moveable type happened earlier; however, as will be further discussed it did not have large print runs and public access. Prior to Gutenberg’s invention books were laboriously copied by scribes inevitably leading to errors. As a direct result of Gutenberg the world population has personal access to books in libraries such as the Mitchell Library.

There is doubt about Gutenberg’s date of birth. Without supporting evidence, it has been accepted for many years that he was born in 1400; however, the most reliable date is somewhere

between 1394 and 1404. While the invention of printing was celebrated by the general population of book purchasers, Gutenberg, the inventor was not. In 1896 the mayor and citizens of Mainz, where he had his printing works, decided this should change, therefore the 500th anniversary of the birth of Gutenberg should be celebrated. The date chosen was St John’s Day, 24 June 1400, so on that day in 1900 the celebrations started which led to the establishment of the excellent Gutenberg Museum in Mainz. Gutenberg probably went to school at the monastery of St Viktor near Mainz, starting his education of Latin of which he needed detailed knowledge later as a master printer. He may also have attended Erfurt University. Mainz had long been an important town at a crossing over the River Rhine at the junction of the River Main and in 1400 Mainz had a population of 6,000 compared to Vienna and Cologne 35,000, Lubeck 30,000, Strasbourg 25,000, Nuremberg and Erfurt 20,000. While Mainz was a small town, it was important as its Archbishop was a powerful figure being part of the small panel selecting the Holy Roman Emperor. In the early 1400s Europe was a sparsely populated continent decimated by the Bubonic Plague (Black Death) in the latter half of the fourteenth century, with towns the size of today’s villages joined by muddy paths about six hours walk apart through dangerous forests “the domains of wolves and spirits”. In 1340 the total population of Europe was about 73.5 million, by 1450 this had reduced to 50.6 million. It is currently about 730 million. Mainz had a population of about 20,000 before being hit by the 1348-9 Plague.

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16 Man. op.cit. 27 - 9.
17 Kapr. op.cit. 38.
18 Kapr. op.cit. 40 - 46.
19 Kapr. op.cit. 25 - 29.
20 Man. op.cit. 6.
22 Man. op.cit. 22.
Gutenberg moved from Mainz to Strasbourg in 1430 and in that year started work on his printing press with moveable metal type which he developed to a working model in 1440\(^{23}\), the year celebrated as the invention of the printing press. He then followed a steady progressive, incremental path to refine his press, and to invent the process of cast type with the necessary metal box clasps and a suitable ink culminating in his magnificent 42 line Bible in 1454. There were challenges to be met; he was sued for breach of promise in Strasbourg in 1437, the outcome of which is unknown. However Gutenberg was free to follow his dream of the invention of printing with moveable type.\(^{24}\) He was involved in a lawsuit in Strasbourg in 1439 regarding a partnership dispute, nevertheless the case was settled in Gutenberg’s favour and he was able to continue the project.\(^{25}\) Gutenberg’s first press, adapted from a common screw press, was constructed with Konrad Saspach in only three weeks in 1438, then continually improved. Gutenberg returned to Mainz and set up a printing shop in 1444. In 1446 he printed “Fragment of the World Judgement”, a book of seventy four pages which ran to seventeen copies and in 1447 “Calendar of 1448”. Before 1448 Gutenberg printed a popular Latin grammar book the “Paris Donatus” which ran to three copies.\(^{26}\) He formed a partnership with a wealthy banker, Johann Fust in 1450, borrowing 800 Guilden from him and immediately began work on a bible initially of 40 lines. He began printing his 42 line bible in 1452 initially with four printing presses then later six presses. He also printed many papal indulgences in four different forms in 1454. These are the earliest dated printed works surviving. He had been working on his technique since the 1430s improving his ideas and his printing presses and finally printed the 42 line Bible, generally referred to as the Gutenberg Bible, in late 1454,\(^{27}\) though his earliest known work was created seven years earlier:

\(^{23}\) Man. op.cit. 26
The earliest known example of typographical printing, with separate movable type, is a fragment of an Almanac in German for the year 1448, therefore being printed the year preceding; this part of a single leaf, printed on only one side, is in the type of the 36 line Bible, and therefore assigned to Europe’s prototypographer Gutenberg.\(^{28}\)

To comprehend the significance of Johann Gutenberg’s amazing invention of printing with moveable type in Europe it is necessary to investigate if there was a link with such earlier inventions in East Asia, especially the three most fundamental requirements: paper, ink and moveable metal type. Significantly the only one was paper, though he printed his most prestigious bibles on vellum. The ink used in Chinese and Korean printing was water based, satisfactory for Asian and European block printing, but unsatisfactory for Gutenberg’s press resulting in him deciding to use a drying linseed oil based ink only twenty years after artists, especially Jan van Eyck and Roger van der Weyden, commenced using oil based paints. The artists’ oil based paint was slow drying, as it is today, while Gutenberg’s oil based ink was rapid drying. While there is no verifiable evidence of the production of the black ink for Gutenberg’s 42 line bible, recent research using cyclotron analysis with a proton milliprobe has shown there to be a large quantity of copper and lead oxides in the ink which gave the glossy black image.\(^{29}\) There was also probably some lamp black as used by scribes and other early printers. Gutenberg was certainly an innovator in choosing ideas from other related areas and adapting them for printing. Even though we have images of early printing presses we do not know the exact design of Gutenberg’s press, which would have followed the design of the many domestic and industrial screw presses some of which are used for wine. Like other sensible people dealing with changing circumstances, Gutenberg and subsequent printers developed improvements on existing designs. There is general agreement with Kapr when he states


“All early views of printing presses show remarkable resemblances to each other, pointing to the conclusion that they must have been closely modeled on the one built by the Strasbourg chest maker Konrad Saspach to Gutenberg’s instructions.”

This image shows an ink man on the left with his two prepared ink balls, a type setter on the right setting up the type for the next page and the printer pulling a long lever for the screw to press the paper down in the inked type. The press is constructed of massive wooden frames to absorb the pressure of the printing head which has a large screw and a horizontal lever. Below this is a sliding carriage which when slid out allowed the type to be inked and when the required repeats of printing a page had been finished allowed the type setting to be replaced with the next one. The carriage is in two parts hinged together, which when opened allowed the printed sheet to be removed and placed in a pile or hung up and allowed to dry. The new previously dampened sheet is attached to the upper

30 Kapr. op.cit. 133.
portion of the carriage, slid into place over the newly inked type and the lever pulled towards the printer to print. Kapr claimed these types of presses were all based on the Gutenberg press.31

The earliest known image of a printing press, appeared in Lyon in 1499 in *La Grant Danse Macabre* (The Dance of Death) by Matthias Huss. The image depicts death as it visits a compositor, a printer at the press, the ink man and an adjacent bookseller. At this period the master printer was printer, publisher and bookseller.

La Grant Dans Macabre. Lyon 1499.

The Danse Macabre (Dance of Death) began as a Middle Ages phenomenon arising in France in the early fifteenth century, the earliest known example being a painting of the Danse Macabre on the wall of the cloister of the Church of the Holy Innocents, Paris in 1424. Each living person of all ranks has a skeleton reaching out to hold him or her, implying that death comes to us

31 Kapr. op.ci. 133 - 137.
all, sometimes unexpectedly. The religious massage in this was to repent all sins to achieve redemption. This applied as much to an early printing workshop as to any other undertaking.

One printer who deserves special mention is Jodocus Badius, because his mark, first used in 1507, includes an early image of a printing shop in action. The press takes centre stage, surrounded by the three members of the printing team. In front is the pressman, pulling the screw press lever (“devil’s tail”) to press each sheet of paper against the inked type. To the right, the compositor selects the individual pieces of moveable type from a case and lines them all up on his composing stick, while checking his accuracy against the manuscript copy propped up nearby. And in the back, the ink man holds two leather balls covered in ink, ready to stamp onto the type for the next sheet.

An apprentice printer was sometimes referred to as a “Printer’s Devil” as he was the one who swung the “devil’s tail”.

Printer's mark of Jodocus Badius, from Baptista’s Prima Pars Operum, 1507.

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33 Meredith Mann. *Mark My Words: Printers’ Marks in the Rare Book Division*. NYPL. 2014.
Early printers’ marks were a form of identification as the equivalent of modern-day intellectual copyright. The above three images of printing presses are remarkably similar, despite some variation, in the size and support for the cross beam and, in the Danse Macabre print, the press screw has a left hand thread, indicating the continuation of Gutenberg’s design. The Gutenberg Museum, Mainz and the Museum of Printing History, Houston have working models of what they believe to be Gutenberg’s printing press, similar to the above, allowing visitors in Houston to print their own copy of a page of the Gutenberg Bible.

The history of printing in Asia, long before Gutenberg, needs a brief explanation here. In China wood block printing began with religious images and playing cards produced as multiple texts around 200AD, and similarly in India around 300 AD, predating European printing by 1,100 years. About 1425, block books with text and multiple images became available in Europe. For some time this type of book had advantages over manuscripts and even later moveable type, as it had fewer pages with many illustrations. Woodblock printing continued to be used in Europe in conjunction with moveable type printing for illustrations, title pages, page borders, initials and very large letters.

About 1040 AD Bi Sheng of the Chinese Northern Song Dynasty invented printing with moveable ceramic type held in a metal forme, followed by moveable clay type in 1193. Clay type was not as fragile as one might imagine and could survive being dropped two metres onto a hard floor without breaking. Nevertheless they did not have the precision of metal type.

The most significant Asian advances in printing with moveable type occurred in Korea in the fourteenth century. Significantly the oldest surviving book printed with moveable metal type is the Jikji (Anthology of Great Buddhist Zen Teachings) printed at the Heungdeok Temple, Cheongju.

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34 Kapr, op.cit. 109.
36 Twitchett. op.cit. 74.
during the Goryeo Dynasty in 1377, over seventy years before Gutenberg’s Bible. This book was lost for many years after the last remnants were transferred to France about 1890. The book was found in 1967 by Dr. Park Byung Sun when working as a librarian in the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris where it was later displayed in 1972. The Jikji remains in Paris as France has refused requests for its repatriation. The Cheongju Early Printing Museum, with examples of their early printing techniques, is located at the Heungdoek Temple site.


In what has been termed “Paper’s Thousand-Year Journey from China to Europe” paper was made in China from 105 AD. It gradually spread west and was made by the Arabs from about 750. Damascus became the main source of paper for Europe as by 743 the Caliphate of the Umayyads stretched from India to Spain. King Roger of Sicily signed the earliest known paper document in Europe written in Arabic and Latin, dated 1109. The manufacturing process traveled through North
Africa to Spain then Italy in the thirteenth century which then became the main source for all of Europe.\textsuperscript{37}

In Egypt Papyrus scrolls date from at least the First Dynasty of Semti-Hespri around 2,900 BC.\textsuperscript{38} Papyrus is a thin paper-like material made from the pith of the papyrus plant, Cyperus papyrus, which was cultivated in the swamps on the Nile Valley before being harvested and processed by layering in moist conditions in nearby factories.\textsuperscript{39} Documents were written on sheets of papyrus joined together end to end and rolled up into a scroll which was unrolled as it was read. Until the use of parchment became available, quires of papyrus were sometimes made by folding eight leaves of papyrus, and later many leaves to form codices. From 180BC to 100AD papyrus scrolls were linked as a writing surface by parchment which was prepared from animal skins. Sheets of parchment were later folded to form quires from which book form codices were made. Early Christian writers soon adopted the codex form, and in the Græco-Roman world it then became common to cut sheets from papyrus rolls to form codices. Papyrus was suitable for the hot, dry climate of Egypt, although it was unsuited for the cooler, humid climate of Europe. Until paper was available in Europe the product of choice for manuscripts was vellum or parchment.\textsuperscript{40} Parchment is made from sheep and goat skin while vellum is made from calf skin. Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great in 331 BC and was a Hellenistic centre in Egypt and a link between Greece and the Nile valley. Alexander gave instructions for a library to be built following the traditions of those in Greece and Persia.\textsuperscript{41} The Library of Alexandria was founded about 300 BC by Ptolemy I Soter and had about 500,000 scrolls.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{37} T F Carter. op.cit. 132 - 135.
\textsuperscript{38} David Diringer. \textit{The Book before Printing}. 1982. 142.
\textsuperscript{40} Daniel J Boorstin. \textit{The Discoverers}. 1984. 525.
\textsuperscript{41} Roy Macleod (ed.) \textit{The Library of Alexandria}. 2000. 1.
\textsuperscript{42} Peter Green. \textit{Alexandria to Actium}. 1990. 86, 88.
Founded sometime prior to 300BC Pergamon (Pergamum) was an important ancient Greek city, located in Anatolia. While there is no consensus regarding the exact location of the Royal Library of Pergamon many authorities place it in the sanctuary of Athena. This was the main reading room containing up to 200,000 scrolls. There is an excellent Pergamon Museum in Berlin which has large reconstructed buildings including a copy of the Pergamon Altar.

In China the Mongol Empire rose to power rapidly and at its peak covered a greater land mass than any other empire in history until the British Empire in 1920. By 1279 it controlled from Korea to Russia and Syria. As a result there was trade and the exchange of ideas. By 1300 the Silk Road extended from Xian, China to the Middle East, the main route going via Lanzhou to Dunhuang and Kasghar. From there it went to Samarkand, Bukhara, Merv, Teheran, with one branch via Trebizond to Constantinople. The other branch went to Baghdad again dividing with the northern branch to Antioch and the southern to Damascus and Tyre. From there the sea route went to Venice, Sicily and southern Italy. There were even diplomatic exchanges between Karakorum and the Vatican. There is, however, no evidence to show printing was brought from China to the west through trade. Some half century after Gutenberg, a Chinese book came to the king of Portugal through sea trade. Because the Mongol empire stretched as far as the Adriatic Sea and Bohemia, it is entirely possible the Korean method of printing on paper with moveable metal type reached the Rhineland during the thirteenth, fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. However there is no record of it and given the disintegration of the Mongolian Empire in 1368 it is unlikely. Two Franciscan missionaries were in Karakorum in 1246 and on their return to Cologne wrote of their experiences. There is, however, no record of any attempt at printing with moveable type in Europe

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44 T F Carter. op.cit. 163.
45 T F Carter. op.cit. 159.
46 Kapr. op.cit. 116.
before Gutenberg, although it is probable there was knowledge of the existence of printed books but not the process.

While it is almost universally acknowledged Gutenberg was the inventor in Europe of printing with a press using movable type by 1440, there remains a challenger in Lourens Janszoon Coster of Haarlem about 1440. The reports of Coster’s achievements were first made public in the Cologne Chronicle in 1499, which stated Donatuses, products for a good cause, were printed in Holland before 1440.\textsuperscript{47} In “Batavia” by Hadrianus Junius (Adriaen de Jonghe) written in 1568 and published after his death in 1588, 140 years after the events were supposed to have taken place, it was stated Coster was walking in the woods and carved letters in bark to make images to print on paper, initially to amuse his grandchildren and later to use metal letters and print with ink.\textsuperscript{48} Some typographic books originally attributed to Coster are proven to have been printed after 1470. There was for a short time in Haarlem a difficult and tedious process of forming metal type with a sand mould process which proved to be a dead end and most likely not used by Coster.\textsuperscript{49} Although there is a monument in Haarlem to the “inventor of the art of printing” and a statue of Coster in Vleeshal, all claims in favour of Coster being the first to invent printing with moveable metal type are skimpy and have produced no reliable evidence.\textsuperscript{50} On reviewing the interpretation of McMurtrie and Kapr it is conclusive there is no reliable evidence to support the claims of Coster inventing printing.

Johann Fust had lent 800 guilders to Gutenberg in 1450 and another 800 in 1452 for completion of his bible. The estimated number of copies of the 42 line bible is 180, of which 140 were on paper and 40 on vellum for which Gutenberg needed 50,000 sheets of paper measuring\textsuperscript{47} Douglas C McMurtrie \textit{The Dutch Claims to the Invention of Printing}. 1928. 9
\textsuperscript{48} McMurtrie. \textit{Dutch Claims}. op.cit. 11 - 12. Kapr. op.cit. 100 - 106
\textsuperscript{49} Kapr. op.cit. 103 - 104
\textsuperscript{50} Kapr. op.cit. 106.
16.5 X 12 inches, and 5,000 calfskins. The total time for Gutenberg to complete the 42 line bible was about two and a half years. He needed to cast about 100,000 types which would have taken about six months. Printing 180 copies of 1282 pages involved 230,760 passes through the presses. As the mediaeval working year was about 200 days because of the large number of religious festivals, the completion of the printing would have taken another two years. The State Library of New South Wales has a leaf of the Gutenberg Bible and a leaf of Fust and Schoeffer’s 1462 bible.

When Gutenberg was unable to repay the loan Fust took him to court, won the lawsuit and acquired the six printing presses. After a preliminary judgement, on 6 November 1455 the final judgement was made at the Convent of the Barefoot Friars by the Notary, Ulrich Helmasperger. Gutenberg did not attend, probably as he knew he had no redress. Fust obtained possession of Gutenberg’s workshop, all of the presses, type, printed works including the recently completed 42 line bible and all the workmen. He could have obtained more nevertheless he allowed Gutenberg to retain the Gutenhof which he had recently inherited, the one printing press therein, various types including the 42 line type and possibly some of the profits of the bible. As seen below Gutenberg utilised Scriptor, Rubricators and Illuminators for large capital letters and other decorations.

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52 Kapr. op.cit. 20.

53 Man. op.cit. 184 - 190.
Gutenberg went on to print the Catholicon (1460) and the 36 line (Bamberg) bible, the first edition of which was completed in 1460.\textsuperscript{54} He fled Mainz during the 1462 war to Eltville where there were family and friends. There he did some further printing and in 1465 was granted a pension-in-kind by Adolf von Nassua the then Archbishop of Mainz. He was allowed to return to Mainz if he wished but did not. He died in Eltville on 3 February 1468.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{54} McMurtie. \textit{Some facts on the invention of Printing}. op.cit. 1939. 28 - 30. Man. op.cit. 199 - 201
\textsuperscript{55} Man. op.cit. 208 - 213.
Peter Schoeffer worked for Gutenberg during the printing of his bible, then joined Fust and later married his daughter. Gutenberg’s was a large workshop employing 6 compositors, 12 printers (6 inkers and 6 pressmen), also a typecaster, engraver, inkmaker and others. As Gutenberg did not use a printer’s mark there is dispute over the authenticity of his later printing of the 36 line Bible and the Catholicon. There is also doubt over the authenticity of the Mainz Psalter; it is probable it was started by Gutenberg, as the actual printing began in 1455 at the time of the lawsuit, and completed in 1457 by Fust and Schoeffer. There is also doubt about the authenticity of the printer of the 42 line “Gutenberg” bible. It was possibly completed by Fust and Schoeffer and, though unlikely, some argue it was both started and completed by them.

While Gutenberg’s workmen had been sworn to secrecy, after he lost control of his printing works there was a dissemination of printers. As a result an explosion in the numbers of printed books occurred making them much more accessible to the general public. This led to better informed and culturally aware societies and as European towns and cities moved from being isolated, independent entities into states “bookmaking” became an important factor in nation building.

Early European printers came from a variety of backgrounds: Gutenberg was a goldsmith; Fust, banker, money lender and possibly goldsmith; Schoeffer, clericus and engraver; Aldus, scholar; Petit, publisher, poet and scholar; Giunta, publisher; Caxton, mercer and binder; Pynson, glover. Jan Veldener was the first printer in Holland, worked in Cologne with Caxton whom he trained and who in turn financed him, then Veldener went to Leuven in 1472. He helped Caxton establish in Bruges for the 1472-73 printing of Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye. He was a punch

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56 Kapr. op.cit. 222 - 224.
57 Kapr. op.cit. 202 - 203.
58 McMurtrie. Some facts on the invention of Printing. 1939. 22.
59 Christine Sylvester. Art/Museums: International relations where you least expect it. 2009. 28.
cutter who created typefaces for himself and others. Veldener went to Utrecht in 1477, returning to Leuven in 1484. Many printers were metal craftsmen, although some scribes became printers such as the first three in Augsburg.\textsuperscript{60}

Within fifty years there were a thousand printing works in 350 cities across Europe. Between 1450 and 1500 30,000 titles were published, a total of about nine million books,\textsuperscript{61} far exceeding the total production of handwritten books from the eighth to fifteenth centuries.\textsuperscript{62} Prior to Gutenberg’s invention it took a scribe one month to make a copy of one book. With the introduction of printing a print run of 500 could be done in one week.\textsuperscript{63} Umberto Eco gives a very good description of the layout and workings of a scriptorium and its scribes, rubricators and illuminators in his book “The Name of the Rose”. Recently a bible on vellum has been made at a scriptorium in Wales for a Benedictine abbey in America at a cost of $8 million, the first such commission in 500 years.\textsuperscript{64} The SLNSW has purchased a Heritage Copy of this for its collection. Prior to book printing, the books copied by scribes were almost exclusively theological works. The changes in the variety of titles printed in the late fifteenth century is interesting. Out of the 30,000 titles then printed 80% were in Latin. The book market was dominated by Latin works until the end of the seventeenth century, following the Reformation in Central Europe during the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{65} It has been estimated that Theology comprised 45%, Literature (including Philosophy) 36%, Law 11%, and the rest Science (including Medicine and Pseudo science).\textsuperscript{66} By 1996 10,000 million books were being printed per year using 50 million tons of paper, plus about 9000 daily

\begin{footnotes}
\item[61] Fussel. op.cit. 8.
\item[63] John Man. op.cit. 2.
\item[64] www.saintjohnsbible.org - viewed January 2017
\item[65] Fussel. op.cit. 113
\item[66] Abel. op.cit. 41.
\end{footnotes}
newspapers and magazines bringing the total annual use of paper to 130 million tons.\textsuperscript{67} While some commentators have predicted the demise of printed works, by 2012 this production had risen to 400 million tonnes of paper being produced where it appears to have stabilised.\textsuperscript{68} Currently in library reading rooms it is obvious to observers about half the readers are focusing on their laptop computers, however the rest are reading books. Once finalised by Gutenberg the printing press was continually upgraded, however the process remained fundamentally unchanged until the relatively recent introduction of film setting, offset processing and computerised techniques.\textsuperscript{69}

**Printers’ Marks.**

Because the southern doors of the Mitchell Library have panels with printers’ marks cast in bronze this necessitates an explanation of these marks, their history and significance. These doors were designed in 1940, the 500th anniversary of the invention in Europe of printing with moveable type by Johann Gutenberg, thus it is symbolic they have printers’ marks.

A printer’s mark, device, emblem, symbol or insignia has been described as a trademark which acts as an intellectual property copyright to let everyone know who was the printer of the book and usually the date and place of printing,\textsuperscript{70} and which has endured until the twentieth century with printing craftsmen proud of their tradition until the demise of type set printing. A different view was taken by Frank Schecter who stated the primary function of printers’ devices and marks would appear to have been decorative rather than regulatory,\textsuperscript{71} though the former argument is more persuasive.

\textsuperscript{67} Man. op.cit. 4.

\textsuperscript{68} Swedish Forest Industries Federation. *Global Paper Production 2015*.


\textsuperscript{71} Frank Isaac Schechter. *Early Printers’ and Publishers’ Devices*. 1925. 3.
Now the similar marks in books are publishers’ marks, though in the early days printers were also publishers and book sellers. The first printer’s mark was used by Johann Fust and Peter Shoeffer in their 14 August 1457 printing of the Mainz Psalter, which was the first book printed bearing the date and place of printing with the names of the printers. The Mainz Psalter, of which there are ten surviving copies, started concurrently with the 42 line Bible about 1452 under Gutenberg. He knew the Bible would be a best seller and probably thought of the Psalter himself though it was commissioned by the Archbishop of Mainz, Diether von Isenberg,\(^\text{72}\) who knew Gutenberg.

Mainz Psalter. 1457. Image of the colophon from SLNSW facsimile.

For some unknown reason the mark did not appear in all copies of the Psalter and now exists in only one copy in the Austrian Nationalbibliothek,\(^\text{73}\) of which the SLNSW has an excellent reproduction. This mark is distinctive in red, though all their subsequent marks were in black. The

\(^\text{72}\) Man. Op cit. 193 - 195

right shield has the Schoeffer family crest, the stars later being replaced by roses after the death of Fust in 1468, while the left shield has the Fust family crest. For their printed works over the next five years Fust and Schoeffer did not employ a mark however did finish with a colophon. Their next work with a mark was their 1462 Biblia Latina.

Johann Gutenberg did not use a printer’s mark. He came from a financially secure family background with a family crest which he could have used, or part thereof, as a printer’s mark. There are many interpretations of this crest, several of which are plausible but none is definitive.  

Gutenberg Family Crest

It has been suggested the reason for his lack of a mark was a reluctance of purchasers buying typed instead of inscribed books and manuscripts, as were other printers of the 1450s and 1460s. Some collectors would not have a printed book in their libraries, for instance Frederico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino (1422 - 82) who had the largest library in Italy outside the Vatican with its own scriptorium “would have been ashamed to have a printed book in his library.”

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Bookmaking by scribes continued alongside printed books for some time resulting in as many scribes in the 50 years after Gutenberg’s invention as in the 50 years before.

The next printers’ marks appeared from 1470: Gallus, Rome 1470 who counterfeited Fust and Schoeffer’s mark; Ther Hoemen, Cologne 1471 of a shield bearing two crosses, a star and the printer’s initials hanging obliquely from a leafy branch; Gotz, Cologne 1474 has a shield with arms and a crest; Frisner and Sensenschmidt, Nurnberg 1475 with twin shields with two scythe blades on the left and and a pelican on the right; followed by Joh de Westphalia, Louvain 1475; Wenssler, Basle 1476; Richel, Basle 1476; Zainer, Augsburg 1477; Jacobszoon and Yemantszoon, Delft 1477; and Mansion, Bruges 1477. 76

The range of books was from serious and religious texts, as was previously the norm, to popular stories, as is the case today. Even though there were about 1000 printing works by 1500, there were only 660 printers’ marks throughout Europe and some printers changed their mark over time.77

The following are the six printers selected for their marks to be cast in panels on the bronze southern doors of the Mitchell Library. In discussing these I have relied on Davies, who emphasises Working Period rather than solely Births and Deaths.

Veldener’s Mark.

76 Davies, op.cit. 110.
77 Davies, op.cit. 113.
Jan Veldener, birth date unknown, died between 1486 and 1496. His working periods were 1471 - 72 Cologne, 1473 - 77 Louvain, 1478 - 81 Utrecht, 1483 - 84 Culemborg and 1484 - 85 Louvain. His printer’s mark (1476) has the twin shields of Veldener and Louvain with Veldener’s name between, suspended from a branch of the Tree of Knowledge with foliage. Veldener taught William Caxton the process of printing in Cologne in 1472. Caxton probably financed Veldener’s printing works and it was from Veldener that Caxton acquired his press and workmen. Veldener is recognised as one who worked on the start of the first two books of Caxton’s *History of Troy* because of the printing in red which is a characteristic of Veldener’s work. 78 SLNSW has a copy of Veldener’s Fasciculus Temporum 1476.

Giunta’s Mark

Luc Antonio Giunta lived from 1457 to 1538. His working period was 1482 - 1536 in Florence and Venice. His printer’s mark (1497) is a broad Fleur de Lis, the symbol of the Christian Trinity, and the emblem of Florence with the initials LA. He was from Florence, left in the mid 1470’s with his brother Bernado for Venice, then a centre of printing and publishing. The Florentine


branch of the family were mainly publishers and booksellers and his successful enterprise in Venice supported them financially. Among his most successful works were all twenty three volumes of Justinian’s *Institutes* in 1516. SLNSW holds copies of *Virgil’s Works*, 1502 and two copies of the three volume *Delle Navigitione et Viaggi* from 1550 to 1613 purchased in 1894.

Fust and Schoeffer’s Mark.

Johann Fust (c1400 - 1466) working period 1457 - 66 and Peter Schoeffer (c1425 - c1503) working period 1452 - 1502, Mainz. Their printers’ mark (1457) has the twin shields of Fust and Schoeffer suspended from a twig of the Tree of Knowledge. Fust was a wealthy banker and money lender who, as previously stated, lent money to Gutenberg and formed a partnership with him and subsequently took over Gutenberg’s printing equipment. Schoeffer studied at university in Paris, became a scribe then became apprenticed to Gutenberg and later became foreman in the printing works. He joined Fust as a partner after the takeover of Gutenberg’s printing works and later married Fust’s daughter. In addition to the Mainz Psalter and the 1462 Bible they printed the popular Cicero’s *De Officiis*. The printing business was very successful and served as a model for other emerging printing works. It was carried on by Schoeffer’s sons, John and Peter the younger,
later by his grandson Ivo until 1555. SLNSW has a leaf from the 1462 Bible, the original in the strong room and a reproduction available for general readers.

Aldus’ Mark

Aldus Pius Manutius (1449 - 1515). Working period 1494 - 1512 in Venice. His printer’s mark (1502) is a dolphin and anchor with AL and DVS either side. The family motto is “Festina Lente” which is “Hasten Slowly”. He used it initially on the bindings of his books. This device was previously used by Vespian, Domitian and possibly Augustus as it is the reverse of the image on Roman coins from the time of Vespian and Domitian. A dolphin was an ancient Greek symbol for the saviour of the shipwrecked and an anchor symbolises hope. Aldus invented Italic type in 1501 subsequently using it in all his works copying the handwriting of Petrarch as it was compact and allows more words per line than Roman and he also introduced pocket size Octavo books. The

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81 Bayley. op.cit. 28, 49.
State Library of New South Wales has copies of *The Works of Virgil* 1522 and *The Works of Julius Caesar* (1575) by his grandson, Aldus Manutius the Younger.

Jean (Jehan) Petit, (birth and death dates unknown). He had many printer's marks, his working period was 1495 - 1530 in Paris printing over 1000 works with fifteen presses. His was a large family firm lasting 366 years, and had many printer's marks. The printer's mark (1516) is a shield with a narrow Fleur de Lis and initials “I P” on either side. SLNSW has eleven items from the press of Jean Petit dating from 1502 to 1532. One of these items was purchased in 1892 and two

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82 Roberts. op.cit. 112.
83 Davies. op.cit. 374.
are from David Scott Mitchell’s bequest. The 1502 item of St Augustine’s selections has Jehan Petit’s printer’s mark on the title page.

William Caxton (1415-92) whose working periods were 1471-2 Cologne, 1474-6 Bruges and 1476-91 London. He was a wealthy businessman and English emissary in the Low Countries watching the impact of printing and its business opportunities. Caxton used his printer’s mark on few of his printed works, the first being “Missale ad Usum Sarum’ 1487. The large letters at each end are his initials, and those between are four and seven in medieval Arabic numerals, which has been interpreted as 1474, a significant year for Caxton. The smaller letters ‘S’ and ‘C’ are suggested to represent Sancta Colonia [Cologne] where Caxton learnt the printing trade from Jan Veldener and Collard Mansion, or as being purely decorative. It was Veldener who made Caxton’s first printing press. 1474 was a very important year for Caxton as he had completed his

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85 Davies. op.cit.194, 574. Avis. op.cit. 10. Roberts. op.cit. 57.
“Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye” and in that year presented it to his patron, Princess Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, who was a sister of King Edward IV of England. Caxton was employed by Margaret from 1468 in the capacity of a financial and commercial advisory capacity. Margaret had commissioned the work from Caxton then encouraged and edited his translation from French to English. This book was an important moment in his career and printing in English.

Although in many ways the dowager seems to have been rather old fashioned, as far as William Caxton was concerned she was at the forefront of revolutionary change. Her patronage resulted in the printing at Bruges of the first book in English and ultimately in the introduction of printing into England.  

In September 1476 Caxton left Bruges and set up his printing presses in Westminster where he produced Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*, the first book printed in England. Caxton printed over one hundred books and was responsible for starting standardising the English language which then had many different dialects often not commonly understood. He was followed by his foreman Wynkyn de Worde, Richard Pynson and the St Albans printer as the earliest English printers. They chose to print books of well known writers such as Chaucer as a commercial proposition knowing they would sell well. SLNSW has six of Caxton’s works including one from David Scott Mitchell’s bequest and “The dictes and sayings of the philosophers” 14 November 1477, the first book printed in England with a date for its printing.

There are at least eighteen examples of the above printers in addition to those of other printers in the collection of SLNSW, several dating from David Scott Mitchell’s collection, some original and others facsimiles. I have been privileged to hold in my hands one of Veldener’s original books from 1476.

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87 Boorstin. op.cit. 521 - 3.

88 Blake. op.cit. 75.
Library Quarterly used 176 different printers’ marks on its cover between 1931 and 1975 of which William Ifould would have been aware during the period when he was intending to use printers’ marks as decorations for the Mitchell Library, initially as marble panels for walls then finally as panels for the southern doors.  

Printers’ marks as decorations of the Mitchell Library were on William Ifould’s mind from the early 1920’s. Ifould wrote to the Print Society, Ringwood, Hampshire, England in 1922 wanting a copy of their Print Society and some advantages it offers to print collectors. In 1924 the Trustees ordered a copy of H R Plomer’s “English Printers’ Ornaments” which, however, is mostly about decorations, adornments, illuminations and rubrications with little relating to printers’ marks. In early 1925 Ifould was in correspondence with the librarian of the University of Illinois, Urbana Library. At that library there are twenty seven tinted glass panels with printers’ marks on the windows completed in 1924 of which Ifould would have been aware. 

There are at least twenty libraries and other buildings with printers’s marks in America dating from 1890 to 1954. I have been unable to discover other buildings apart from the Mitchell Library, Sydney with printers’ marks in other countries which has been confirmed by other researchers including Karen Nipps of Houghton Library, Harvard University: “One thing intriguing me is I could not locate on the web any European examples, leading me to believe it mostly a ‘new world’ phenomenon - romanticizing the Olde World.” A detailed search was made, yet no printers’ marks have been located on library buildings in Britain, Ireland, continental Europe, South Africa, Canada or New Zealand.

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89 John L. Sharpe III. An Index to Printers’ Marks. 1978 40 - 59.
While the use of printers’ marks declined during the seventeenth century, those on the Mitchell Library southern doors are a tribute to the early printers’ craft which gave Europe then the rest of the world printed books leading rapidly to greater literacy and education. These excellent bronze doors with six panels of early printers’ marks are of importance to not only the Mitchell Library but to the whole of the State Library of New South Wales.

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Chapter Three

Mitchell Library Building 1906 to 1987

Having rediscovered the southern bronze doors of the Mitchell Library for myself and most other people in early 2011, I embarked on an exciting journey to analyse those doors, their heritage value and their symbolism to the Mitchell Library and to the people of New South Wales. From the completion of the main part of the Mitchell Library building in 1942 until the construction of the Macquarie Street wing of the State Library of New South Wales building in 1985 to 1987, people walking up to the southern facade of the Mitchell library from Macquarie Street could see and admire the southern doors. This stopped in 1987 and the doors were largely forgotten.

While the bronze southern doors of the Mitchell Library are the subject of this thesis, they need to be viewed as part of the prolonged construction of the Public (later State) Library of New South Wales, especially the Mitchell Wing which is generally called the Mitchell Library. In 1869 the New South Wales Government purchased a subscription library, on the corner of Bent and Macquarie Streets, to form the Sydney Free Public Library. In 1895 the name was changed to the Public Library of New South Wales. In 1910, diagonally opposite the Public Library building, the Mitchell Library opened in what is now the north west corner of the completed Mitchell Library and the Dixson wing was added in 1929. Plans for finishing the Mitchell Library during the 1930s were labelled National Library. When everything was transferred to the new extension in 1942 the Mitchell building was then called the Public Library of New South Wales and changed to State Library of New South Wales in 1975. The Mitchell Wing of the State library of the State Library is still generally call the Mitchell Library.

My focus in this chapter is on late 19th and early 20th century library buildings, their designers, critics and influences on the Mitchell Library building.
Library Reading Rooms

The main reading room is of major importance in library design. There has been debate since the 1850s as to whether the reading room should be circular or rectangular in form.

Photo Biblioteque Nationale de France, Paris.

An early design proposed, but not completed, is by Etienne-Louis Boulee for Royal Library, Paris 1785. This features a long rectangular reading room in the Palais Mazarin, with four levels of bookshelves and a barrel vault ceiling with natural overhead lighting. This design had a large effect on later libraries and art museums. 95

The two major early influences on public library reading rooms were those of Biblioteque Sainte-Geneveive, Place du Pantheon, Paris (1851) and the British Museum, Great Russell Street,

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London (1857). Their spectacular reading rooms were a source of wonder and great pleasure to the assembled readers.

The Bibliothèque Sainte-Genevieve was designed by Henri Labrouste in a block Italian Renaissance style and constructed between 1845 and 1851. It has a rectangular main Reading Room with twin barrel vaulted arches requiring supports along the centre of the room.
In designing the interior design of Biblioteque Sainte-Geneveive, Henri Labrouste was one of the first to utilise industrial age technology with iron columns surmounted by Ionic capitals. The iron supports for the vaults had a perforated leaf design to minimise weight. The rectangular reading room filling the whole upper floor is 75.6 by 21 metres. The facades are in block Renaissance style with the windows topped by a Romanesque arch. This library’s architecture influenced many later library designs, starting a tradition which carried through to the Chicago Public Library completed in 1991.

The following major libraries have rectangular reading rooms: Boston Public Library (BPL) which was directly modeled on Ste Geneveive and constructed 1888 - 1895, New York Public Library (NYPL) 1902 - 1911, Mitchell Library Glasgow 1906 - 1911, Mitchell Library Sydney (ML) 1906 - 1964.

![Boston Public Library Bates Hall Reading Room. Photo Boston Public Library.](image)

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Almost all of the 2500 Carnegie libraries between 1883 and 1929 have rectangular reading rooms, including 1700 in USA and four in Australia, the most important of the latter being the Tasmanian Public Library, Hobart, 1902 which is now the Maritime Museum of Tasmania. There
are so many Carnegie libraries with rectangular reading rooms they became referred to as “Carnegie Rectangles”. They were almost all built with imposing entrance doors, with a staircase leading up to a rectangular reading room. Both the NYPL and the ML have rectangular reading rooms, their design committees having rejected circular and hexagonal suggested designs.

British Museum. Photo British Museum.

British Museum, with its circular reading room, was designed by Sir Robert Smirke in a Neo-Classical Revival style. The building took from 1825 till 1850 to complete and was finally opened to the public in 1857. The main classical facade of the British Museum, of Greek temple design with Ionic columns and carved entablature, may have influenced the design of the main facades of the NYPL and the ML.
The large circular reading room of British Museum was commenced in 1854 and completed in 1857. The circular shape was the wish of Antonio Panizzi, Keeper of the Printed Books who was influential in convincing Smirke to go ahead with this type of design. This was the reading room of the British Library in continuous use from 1857 until 1997. Inspired by the Pantheon in Rome, placed in the centre of a little used quadrangle, it has a diameter of 42.7 metres and surrounding, radiating stacks on the same level.

This reading room was hugely effective as model for large library reading rooms for the next sixty years. Its influence extended to the Thomas Jefferson Building, Library of Congress (LOC) 1890 - 1897, Prussian State Library 1914, Stockholm City Library 1928 and even to the oval reading room of the reconstruction of the Biblioteque Nationale de France, Paris 1865 - 1868,97 designed by Labrouste. The dome over the octagonal reading room of the State Library of Victoria

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was completed in 1913. The Manchester Library with its circular reading room was built between 1930 and 1934.


State Library of Victoria. La Trobe Reading Room. Photo State Library of Victoria.
During the design of the building of the State Library of Victoria the Chief Librarian, Edmund La Touche Armstrong, was so strongly in favour of the resulting octagonal reading room designed by Norman G Peebles, which was at that time the world’s largest reinforced concrete dome, of 34.75 metres diameter, that Ifould called it “Armstrong’s Folly”, and he may well have been right. “It was built on the plan of a wagon wheel. The desks radiated akin to spokes and at the hub on a raised podium sat a librarian who oversaw all, like a warder.” The librarian thus had the power to control the readers with their knowledge of the placement of the books and of what the readers were doing, as Sir Francis Bacon stated “Knowledge is Power”. These descriptions of the power of librarians to control readers have overtones of a circular Panopticon prison, where as Jeremy Bentham said “To say in one word, it will be found applicable, without exception to all establishments whatsoever, in which a space not too large, a number of persons are meant to be kept under supervision.”

Fred Schlipf, Professor, Graduate School of Library Information Science, University of Illinois stated in a recent journal article highlighting some library architecture problems that librarians are still frustrated by some common dysfunctional designs from architects of library buildings. He lists over 30 of these. In attacking non-rectangular spaces he states everything put into libraries is rectangular and book stacks only work well in rectangular spaces. With circular and octagonal reading rooms the immediate surrounds must be triangular or pie shaped, similar to the plan of Andrea Palladio’s 1570 Vicenza Rotunda, which is against all good library practice.

100 Sir Francis Bacon. Meditationes Sacrae. De Haeresibus. 1597.
101 Jeremy Bentham. Panopticon; or The Inspection-House. 1791. 2
Mitchell Library and New York Public Library Similarities

The subject of this thesis is one pair bronze doors of the Mitchell Library; however, the design of reading rooms and the overall architecture of major library buildings is important. It is therefore necessary to further discuss the architecture and bronze doors of other major libraries.

There were two very similar important new public libraries opened in the early twentieth century, the Mitchell Library, Sydney and the New York Public Library. The Mitchell Library was built to house David Scott Mitchell’s collection of Australiana and Pacific items donated with the proviso there would be a suitable building to house them.

In early November 1934 it was envisaged the Mitchell Library would have one pair of bronze northern doors. However, the first meeting of the Bronze Doors Committee of PLNSW on 27 November 1934 decided there were to be three pairs of bronze main entrance doors. The central doors were to represent navigators and explorers, the side doors denoting allegorical figures with the left of centre doors showing images of Poetry, Drama, Music, Sculpture and the right of centre doors of Philosophy, History, Science, Architecture. These images are similar to those of other late nineteenth and early twentieth century library buildings such as the Boston Public Library. The images on the left and right doors were later changed to show Aboriginal tradition and culture. Thus the decision for three doors, rather than a single door, was taken by that committee and later approved by the minister. The northern facade elevation showing three pairs of bronze doors and the southern facade showing one pair of doors were refined and signed by Cobden Parkes, Government Architect on 13 November 1935. All northern and southern bronze door panel designs were finalised in October 1940. Ifould was a traditionalist in a time of change, so his choice of Aboriginal motifs on the left and right doors was a significant gesture in symbolically acknowledging the original inhabitants of Australia.


105 SLNSW. PXD 363, f 175a.
A discussion of the pair of southern doors must include the northern doors and the inspiration Ifould received from American libraries, especially the New York Public Library, the Boston Public Library, and the Library of Congress (Thomas Jefferson Building); NYPL for its architecture, BPL and LOC especially for their printers’ marks decorations. Ifould visited NYPL June 1923 and the first week of May 1936, BPL June or July 1923 and LOC June or July 1923 and June or July 1936.

New York Public Library Portico. NYPL. Mitchell Library Portico. Photo Author.

The New York Public Library (1911) 5th Avenue facade has three pairs of identical bronze entrance doors with images of acanthus leaves, scallop shells, grapes with vine leaves and other fruit. I will demonstrate the Mitchell Library doors are partly modeled on those doors. There are six Corinthian columns supporting the pediment. The Mitchell Library northern facade is very similar though the columns are Ionic. The NYPL columns are arranged with single columns to the outside and two pairs towards the centre, whereas the ML columns are arranged with two pairs towards the outside and single columns towards the centre. In both libraries this variance was necessary to be able to view the three entrance doors whereas Greek temples had only one entrance door.

New York Public Library, 42nd St Entrance 107    Mitchell Library, Southern Entrance. Photo Author

Leading up to the 42nd St entrance of the New York Public Library there are steps flanked by tall bronze candelabra with elaborate acanthus leaves, keyline patterns around the base and spherical globes mounted on cube shaped stone pedestals. There is one pair of bronze doors with inner doors. Above the doors is a window with a balustrade with single balusters, bracket supports and flanked by a pair of Corinthian columns. The southern entrance doors of the Mitchell Library are a close match. The doors are approached by steps also flanked by very similar bronze candelabra with imbricated bay leaves on the column and acanthus leaves at the base, keyline pattern around the base and spherical globes mounted on cube shaped pedestals. Above the doors are the Caxton Window with a balustrade of single balusters and bracket supports. A difference is that the Mitchell doors, Caxton window and Caxton mark are flanked not by columns but by Ionic

pilasters. The remarkable similarity of all the entrance doors and surrounds is so close that it is most unlikely to be a coincidence. Many of Ifould’s ideas in library design, which he conveyed to the Government Architect, were strongly influenced by the NYPL.

Mitchell Library 1910. Photo SLNSW.

Mitchell died on 24 July 1907 while the building was in progress and the first phase was opened on 8 March 1910. The NYPL opened on 23 May 1911 to accommodate three private donated libraries. The NYPL when opened was complete, nevertheless it took until 1964 with the south east wing opening for the ML to be finished, somewhat in the tradition of Gothic cathedrals which took up to two hundred years to complete.
Carrere and Hastings, who won the design competition for the NYPL, trained at the Ecole Nationale Superieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris. They were two of many American architects to receive training in France, the country of choice as there was a close connection because France had supported America during their War of Independence. Carrere and Hasting’s first employment was with McKim, Mead and White who designed Boston Public Library with a similar facade to the Biblioteque Ste Geneveive, Paris. The main facade arches of NYPL are two storeys high to give emphasis to it being an important public building.

In discussing the design of NYPL Hastings stated “It has been the desire of all those connected with the Library to have a simple and dignified design, not depending on an over amount
of ornamentation, Renaissance in style, based on classic principles, and modern in character.” 108 In doing so in their winning design they rejected a circular reading room in favour of a rectangular one.

Soon after they won the design competition Carrere and Hastings changed the Ionic columns on the 5th Ave facade to Corinthian. In Reed and Morone’s opinion “The New York Public Library is classical, as were the most important buildings constructed at the turn of the century. It is hard for us today to to grasp the fact that in those days the United States was, at least in architecture, the great classical country, because the tradition has largely vanished in the arts today”, and classical is defined here as “.... the generalized and idealized interpretation of nature begun by the Greeks and the Romans and continued in the Renaissance.” They further stated “The building had to be a monument, a triumphant adornment to the city, the Peoples Palace to assuage the visual hunger of local pride.” 109 Thus although Carrere and Hastings had French training, they used classical tradition influences.

While the Mitchell Library and the New York Public Library appear similar there is a large difference in size. The dimension of the ML northern facade is approximately ninety metres, the south facade is the same, and the east and west facades are approximately sixty metres. The central portion of the ML southern facade, being the southern wall of the reading room, is approximately thirty seven metres extending eighteen metres from the rest of the southern facade. The approximate dimensions of the NYPL facades are 140 metres on 5th Avenue and eighty five metres on 42nd Street. With a footprint of approximately 6,566 square metres ML is about half the size of NYPL with approximately 11,900 square metres.

Both the New York Public Library and the Mitchell Library have three main bronze entrance doors and similar Neo-Classical Greek facades with columns, entablatures and pediments. Both

108 Reed. ibid. 25.
109 Reed. ibid. 32-3.
have another pair of bronze entrance doors of similar designs and surrounds on a different facade. These are the only libraries I have found in my research with four external doors cast in bronze. The close similarities of both libraries in the design of their facades, four bronze entrance doors, elaborate foyers and large rectangular reading rooms are so close I will show it is not a coincidence in the design of the 1929, 1939 - 42 and later extensions to the Mitchell Library, but the direct architectural involvement of William Ifould, the Principal Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales from 1912 till 1942, who first visited the NYPL in 1923. His passion for a functional library is shown in a talk he gave to the Sydney branch of the Institute of Architects when he said if he hadn’t been a librarian he would rather have been an architect.\textsuperscript{110}

**Library Bronze Doors**

Library entrance doors are highly symbolic, emphasising the importance of the building as a major source of knowledge and repository of the culture of the nation. This symbolism is well shown in the Mitchell Library entrance doors.

*Knowledge and Wisdom* bronze doors. Boston Public Library. Peter A Wick.\textsuperscript{111}

One of the major public libraries of the late nineteenth century was the Boston Public Library, the building of which commenced in 1888 and completed in 1895. There are three main


\textsuperscript{111} Peter A Wick. *A Handbook to the Art and Architecture of the Boston Public Library*. 1977. 22
bronze entrance doors with female draped figures; the left pair represent “Music” and “Poetry,” the
centre pair are “Knowledge” with a large book on her shoulder and “Wisdom” representing printing
of books and education, while the right doors are “Truth” and “Romance”. The symbolism of
these doors influenced the first Mitchell Library Bronze Doors Committee meeting in November
1934 to include similar images in the left and right northern doors. There are thirty three medallions
cut in granite in the spandrels of the window arches around the outside of the BPL building from the
Blagden Street entrance to the Boylston Street facade. Thirty one of those are Printers’ Marks
mostly of the 16th century, including William Caxton and Aldus Pius Manutius. Ifould visited
the Boston Public Library on his 1923 trip and therefore was familiar with its early Printers’ Marks
in medallions on the external walls.

Humanities and Intellect on the doors. Above, the goddess Minerva passes large books to two
winged cherubs symbolising the benefits of the invention of printing. Photo Anne Day.

112 Wick. ibid. 23-3.
The Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress, Washington (1897) also has three large main entrance doors cast in bronze. The left doors are devoted to “Tradition” with figures of ‘Imagination” and “Memory”, the centre ones are entitled “The Art of Printing” representing “Humanities” and “Intellect”, while the right doors represent “Writing” with figures of “Truth” and “Research”. In the lunette above is “Minerva Diffusing the Products of Typographical Art” while on the reverse is engraved “Homage to Gutenberg”, especially apt because while the library has in its collection three Gutenberg Bibles. The John Adams Building of the LOC (1939) has bronze doors depicting figures representing the “Art of Writing”. These images are symbolic of the importance of Gutenberg’s invention of printing leading to mass production of books, one of the main reasons for libraries.

NYPL  5th Avenue Centre Entrance Door

The three main bronze entrance doors to the New York Public Library on 5th Avenue feature geometric designs of rosettes, acanthus and Greek keyline patterns. The British Museum, London has two entrance doors on different facades. The main entrance on Great Russell Street has a pair of wooden doors and the secondary entrance on Montague Place has a pair of wooden doors with outer
metal cladding. Both of these doors are now considered too small to cope with large crowds visiting and an alternative entrance is being planned. The three main entrance doors of the Thomas Jefferson Building of the LOC are no longer used as such due to security and crowd control reasons. However, in contrast, the Mitchell Library main entrance doors will soon revert to being the main entrance of the State Library of New South Wales with disability access in a current well designed reconfiguration.

**Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Library Architecture**

In analysing the similar features of the architecture of the Mitchell Library and the New York Public Library it is necessary to examine the three revival architectural styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These are Renaissance or Roman Revival, Neo-Classical or Greek Revival and Gothic Revival.

Both the ML and the NYPL buildings are a combination of block building Renaissance architecture together with nineteenth century Neo-Classical facades each having a central portico and a pavilion at each end of the main facade. The NYPL has a Neo-Classical Corinthian hexastyle portico while the ML has a Neo-Classical Ionic hexastyle portico, though in neither case as a classical Ancient Greek Temple peripteral style arrangement.\(^{115}\) The NYPL has the four centre columns arranged in two pairs and the ML has the four end columns in two pairs. In each of these library buildings the names Public Library of New South Wales and The New York Public Library are carved into the frieze stonework of the entablature. At the NYPL the pediment of the portico is set well back from the attic above the entablature, whereas the ML pediment is immediately above the entablature. The NYPL main facade has a further six Corinthian columns each side of the portico between each of the windows. The end pavilions/aedicules are in distyle arrangement with

Corinthian columns at the NYPL and tetrastyle unfluted Ionic columns at the ML without any entablature. There are two candelabra on pedestals in front of the portico in both cases.

Renaissance buildings had small security windows on private buildings such as the Palazzo Rucelli 1453 and the Palazzo Medici Riccardi 1444 both in Florence. Public buildings had larger windows with Romanesque arches such as the Ospedale Maggiore, Milan 1456 and Santa Maria della Pace, Rome 1504. The original design of the northern facade of ML had arched windows later changed to smaller rectangular ones while the western facade has arched windows.

The commencement of the Neo-Classical movement started about 1750. Prior to this Greece was off limits due to Turkish occupation and the Grand Tour of Europe went only as far as Italy. William Wilkins who dominated Greek Revival architecture in Britain toured Greece, Asia Minor and Italy between 1801 and 1804. However he had a rival in Robert Smirke, the architect of the British Museum, who made a long trip to France, Italy, Greece, Austria and Germany between 1802 and 1805. “In Britain - if not in Europe - the Dilettanti presided over a cultural revolution, a veritable second Renaissance.... which produced, among other things, the architecture of the Greek Revival.”

Gothic Revival was the other revival architecture movement during the 1800s. Neo-Gothic or Gothic Revival Architecture commenced in the late 1500s during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, though the main impetus began about 1820. Many churches and other public buildings were built in this style, yet few libraries were built between 1850 and 1950 the period under investigation. A notable exception is the University of Sydney founded in 1850 with its magnificent Neo-Gothic quadrangle, Great Hall and associated rooms completed in 1862. The main library of the University of Sydney is the Fisher Library. The original Fisher Library was designed by Walter Vernon and

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116 Servida. ibid. 37, 66.
117 Crook. ibid. 46 - 56.
118 Crook. ibid. 62.
completed in 1890. The reading room, now the MacLaurin Hall, is of Neo-Gothic design thus making this library one of the very few libraries within a Gothic Revival building.

**Mitchell Library Building Design and Construction**

In 1905 the State Government directed the Walter L Vernon the Government Architect 1890 to 1911, to prepare plans for the Mitchell Library as part of a National Library to be situated in Macquarie Street opposite the Palace Gardens, part of the Botanic Gardens. The plan closely followed the 1893 - 95 plans of James Barnet, then Government Architect. Construction started in 1906 and the first part was completed in 1908. Tenders were immediately called to construct the remaining major portion of the library; however the Government did not proceed. When it was finally constructed in 1939 - 1942 it was to a different design eliminating the dome, though much of Vernon’s design was retained including most of his northern facade.\(^{119}\)

When Ifould took over as Principal Librarian in 1912 he would have been hoping for an early resumption for the building of the Mitchell Library complex. However, as David Jones records, “Next to the Mitchell wing, and by now almost obscured by weeds and idle builders’ paraphernalia, were the foundations for the ‘National Library’ building, untouched since Cabinet’s decision to defer the project indefinitely in 1910. For a time Ifould remained optimistic, but the building was not on the Government’s short term List.” \(^{120}\) Because the Public Library building, on the corner of Bent and Macquarie Streets, was never adequate, the Library Trustees became so concerned in 1914, that they wrote to the Minister for Public Instruction emphasising the need for action. When H C L Anderson was Principal Librarian in 1905 he requested a circular reading room 100 feet in diameter seating 260 people. Walter Vernon originally drew plans for a reading room accommodating only 80. The Trustees requested in 1914 the reading room be octagonal and the


diameter be increased from 66 to 114 feet which was accepted and the drawings completed.\textsuperscript{121} Progression in completing the National Library to its original concept designed in 1905 was slow, due to lack of Government funding. The Mitchell Wing was completed in 1910, the Dixson Wing in 1929, while the main portion comprising the central part with its magnificent reading room, the northern facade and the central part of the southern facade was completed in 1942 and the south east corner finally in 1964.

Ifould left for London on 30 January 1923 and after seeing libraries in Britain spent two months in America also over sighting libraries, returned to Sydney on 15 August 1923.

“Ifould was otherwise impressed by the libraries he saw in the United States, confirming the impressions he had gained earlier from the literature. He noted the libraries like his own obtain most guidance from the American libraries, especially in progressive library work, despite the obvious differences between the two countries, Australia with a small, dispersed essentially monolingual population, and the United States with a large, denser and multiracial society.” \textsuperscript{122}

In their annual report to the Government the Library Trustees were scathing about the lack of progress in finishing the National Library building. \textsuperscript{123}

Prior to Ifould’s 1923 trip, in 1919 William Dixson, a wealthy collector of rare books, manuscripts and pictures offered some of his pictures to the library on condition they be displayed in the galleries of the completed National Library. The government ignored the offer which was again, fortunately, made on 4 April 1924. Dixson was a very patient man. His provisos included a purpose built extension to the Mitchell Library to house the collection and he would bequeath his entire, large collection to the library on his death. Dixson’s offer was accepted by the Trustees and

\textsuperscript{122} David J Jones. ibid. Chapter 7, 171.
\textsuperscript{123} SLNSW-Records- NPL32-File 33700/4-Trustees Report - Items 6143-6157-21 October 1923.
passed on to the Under Secretary, Department of Public Works. After some intense lobbying the government accepted the offer in June 1924. In December 1924, the necessary Act of Parliament was passed, and in January 1925 Ifould wrote to Dixson informing him the Library Act had been passed for the completion of the National Library building at a cost of 495,000 pounds including provision for the Dixson Gallery.

Approval for the building work, including the Dixson Gallery, was delayed until April 1926. Ifould was concerned that Dixson might finally become frustrated with all of the delays and instead send his collection to the Commonwealth. Work finally started on the Dixson Wing in 1926 and was completed in 1929.

Mitchell and Dixson Wings 1929. Photo SLNSW, PXD363 f467a.

After the opening of the Dixson Wing the Trustees again became concerned as work on the main library building had ceased. Ifould reported to the Minister about the very cramped conditions in the Bent Street Public Library building and possible resolution; “...the whole problem is bristling

with difficulties and is only one of the many problems arising through the absolutely inadequate and unsuitable nature of the present Public Library Building.” 127 Ifould and his Trustees continued to pressure the Government about the urgency of completing the library building and about the need for more land, 128 in order to complete the “National Library building as quickly as the exigencies of finance will allow.” 129

The design and construction of the largest, central part of the Mitchell Library, completed in 1942, is due mostly to the foresight, persistence and attention to detail of William Ifould. It was through him the original plans were changed to a better working model, the necessary parliamentary acts were passed, government funding was obtained and many benefactors gave money for most of the magnificent embellishments, without which the library would have been just another mundane public building. Ifould went on working trips to USA, Canada and UK in 1923, 1929 and 1936 seeing many libraries including those in Washington, New York, Boston and London to review library practices and architecture during a period when there were planned major extensions to the Mitchell wing of the Public Library of New South Wales (Mitchell Library). The changes in planning for the central portion of the Mitchell Library, including the bronze doors had started by 1922, were well advanced by 1929 and were completed by 1936. The architecture of these overseas buildings impressed him, especially the New York Public Library which he visited during the first week in May 1936.130 As he was the one who decided printers marks should be the principal feature of the southern doors and who personally chose which marks should be used, he made close observation of the printers’ marks at Boston Public Library and the Library of Congress.

128 SLNSW - Records - NPL42. 33771 1 - 6. Professional Relations - Funding Allocation - PLNSW - Out-letters - July to December 1929. Ifould to Under Secretary of, Department of Education. 17 December 1929.
129 SLNSW - Records - NPL42. 33773 1 - 6. Out Letters. 11 June 1930.
130 NYPL Staff News, vol 26 no 20, 14 May 1936. 61.
Unfortunately as record keeping was not up today’s standards there is no record in either library of visits by William Ifould.131

The New York Public Library design was the result of an Architectural Competition, of which architects and librarians in Australia would have known. William Ifould was aware of the change of input to library design in America. Prior to 1931 architects designed a library to be a building of beauty and importance, then it was left to the librarian to make the interior functional. Later the librarians and their building committees had much more say.132 Australian librarians were aware of the changes in the the planning process in American library architecture. This was important to Australian libraries as it meant here, as in America, the planning committee controlled the early stages of planning. Not all late nineteenth and early twentieth century library buildings were acclaimed. In 1929 Suzanne La Folette commenting on the Boston Public Library building stated the firm of McKim, Mead and White “lifted Labrouste’s library of Ste. Geneveive ..... but they did not create a building well adapted for the uses of a library” and “Nor did Carrere and Hastings succeed any better with the New York Public Library, which is a striking expression of the modern idea of conspicuous waste, and a very poor one of the ineluctable fact that the library is a place in which to house books, and to read them.”133 Ifould would have been aware of this change. It is very unusual that one of his predecessors, Chief Librarian H C L Anderson was fortunate in being able to instruct the Government Architect W L Vernon in the design of the original Mitchell building.134 The Government then decided to complete the Mitchell wing building to Vernon’s plans and with a similar layout to Vernon’s design to include the rest of the new Public Library building.

131 John J. Devine, Jr. Reference Librarian, Research Services Department, Boston Public Library. Personal communication, email, 24 March 2016.
132 Cheryl Fox, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. Personal communication, email, 6 February 2016.
In both the Mitchell and New York Public Library there were examples of circular and hexagonal/octagonal reading rooms in early designs. In the design competition for the New York Public Library there were examples of circular reading rooms but these were rejected in favour of the plan by Carrere and Hastings, with a rectangular reading room measuring 90 x 23.5 metres.

The 1905 plans for the New South Wales Public Library had an octagonal reading room which was rejected by Ifould and his Advisory Committee, with Metcalfe’s support. The Trustees had preferred a larger octagonal room; however, Ifould eventually convinced them otherwise. In September 1933 the Government Architect (Edwin Smith) was instructed to continue planning the library building and cabinet accepted recommendation of David H Drummond, the minister for Education for completion of the building comprising finalising of the northern facade, the main reading room and the southern facade apart from the southeastern corner.

The National Library Building Advisory Committee of G R Thomas, J Nangle and W H Ifould sent a report, in December 1933, to the Minister for Public Instruction stating “The trustees of the Library and the Principal Librarian have always objected to the circular form of the reading room, and on your instruction the

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135 David J Jones. ibid. 220.
Government Architect has redesigned the main reading room...” Thus “A rectangular reading room 150 feet long by 80 feet wide takes the place of the circular room in the original plan.” This reading room, lit from above accommodating 400 readers is the magnificent one we know today. While progress was slow, on 2 June 1934 the Premier, B S B Stevens wrote to Drummond, informing him the design recommended by sub-committee had been agreed upon. On 5 July 1934 Ifould wrote to Drummond congratulating him on the passage of the necessary bill for the continued construction of the library building. These details illustrate how Ifould prevailed over the Government Architect.

William Ifould looked closely at library architecture with a view to the completion of the National Library as well as studying library services during his trips to USA, Canada and Britain. He recorded “Then I wanted to see the latest developments in Library Architecture and methods”. In the 1923 trip he was anticipating the government reviewing the decision to take no action on William Dixson’s 1919 offer, and hoping the offer would be repeated. Thus he focussed on display galleries within the large libraries. He arrived in New York from Liverpool aboard the Celtic on 10 July 1923. Of all of the large libraries he visited he was particularly impressed with the architecture and decoration of the Library of Congress, the Boston Public Library, the New York Public Library and the British Museum housing the British Library. His architectural focus was on the New York Public Library and his visits to the British Museum and the Library of Congress confirmed the limitations of a circular reading room with surrounding stacks. One of his main interests at the Library of Congress and the Boston Public Library was the use of Printers’ Marks in those buildings.

137 SLNSW - NPL137. 34559 1-3. 34559 - 2. Ifould to Drummond. 5 July 1934.
Plans for the Mitchell Library by Edwin Smith (Government Architect) were drawn in March 1934.


They were later changed in May 1934 when Smith signed off on designs showing the northern and southern facades of the Mitchell Library. Windows were later altered though most was carried through to the final design. The northern elevation had one pair of bronze doors and the original bell shaped arched windows. The southern elevation had one pair of bronze doors and bell shaped arched windows.

Mitchell Library northern facade elevation, original bell arched windows, one pair of doors. Signed Edwin Smith.18/05/1934. SLNSW PXD363 fl30. Photo author.
Mitchell Library southern facade elevation, original bell arched windows. Signed Edwin Smith.
18/05/1934. SLNSW PXD363 f133. Photo author.

In July 1934 the government authorised construction to go ahead. John Metcalfe, Deputy Librarian was very supportive of Ifould’s ambitions for the library and library services and left for the USA and Britain in August to inspect about 100 libraries on a Carnegie grant which Ifould had been instrumental in obtaining. Ifould did not agree with all of Smith’s plans as not being sufficiently imposing. As he had the confidence of his Minister, Drummond, he had an influence on the new Government Architect, Cobden Parkes. The Bronze Doors Committee of PLNSW decided in November 1935 there would be sufficient funds for three pairs of bronze doors for the northern facade of the new National Library and this information was passed on to Parkes. In December 1935 Metcalfe received the finished library plans for the Mitchell Library from Cobden Parkes, who was sympathetic to Ifould’s aspirations, while Ifould was on leave (trout fishing at The Creel, Jindabyne.
Mitchell Library northern facade elevation, 3 pairs of bronze doors. Final drawing signed Cobden Parkes 12/11/35. SLNSW PXD363 f390. Photo Author

Mitchell Library southern facade elevation, including Dixson wing and reading room, though excluding the southeastern corner which was completed in 1964. 1 pair of bronze doors. Final drawing signed Cobden Parkes 12/11/35. SLNSW PXD363 f391. Photo author

In 1936, as the final design for the central part was complete, Ifould’s focus was thereafter on the embellishments of the various libraries which would be suitable for the Mitchell. In late 1935 he was planning a trip to America, Canada and Britain at the paid invitation of the Carnegie Corporation. His intention was to visit Minneapolis, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Washington and New York. Ifould informed his Trustees of the scope of his project as

140 SLNSW - Records - NPL52. 33862 1-4. PLNSW. Ifould to Dr F P Keppel, President, Carnegie Corporation. 12 November 1935.
“Suggested Subjects for illustrations of library services abroad” under headings: Early, National, Famous, Special, University, and other libraries. He intended visiting many libraries including the British Museum, the Library of Congress, Boston Public Library and others.141

Tenders for the major part of the Mitchell Library were not called until March 1938, work began March 1939 and the building was completed, available for public use in June 1942, and officially opened in November 1943. The Mitchell Library, officially the Public Library of New South Wales became the State Library of New South Wales in 1975 and while the name was changed the library functions remained the same.

In all aspects of the building from the largest stonework to the smallest decoration Ifould paid immense attention to detail taking much time of his loyal staff in research. Nita Kibble joined the Public Library in 1899 and retired in 1943 rising from a very junior position to Head Cataloguer and establishing the Research Department. She had the prime responsibility in organising the data retrieval.142 William Ifould tendered his resignation in 1940, but withdrew it after the fall of France in the Second World War, and retired on the first of March 1942. The almost completed building was much admired, and there were many accolades for Ifould:

The development of the Mitchell Library was also mainly due to Mr Ifould’s negotiation of important purchases and donations. 143

You will not be forgotten while the Library building stands. Your versatility, your artistry, your attention to duty, and above all, your common sense, have made the Library building something more than a place for the storage of books - something that will inspire the present and coming generations of New South Welshmen.144

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141 SLNSW - Records - NPL52. 33862. 1-4. 2 December 1935. Ifould to Trustees.
142 Nita Kibble. Papers SLNSW MLMSS 4130.
143 Sydney Morning Herald. 04/02/1942, on Ifould’s retirement.
144 A W Hicks,. Public Service Board, undated letter on Ifould’s retirement.
It was Ifould who gave Sydney the most noble building of our time - the Public Library. He discarded whatever was not in the classical tradition and visitors may look around them to see his monument.  

William Dixson was knighted in 1939 and following his death in 1952 his bequest of a large number of books, manuscripts, maps and paintings passed to the Mitchell Library and are now housed in the Dixson Library part of that building.

There were some alterations done to the Mitchell Library in 1959 when construction of the south east wing started. It was finished in late 1963 and the official opening of the final section of the Mitchell Library took place in March 1964 where the Principal Librarian, G D Richardson: quoted from the official booklet on the Library “Special recognition must be given to Mr Ifould. An outstanding record of achievement as a librarian and a citizen was crowned by the building for which and on which he worked during his whole period in office”.  

William Ifould received further congratulations on his 90th birthday: “The Public Library of NSW, and that great building that houses it, stand today in very large measure as a monument to the enduring worth of your service.” The completion of the Mitchell Library building was largely due to the one person with the determination and problem solving ability to see the process to a successful conclusion. This was the Principal Librarian for 30 years, William Herbert Ifould. The Minister Drummond was a key figure, yet he and the Government Architects: Wells, Smith, Parkes, the library staff, the artists, the builders, stone masons and bronze casters were all peripheral to Ifould’s single mindedness. His high intellect and good knowledge of library architecture and decoration saw this project to a successful conclusion as a symbolic public library building while also an aesthetic architectural achievement.

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145 Claude McKay. Daily Mirror. 13/05/1957. 16
146 The Public Library of New South Wales. Proceedings at the opening of the south-east wing by his excellency the governor of New South Wales. 20th March, 1964. 8.
On the available evidence, supported by other researchers, the Mitchell Library is unique as it is the only library, outside USA, with printers' marks displayed on the building; only one of two, anywhere, with these displayed externally; only one of two with printers' marks on bronze doors; only one of two with four pairs of bronze doors; the southern bronze doors are the only such library doors designed by a Principal Librarian, who also had a huge influence in the library building design.

**Mitchell Library Design Faults**

While I and others have a very high regard for William Ifould’s achievements, all was not as satisfactory as it could have been. No new, old or future library building is perfect in satisfying the needs for its clients, the reading public and the workforce providing for those needs. From the beginning of occupation of the major part of the Mitchell Library in 1942 it was obvious there was failure of function. William Ifould took all the major decisions himself and it has become obvious he should have had advisors who knew more about library function than he did. Unfortunately as magnificent as the Mitchell Library edifice is, it does not follow the mid 20th century’s dominant ideal of Form Following Function where the design of a building should be based on its purpose. As a result here was a case of poor function following the form of the inspiring architecture.

The library building and decorations are magnificent, as everyone agrees. In his 1989 book Raymond Holt states that in preparing a library building program there should be group of advisors who understand the functionality of library buildings and that this knowledge does not always come from librarians.148 This was the case during the planning of the Mitchell Library building architectural design. Ifould was very much a martinet, his trustees agreed with almost all of his proposals and the only planning committees were Library Building Committee who over sighted the

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general design and the Bronze Doors Committee of 1934/5 whose main function was to select the composition of the panels for the northern doors.\textsuperscript{149} Ifould served on both committees during the 1930s which was a period of conflict between traditionalists and modernists.\textsuperscript{150} Ifould was definitely a traditionalist as shown in his approach to library design and in his position as trustee and a short term acting Director of the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In doing so he retained outmoded principles of library function when major thinking in this area was rapidly changing. There was too much emphasis on the aesthetics of the building and not enough on the function. As a result there was inflexibility, poor work flows, difficult movement of collections and people, all of which have been difficult for library staff to manage ever since. I have seen what other readers see, but not the major part of the building which are the main functional areas that readers do not see. As David Jones pointed out in his presentation “Getting it Right”, Ifould gave us a building with late nineteenth century architecture which appears fine on the surface but he also gave us nineteenth century function of which John Metcalfe despaired from the day he took over as Principal Librarian and those working there were fully aware.\textsuperscript{151} Thus while I have emphasised the importance of symbolism, it should not be to the detriment of function. There is a danger of allowing one person in authority with a dominant personality to be the single project manager. As Terry Webb emphasises in his book this certainly applied to the 1930s as much as today.\textsuperscript{152} There was faint praise for Ifould from John Metcalfe who, after several years as Deputy Librarian, followed Ifould as Principal Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales in 1942. After his 1934 - 35 trip to America and Britain, Metcalfe stated “the new Library building has already been determined ..... and it avoids the most debated feature of the library (Manchester), completed in 1936, the circular

\textsuperscript{149} SLNSW. F2804 PL/N6. SLNSW Archives, Bronze Doors 1934 - 42 file. 27/11/1934.


shape of its central reading room and surrounding offices.”

In his 1969 obituary of Ifould, Metcalfe stated “In so many ways he was a man for all seasons, an Italian despot, a Cosimo or Lorenzo de Medici, out of his time.... The paradoxical answer may be that all the foregoing distinguished him as a librarian.”

With an ever growing collection in the early 1970s it was decided the State Library needed more space, so between 1975 and 1987 the next large part of the State Library was planned and built, which is an excellent functional library building accommodating the very good collection area, reading rooms, bookshop, cafe, a 140 seat auditorium and five underground floors of book stacks.

**Southern Bronze Doors Viewing Problems**

A 1982 feasibility study for the new Macquarie Street wing of the State Library of New South Wales building shows the Domain Terrace, the pedestrian walkway from Macquarie Street to the Domain separating the Mitchell Wing from the new building, with level access from the terrace behind the Glasshouse skylight to the steps down to the southern doors. The Glasshouse skylight area appears to be open to the sky with trees growing from the lower area.

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The plans were changed from the feasibility study to the final design by raising the level of the domain terrace by eighty centimetres to the detriment of the southern doors. However the planning team had allowed a substantial semi-circular viewing platform with pillar supports to be built below the steps to these doors which is still in place.
This change from feasibility to final architect’s drawings is unfortunate and in my original opinion it showed poor judgement by the architects and planning committee. However, it transpires the architects were not at fault. The reason for the raising the level of the Domain Walkway by eighty centimetres, hence eliminating public access to the southern doors, is the result of a decision by the Premier of New South Wales, Neville Wran who insisted the top level of the new building should be removed. As a result an extra lower level was built, however as it was close to the railway tunnels the Domain Walkway was raised 80 centimetres.

As a result of several discussions with Russell Doust who was State Librarian during the design and building of the Macquarie Street Wing of the State Library of New South Wales and thus an important figure in the process, he sent me the following communication. I quote the entire document at Mr Doust’s request:

Graham Southwell, in his careful and extremely useful research on the bronze doors and other decorative features of the original Public Library of New South Wales Shakespeare Place building, (now renamed as The Mitchell Wing) has drawn attention to the difficulty of access to the south doors of the building. It has never been used as an entrance to or exit from the Library, and during most of the years between 1942 and 1988, if opened led to an inaccessible area. (It has regularly if not frequently been opened and shut as part of normal emergency procedures.) It can now happily be seen together with the sandstone bas-relief carvings high up on the south wall of the building although the public cannot at present get close to the door to inspect the various motifs on the doors. As Graham has pointed out, these include, very appropriately, reproductions of early printers marks; these doors complement the three similar doors which form the north entrance to the building from Shakespeare Place. Graham has pointed out to me that an early description in the feasibility study of how the proposed new (Macquarie Street) building could relate to the original
building: in Graham’s words, “a substantial semi-circular viewing platform with pillar supports to be built below the steps down from these doors” was proposed in the early feasibility plans and elevations. The “viewing platform” proposed function disappeared very early in the detailed planning process, probably because a totally new building was planned, with minimum alterations or additions to be allowed to the external fabric of the existing building, which is heritage listed. In considering these matters it is well to recognise that inevitably much will change from original proposals shown in a feasibility study, the purpose of which is simply to show where and how a new structure could be built. Changes to the original proposals are common in a major building operation; for instance, months elapsed before it was realised that re-using the “old” General Reference Reading Room for the Mitchell Library was a better proposition than making provision for it in the new Macquarie Street building. Another issue was exactly how the two buildings could be made to function as a whole: clearly a ground level connection was not feasible, and certainly not one which made use of the south door.

However, the most obvious major alteration was the change in the overall height of the new building. This occurred when the feasibility plans were shown to the Premier and Minister for the Arts (Neville Wran) in his eighth floor office almost directly opposite the building site. My recollection is that after being assured that no trees on the site were at risk, Mr Wran said “It’s too high: take a storey off the top”, or words to that effect. Present were me as State Librarian (and technically I think the client), the architect (Andrew Andersons) and his assistant architect, and probably one or two officers from the Premiers Department. The Premier’s words would not have been a surprise to any of us present: Neville Wran’s passionate and proud defence of the historical Macquarie Street streetscape was well known, and coupled with that was probably an instinctive feeling on his part that our new
building should not seem to overshadow the adjoining Parliamentary administrative building. In any case, if one is trying to sell a proposition to the Minister of State who would have the ultimate responsibility, one does not argue about a direction of that kind and especially when it is obviously sensible, and unlikely to seriously affect the way in which the building is expected to operate. It is now well known that the overall volume of the building was not compromised by adding a lower floor on the same, or perhaps larger, building footprint. That extra book storage space has been of tremendous value to the Library over twenty or more years, although I am now informed that the Library now needs additional offsite storage space.

Graham in a comment to me has referred to a change in the level of Domain Terrace, the walkway between the two buildings, related to the additional lowered floor, which he believes was critical in making the south door of the original building inaccessible; I do not wish to comment on this since I do not know whether this is so. However, I think it is important for me to have put on record how the changes to the original new building height came about, something which I have alluded to in private conversations and at other times.

My understanding is that Graham originally thought that the problem was with the architects, but now knows that if it is or was a problem it was brought about by a decision of the Minister for the Arts, Premier Neville Wran, which was entirely satisfactory to both architect and client. I have encouraged Graham to press for a solution, if one exists, to make the south doors more accessible to visitors.156

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Photo: Author from Domain Walkway level.

Mitchell Library central Southern Facade and Glass House skylight.
Photo: Author from a high view point.
Macquarie Street Wing and Mitchell Wing, State Library of New South Wales. Google Earth. The above image shows the Macquarie Street Wing of the State Library of New South Wales (bottom left) occupying a small, difficult site adjacent to the State Parliament House (bottom right), whereas the centrally placed Mitchell Wing, with its glass roof over the reading room, has a much larger footprint. The design and position of the large semi-circular Glasshouse skylight has resulted in the bronze southern entrance doors of the Mitchell Library with their important printers’ marks having been made redundant, as since 1987 it has not been possible to view them. Given they are a treasure of the library they should be cherished. I show in Chapter Five how access to these doors for visitors and guided tours will most likely be achieved.
Chapter Four

Construction of the Bronze Southern Entrance Doors

During my research I discovered five significant events leading to the southern doors of the Mitchell Library being cast in bronze. Firstly, in July 1934, the National Library Amendment Act passed through State Parliament commencing the process of building the remainder of the Mitchell Library, immediately after which William Ifould wrote a congratulatory letter to his Minister.157

Secondly, William Dixson donated 4,000 pounds in January 1935 to the Mitchell Library to fund a pair of bronze entrance doors commemorating David Scott Mitchell.158 Thirdly, also in January 1935, Ifould discussed this matter with William Dixson and he and the Library Trustees were given discretion to use surplus funds for library embellishments as they saw fit,159 and in March 1940 Dixson gave Ifould complete control over further decorations.160 Fourthly, in November 1935, the final plans for the major part of the Mitchell Library were completed by Cobden Parkes, the Government Architect.161 Finally, in October 1940, the architect’s drawings for the southern bronze doors were signed off by Parkes.162 These events allowed William Ifould in 1942, after completion of the decorations, to authorise the construction of the southern doors to the design he gave to the Government Architect.

The southern bronze doors are part of the many embellishments and decorations of the Mitchell Library the most significant of which are the three pairs of northern bronze doors.

157 SLNSW. Records - NPL137. 34559 1-3. 34559 - 2. Ifould to Drummond. 5 July 1934.


160 SLNSW, File F2804 - PL/N6 Bronze Doors File. 07/03/1940. Item 2629.


Ifould knew of Dixson’s plan for a bronze entrance door and one day in July 1934 he allowed Dixson to win the last hole in a game of golf. Later, over a scotch and soda in the clubhouse, he raised the issue of Dixson’s proposed donation. When Dixson asked how much money was needed Ifould stated about 3000 pounds to which Dixson’s response was “Well I am prepared to up it to the extent of, say, 4000 pounds if it is necessary to pay that much.”

Ifould’s estimate of 3,000 pounds for one pair of doors was based on the doors each being one solid casting; however, as the architect’s final design featured three pairs of doors with cast panels and surrounds on extruded frames the total cost was reduced to 2280 pounds, thus leaving ample funds for other library embellishments including the southern doors.

As a result of Ifould attracting donors for various decorations by mid 1940 and the accumulation of five years of interest in the William Dixson Donation Account it became obvious to him there would be sufficient funds to construct the southern doors in bronze commemorating Printers’ Marks in which he had a keen interest. In finding motifs for the library building decorations including all the bronze door panels he relied greatly on his staff, especially Nita Kibble, head of research. The new building was Mr Ifould’s greatest achievement as the guide published in 1943 states: “He conceived much of the decoration and insisted on the highest standards of workmanship.”

As David Jones states, Ifould needed to spend an increasing amount of time on the design work for the new building with excellent help from his staff, especially Nita Kibble. Staff researched the collection for illustrations to be used in the decorations for the building: Caxton, stained glass windows, animals in Chinese art, authentic images of Aborigines, pictures of cherubs and watermarks. It was Ifould who designed the southern doors, with help

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from staff who researched printers’ marks, New South Wales flora and other details. “Staff scoured the literature for illustrations of watermarks, bindings, symbols”.

Not everyone is aware of the significance and symbolism of the Mitchell Library bronze doors. The northern, main entry, bronze doors are a celebration of the history of Australia. The left and right doors are of Aboriginal history and culture during more than 40,000 years and the central doors of European navigators and explorers over 400 years with resulting European settlement and development of the nation. In contrast the southern doors with early Printers’ Marks are a celebration of the invention of printing in Europe, hence a celebration of books, which is the main reason for the existence of libraries.

I have discussed the southern doors as “Entrance Doors” even though they were not so used. I have done this deliberately as this is the description on the Government Architect’s drawings. However this raises the question of what is the reason for these doors? Even though they were adjacent to the footpath leading from Macquarie Street to the Domain for the first time, were they really to be entrance doors, considering there is no atrium and when the bronze doors were open every time someone entered through the glass doors the whole reading room would have been exposed to the weather? Were they non-functional doors similar to that at the New Bodleian Library Oxford (1937 - 1939) which are opened only occasionally for ceremonial reasons? Were they to be purely decorative? Were they fire escape doors? The last two are the most likely. During the 1970s and early 1980s there was occasional fire escape drill using these doors and in those years the only other time the south doors were open was when the air conditioning broke down and the doors were open to fresh air with barriers in place to prevent anyone using them for entry or exit. However, it must be considered why the southern doors are cast in bronze when there are the imposing bronze Northern (Main) Entrance Doors? What was the original intention? This question

166 David J Jones. William Herbert Ifould. 347.
should be looked at from a 1930-40’s viewpoint rather than an analytical 2017 viewpoint. The 1940 Architect’s Drawing labels them as “The National Library. Bronze Doors to Southern Entrance” and 1943 photographs label them “Southern Entrance Bronze Doors”. A 1942 description of the new building states, on leaving the Reading Room “Descending the steps on the southern side, one may gain a good idea of the size of the Reading Room from the shape of the exterior walls”.168 This phrase raises the question of why such a statement was made. Was it envisaged at that time the southern doors were to be regularly opened? A 1943 photograph shows a librarian’s desk and stairs to the stacks below near the southern doors which are close to Macquarie Street with a footpath to the Domain, offering a more easily accessible entrance than from Shakespeare Place. If the Glasshouse skylights are removed and access is made available to the viewing platform, thus close to the doors, as I suggest in chapter five, the southern doors could be used for ceremonial access from a function in the Metcalfe Auditorium in the Macquarie Street wing to a formal dinner or other occasion in the Mitchell reading room.

The design of the facades including the entry doors changed during the 1930s after the grand designs of 1883 and 1905 were rejected.169 1934 was a momentous year for the design of the Mitchell Library and its decorations. The two elevations of the northern and southern facades of the Mitchell Library building were signed off on 5 March 1934 by Edwin Smith, the Government Architect, with variations demonstrating at this stage the decision of the composition of the northern facade had not been finalised.170 Smith’s final elevations for both facades were signed off on 18 May 1934.171 These were changed when Cobden Parkes became Government Architect and were signed off by him on 12 November 1935.

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170 SLNSW. PXD 363, f133. SLNSW. PXD363, f142.
171 SLNSW. PXD 363, f133 B701 *Southern Elevation*. 
Mitchell Library Northern (Shakespeare Place) Doors. Photo author.

Authentic images of Aboriginal people from remote areas of central and northern Australia were obtained by Ifould in late 1939. In July of that year he wrote to Sir Hugh Denison of Associated Newspapers thanking him for the gift to the Mitchell Library of photographs of Northern Australian Aboriginal people. Ifould also wrote to F W Tonkin, editor of the Sun newspaper thanking him for photos of aborigines taken for Pix magazine. Similarly in September that year he wrote to the widow of Henry Basedow regarding her husband’s works on Aborigines which were very useful in the design of the doors. Basedow (1881 - 1933) was an anthropologist, geologist, scientist, explorer and medical practitioner who spent much time in central and northern Australia and had an enlightened and sympathetic view of Aboriginal culture. In the same month Ifould also wrote to K Binns, Commonwealth Librarian and to W A Cowan, University of Adelaide Librarian thanking both men for the Aboriginal material they provided for the bronze doors.

Each of the eight bronze entrance doors measures nine by three feet (285 x 91.5 cm). The height to width ratio of a pair of doors is three by two, in effect satisfying a Golden Rule ratio. The

northern doors are 3 1/2 inches thick, and while I have been unable to measure the southern doors they are probably the same. The northern doors each have eight panels measuring 15 by 12.5 inches as this shape best suits the 3/4 portraits of explorers and navigators, and one bottom panel measuring 15 by 28.5 inches suiting images of ships. The southern doors each have three panels 24 by 24 inches and one bottom panel 12 by 24 inches. The square panels best suit the design of the printers’ marks and the rectangular suit images of wildflowers. The northern doors are of greater artistic merit than the southern doors and while classed as low relief they are quite deep at 2.5 centimetres and as there are no undercuts the final models were in plaster, most of which have been preserved. In contrast the southern doors are true bas-relief with a depth of less than one centimetre. The panels of the northern doors are one solid casting. The square panels of the southern doors have a cast round centre piece, a cast leaf and dart circular surround and pressed plate periphery. The rectangular panels have a cast centrepiece with a pressed plate periphery welded at the corners. The northern doors are very solid and heavy when opening while the southern doors have a lighter feeling with some flexibility.
The internal design of the southern doors was revealed while I was inspecting and photographing the southern doors, for the second time in June 2011 with the head of security. He noticed one of the bottom panels was slightly out of position and on inspection the panel came out in his hands! It revealed the door was composed of welded frames of vertical and horizontal zinc coated steel hollow structural section beams about 2 by 4 inches by 1/4 inch thickness to which the bronze surrounds and panels were attached.
We were thus the first people to observe the construction of these doors since before they left the factory in 1942. Although there are no surviving records of the doors’ construction this observation proved all panels were constructed separately then later attached to the mainframe of the doors. Inspection of the reverse of the panel showed there were two parts. The central detailed part was cast about three centimetres thick, as one would expect given the intricacy of the design, attached by sixteen rivets to the outer plain section of pressed bronze plate of 3/8 inch in thickness and machined, which would have been cheaper. If the whole panel had been cast it would have been cast in one piece. The two parts of the panel were joined together before being attached to the rest of the door. Most likely the square panels were done in the same way with the central round section cast and the outer square section of pressed and machined bronze plate. It has recently been discovered that the southern bronze doors have serious corrosion, and to remedy this they will be removed and repaired off site.¹⁷⁴

Ifould paid very close attention to the design and planning of the extension to the building of the Mitchell Library, especially to the design, planning and casting of all the bronze doors. “Panels for the bronze doors were submitted to him at all stages of design and production for his approval”.¹⁷⁵ In his letter to Daphne Mayo giving her the commission for the bronze Aboriginal doors on the left at the northern entrance Ifould stated the plaster models were to be finished so the bronze founder would not need to do any undercutting or etching and he would approve each panel in clay and plaster before casting.¹⁷⁶ He most certainly would have kept a similar close eye on the southern doors. Ifould’s original estimate for a single pair of bronze doors of about 3,000 pounds was most certainly based on a single solid casting. When the final design for the northern facade

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¹⁷⁶ SLNSW. PL/N6. Ifould to Mayo. 23 July 1940.
was changed to three doors it would have necessitated the doors made of panels attached to frames which was much cheaper. The fact Dixson generously donated 4000 pounds allowed sufficient funds for other decorations for the Mitchell library building and for Ifould to have the southern doors made of bronze.

The use of printers’ marks on the southern doors, the design of other decorations and the final composition of the panels for the north doors were on Ifould’s mind during his 1936 trip to USA, Canada and UK. During an interview where he is discussing his journey Ifould stated he accepted an invitation from the Carnegie Corporation to consult with them about Australian conditions. He also wished to see the latest developments in library architecture and methods. 177 Ifould closely consulted William Roberts’ important 1893 book *Printers’ Marks* and in 1932 and made extensive handwritten notes in pencil referring to it in August 1932. These notes are significant as they illustrate Ifould’s early thoughts in having Printers’ Marks as symbolic library decorations. Ifould’s hand written notes in pencil to the Trustees states the early Printers’ Marks of “Caxton, Fust & S, Leew for panel stone carving South Front.” His notes also included the following printers and page numbers from Roberts’ book:

1. Fust and Schoeffer (Roberts) 40.
2. Caxton 55.
3. ? Pynson (2nd one) 60
4. Liberch 95
5. Aldus (? best form) 218
6. Giunta (the plainer one) 225
7. Gerard Leew. 39
8. 2 shields
9. Froben 43
10. The St Albans Printer 56
11. Wechel 126
12. Tofine 131
13. Treschel. Golden Cockerel 132
14. Gryphe the Griffin Only 135
15. Ra??bolt (..... with horns) 212
16. 43 panel of marble for..... size 15” 9” high. marks for balconies.

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177 William Herbert Ifould, Papers 1856 - 1969, SLNSW. MLMSS 1878. Box1
Ifould originally thought marble panels should be placed on the balconies having printers’ marks carved in them with the dimensions of 15” x 9” high. These details also show Ifould was well aware of the significance of Roberts’ book. It demonstrates his attention to detail, and at this point his thinking of printers’ marks being carved in marble similar to those at the Boston Public Library. Finance for all carvings in the stonework would come from the Government Library Fund. The decision for the southern doors to be cast in bronze featuring printers’ marks came later when sufficient funds from the William Dixson Donation Account became available.

Printer’s mark sculptured in granite. Boston Public Library.

The impetus for these printers’ marks carved on the outside walls of Boston Public Library came from their Trustees’ minutes of May, 1890 stating the printers' marks for the medallions on the spandrels of the arches around the exterior of the building would cost about $1000 and it was agreed this should be done.\textsuperscript{179} This change was made late in the building program and they are one of the earliest printers’ marks adorning library buildings I have discovered, emphasising the importance of this building influencing the decorations of other major libraries.

Caxton’s Printer’s Mark. Library of Congress. Carol M Hindsmith Archive, LOC

On the upper walls of the Thomas Jefferson building of the Library of Congress the corridors on the second floor of the Great Hall have fourteen printers’ marks including Luc Antonio Giunta and Aldus Manutius. At a lower level on the walls are twenty six printers’ marks including those of Jean Petit, Johann Fust and Peter Schoeffer. In the north corridor are sixteen printers’ marks or publishers’ trade marks including William Caxton and Richard Pynson.

\textsuperscript{179} Kimberly Reynolds. Curator of Manuscripts, Boston Public Library. Personal communication, email. 9 November 2013.
At the entrance to the Rare Books and Special Collections reading room is a pair of bronze doors with six panels depicting the history of printing from Europe and the New World with printers’ marks including Fust and Schoeffer. These doors were completed in 1935 are the only other library bronze doors, on the evidence obtained, with printers’ marks. William Ifould inspected this building during his 1936 travels and would have seen these doors and the other printers’ marks around the building. He researched printers’ marks from 1933 and as a result of monetary interest accumulating in the William Dixson Donation Account, it seems likely he then decided to have the southern Mitchell doors cast in bronze featuring printers’ marks rather than those marks being carved into stone.

The other Library of Congress buildings do not appear to have any printers’ marks. However there are other American Libraries with printers’ marks. Ifould had correspondence with the

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librarian of the University of Illinois, Urbana - Champaign Library which has 27 stained glass windows with printers’ marks in circles which are gifts of their Printers’ Marks Society in 1924. The Doheny Library Reading Room, University of Southern California, Los Angeles has 14 printers ‘marks on the ceiling. In 1935 Ifould received a brochure of the architecture and decorations of the 1934 Indiana State Library from the director L F Bailey, where there are thirty fifteenth and sixteenth century printers’ marks and thirty American printers’ marks on the ceilings of the reading rooms.

Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester. Central doors and Fust and Schoeffer’s coats of arms.

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183 Steven Schmidt, Library Development Office, Indiana State Library. Personal communication, email. 21 June 2014.
The Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester, Rochester, New York (1930) has eighteen printers’ marks panels cast in bronze attached to wooden entrance doors. They include Aldus, Giunta, Caxton and, surprisingly, Fust and Schoeffer as two separate individual marks, essentially their family shields, even though all their printing was done in partnership with their printer’s mark having both shields combined. Fust’s mark has the Greek letter chi which is symbolic of Christ. Schoeffer’s mark has the Greek letter lambda which is symbolic of Logos, the Word of God and stars representing the Holy Trinity. Images and details of the Rush Rhees Library have kindly been sent to me from Rochester by Melissa Mead of the Rush Rhees Library. 184

Other American buildings feature decorations of printers’ marks on their doors, windows, ceilings and walls dating from the late 19th and early 20th centuries:

Enoch Pratt Library, Baltimore, Maryland. 1886.
Chicago Cultural Center, formerly Chicago Public Library. 1897.
Widener Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. 1915.
Printing Crafts Building, New York, 1916
Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, 1934.
Evans - Winter - Webb Building, Detroit.
The above eight were listed by Patricia Cost.185

Morrisson Reeves Library, Richmond, Indiana, 1893.
Rhode Island State Library, Providence, Rhode Island, 1904.
Andover Hall, Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts. 1911.
Mansueto Library, University of Chicago, 1912, moved to current location 2011.
Gilman Hall, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland. 1915.

184 Melissa S Mead. John M. & Barbara Keil University Archivist and Rochester Collections Librarian, Department of Rare Books & Special Collections, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester. Personal communication, email. 5 September 2013.
University of Illinois Urbana - Champaign Library, 1924.
Most spectacularly the Dome of the Powell Library, University of California, Los Angeles, 1929 with 48 Printers’ Marks.
Allen Hall, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. 1954.
The above nine were listed by Karen Nipps.186

Hall of Noble Words, Life Sciences Library, University of Texas, Austin, Texas. 1882.
Hotel Pennsylvania Library ceiling, New York. 1920. Designed by McKim, Mead and White the architects of the Boston Public Library.
Iowa State University, original Library building, Ames, Iowa. 1925.
Doheny Library Reading Room, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. 1932.
Fondren Library, Rice University, Houston, Texas. 1949.
The above five listed by the author.

Powell Dome. UCLA.

In an excellent book on the New York Public Library there is not one mention of a printers’ mark, so it can safely be concluded they do not exist in that library.\textsuperscript{187} On contacting that institution I was informed they were not aware of any printer’s marks there. “I know of no printers' marks used within this building. Sort of odd, on reflection, but apparently it is the case.” \textsuperscript{188}

Following his 1936 overseas trip the design of the panels of all Mitchell Library bronze doors was entirely William Ifould’s decision. The first newspaper reports of the designs of all the doors appeared as a result of Ifould giving some of his rare press interviews in October 1940 clearly showing Ifould to be the controlling agent of the design and production of the doors. One article had a photograph of an Aboriginal woman and small child which appears on one of the finished north doors.\textsuperscript{189}

Three double bronze doors costing more than 4000 pounds, are to be erected at the new Public Library building in Macquarie Street. At least four sculptors will cooperate in designing 48 panels, showing life and habits of Aborigines and portraits of famous navigators and explorers. The artists have been selected by the Chief Librarian (Mr W H Ifould) who has decided the design and subject matter of the doors. The cost will be paid from a gift made to the library trustees of 4000 pounds by Sir William Dixson several years ago.\textsuperscript{190}

‘The doors will be somewhat of a luxury’ said Mr Ifould yesterday ‘and I want to make them unusual’. ‘It has meant two years of solid thinking and working for me already, selecting the subjects and trying to get artists experienced enough to carry out the work.’ Mr Ifould said one double door would carry 16 three-quarter face portraits of great navigators of the South Pacific and famous Australian Explorers. The other doors would be devoted to the life and habits of Australian

\textsuperscript{187} Reed, Henry Hope and Francis Morrone, Anne Day Photographs. \textit{The New York Public Library: the architecture and decoration of the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building}. 2011.


\textsuperscript{189} Daily Telegraph. 4 October, 1940. 7.

\textsuperscript{190} Daily Telegraph. 4 October 1940. 7.
Aborigines. ‘I have selected Miss Daphne Mayo for one complete Aborigine door’ said Mr Ifould. ‘Mr Lenegan, of Melbourne, will do one panel or another; Mr Frank Lynch, of Sydney, two panels maybe one or two more; and Mr Ralph Walker, of Sydney, at least two panels.’ 191

The enlightened idea of using Aboriginal figures was very unusual for the time and came under much criticism as was Ifould’s selection of the Slovakian, Dr Arthur Fleischmann for the central doors as, during 1940 the Second World War which was going poorly for Australia and its allies in Europe, some people saw anyone not from the British Empire as a threat.

The southern doors also attracted interest. “Two bronze doors will have a decoration of printers’ marks, one from each important country”.192 Ifould designed the southern doors himself and selected which printers to be used with the help of his staff. In one letter he stated:

Here are some notes on the printers’ doors on the south wall of the new library building, that is at the south end of the main building. This is a large bronze door with six panels exhibiting in bronze bas-relief early printers’ marks. Whilst I was anxious to represent on the door the first printers of Germany, Holland, England, France, Spain and Italy, it was a sine qua non that the marks should be of a suitable character for designing in bas-relief, that is each panel should have about the same balance, and I found then that it was impossible to record the first printers of each of these countries. We ultimately chose the marks of Aldus, Caxton, Fust and Schoeffer, Giunta, Pynson and Veldener - as you know two British printers, the German printer Aldus, Giunta of Venice and Florence, and Veldener who is usually regarded as the first Dutch printer. 193

Ifould was incorrect as Aldus was Italian who worked in Venice and the German printers were Fust and Schoeffer. He knew this, therefore the letter was probably a last minute rush.

191 Daily Telegraph. 4 October 1940. 7.
192 Sydney Morning Herald. 14 October 1940. 4.
For reasons unknown Pynson’s mark was dropped and replaced by that of Jean Petit of Paris in the short time from when this letter was written on 23 October 1940 to when the Government Architect’s drawings of 29 October 1940. The only hand written note of his I have been able to find from the Bronze doors file is one with a list of printers for the doors including Pynson but not Petit as in the letter above.

The position of the printers’ marks differs on the drawing from that on the completed doors. This is certainly at the insistence of William Ifould. It is possible Parkes thought two Fleurs de Lys at the top and two twin shields at the bottom gave the best balance. Regardless, with the changing relationships generally between architects and librarians, Ifould would have had the final say. The marks are simpler versions of the images in Chapter Two in order to facilitate the casting process.

104 SLNSW File PXD 363, f175a.
Both the drawing and the doors have a guilloche in the sandstone door surrounds while the square panels have the marks in a medallion surrounded by a leaf and dart design. In the drawing the surrounds of the panels are composed of a scroll and dart design with rosettes at each corner, while on the doors they are more elaborate and symbolic as stated later in this chapter.

The following are the printers’ marks selected for the southern doors and their positions:

Veldener’s mark on plan. Bottom left.  
Veldener’s mark on door. Top left.  
Giunta’s mark on plan. Top right.  
Giunta’s mark on door. Centre left.
Fust & Schoeffer’s mark on plan.
Bottom right.

Fust & Schoeffer’s mark on door.
Bottom left.

Aldus’ mark on plan. Centre left.

Aldus’ mark on door. Top right.

Petit’s mark on plan. Top left.

Petit’s mark on door. Centre right.
Viewed from inside the Reading Room above the southern bronze doors is the fine Caxton window depicting William Caxton presenting his 1474 book “Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye” to his patron, Margaret of York as described in chapter two. This image is derived from an engraving in a 1475 Chatsworth copy of the book from the Duke of Devonshire’s library, now in the Huntington Library, of which SLNSW has a copy. The Caxton Window was donated by the Sydney Morning Herald in 1940 celebrating 500 years since Johann Gutenberg’s invention of printing.

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Outside the building on the southern wall above the bronze doors and the Caxton Window is Caxton’s mark carved into the sandstone on the building which was installed when the fabric of the building was almost complete but before the Caxton window and southern doors were installed. This printer’s mark is the only one carved into the external wall of any library building, on the available evidence, apart from those on the walls of the Boston Public Library which Ifould saw on his American travels. In a replying letter to a newspaper editor Ifould stated the carved Caxton’s mark was also celebrating 1940 as the 500th anniversary of Gutenberg’s invention of printing. 196

There are other printers’ marks to be found around the library. The mark of Aldus Pius Manutius is etched into the bronze and glass doors inside the building on the southern wall leading from the Special Collections area to the south doors. On the right glass door from the vestibule to

\[\text{196 SLNSW. NPL64. 33909 1-4. Professional Relations - Liaisons - PLNSW - Out-letters May to August 1941. Item 6327 Ifould to The Editor, The World’s News.}\]
the stairs down to the Dalgety walkway is etched the mark of Mathias van der Goes, “the first printer in Antwerp”.

Ifould wrote to Dixson on 30 March 1940 recommending Wunderlich over Chubb for the construction of the northern doors because of the quality of the trial casts. Both firms were experienced in bronze casting and many of their bank safes are still in use today, one on the first floor of the Mitchell Library. Ifould and his Trustees preferred Wunderlich as it was a Sydney firm whereas Chubb was based in Melbourne, though they did have large foundry in Sydney. The Wunderlich tender was 2280 pounds against Ifould’s original estimate of 3000 pounds. The available evidence strongly suggests the decision to do the southern doors in bronze would have been made soon after March 1940 as there were now sufficient funds. Some of these funds were used for other embellishments. On the basis of Wunderlich’s tender I estimated the southern doors would have cost about 750 pounds, which later analysis showed to be 758 pounds.

Ifould again wrote to Sir William Dixson on 30 May 1940 regarding tenders for the three northern bronze doors; however at this stage, there was no mention of the southern doors. The trustees and the Government Architect considered Chubb and Wunderlich the only two firms in Australia capable of constructing the doors. Although the Chubb tender at 2208 pounds was cheaper, the Government Architect, the Chief Designing Architect and Ifould all considered Wunderlich superior with their trial castings and recommended their tender be accepted. Ifould disclosed he had shares in Wunderlich and wanted Dixson to make the final decision. All doors were moulded in green French sand and “executed in cast-bronze of approved composition containing approximately 90% copper” from plaster moulds made by the artists.
The southern doors, however, were cast by Chubb Australian Company Limited. The panels were probably cast in their main, Melbourne, foundry then the frames and surrounds in their foundry at 260 Elizabeth St, Waterloo from moulds made to Ifould’s designs and installed in 1942. It is probable the southern doors contract was awarded to Chubb on the advice of the Government Architect, the Chief Designing Architect and Ifould as a compensatory gesture because they were involved in other work in the building including the bronze candelabra at both the northern and southern entries and all of the bronze and glass internal doors. These doors were paid for by Sir William Dixson’s funds, because the northern doors were less costly than the amount Ifould had estimated in 1934. The William Dixson Donation Account had grown to 4,623 pounds by August 1940, while the library building was under construction, as a result of five years of interest accumulation. 200 Unfortunately the records of the William Dixson Donation Account were destroyed thus I have had to rely on Trustees Agenda for information. 1,200 pounds was paid to Wunderlich as part payment for the northern doors. Fleischmann the premier sculptor for the

northern doors was paid 467 pounds, Mayo 441, Walker, Lynch and Lenegan the same amount in proportion to their contributions. By March 1942 payments had been made for all the windows except the Chaucer windows. There was no payment to artists for the southern doors as Ifould designed them himself as he had read comprehensively about printers’ marks and the library already had works by Fust and Schoeffer, Veldener, Caxton, Aldus, Giunta and Petit, and the images selected were from those books. Ifould supplied Chubb with the images he selected and the architect’s drawing. The final payment of 1,080 pounds to Wunderlich for the northern doors was made on 21 April 1942 by John Metcalfe, new Principal Librarian as Ifould had just retired. The Chaucer windows costing 450 pounds were paid for in May 1942. The first payment of 458 pounds to Chubb for the southern doors was authorised by the trustees in July 1942. The final payment of 300 pounds was made on 20 January 1943.

![Bottom panels and surrounds of left door. Photo author.](image)

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202 SLNSW. NPL 66. 33920 1-4. Metcalfe to Wunderlich, 21 April 1942, item 8339


The bottom panel of each of the southern doors features two rose like flowers, the Small Bolwarra (Eupomatia bennetti) native to New South Wales, two unidentified small four petal flowers with stamen politely described, by a knowledgeable reviewer, as “it may be a sculptural flourish rather than an accurate representation of any New South Wales species”, and a large renaissance version of acanthus mollis leaves. The surrounds of all of the panels of these doors have flannel flowers (Actinotus helianthi) even though not botanically accurate and waratah flowers (Telopea speciosissima) with their leaves both of which are also native to New South Wales, as well as rosettes and acanthus leaves. The National Botanic Gardens have been most helpful in identifying these flowers.
Acanthus leaves are used in the capitals of Corinthian and Composite columns, and in friezes. They were first used in Ancient Greek and Roman times signifying long life or immortality. They are on the panel surrounds and bottom panels of the Mitchell Library southern entrance doors and the candelabra of both northern and southern doors, also on the Corinthian columns in the vestibule. Although there are about thirty varieties of acanthus, the most commonly used in architecture and sculpture are A. spinosus and A. mollis. Their common names are bear’s breeches and oyster plant. The date inscribed in the sandstone immediately above the southern doors is MXMXLI (1941) and the doors were installed in 1942, one of the last items in place on a magnificent building project which took almost four years. All that remained to complete the building was the south eastern corner which was done to Ifould’s suggested designs in 1964. The southern doors, a celebration of the printing of books, could thus be regarded as the final piece in William Ifould’s great undertaking. Unfortunately, due to the 1987 major extension of the State Library buildings physical and visual access to these doors has been completely eliminated. It is planned this will be rectified in the next upgrade to the buildings which is already underway. The Southern Doors of the Mitchell Library are an artistic, literary and symbolic treasure of the State Library of NSW which should be made available for public viewing.
Chapter Five

Conclusion

Southern Doors Heritage

The bronze southern doors of the Mitchell Library have very high heritage value. A 1997 Heritage and Conservation study of the State Library showed all the bronze doors to have “High Significance”.

Furthermore: The Mitchell Wing is the second most important Government Building in Sydney to be designed in the Federation Academic Classical style, the other being the nearby Art Gallery of New South Wales, which is the finest example in Sydney. External details such as Bronze doors are significant for the part they play in the overall quality of the materials and finishes of the building as well as being important designs and workmanship of local artists.

Proposals for works which would alter the significant form, scale, character, original detailing or existing original materials of the Mitchell Wing externally or internally should not be considered. The exterior of the Mitchell Wing should be conserved and restored. If necessary, repairs should be in sympathy with original fabric and style.

A later publication on Mitchell Library conservation states “All bronze doors on the north and south facades have high significance”. This publication recommended the appointment of a heritage building officer responsible for coordinating and reporting on heritage property and maintenance.

At the request of the State Library a Strategic Master Plan was prepared in 2007. In addition to the above heritage listings it included the following:

Australian Heritage Commission. The State Library’s Mitchell Wing is included in the Register of the National Estate.
NSW Heritage Council. The Mitchell Wing is identified in the NSW Heritage Inventory and Register.

NSW Minister for the Arts. Section 170 Register.

National Trust. Listed.

Council of the City of Sydney. The Mitchell Wing is identified in the Central Sydney Heritage Inventory.

Royal Australian Institute of Architects. RAIA 20th Century Register of significant buildings. Additionally in their Master Plan, under “Heritage, Existing Fabric: Opportunities & Constraints” is shown photograph of the Glasshouse and south doors with the caption “Existing skylight obscures significant heritage fabric”.

There are major problems with the accessibility to the southern doors as stated in chapter one. They are significant as they are part of an important 1942 public building which is emphasised as the architecture is a combination of Classic Ancient Greek and Renaissance style. The decision to have these doors cast in bronze demonstrates their importance. The motifs of early printers’ marks are a celebration of the invention of printing in Europe and subsequent mass circulation of books, the motifs of wildflowers are symbols of the state of New South Wales. The major problem regarding the southern doors is that in the final design of the 1987 building of the Macquarie Street wing of the State Library the southern doors of the Mitchell Library were ignored and left completely out of the design with the result they cannot be seen by the most important people associated with the library, the visitors and reading public.

A Macquarie Street wing 1982 feasibility study on the ground floor level plan shows domain terrace access behind the Glasshouse skylight to the southern doors’ steps as shown in chapter three. The plans were changed from the feasibility study to the final design by raising the entry level of the Macquarie Street wing to the detriment of the southern doors which cannot be
seen. The Government Architect was John W Thomson and his designing architect was Andrew Andersons who “sought harmony with the old and new Parliamentary buildings, and the sandstone Library Building”. He recognised “Paying due respect to the existing sandstone Library building made the question of physical links between the old and the new buildings a sensitive one”.

The public, at that time, were able to view the southern doors from their installation in 1942 until the commencement of the Macquarie Street wing in 1985 as mentioned on page 46. Since then the doors have been forgotten and neglected until the problem was identified in the Johnson Pilton Walker report of 2007. This represents a failure of the duty of care of the southern doors by the State Government of New South Wales and the State Library management which will soon be rectified. Had this problem been identified from the opening of the Macquarie Street wing a simple plan to allow access would have been to remove the two end panels on the western end of the Glasshouse skylight, construct a simple path and steps plus a ramp down to the viewing platform.

There has been an ongoing lack of maintenance to the southern doors and surrounds. They appeared to have been forgotten as there was green algal slime on the surrounding stonework and the doors and adjacent candelabra had not been cleaned for many months. This has recently been rectified. However there is a funding shortfall for maintenance of all New South Wales public buildings, the greatest being the State Library needing an additional $9.1 million.

**Library Building Symbolism**

The Mitchell Library building and all the bronze doors are symbolic in New South Wales library culture, the building because of its neo-classical and renaissance design and the bronze doors because of aboriginal heritage, navigators and explorers, early printers’ marks and NSW wildflowers.
In a 2000 book on “Building libraries for the 21st Century” there are many comments on recent, current and future library buildings. However there are items relevant to the Mitchell Library which was completed in 1964. In this book Jane Carr, Director of Public Affairs, The British Library (New Library 1997) states:

Antonio Panizzi’s vision of the universal library in which all human knowledge might be found. His energy resulted in the construction of the Round Reading Room, as perhaps the most powerful ever architectural symbol of the universal significance of Libraries and Librarianship. The building was needed to a visual manifestation of the knowledge and history across the arts and sciences contained within it.

Looking at symbolism, in this book Terry Webb states there are many comments on recent, current and future library buildings. He also stated: Symbolic Librarianship, as I call it, is the little recognized portion of library practice that acknowledges the library as a system of symbols and calls for proper management of those symbols as an important part of a library’s resources. It is the interpretation and utilization of the symbolic value of a library to strengthen and extend the library’s influence as a social institution. It is the ability to interpret, be sensitive to, and build upon public perceptions of a library as a societal asset that is as much symbolic as functional.

While the symbolism of a library building is important, it should also be functional as discussed in chapter three. John Ruskin did not agree with this premise as he felt symbolism should be more important than function. In 1853 he made a pedantic and authoritarian statement regarding who should be an architect: “No person who is not a great sculptor or painter can be an architect. If he is not a painter or sculptor, he can only be a builder.” In a 1927 book on library planning which is relevant to the period of the finalisation of architectural plans for the Mitchell Library, it was stated “He may, of course, be a librarian with architectural leanings, for every librarian is an

architect at heart. The ideal combination in the construction of a library is an architect who sees the librarian’s viewpoint.”207 “Ruskin consistently discusses a building as something to be seen rather than to be used.”208

If one accepts the argument of symbolism being as important as functionality, it follows that the Mitchell Library architecture and all of its decorations including the carefully chosen stained glass windows and the diligently chosen motifs of all the bronze doors have high symbolic value. The architecture of the Mitchell Library is symbolic with its arresting exterior demonstrating its importance and the awe inspiring reading room is a powerful reminder this is the fountain of knowledge. The Greek temple portico indicates the library is a temple of knowledge. It could well be accepted that the eight fluted Ionic columns supporting the entablature are symbolic of columns supporting the weight of that knowledge and the northern doors which are opened every morning are inviting the public to enter and access this knowledge. In recent times this symbolism has been accepted by international politicians as in the early 1990’s the Singapore Minister for Information and the Arts wrote “We must educate our people to their maximum potential and throughout life. Public libraries help us to do that.” In 1996, China’s Premier Li Peng addressed the opening session of the 62nd annual International Federation of Library Associations conference in Beijing stating libraries were treasure houses of knowledge, and the government of China would support the building up of libraries and librarianship in order to hasten the nation’s social and economic development.

**Mitchell Library Decorations**

There are many external and internal decorations of the Library building. The expense of external decorations, sandstone carvings, Flinders statue, internal carvings as well as floor and wall adornments were paid for from the New South Wales Library Account.

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208 Michael W. Brookes. “John Ruskin and Victorian Architecture. 1987.9
The southern facade of the Mitchell Library building has three components: the central part which is the rear wall of the main reading room and set back are the western part with images carved in sandstone plus the 1964 eastern part which is the same except with windows in place of carvings. The carvings in the sandstone cornice include decorations described in architectural terms as cymatium, fillet, corona, egg-and-dart on ovolo and dentils.

An image in chapter one shows that immediately below the frieze with the sandstone carving “Public Library of New South Wales” there are four fluted Ionic pilasters, a balcony with balustrade of single balusters and brackets below the Caxton window and above the southern bronze doors in addition to a guilloche carved into the sandstone surrounding the bronze doors. Caxton’s printer’s mark is carved into the sandstone above the Caxton window. The external walls of the southern facade on the reading room and Dixson wing have nine sandstone high relief carvings of images of past civilisations from 1447 BC to 1200 AD. These carvings measure 11’ 6” by 5’ 6” or 3.5 by 1.7 metres.

The question needs to be asked who decided on these carvings and why? While it may be proved wrong, in a default paradigm it can be no one other than William Ifould. His staff located ancient images and he had active discussions with archeologists and ancient historians as when he returned a copy of André Grabar’s L’art Byzantin to Professor A D Tindall, University of Sydney.
In interpreting the ML sandstone carvings it is necessary to know something of the history of the people who made the originals of these objects. “In an anthropological perspective, art is not reduced to a ideational configuration of forms; it is situated among other systems such as philosophies, religious beliefs, and political doctrines.”

These carvings are, from left to right, an Egyptian lion of Thutmose III 1447 BC when hieroglyphs had been long established. Thutmose III was the sixth Pharaoh of the eighteenth Dynasty who ruled from 1479 to 1425 BC, when this writing system was long established. Secondly, an Assyrian Winged bull fourth century BC during the 550 to 330 BC Ashaemenid period of the Persian Empire. In 480 BC about 50 million people lived in the Achaemenid Empire. At its peak it has been estimated the empire ruled over 44 percent of the world's population, the highest such figure for any empire in history. Thirdly, a Chinese war horse of Tang dynasty 618 to 907 AD
where there was woodblock printing, the oldest being the Dharani Sutra 670 AD, with a phoenix of Western Han dynasty 106 BC to 24 AD when the Silk Road to Europe was opened by Emperor Wu who ruled from 141 to 87 BC. Fourthly, Byzantine peacocks installed at St Mark’s Basilica Venice in 1204 AD. Fifthly a Classical Greek horse and rider from the Parthenon Athens fifth century BC. Sixthly, an Assyrian mounted archer seventh century BC during the prosperous late Neo-Assyrian Empire. The Neo Assyrian Empire lasted from 911 to 609 BC and its most prosperous period was during the 669 - 627 reign of Ashurbanipal who promoted art and culture, and had built a vast library of cuneiform tablets at Nineveh. The seventh carved figure is Hercules capturing the bull (the seventh of the twelve labours of Hercules) which is a Roman copy of the original Greek first century AD. The eighth is a Greek horse breaker of the Classical period fifth century BC. Finally there are carvings of Byzantine griffins from St Mark’s Basilica Venice where they were installed in 1204 AD. The Venetian items are located in two rooms in a tower of St Mark’s containing almost 300 items looted during the plundering of Constantinople by the fourth Crusade in 1204 AD. All these entablatures, being good copies of the originals, are saying those ancient civilisations were communicating to others and eventually to us through the images. These high relief carvings were exquisitely created by highly skilled craftsmen of Beat Bros (Darlington) and, with minor changes, were taken from the drawings signed by Cobden Parkes, the Government Architect on 12 November 1935.
Beat Bros stonemasons working in the vestibule. Beat Bros Stonework. PLNSW. 1942.

The Shakespeare Statues are in front of the northern facade of the Mitchell Library, isolated in Shakespeare Place by the entry and exits of the Cahill Expressway. They comprise Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Portia and Falstaff. They are by Sir Bertram Mackennal and paid for by Henry Gullett. The statues were cast in bronze in England and the white marble base came from Italy in 1925.

Near the north western corner of the library is a bronze statue of Sir Richard Bourke, the popular Governor of New South Wales from 1831 to 1837. It was paid for by public subscription and was the work of Edward Hodges Baily in London in 1842. This statue was placed on this site long before the library was conceived of, and so was not actually part of the library’s deliberate decoration.

Early in his career as Principal Librarian, William Ifould acquired the Flinders papers from Professor Flinders Petrie, grandson of Matthew Flinders. These were given on the condition that a
statue of Flinders be erected. This was done and a bronze statue of Flinders in naval uniform, holding a sextant was unveiled in 1925. The sculptor was William Robert Colton in England.

There are three stained glass windows on the northern wall of the vestibule derived from old illuminated manuscripts; the centre window is from the thirteenth century Gifford Psalter and the two side windows are from the eighth century Book of Kells. These windows, below which are three small balconies with balustrades of double balusters, there are internal columns with corinthian capitals and stone carvings high on the walls are best viewed from the first floor balcony level. Also in the vestibule is a bronze head of William Ifould paid for by the employees of the library after his retirement and created by Arthur Fleischmann.

Sir William Dixson was delighted part of his Donation Account was used to fund the three Chaucer stained glass windows on the eastern wall of the main Reading Room which celebrate the Canterbury Tales first printed by William Caxton in 1474.

The Sydney Gazette Window, on the western wall, commemorates the first Australian newspaper printed in 1803 which was donated by the Sun Newspaper to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the invention of printing in Europe as it was installed in 1940.

The Caxton Window, on the southern wall, commemorates William Caxton presenting his patron Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy with his new “Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye” in 1474 which was donated by the Sydney Morning Herald.

There are two bronze medallions, on the northern end of the reading room, celebrating the major benefactors of the library, David Scott Mitchell and Sir William Dixson created by Arthur Fleischmann.
Mitchell Library Reading Room looking north. Photo Author.

The Chaucer, Sydney Gazette, Vestibule and Shakespeare room windows were by Arthur G Benfield and constructed by Frank G O’Brien of Waterloo. The Caxton window was by John Radecki and constructed by J Ashwin, Sydney.

The Shakespeare Room resulted from a group of Sydney Shakespeare enthusiasts deciding in 1912 to acknowledge the 300th year of Shakespeare’s death in 1616. World War I intervened and the Shakespeare Room became part of the 1942 extensions of the Mitchell Library. The ceiling is closely modeled on that of Cardinal Wolsey’s study at Hampton Court Palace and was made by Art Plasto Company. The bronze light fitting was made by Chubb’s Australian Company. Adorning the northern walls are seven stained glass windows depicting the Seven Ages of Man from “As you like it”. In the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC there is a 1932 large stained glass window with images of the Seven Ages of Man. William Ifould would have seen this during his 1936 trip
and as he was very influential in all aspects of the Mitchell Library building design he would probably have recommended these images as suitable for the Shakespeare Room.

The symbolic value of the embellishments and decorations of the Mitchell Library are important for the people of New South Wales. The sandstone carvings are symbolic of past traditions handed down to us. The north facade, the Shakespeare Room, the Caxton, Chaucer and Sydney Gazette stained glass windows symbolise the literary and cultural traditions we have inherited. The Shakespeare, Flinders and, fortuitously, Bourke bronze statues symbolise the literary tradition, the exploration and the European settlement of this nation. Other libraries have similar traditions. In discussion with library colleagues in America I have been asked “Don’t you have any lions in front of your building?” Lions symbolise power, which could be interpreted as being the power libraries have in distributing knowledge to the people.

**Access to Southern Doors**

In the Library’s Records there is a 1942 photograph of the southern doors from inside the Reading Room showing the glass doors and the left bronze doors closed and with light and shadow showing the right door to be open. As previously mentioned, in 1942 it was envisaged that one would be able to walk through these doors from the reading room down the steps then turn around to admire all of the southern facade of the Mitchell Library. No one has gone through these doors for over twenty five years! The evidence suggests, apart from maintenance, they have not even been opened in the last twenty five years except on two occasions, at which I was present, in January 2014 for the State Librarian, Dr Alex Bryne and his senior staff, and again during the November 2014 Library History Forum.

The problem of the dismissing of these doors could have been avoided if the 1982 Feasibility Study for the 1987 extension had been followed instead of including the Glasshouse which comprised a little used study area and failed restaurant with a pitched glass roof skylight.

Possibly the best resolution for public access to the southern doors is to demolish the Glasshouse skylight, which in architectural terms could be best described as unique, adventurist or quaint as this form had not been used previously or subsequently. In terms of appreciating the
architectural treasures of the library it should be described as obstructive! Replacing it would allow easy access for visitors to see and understand the significance of the southern doors.

According to the SLNSW 2016 Master plan there will be reshaping of the galleries and public access areas of the Mitchell Library. There will eventually be a 400 seat auditorium, below the reading room, with access from the northern entry. The glasshouse skylight will be demolished and the area paved over at the present level with public access to the southern doors by steps and a ramp.

The southern doors are a tribute to the foresight and inspiration of William Ifould. He was very single minded in his pursuit of Public Library services in NSW and had great attention to detail and a passionate oversight of the 1939 - 1942 extensions to the Mitchell Library. He did not seek glorification and is remembered in the Mitchell Library with a bronze head donated by the library staff located in the vestibule near the stairs. The bronze Southern Doors are primarily a celebration of the invention of printing with moveable type in Europe and widespread 15th and 16th century printing of books. This led to increased literacy, the purchase of books, later the reading of them in libraries and increased information and education amongst the general population. The process invented by Johann Gutenberg and carried forward by the printers whose marks appear on these doors for over 500 years has only recently been superseded by computerised techniques. While many libraries have decorations of printers’ marks, the southern doors of the Mitchell Library are unique as they are the only external bronze doors with images of such marks on all the major panels.

The Southern Doors of the Mitchell Library are a literary, cultural and artistic treasure of the State Library of NSW and should be made available for public viewing from the outside. A good case could be put forward for these excellent bronze doors to be made freely available for public viewing in the foreseeable future, with an explanation of the cultural significance of printers’ marks
relating to the library. Given that the library is a repository of knowledge, and as a result custodian of important books and manuscripts, these doors are a symbolic treasure of the library and should be better preserved and brought to public attention. Importantly, we all understand the major focus of any library is its readers.

The path outlined in chapter one was followed and I was given assistance from the staff of the State Library of New South Wales in accessing the southern doors of the Mitchell Library which are unavailable for public viewing. The southern doors are part of the 1939 to 1942 major extensions of the Mitchell Library building overseen by William Ifould, Principal Librarian who designed the doors himself and closely supervised the library building program and decorations. As shown on the Government Architect’s drawing these doors have panels of early Printers’ Marks, therefore these were researched in depth as was the invention of printing with moveable type in Europe by Johann Gutenberg.

As a result it was necessary to track Ifould’s trips to USA and the influence library building architecture and decoration had on him. He was impressed by the Boston Public Library which has thirty three printers’ marks cut into granite medallions on the outer walls. In 1932 Ifould initially considered having forty three panels of marble rectangles fifteen by nine inches for printers’ marks on the balconies. The Boston Public Library has allegorical figures on the three bronze entrance doors, those on the left being Music and Poetry, centre Knowledge and Wisdom, right Truth and Romance. In November 1934 Ifould and other members of the Mitchell Library Bronze Doors Committee decided that there should be similar images on the northern doors. These were later changed to sixteen square and two rectangular panels of aboriginal people for each pair of left and right doors, a very innovative change for the time they are outlined in chapter four. The Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress has fifty six printers marks on the inner walls which everyone sees when touring that building, also there are two bronze doors with printers marks
leading to the Rare Books and Special Collections area which Ifould would have seen because of his interest in that library’s collections. While in Washington Ifould went to Folger Library for its Shakespeare collections and research, thus saw its large stained glass window of the Seven Ages of Man. While in Los Angeles Ifould went to the Huntington Library, which he recommended to Justice H V Evatt, as it contains the only engraving of William Caxton presenting Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy with his Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye, the image used in the Mitchell Library’s Caxton Window. The State Library of New South Wales has a copy of this engraving. The main facades of the New York Public Library and the Mitchell Library are similar. The design of the classical ends of the Mitchell facade was decided with the first part completed in 1910. However the final form of the remainder was not completed until 1935 where the architects drawing showed it in the form of the building as it is today, notably classical central portico with Ionic columns and changing the upper part of the lower windows from curved form to rectangular. In his 1923 trip to America Ifould saw the New York Public Library at close quarters and would have passed his ideas onto the Government Architect. He also noted the rectangular reading room and in 1933 persuaded the Library Trustees and the National Library Building Advisory Committee to strongly request the Minister to order the architect to change the proposed circular reading room to a rectangular one, which is the reading room we have today. The printers’ marks on the doors date from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. One might ask what is their relevance in the twenty first century. In this age of digitisation libraries will still be needed to play an important function and as I have demonstrated books will continue to be printed in ever increasing numbers.

It would be appropriate for the southern doors to acknowledge William Ifould with a bronze plaque as the designer of those doors celebrating the invention of printing in Europe which rapidly created the vast production of books, hence the need for libraries. In addition there should another plaque with a brief explanation of printers’ marks. Given Ifould’s huge impact on the Mitchell
Library it would probably be more appropriate for him to be honoured in one of the major restructures of the library buildings.

The symbolic value of the embellishments and decorations of the Mitchell Library are important for the people of New South Wales. The sandstone carvings are symbolic of past traditions handed down to us. The Northern Facade, the Shakespeare Room, the Caxton, Chaucer and Sydney Gazette stained glass windows represent the literary and cultural traditions we have inherited. The Shakespeare, Flinders and Bourke bronze statues symbolise the literary tradition, the exploration and the settlement of this great country. The wildflowers on the bottom panels and surrounds of the doors are symbolic of the library belonging to the people of New South Wales.

The Mitchell Library is unique. This assertion is supported by other researchers. It is the only library outside USA with printers’ marks displayed on the building. It is only one of two with those displayed externally. It is one of two with printers’ marks on bronze doors. It is one of two with four pairs of bronze doors. The southern bronze doors are the only ones designed by the Principal Librarian.

**Resolution**

The question to be addressed is what should be done with these doors in the short term and in the long term. Should they be ignored as has been done since 1987? It is to be hoped not. Fortunately this is no longer the case as there has recently been much interest in these doors and their significance from highly placed members of the State Library staff and from the NSW Library Council. Should they be opened for public viewing? This option is impractical as it would impact on the scholars in the Special Collections area. However, If my proposal for demolishing the Glasshouse skylights is accepted and access obtained, it would feasible to open the southern doors for ceremonial purposes such as the Premier’s Literary awards when, after presentations in the
Metcalfe Auditorium of the Macquarie Street Wing, all assembled could transfer to the Mitchell Reading Room for a formal dinner or other festivity. The best way to view and interpret all bronze doors is when they are closed, thus diminishing the argument they should be accessed through the Special Collections reading room. Could they be included as part of the regular walking tours of the State Library buildings? I am firmly convinced they should be. If this were to happen it would be with maximum benefit for the people of NSW to see and understand the reasons for these doors being cast in bronze featuring early printers’ marks. A long term solution depends on the outcome of any future reconfiguring of the library buildings already underway with a proposal to remove the Glasshouse skylight, pave the area as part of the Domain Walkway allowing interested viewers access to the outside of the southern doors.

Johnson Pilton Walker’s 2007 Strategic Master Plan for the State Library is a series of grand plans for reconfiguring both the Macquarie Street Wing and the Mitchell Wing to give better access to and a better presentation of the Library. However it poses a new threat to the southern doors as in two of the four options have the south doors suspended one floor above entry level. It is probable this plan will not be implemented “as all of the southern façade is scheduled to be restored in the Library's maintenance program, and it is hoped the doors will be made available for public viewing.”

Further developments of SLNSW. Personal communication, email 19 June 2017.

Dr John Valance, State Librarian of NSW. Personal communication, Meeting 17 October 2017.
The panels of early printers’ marks are from a semiotic viewpoint a stroke of genius on Ifould’s part as they are a celebration of the invention of printing, hence books which are the major reason for the existence of libraries continuing into the future. The excellent bronze southern doors can no longer be ignored, and must soon be brought to the easily accessibility of the public, hence the readers, the most important people of the Mitchell Library’s wonderful tradition! Amazingly, on the changing current evidence this will be achieved by the removal of the Glasshouse skylight and the area paved over as part of the Domain Walkway with access down to the viewing platform,
following the completion of the 2016 Mitchell Library Master Plan, in 2018.\textsuperscript{211} This change will be implemented as part of the Further Development of the State Library of New South Wales, \textsuperscript{212} allowing interested viewers access to the outside of the southern doors. This change will be implemented as part of the Further Development of the State Library of New South Wales, allowing interested viewers access to the outside of the southern doors. In the short term “we might be able to remove some stickers on the glass of the windowed walkway on the first floor bridge between the two buildings, which would allow the doors to be seen”\textsuperscript{213} This action would bring to visitors’ attention the existence of the southern doors and might encourage some of them to know more about them by reading this thesis.

Personally, I am absolutely delighted about this outcome for which I have been advocating over five years, thus perhaps my research has had some beneficial practical consequences, given there was previously little knowledge or interest in the southern doors.

\textsuperscript{211} Further developments of SLNSW. Personal Communication, email 19 June 2017

\textsuperscript{213} Dr John Valance< State Librarian of NSW. Personal communication. Meeting 17 October 2017.
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**Board Management Meetings - PLNSW - Trustees - Agenda**

- 1923 - 1927 33489 1-8
- 1928 - 1932 33530 1-7
- 1933 - 1936 33540 1-8
- 1937 - 1940 33581 1-7
- 1941 - 1942 33354 1-3
- 1943 - 1944 33353 1-2
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**Knowledge and Information Management - Control - PLNSW - Index to Register of Correspondence 1931 - 1934 34933**
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1926 - 1927 34138
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Property Management - Construction - PLNSW - National Library Building - 1914 to 1940
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Board Management - Meetings - Minutes - PLNSW - Trustees Minute Book
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