

## The story of a family (in bookplates)

THE THOMAS MURRAY Bookplate Collection sometimes includes multiple *ex libris* from the same individual or family. Such is the case with this handsome trio of heraldic bookplates from 19th-century England. The first bookplate was likely owned by John Caton Thompson (1801–?), son of John and Dorothy Thompson of Lancashire.

Thompson was a solicitor involved in several business partnerships, including a manufacturing chemist firm and an ale and porter brewery. In 1831, Thompson married Mary Troughton, the daughter of John Troughton of Leach Hall and Anne Moore Troughton. Sadly, the marriage was short-lived; Mary died in 1834, leaving behind three young children. Ten months after her death, Thompson married Mary's sister, Alice, with whom he had at least six more children. For much of their lives, John and Alice lived in Low Hill, a neighbourhood on the border of Liverpool in the township of West Derby. Thompson died sometime before the marriage of his son Charles in 1875.

Thompson's heraldic *ex libris* features a shield parted per pale, baron and femme, meaning that his coat of arms is represented on the left side of the shield and his wives' coats of arms appear on the right. Because both his wives were of the same family, the Troughton family coat of arms appears twice.

Thompson's oldest daughter, Frances Mary, married Marcus Brown Westhead (c. 1834–1897), whose *ex libris* is also in the Thomas Murray collection. Brown Westhead was part of the family firm of J. P. & E. Westhead & Co., manufacturers of cotton and silk trimmings. In addition to having been a captain in the Worcestershire Regiment of Militia and a major of the Manchester Rifle Volunteers, Brown Westhead was an inventor. He received U.S. patents on several inventions involving textiles, including for an improved ribbon-roll clip and tape boxes. He also invented, or submitted patent protection requests



for, improvements to dancing toys, Venetian blind ladders, and "adapting or arranging tapes, and other such narrow fabrics and threads for use."

Brown Westhead married Frances Mary Thompson in 1855, and the couple lived in Manchester before moving to Lea Castle in the village of Wolverley in Worcestershire. Brown Westhead died in 1897, leaving behind

his wife and two children. His *ex libris* features a complicated family crest including, among other elements, Saracen heads, martlets, Roman fasces, chess rooks, a chapel and a two-headed eagle. The Latin motto *Ora et labora* translates as “Pray and work.”

As the first cousin of Mary and Alice Troughton Thompson, the Rev. Thomas Troughton (1817–1880) also shares a connection with John Caton Thompson and Marcus Brown Westhead. Troughton was the son of Thomas Troughton and Rachel Moore Troughton. Troughton’s father was an ironmonger and mayor of the town of Preston in Lancashire from 1834 to 1835. Troughton received his B.A. from Trinity College, Cambridge, and married Mary Robinson, the only daughter of Joseph Robinson of Preston, in 1841.

Although little is known about Troughton after his education and marriage, he is listed as a clergyman in the 1852 publication *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain and Ireland*. Troughton’s *ex libris* is much simpler than those of his two kinsmen,

which is perhaps appropriate for a clergyman, featuring only a lion’s head and a stag along with the motto *Carpe diem*, or “Seize the day.”

Much of the information about these men living in the northwest of England more than 115 years ago is now available and accessible to the public thanks to the digitization of genealogical and heraldic dictionaries and digital history projects such as the Lancashire OnLine Parish Clerk Project, [www.lan-opc.org.uk](http://www.lan-opc.org.uk). Resources like these are a boon to researchers the world over, bringing the lives of men and women out of the darkness of historical obscurity and into present light.

.....  
~ Chelsea Shriver is in her second year of the dual Master of Library & Information Studies and Master of Archival Studies program at the iSchool@UBC (formerly called the School of Library, Archival & Information Studies).

The Rare Books and Special Collections Bookplate Collection can be accessed from the UBC Library Digital Collections and Services site, <http://digitalcollections.library.ubc.ca>.



## BOOKS ON THE ART OF THE BOOK

Since its founding in 1965, the Alcuin Society has published or collaborated on books and other items showcasing or relating to the book arts in Canada. Many of these publications remain available for purchase.

Captain Horton Rhys

### **A Theatrical Trip for a Wager! Through Canada and the United States.**

Vancouver: The Alcuin Society, 1966. \$40.  
No. 50 of a limited edition of 500 copies.  
Signed by the printer, the illustrator and the binder. One copy only.

Johannes Trithemius

### **In Praise of Scribes (De Laude Scriptorium).**

Vancouver: The Alcuin Society, 1977. \$40.  
Originally published in 1494. Translation by Elizabeth Bryson Bongie and edited with an introduction by Michael S. Batts. Hand-set in Caslon by Cobblestone Press and printed by members of the Society on Cortlea Cover.