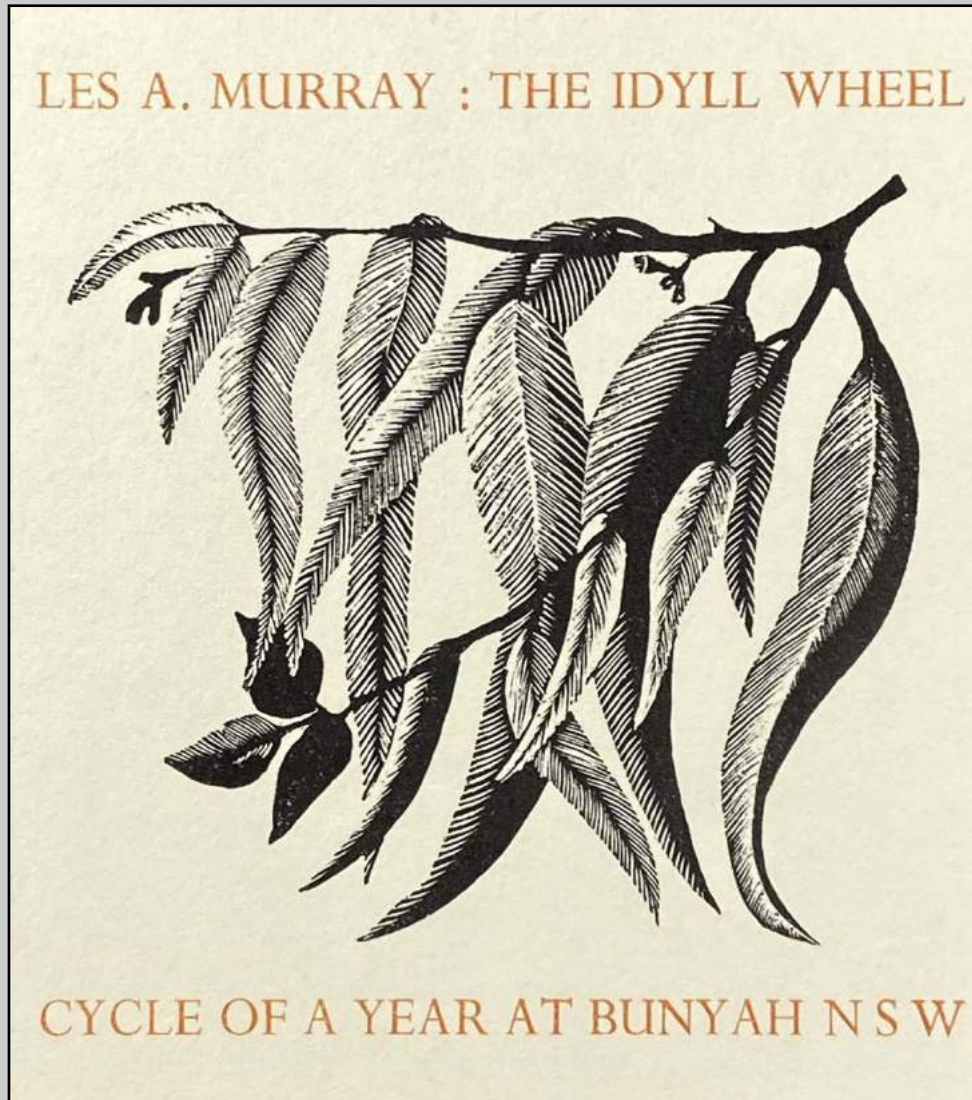


BRINDABELLA



A SHORT LIST

An e-list of 18 private press publications
from Alec Bolton's studio

A Note on Alec Bolton & the Brindabella Press

Alec Bolton is a name long familiar to those who collect Australian Private Press. For many decades he was a quiet but enduring presence in the publishing and literary environment of twentieth century Australia, and his Brindabella titles are appreciated for their craftsmanship and quality of content.

Bolton began to learn printing in 1970-71 as an evening student at London College of Printing while working as the London editor for publisher Angus and Robertson. His wife Rosemary Dobson's poem 'Knossos', printed as a small broadside, was the only literary production of that period, but more was to come. In 1972 having returned to Australia to work at the National Library he acquired a Chandler & Price treadle platen of the 1920s and established "the spare-time Brindabella Press", named for the Brindabella Range within sight of his Canberra home. Some of the first items from the press were ephemeral – a folder with three poems by Rosemary Dobson and two Christmas cards – but book production quickly came to the centre and Bolton began to produce at least a book each year, mostly poetry and all literary.

His principles of design were simplicity, a minimum of ornament, restraint, and a search for joy and *esprit*. Michael Richards, in *A Licence to Print*, describes the result: *There is nothing overly precious about these books. They are solid, well-bound, lucidly written and sensitively illustrated...Almost without exception, they are the works of friends and acquaintances. In that, perhaps, lies an aspect of their character which is difficult to define precisely. One feels, looking at the entire output of the press, that these are all books engaged in a long conversation with each other.* (p 16)

In 1985 Bolton discovered to his dismay that he could no longer register Brindabella Press as a business name in the Australian Capital Territory and so adopted Officina Brindabella as the imprint (Officina is the Italian word for workshop). The name Brindabella Press was regained in 1992.

"I cannot say why it seems to mean so much" he wrote in 1992, but I feel a deep satisfaction in reclaiming something for which, for the past seven years, I felt unluckily deprived." (*Brindabella Press, The Name Regained and Other News*, p 1).

Books and poetry broadsides

continued to be produced until Bolton's sudden death at the age of 70 in December 1996. He had been enthusiastically working towards three new publications, but these were destined never to be published. Brindabella Press concluded with Alec Bolton's passing.

The 18 items in this short list are from the extensive poetry collection of the late Desmond MacAulay of Brisbane. Several items include prospectuses and short notes from Bolton to the MacAulays.

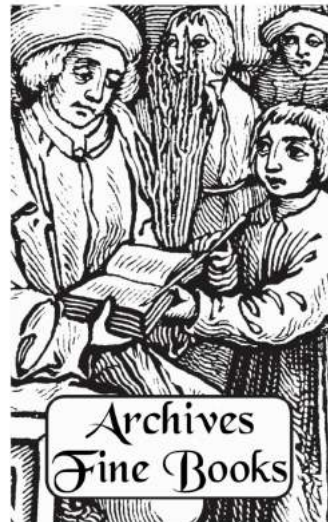
In my comments below I have drawn on Bolton's own recollections from Michael Richard's monograph rather than focusing on the writers and artists, all of whom have left their mark on the Australian cultural landscape.

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References

Richards, Michael. *A Licence to Print; Alec Bolton and the Brindabella Press*. National Library of Australia, 1993

Bolton, Alec. *News From Brindabella Press*. September 1996.

Bolton, Alec. *Publications from 1973 to 1989 of the Officina Brindabella with a note on the Beginnings of the press*. July, 1989.

Bolton, Alec. *Brindabella Press; The name regained and other news*. September, 1992.

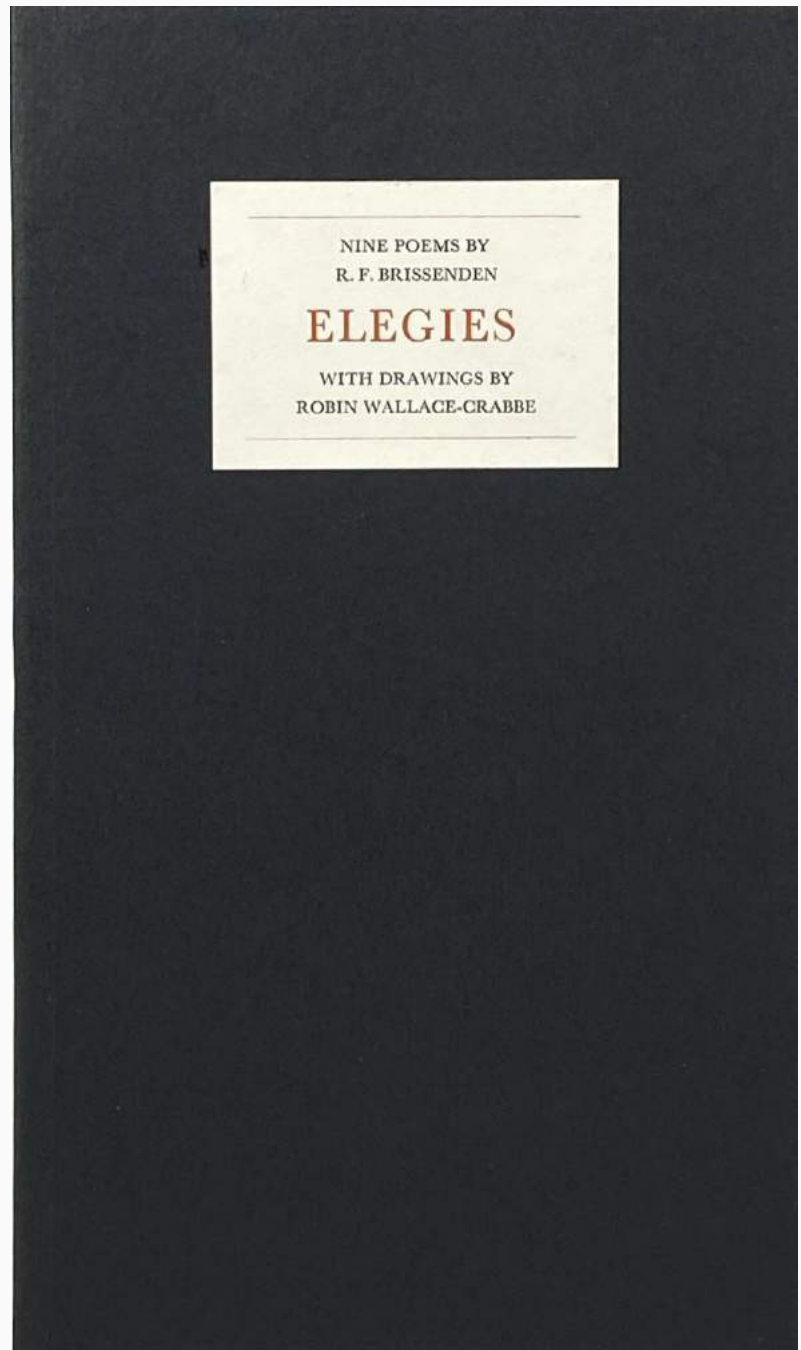
Hard, Lynne. *Letter to the Editor*. ABR December 96/January 97.

Terms of Sale

All items are guaranteed as described and prices are in Australian dollars. Returns are accepted for resale within 10 days of receipt only if packed, shipped and insured as received. Institutions may receive deferred billing. Postage and insurance are extra and will be via Australia Post unless otherwise requested.

Preferred methods of payment are Visa, Mastercard and Paypal. We will however gladly provide bank details for EFT where preferred. Please note that under usual terms of sale all items remain the property of Archives Fine Books until paid for in full.

ILAB affiliates may deduct their reciprocal discount only if the account is paid within thirty days; thereafter the price is net.



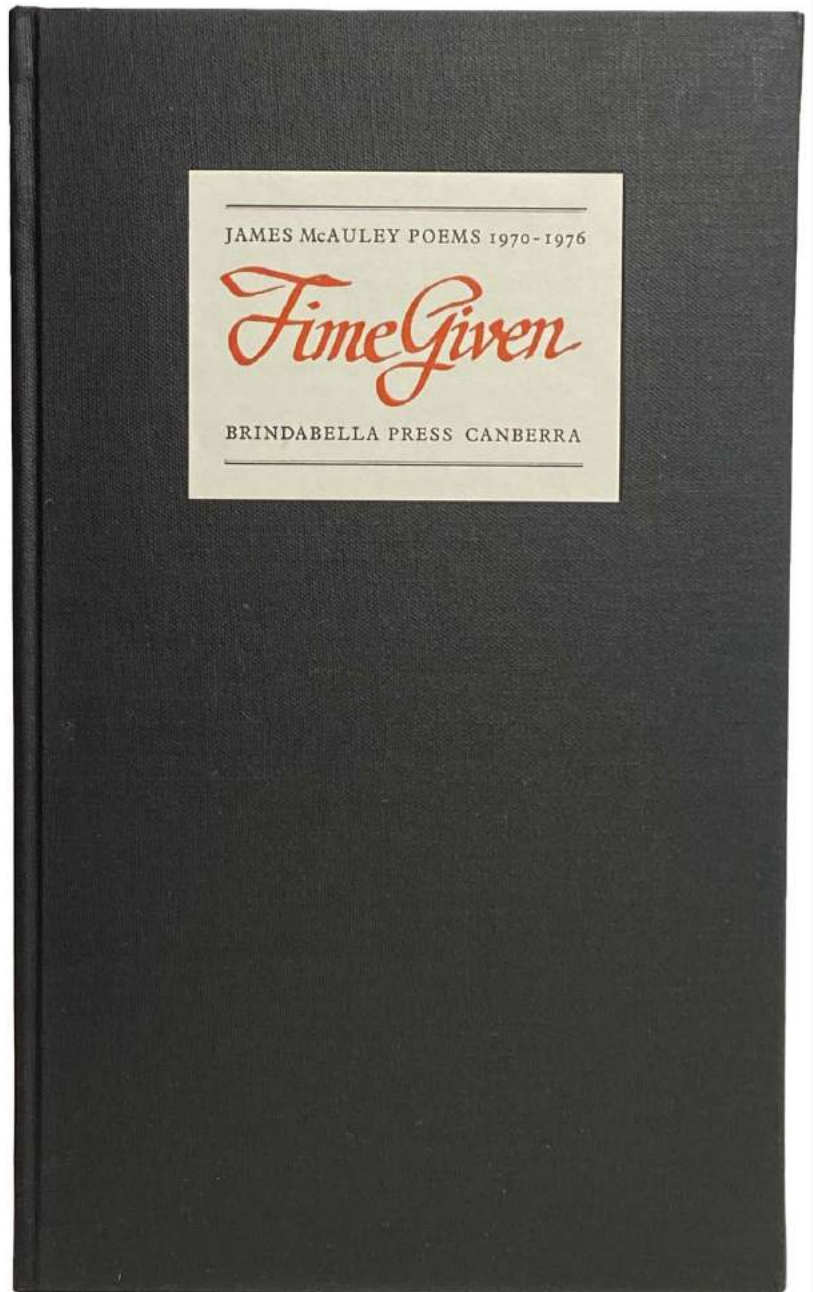
BRISSENDEN, R F
Elegies

Nine poems by R. F. Brissenden with drawings by Robin Wallace-Crabbe. Canberra: Brindabella Press, 1974. First Edition. Sewn poetry chapbook : 20pp : SIGNED by poet and artist : stiff black card wrappers with cream paper label lettered in black and red : black eps : limited edition this being 295 of 310.

[*A Licence to Print*, 4] Fine.

This is the second book from the Brindabella Press. In *A Licence to Print* Bolton recalled, "This was a little less successful than the Campbell collection [the second from the press]. I printed a little too light, with not enough impression and ink. Since then I've been obsessed with bindings that succeed in opening flat." (p 23).

[\(#1906\)](#) \$175



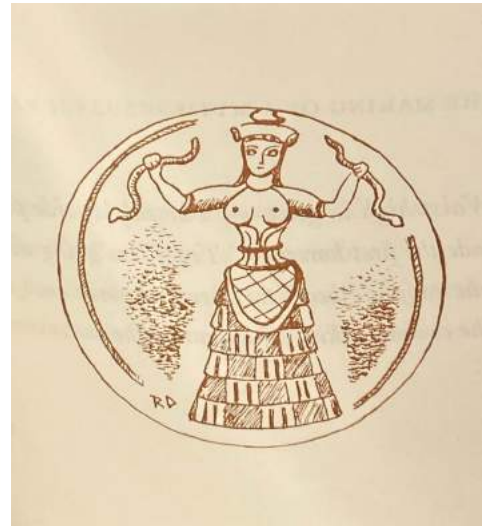
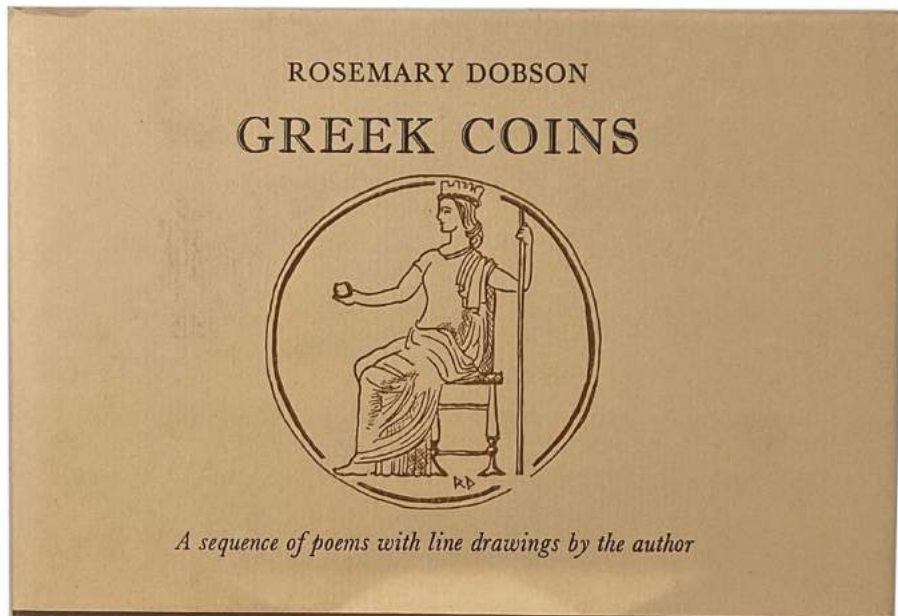
MCAULEY, James
Time Given

Poems 1970-1976 by James McAuley. Canberra: Brindabella Press, 1976. First Edition. Hardcover : 44pp : handwritten titles by calligrapher Rod Shaw : casebound in black with cream paper label to top board lettered in red and black : limited edition this being 96 of 230.

[*A Licence to Print*, 7] Fine.

Handset by Alec Bolton on Basingwerk Parchment this is the fourth book and seventh publication of the Brindabella Press. The work was begun with the "generous collaboration of the author and [was] finished to his memory, Christmas Day 1976." (colophon). On publication most copies were bought by friends of McAuley and for some time this was the most difficult Brindabella Press title for collectors to find. (*A Licence to Print*, p 23).

[\(#1922\)](#) \$500



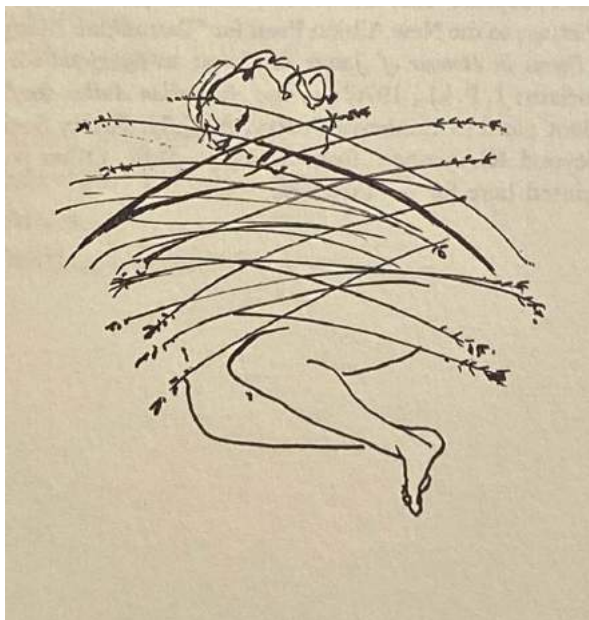
DOBSON, Rosemary
Greek Coins

A sequence of poems with line drawings by the author. Canberra: Brindabella Press, 1977. First Edition. Oblong hardcover : 32pp : illustrated with four coin drawings by Dobson printed in brown : casebound in brown buckram with gilt decoration embossed on top board : decoration repeated on tan paper dustjacket : matching tan eps : SIGNED by the poet at the colophon : limited edition this being 181 of 240.

[*A Licence to Print*, 8] Fine.

Hand-set and printed by Bolton, this is the fifth book and eighth title produced by the Brindabella Press and the only printed dustjacket Bolton produced (*A Licence to Print*, p 24).

(#1911) RESERVED



HOPE, A D
The Drifting Continent

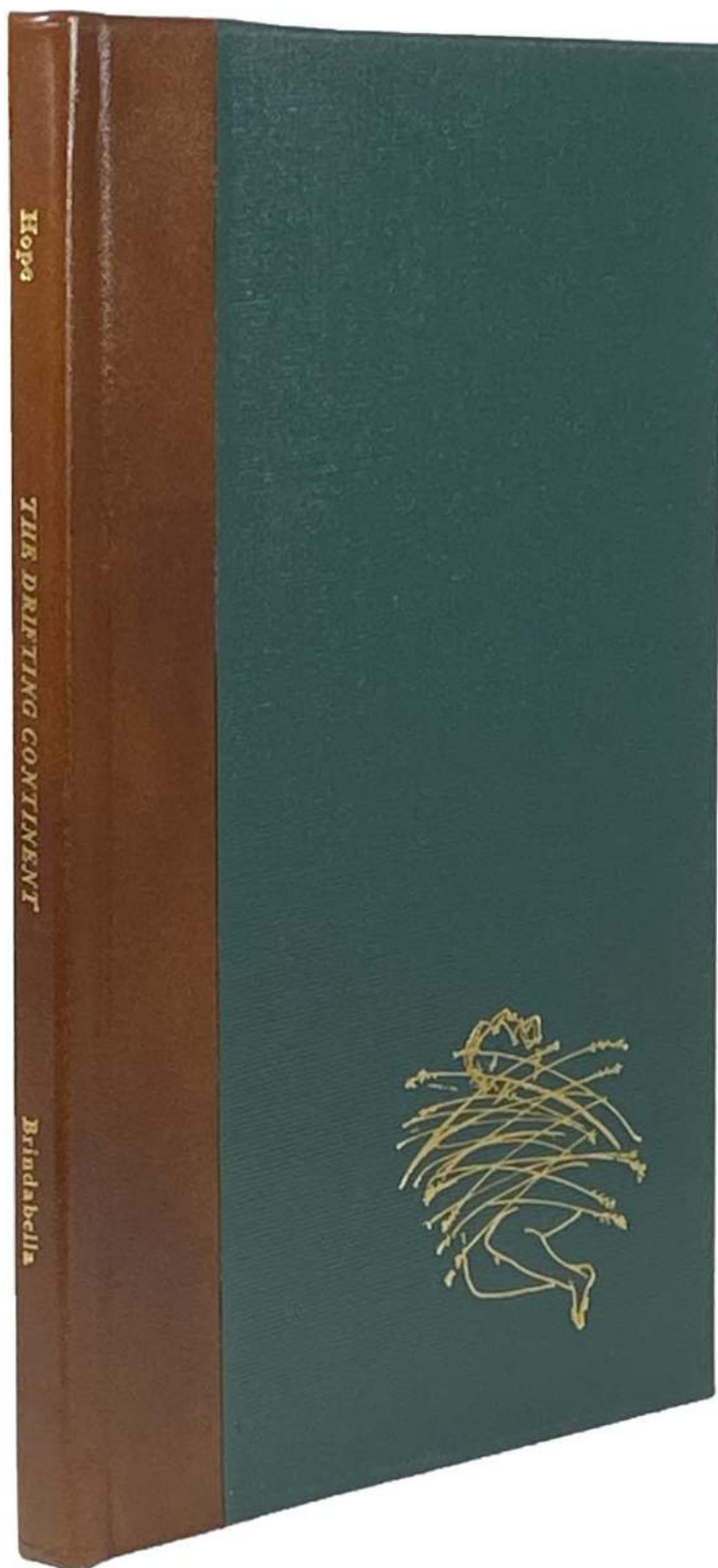
and other poems. With twenty drawings by Arthur Boyd. Canberra: Brindabella Press, 1979. First Edition. Hardcover : 46pp (48) : black eps : quarter leather with buckram sides : gold blocked on the front : SIGNED by poet and artist at the colophon : limited edition this being 133 of 285 : mylar wrap.

Loosely inserted a prospectus for Christina Stead's *The Palace with Several Sides* (Officina Brindabella, 1986).

[*A Licence to Print*, 9] Fine.

The sixth book by Brindabella Press and the ninth publication. Bolton described this as "an exciting book, in every sense". Not only were the poems "thrilling" and the drawings "wonderful", but it was the first time Bolton had printed four-up, and the first time he printed tone. (*A Licence to Print*, p 24).

[\(#1921\)](#) \$200



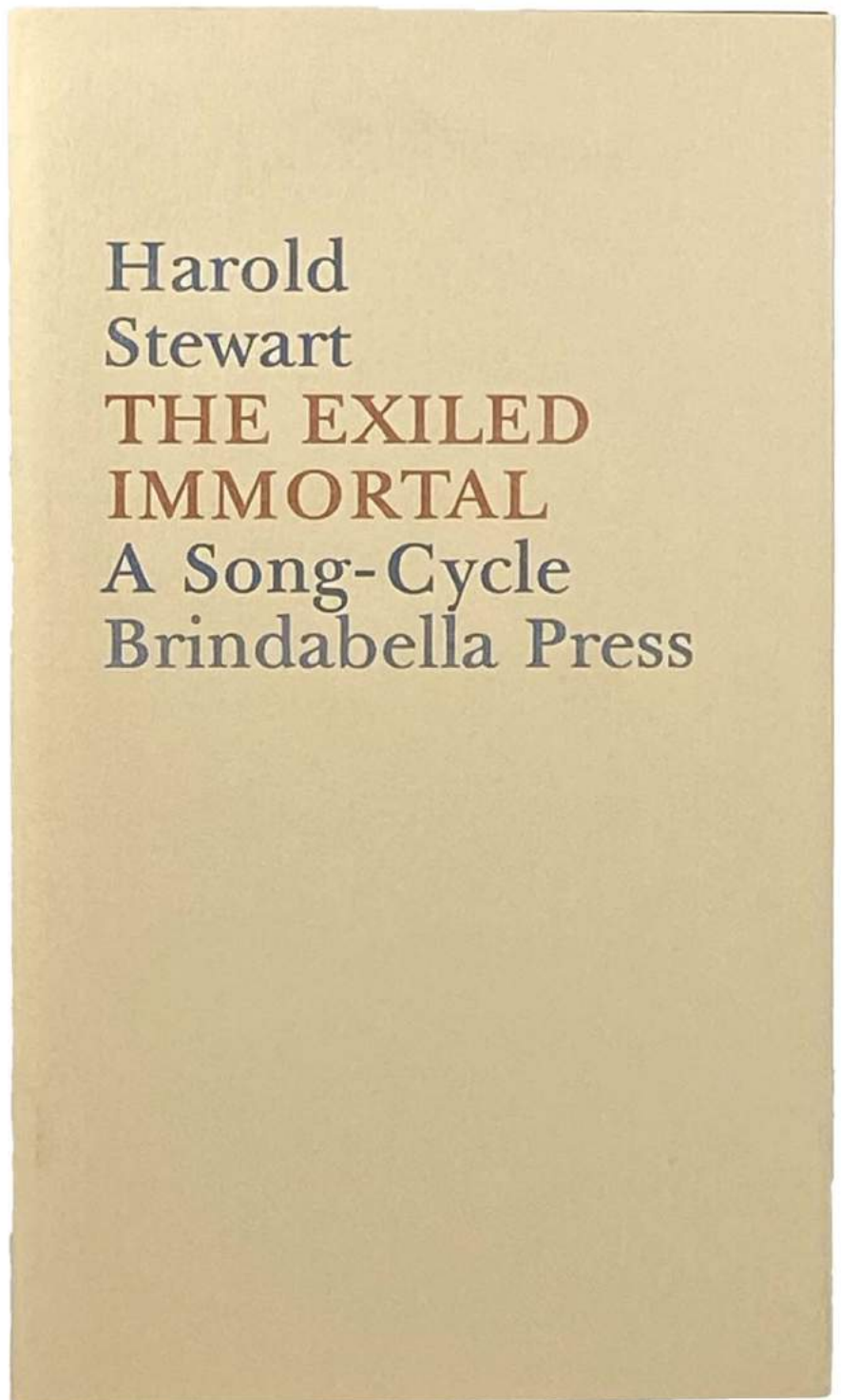
STEWART, Harold
The Exiled
Immortal

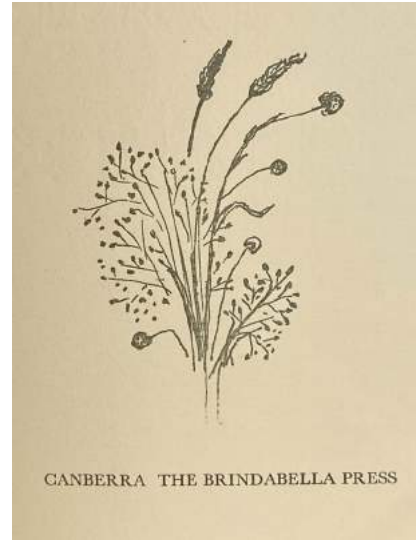
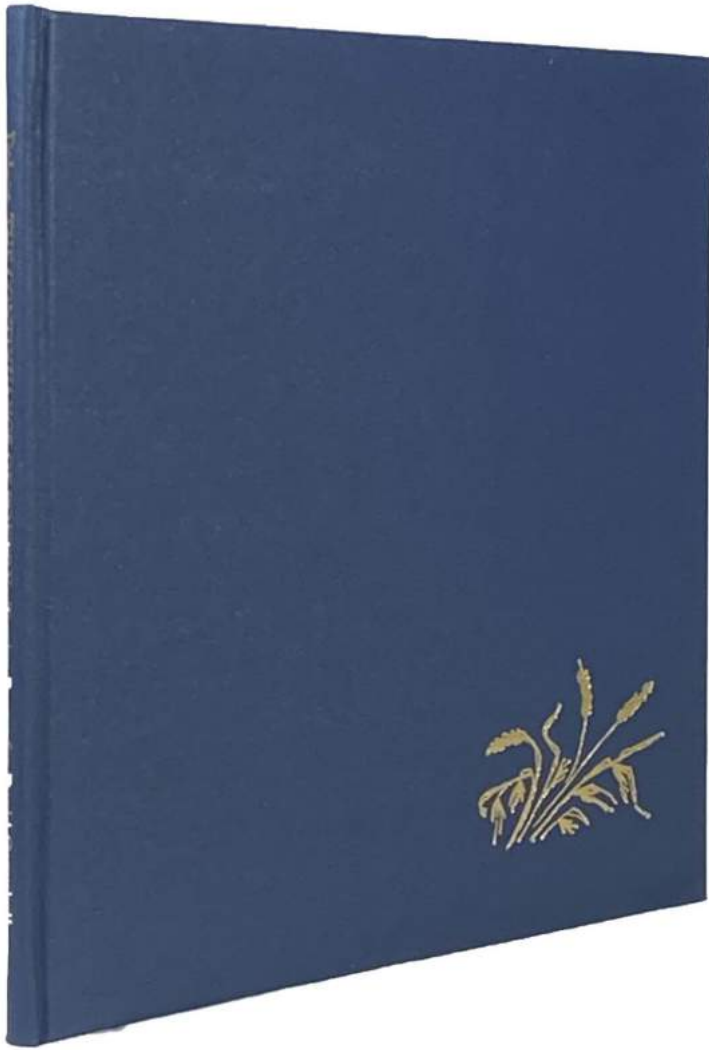
Canberra: Brindabella Press, 1980. First Edition. Handsewn softcover : pp. [5], 31, [32] : Number 125 of 240 hand-set copies : Baskerville font : Gatefold wrapper printed in dark and light brown : SIGNED by the author : Bookseller sticker to foot of front endpaper : Typed letter and hand written card from publisher (both SIGNED by Bolton) loosely inserted.

[*A Licence to Print*, 11] Fine.

This is the seventh book and eleventh publication of the Press. In *A Licence to Print* Alec Bolton recalled, "The second half of Ern Malley!* An austere but reasonably well printed book. This was meant to have illustrations but the work I commissioned was not liked by the author so was not used. Harold Stewart was a good friend of Dorothy Green, who put me in touch with him where he lived in Kyoto." (p 25). [*Ern Malley was a famous Australian literary hoax—Ed.]

[\(#1916\)](#) \$60





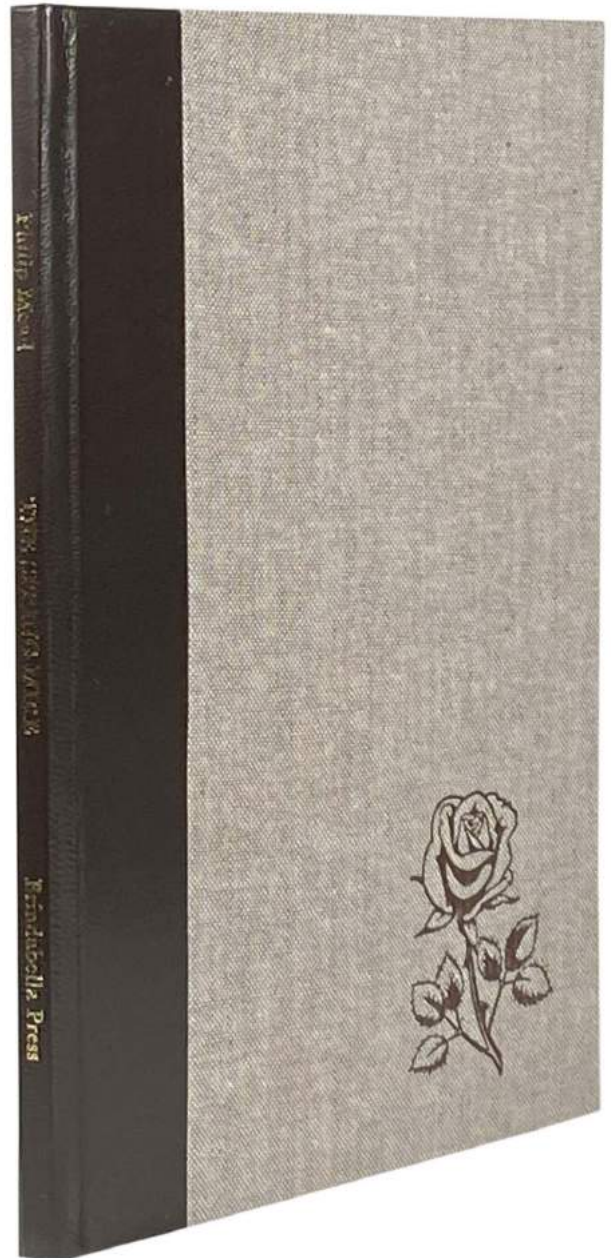
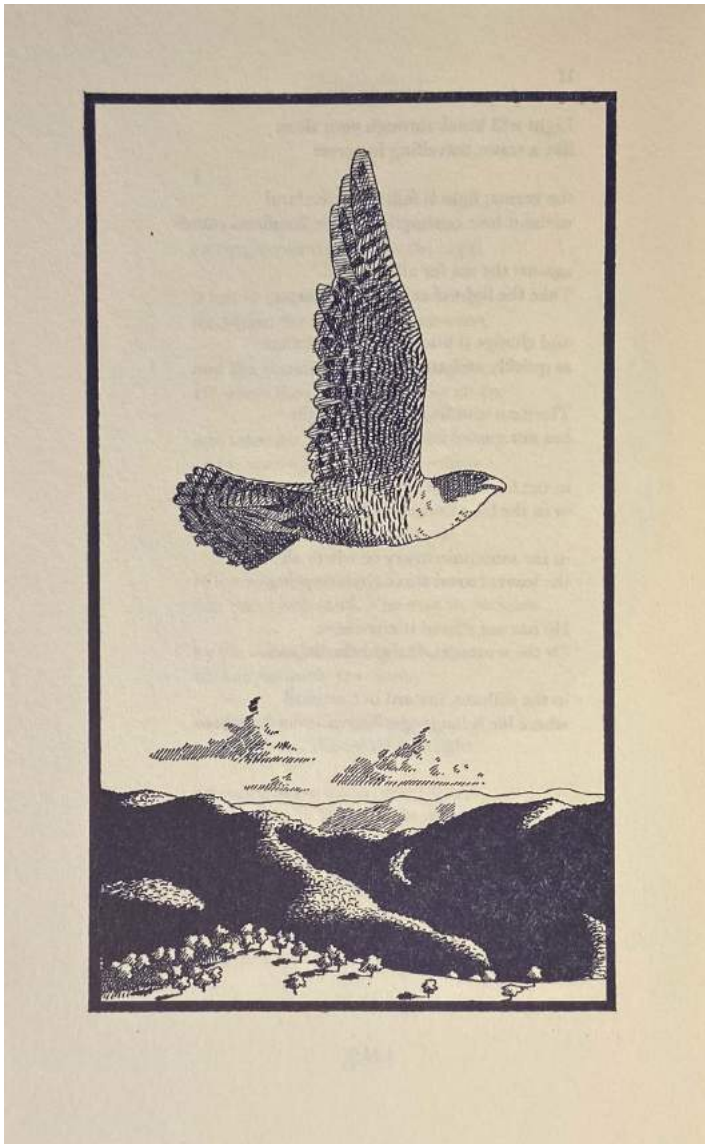
DOBSON, Rosemary
The Continuance of Poetry

Twelve Poems for David Campbell. Canberra: Brindabella Press, 1981. First Edition (thus). Hardcover : 32pp : illustrated with three decorations by the poet and four half tone photographs by the printer in green : olive eps : bound in navy cloth with gold blocked decoration on top board : SIGNED by the poet at colophon : mylar wrap : limited edition this being 228 of 275.

[*A Licence to Print*, 12]

The eighth book of the Brindabella Press and the twelfth publication. One of the most personal publications of the Brindabella, full of personal associations. As Bolton recalled, "We had known David since the early 1950s, and first stayed with him at Wells station on the outskirts of Canberra in 1955. We used often to go out to The Run, his last property, which I photographed after his death." (*A Licence to Print*, p 25). The poems were first published in the Bulletin.

[\(#1915\)](#) \$175



MEAD, Philip
The Spring-Mire

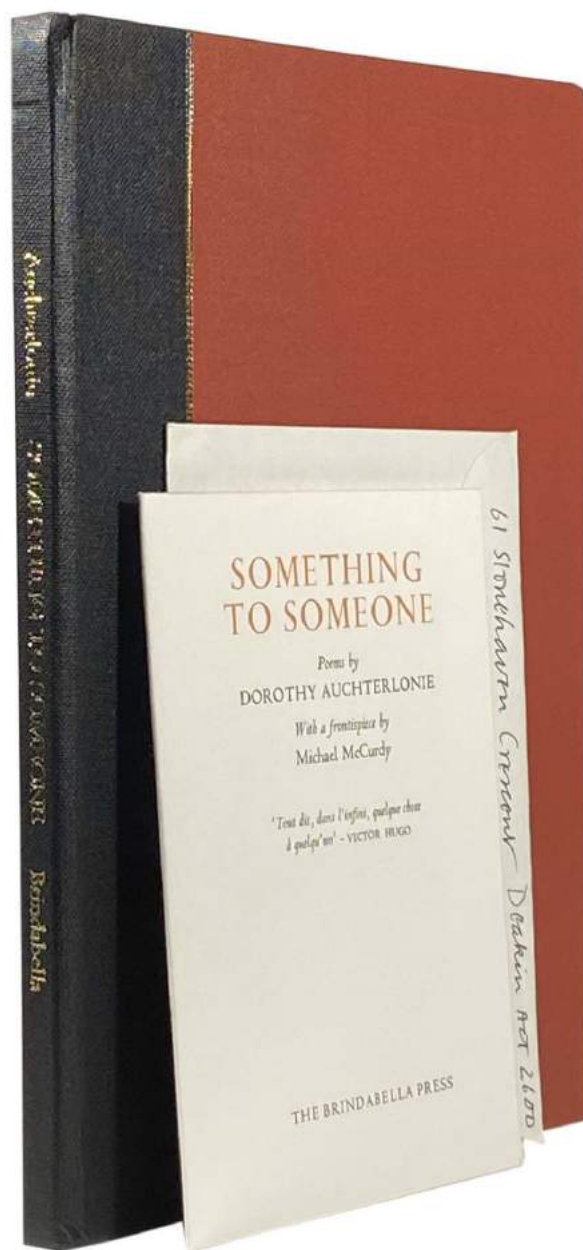
With drawings by Ian Sharpe. Canberra: Brindabella Press, 1982. First Edition. Hardcover : pp [6] 7-31 [32] : seven drawings by Ian Sharpe printed in blue : sand eps : half quarter leather over canvas side with decoration blocked in foil : SIGNED by the author and artist : limited edition this being 199 of 240 : original acetate cover.

Loosely inserted a typed letter from the publisher announcing the book and a SIGNED handwritten note to previous owner from Bolton.

[*A Licence to Print*, 13]

Bolton admired Mead's poems "in a somewhat uncomprehending way" and mused that their "opaqueness" was reflected in the design, which in retrospect he found "a little too dense on the page". (*A Licence to Print*, p 26)

[\(#1920\)](#) \$100



AUCHTERLONIE, Dorothy
Something to Someone

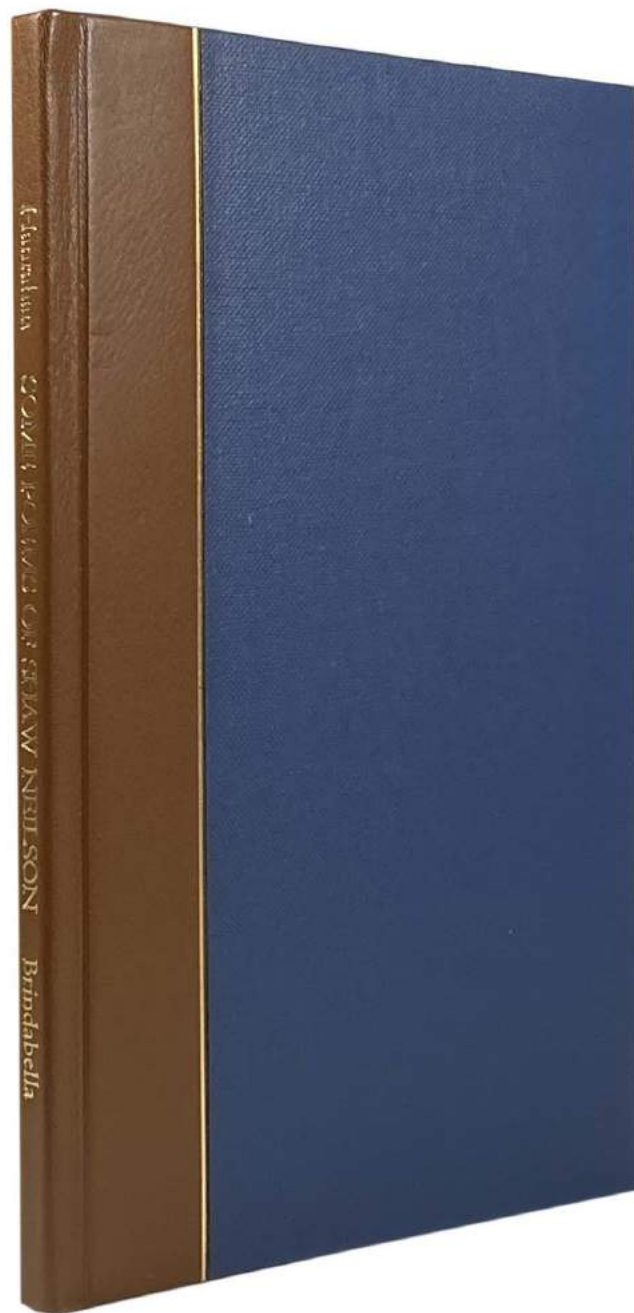
with a frontispiece by Michael McCurdy.
 Canberra: Brindabella Press, 1983.
 First Edition. Hardcover : pp [6] 7-135
 [36] : bound in two buckrams over the
 boards with a vertical gilt line
 separating the black from the burnt
 orange and gilt lettering on the spine :
 original glassine wrapper : limited
 edition this being 156 of 230.

Loosely inserted the publisher's
 prospectus for this book, a SIGNED
 handwritten note from Bolton to the
 previous owner and a handwritten receipt
 for the book in a separate envelope,
 also SIGNED by Bolton.

[*A Licence to Print*, 14] Fine.

"These are very strong poems, with a frontispiece wood engraving by the American artist Michal McCurdy, whose work delighted Dorothy as being absolutely appropriate to the poems. It was set in Centaur with Perpetua. You have to search out type suppliers these days, and I have imported type from Canada and the USA as well as buying it in Australia - the type for this book came from San Francisco. That's not the only reason why I am using Linotype more in recent years, but it is a contributory factor. I also like using new type, which gives a lovely crisp impression, and machine composition makes the whole process much faster. After all, it is the book that is the thing, not the purity of process in getting there." (Bolton, in *A Licence to Print*, p 26)

[\(#1913\)](#) \$100



HANRAHAN, Barbara (Ed)
Some Poems of Shaw Neilson

selected and with wood-engravings by Barbara Hanrahan. Canberra: Brindabella Press, 1984. First Edition. Hardcover : 44pp : 13 wood engravings : dove grey eps : quarter leather over buckram sides with gilt lines : gilt lettering on spine : SIGNED by the artist at the colophon : limited edition this being 198 of 230 : glassine wrapper.

Small 3mm vertical tear to wrapper at back. Loosely inserted are the publisher's prospectus for this book and for *Iris in Her Garden* (Hanrahan, Officina Brindabella, 1991), hand-written and SIGNED note from the publisher and a 1985 news clipping from the Bulletin about Bolton and the name change from Brindabella Press to Officina Brindabella.

[*A Licence to Print*, 15] Fine in near fine dust-jacket.

This is the eleventh book by Brindabella Press and the fifteenth publication. Bolton treasured his collaboration with Hanrahan, who responded to his advertisement for a wood engraver a year after he placed it in *Art and Australia*. He described this, their first project, as an "exceptionally happy" one. (*A Licence to Print*, p 27)

[\(#1908\)](#) \$300

RIDDELL, Elizabeth
Occasion of Birds and
other poems

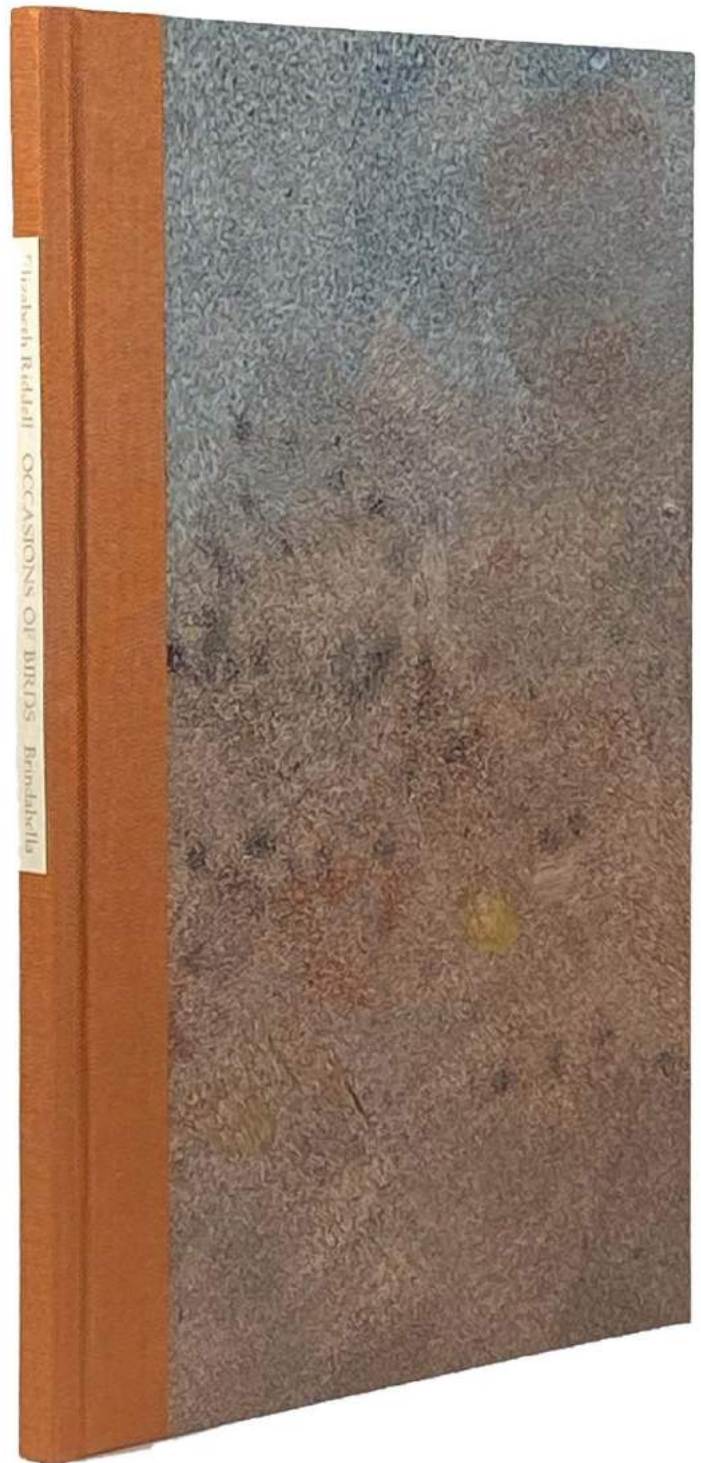
with drawings by Anne Wienholt.
Canberra: Officina Brindabella,
1987. First Edition. Hardcover :
pp. [6], 44, [48] : thirteen
drawings by Anne Wienholt
printed in rust red : bound in
quarter buckram over paste
paper covered boards : paper
label to spine : binding and
paper decoration by Helen
Wadlington : SIGNED by the
author : limited edition this
being 230 of 275.

Loosely inserted the publisher's
prospectus for this book; two
related news clippings (one from
the Bulletin, one from The West
Australian) and a handwritten
SIGNED note from Bolton

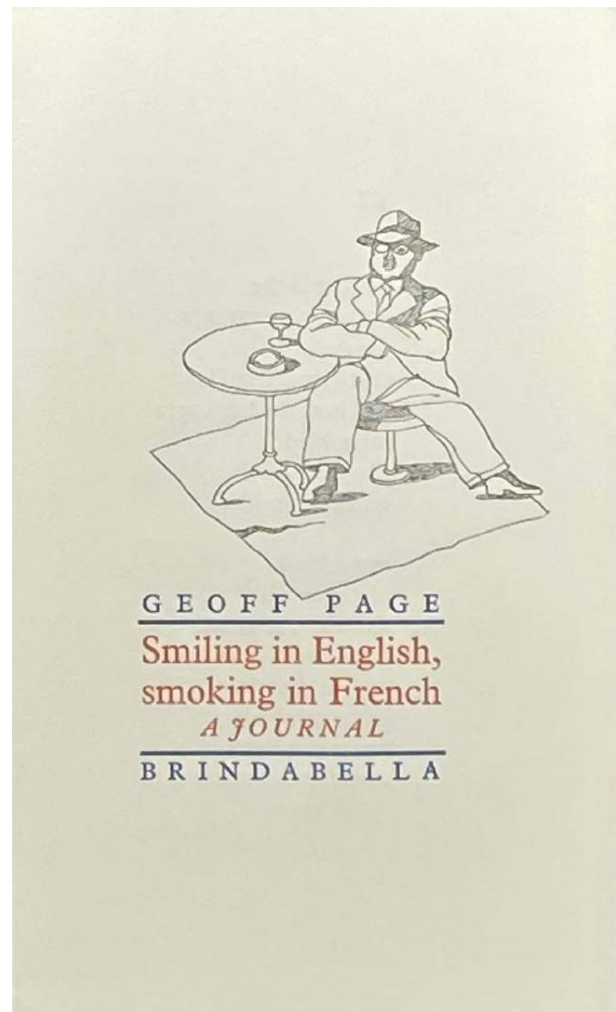
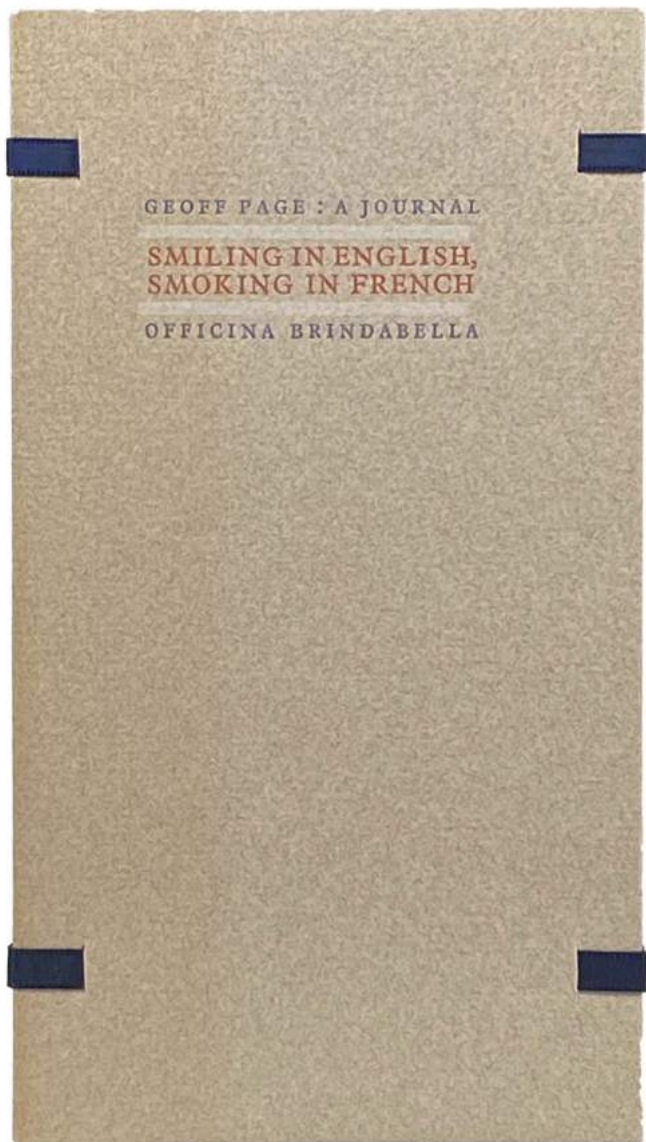
[*A Licence to Print*, 17] Fine.

"One of the books I'm happiest
with. The idea for the
illustrations came from John
and Rosalind Randle's
Whittington Press, whose work I
admire. My old friend Bill Thorn
buys most of their books and

their journal Matrix, and generously lends them to me. They had found
that drawings done with a 6B pencil, when made into line blocks, looked
like original crayon work. Anne Wienholt, another old friend, produced a
series of lovely drawings, full of living beings, in 6B pencil, and they
translated into a crayon effect. This was my first book with paste paper
sides, and the first bound by Helen Wadlington. The poems were
republished in Elizabeth's later collection *From the Midnight
Courtyard*." (Bolton, in *A Licence to Print*, p 28)



[\(#1919\)](#) \$100



PAGE, Geoff
Smiling in English, Smoking in French

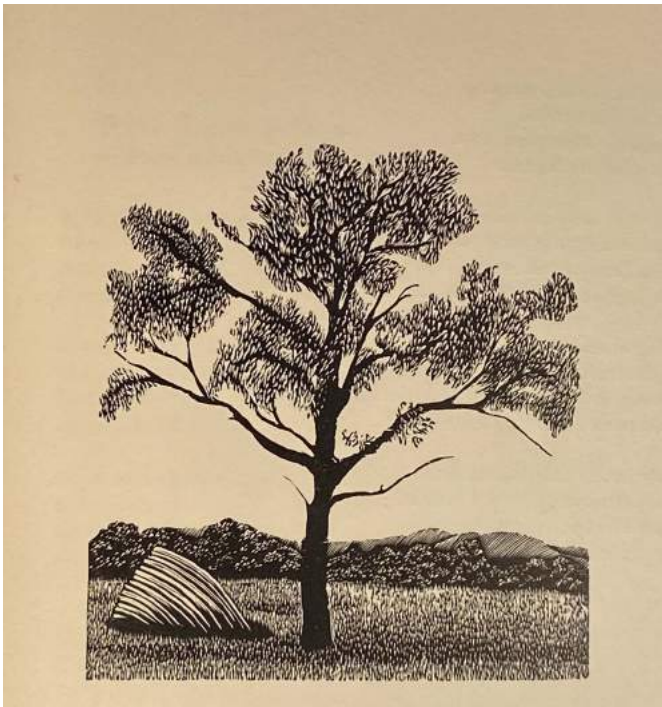
Canberra: Officina Brindabella, 1987. First Edition. Hand sewn softcover : 56 pp (which includes endpapers) : Illustrated with drawings by C.P. von Haldenburg : Blue ribbon threaded through grey cover paper : Lettering in blue and red : SIGNED by the author : limited edition this being 151 of 260 hand-set copies.

Publisher's advertisement with 2 poems from book loosely inserted : Hand written SIGNED card and receipt from the publisher, Alec Bolton.

[*A Licence to Print*, 19] Fine.

"A light-hearted book, with a clever and entertaining binding that reflected its text. I printed four-up on the Chandler & Price for the first and only time. The page size was small." (*A Licence To Print*, p 29)

[#1910](#) \$75



MURRAY, Les A
The Idyll Wheel

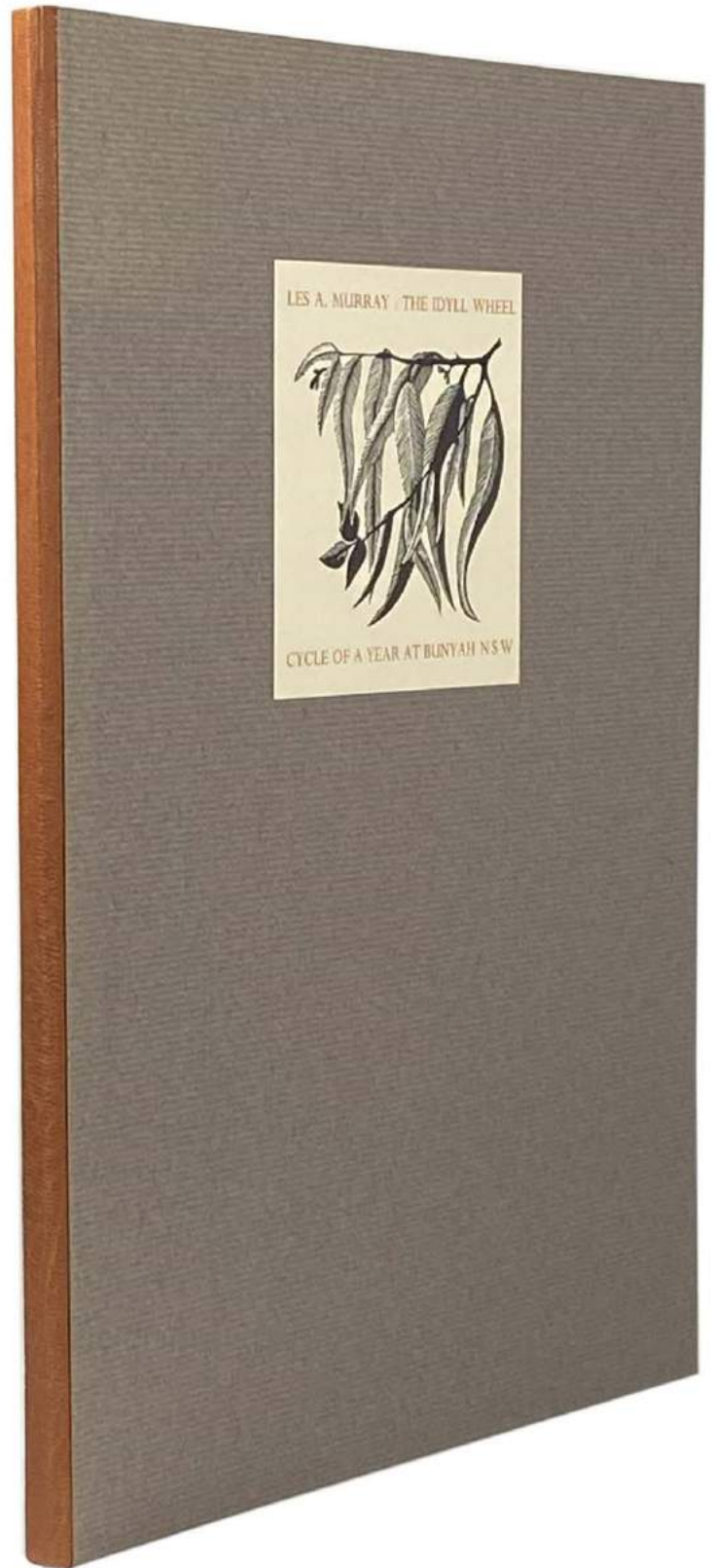
Canberra: Officina Brindabella ,
1989. First Edition. Hardcover :
36 pp : 7 wood engravings by
Rosalind Atkins : number 120 of
290 copies : SIGNED by author :
quarter leather with paper sides
over boards : handmade
endpapers of blady-grass fibre :
some pages uncut at foot : mylar
wrapper.

Publisher's prospectus and a
SIGNED handwritten note from
publisher inserted.

[*A Licence to Print*, 21] Fine.

"This too was a very popular book, which sold out quickly. I imported a lovely German mould-made paper, Zerkall, which went well with the blady-grass endpapers that Katherine Nix made. When it was new the paper smelt of the bush, which many people commented on. I don't like breaking lines in setting poetry, which was a real challenge with this work. To a certain extent the long length of the lines dictated the format." (*A Licence to Print*, p 30)

[\(#1923\)](#) \$500



DOBSON, Rosemary
Untold Lives

Canberra: Officina Brindabella, 1992. First Edition. Hardcover : pp. 40 : Frontispiece wood engraving by Mike Hudson : Quarter cloth with a siding paper silk-screened in red, grey and pink : limited edition this being 15 of 240 copies : SIGNED by author and publisher : Mylar dust jacket

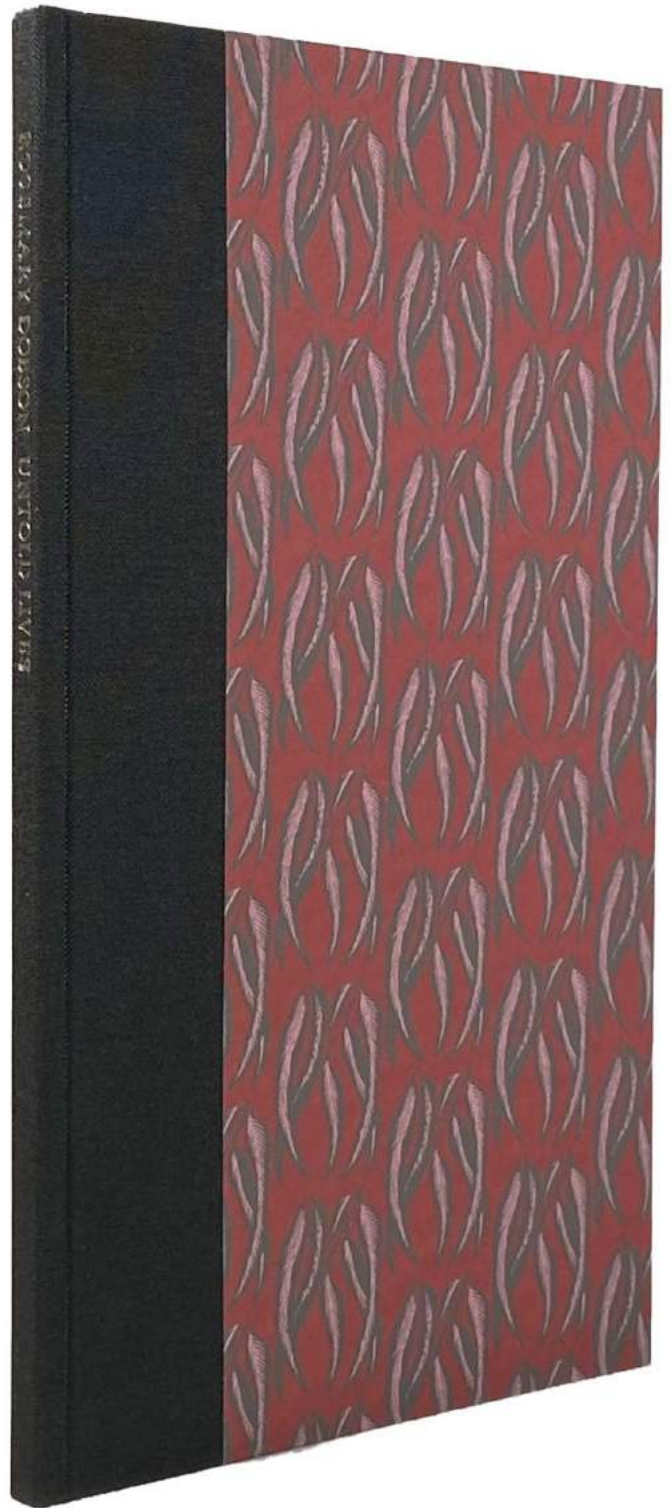
Publisher's prospectus and two SIGNED handwritten notes from Bolton loosely inserted.

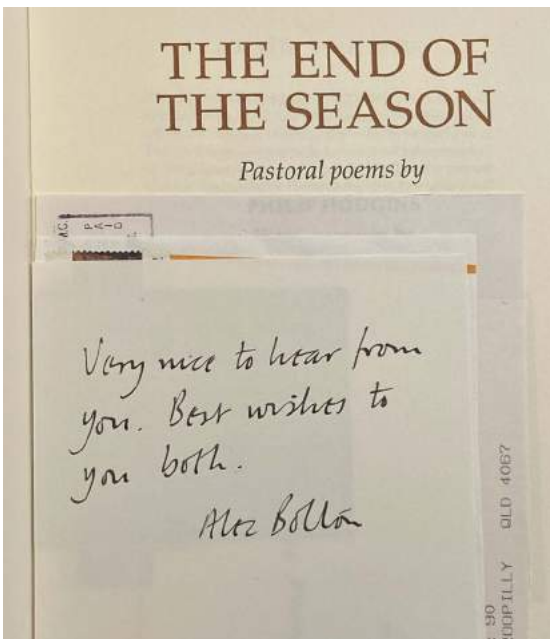
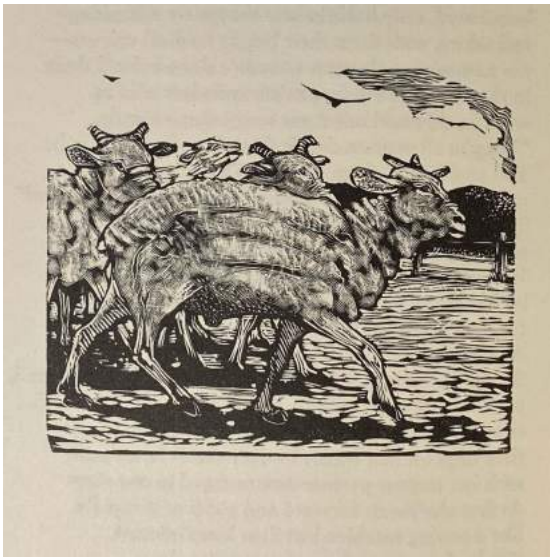
[*A Licence to Print*, 25] Fine.

In *A Licence to Print* Bolton recalled this as, "[a] nice book, although the 12-point Granjon is perhaps a little too big. I had had the idea for some time of creating a patterned paper. It was designed by Adrien Young, with whom I've worked for many years, and is based on the wood-engraved motif by Rosalind Atkins. Robin Tait used it as a siding paper in the binding. I like it very much, and will use it again, in different colours." (p 32)

The granddaughter of English essayist Austin Dobson, Australian poet Rosemary Dobson is admired for her wit and understatement. Her poetry generally follows classical verse forms and demonstrates a deep appreciation of European literary and artistic history and traditions filtered through a uniquely Australian sensibility.

[\(#1907\)](#) \$250





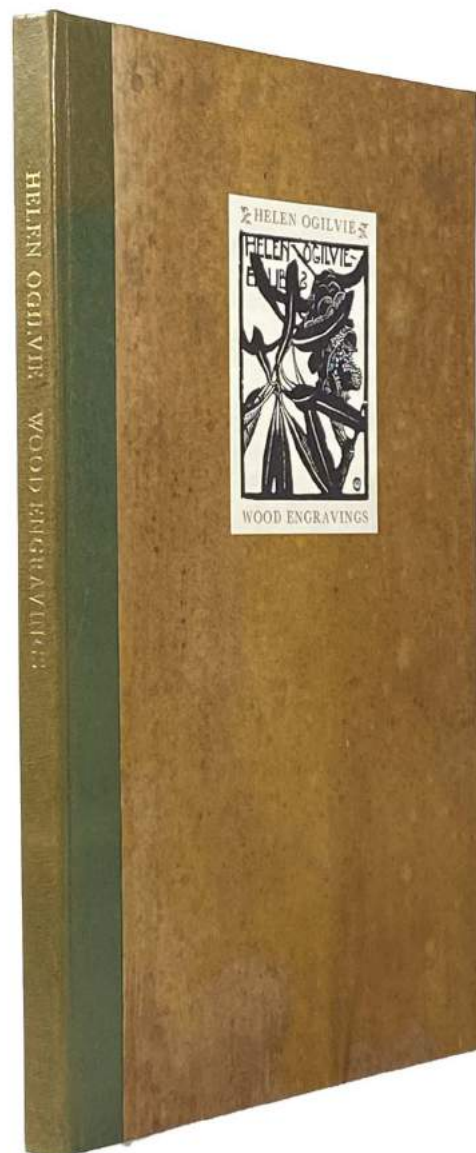
HODGINS, Philip
The End of the Season

Canberra: Brindabella Press, 1993. First Edition. Hardcover : pp. [8], 47, [48] : 9 wood engravings by Victoria Clutterbuck : limited edition this being 169 of 230 : SIGNED by the author : publisher's prospectus for this book inserted as well as other ephemera including a hand written note from publisher : hand bound in quarter cloth with handmade siding of beige paper : black cloth spine with gilt lettering.

[*A Licence to Print*, 26] Fine.

Bolton recalls, "I had a really enjoyable collaboration with Philip to produce this book. It was my first use of Palatino, and the first time I have used wood engravings by Victoria Clutterbuck. Younger authors are harder to sell than established ones, but I would like to publish more of them." (*A Licence to Print*, p 32)

[\(#1917\)](#) \$100



OGILVIE, Helen; MAXWELL, Helen (editor)
Wood Engravings

Canberra: Brindabella Press, 1995. First Edition. Hardcover : 56 pp : 20 engravings, 3 small decorations : frontispiece, tipped in photograph of Helen in her Little Collins Street studio, 1938 : introduction by Helen Maxwell : quarter bound in green leather with brown paper sides : printed illustrated title label to front board : number 62 of 200 copies : SIGNED by Bolton.

Publisher's prospectus and note loosely inserted; with a copy of responding note by previous owner also enclosed.

[*A Licence to Print*, 27] Fine.

The twenty-second book of the press and twenty-seventh publication. "This book, which has been some years in preparation (and hundreds of hours in the printing), reproduces twenty of her major engravings and three small decorations. All but five have been printed from the original wood. The lost five are reproduced from line blocks from the artist's proofs. Helen Maxwell has edited the book and written its introduction. She has also compiled the captions, which incorporate Helen Ogilvie's remarks about the work, recorded at interviews shortly before her death: typically lively, humorous and modest." (from the prospectus)

[\(#1914\)](#) \$500

ROWLAND, J R
Granite Country

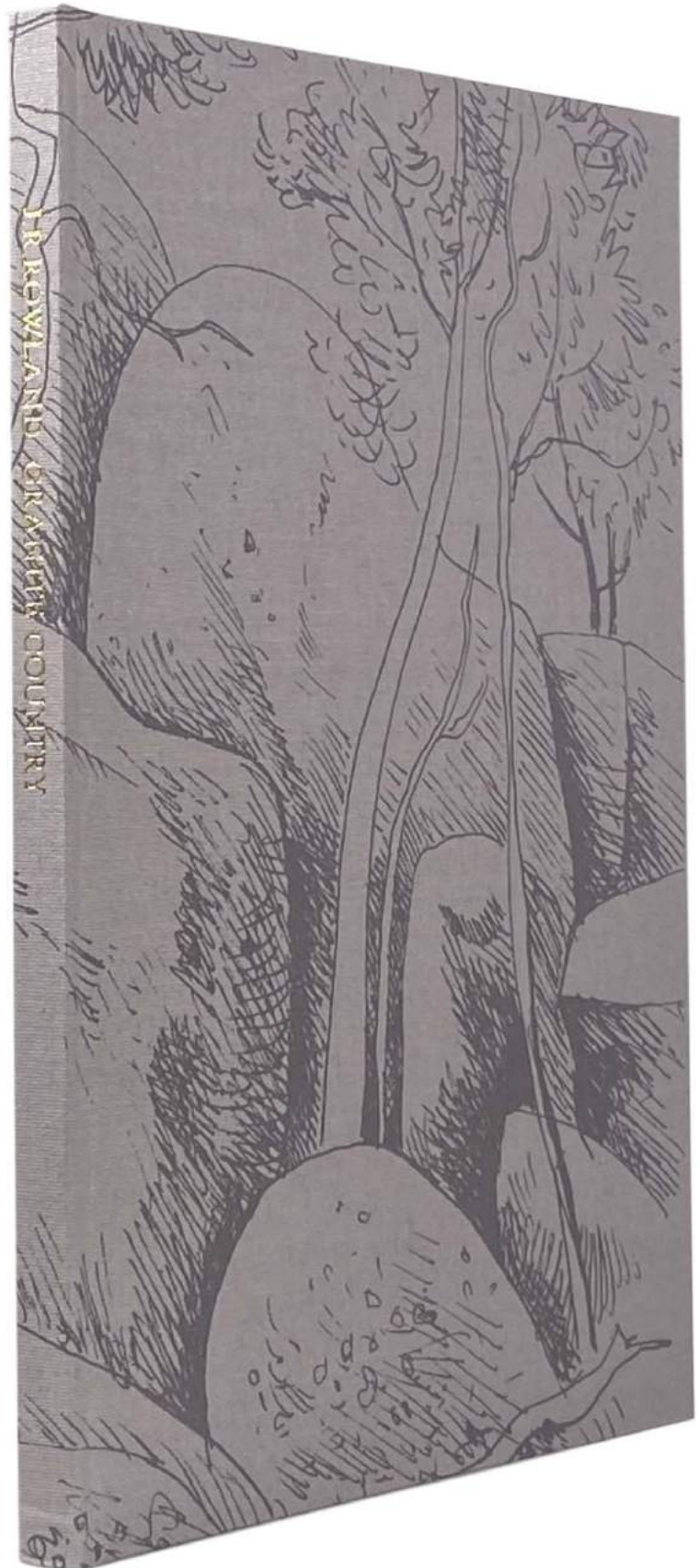
with drawings by the author.
Canberra: Brindabella Press,
1994. First Edition.
Hardcover : pp [8] 9-60 [64] :
illustrated : grey endpapers :
illustrated cloth covered
boards : lettering in gilt to
spine : limited edition this
being 46 of 220 : SIGNED by
the author at the colophon.

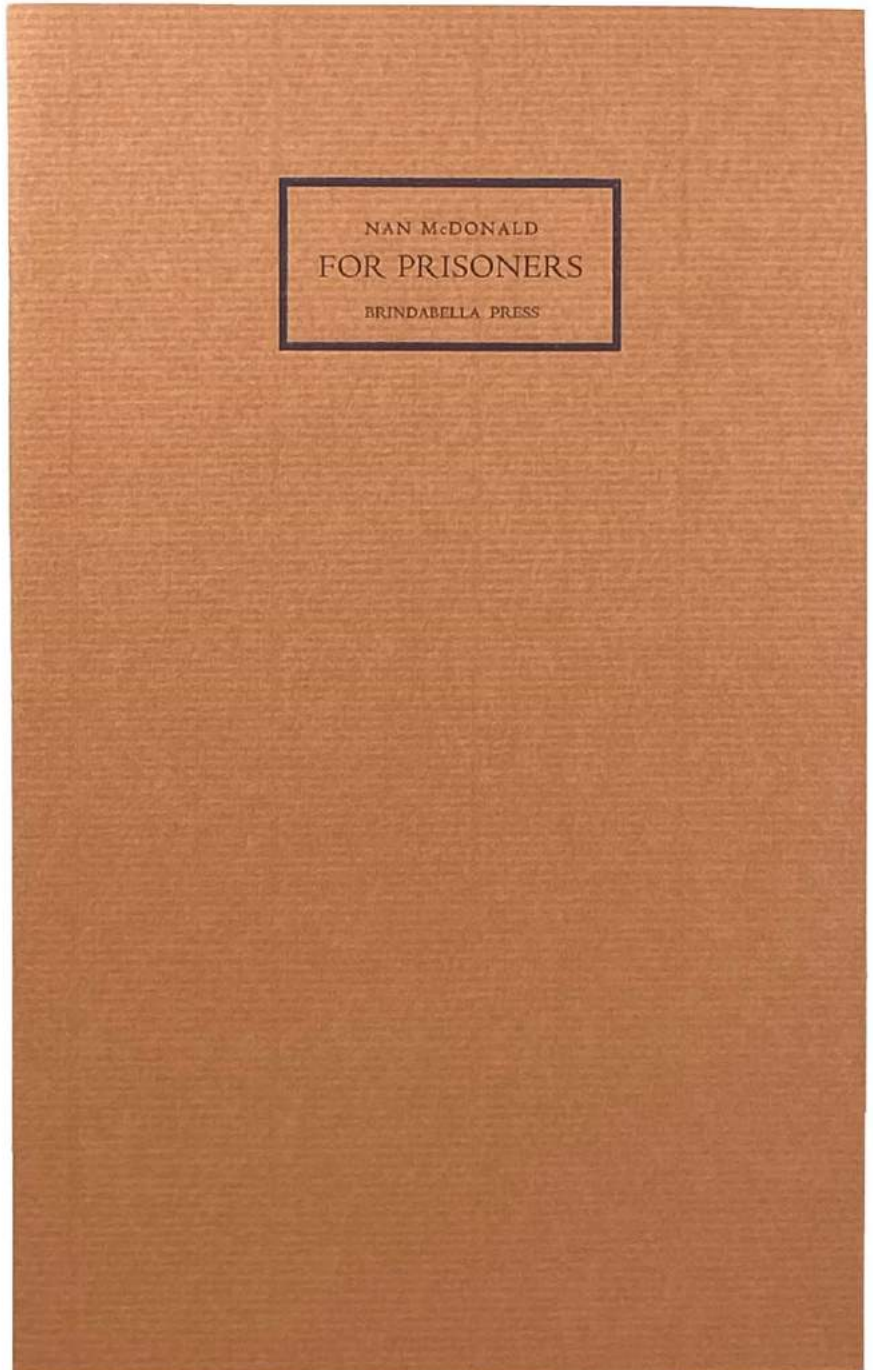
Publisher's prospectus for
this book loosely inserted
together with typed note from
Bolton and a news clipping
advertising the book.

[Not in *A Licence to Print*]

This was Rowland's sixth collection of poems to be published and the second by Brindabella (*Times and Places* appeared in 1975).

[\(#1912\)](#) \$100





MACDONALD, Nan
For Prisoners

Canberra: Brindabella Press, 1995. First Edition. Handsewn softcover : 8 pp : Number 80 of 150 hand-set copies : Burnt orange texted paper covers : Black lettering and border to front.

Typed thank you letter from previous owner to publisher and handwritten note from publisher loosely inserted.

[Not in *A Licence to Print*] Fine.

"Nan McDonald, whose name was once so well known as a poet of the tragic years of war and of the land and seas she loved, has not been remembered or memorialised as her work deserves. The books she published have slipped from the minds of a postwar generation of critics and readers now accustomed to question and reject the values of that time. It is long overdue for a re-evaluation of poems which still retain their power to move and to recall the times we have lived through." (Judith Wright)

[\(#1905\)](#) \$175

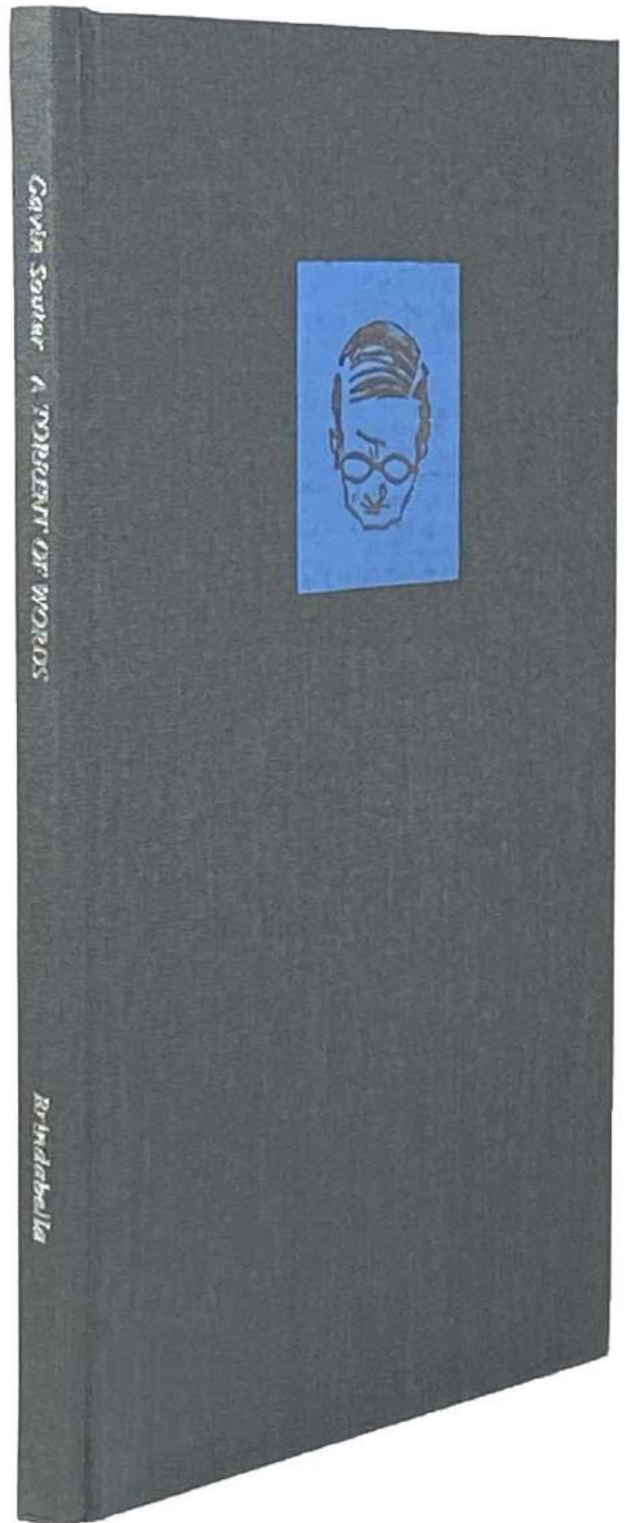
SOUTER, Gavin
A Torrent of Words

Leon Gellert : A Writer's Life. Canberra: Brindabella Press, 1996. First Edition. Hardcover : pp. [8], 63, [64] : 8 pages of illustrations : limited edition this being 54 of 270 copies : SIGNED by the author : Dark green Scottish cloth covered boards : Blue label with argent illustration : Mylar dustjacket : Olive green endpapers : Publisher's prospectus with tipped-in photo of Gellert by Max Dupain in envelope, and an invoice loosely inserted.

[Not in *A Licence to Print*] Fine.

"Gavin Souter's short life of Leon Gellert re-creates an interesting period in the history of Australian literary and artistic life. Admirers of Souter's many historical books will relish his mastery of detail. his ability to find the revealing quotation, the lightness of his touch. It is a lovely piece of writing, with even a personal glimpse of Gellert dating from the author's days as a Herald cadet. The book is illustrated with eight pages of duotone photographs." (from the prospectus).

[\(#1918\)](#) \$95





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