THE EPHEMERAL PUBLICATIONS OF THE FANFROLICO PRESS

I
Disguised as publishers, perhaps,
We (the last simple trustful chaps,
Believing poetry has power
To clap wild heaven, for an hour,
Upon a new earth glittering
With rhythm lacing everything) —
We have essayed, the best we can,
To temper prophecy to man;
To tune our trumpets till their rage
Fits the advertising-page;
To force the angry reckless mirth
Of love in arms against the earth
To calm its outcry and to pipe
Of paper, inking, and of type —
Considering ourselves thereby
Apollo's tailors, since we try
To find the noblest trousers or
Camisoles for Forms we adore,
That other lovers may be wooed
To possess poetry in the nude.
(from Jack Lindsay, 'Hypothesis of a publisher',)\(^1\)

The publications of the Fanfrolico Press have for a long time been sought by collectors. Over a period of eight years the Press published some forty books,\(^2\) and the story behind many of them, are well documented in Harry Chaplin's survey.\(^3\) Little, however, has been written on the ephemeral publications of the Press: their catalogues, prospectuses and other publication notices and leaflets. What follows, after a brief history of the Press, is an attempt to list all known Fanfrolico ephemera. The list is almost certainly not complete, but it is hoped that its publication will bring further material to light and also serve as a useful guide to collectors and those generally interested in the work of the Press.

II
The Fanfrolico Press was founded in Sydney in the early twenties by Jack Lindsay\(^4\) and John Kirtley.\(^5\) The two had been introduced by Frank Johnson,\(^6\) then an assistant at Dymock's Bookshop. Kirtley worked as a stockbroker's clerk and was a collector of fine books; Jack Lindsay, the eldest son of Norman Lindsay, was a poet and sometime bohemian. Kirtley was desirous of printing and producing his own books, while Jack was interested in a vehicle to publish his own verse and to propagate the Lindsay aesthetic. Although Kirtley was interested in literature, their personalities were different and their partnership was one of convenience rather than one based on close friendship or shared philosophy.

Their first publication was a book of verse by Jack entitled Fauns and Ladies. Published in May 1923 under the imprint of 'The Handpress of J.T. Kirtley', it was
produced in an edition of 210 copies and included three woodcuts by Norman Lindsay. Their next book was an edition of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. The translation was by Jack, and Norman did four illustrations for it. The printing was done by Kirtley at his Kirribilli flat, with Jack and his brother Phil as pressmen. It was published on 1 November 1925 in two editions, one of 64 copies signed by both the translator and the printer, and another of 136 copies signed only by Jack. Kirtley was reluctant to issue the *Lysistrata* under his own name, being worried about what his employer might think about his association with Norman Lindsay. At the suggestion of either Norman or Jack the book appeared under the imprint of 'The Fanfrolico Press', the name coming from Rabelais' 'Duke of Fanfreluche'. Copies of the book were sent to England, and they were well enough received for Jack and Kirtley to decide to take the press to England. This was an extraordinarily ambitious move. Although the *Lysistrata* is an impressive production it could have been only naive optimism that spurred them to go. Again Jack saw it as a means of advancing the Lindsay credo, while Kirtley viewed it as a chance to publish fine books in the capital of the book world. They sailed for England in February 1926, Jack with £50 in the pocket of his new suit, both given to him by Norman, and Kirtley with his savings. The only substantial capital they took with them was Norman's illustrations.

The story of their assault on the London literary world is told in Jack Lindsay's *Fanfrolico and After*, and in Craig Munro's 'Two boys from Queensland' in the 1984 collection of essays presented to Jack, entitled *Culture and History*. The first London publication was another edition of *Lysistrata*, issued in December 1926. This was followed by a collection of Kenneth Slessor's poetry. Over 1927 several other titles were issued and others planned, the most sumptuous being *A Homage to Sappho*, which, when published, appeared in an edition of only seventy copies, included fifteen small etchings by Norman and was fully subscribed, despite its price of thirty guineas.

Jack thrived in the literary and bohemian life of London, whereas the shyer Kirtley soon became homesick. Their working relationship deteriorated over the English winter of 1926/27, and Kirtley decided he would return to Australia as soon as the press was on its feet. In September 1927 he handed over his share of the Press to Jack and sailed for Sydney. P.R. 'Inky' Stephensen joined the Press as business manager, and there is little doubt that Jack and Stephensen had contrived to push Kirtley out of the Press. A Rhodes Scholar from Queensland, Stephensen had been temporarily sent down from Oxford for his part in distributing pro-Gandhi propaganda. A fluent linguist with apparent unlimited exuberance, he also contributed to the intellectual side of the Press, and the combined energy of the two former University of Queensland students saw the press firmly establish itself during their eighteen-month partnership.

In February 1929 Stephensen left to form the Mandrake Press, and Jack was joined by Brian Penton, yet another Queenslander. Up to this time Fanfrolico publications had been printed by commercial houses. However, with the *Miniambes of Herondas* the Press began to do its own printing. The headquarters were moved from Bloomsbury to West Hampstead, where a printing press was installed in the basement of the house Jack was renting. Despite this move and a conscious change in direction, the press folded within a year or so.
Its demise was due to a number of factors, one of the main ones being the Depression, which greatly undermined the market for fine books. In addition Jack's heart was no longer in it. He had drifted away from his father's ideas, and his life was complicated by his relationship with the entrancing but unstable Elza de Locre. With increasing financial problems and the inopportune death of a promised backer, the balance of the stock was sold by the remainder department of the wholesaler, Simpkin Marshall Ltd., to go towards paying off creditors, and the activities of the Fanfrolico Press effectively ended.

In 1982 I was fortunate enough to purchase from a London bookseller a collection of Fanfrolico catalogues, prospectuses and other ephemera. The dealer had bought the collection at a London auction, where it had been offered as a lot along with a similar collection from another private press. Many of the items bear the stamp of "JOHN & EDWARD BUMPUS LTD., Booksellers to H.M. The King/350 OXFORD STREET, W.1". Presumably the material came to Christie's from the estate of a collector who was once a customer of this noted London firm.

What follows is basically a bibliographical description of this collection, supplemented with details of other relevant items held in institutions or private hands. I have divided the collection into three sections, viz., catalogues, prospectuses, and other ephemera. I realise that this classification is an arbitrary one and that some items could easily be slotted into more than one category. The arrangement within each section is chronological and the following abbreviations and symbols have been used:

- * Not in the author's collection. (Details obtained from another collection, photocopy or other source. 'C' before size indicates measurements from photocopy.)
- pn Publisher's note or blurb
- pd Publication details (binding, paper etc.)
- d Date of publication announced on the prospectus. (NB: Does not always match the actual date of publication.)
- es Edition statement (number of copies proposed; two numbers indicate a separate deluxe or special edition)

The dating and order are based on the Press's own catalogues and on entries in the English Catalogue of Books. 'Chaplin' followed by a page number(s) means that full details of the book described in the prospectus can be found on the appropriate page(s) of Harry Chaplin's The Fanfrolico Press: a Survey.
CATALOGUES

1. FIRST LIST OF FINE/ BOOKS PUBLISHED IN/ LIMITED EDITIONS BY THE/FANFROLICO PRESS/[Norman Lindsay illustration] FROM THE OFFICE AT/ FIVE BLOOMSBURY SQUARE/ LONDON W.C./ 1926
   8p, stitched with grey wrappers, 223 x 144 mm.
   pp.1-2, 'Foreword'; pp.3-8, details of planned publications.
   Issued mid 1926. A note on page eight states: 'the second list of books to be announced in September'. However, it did not appear until June 1927 (see next item).

2. [decoration]/ THE FANFROLICO PRESS/ [decoration]/ SECOND LIST OF FINE/ BOOKS PUBLISHED IN/ LIMITED EDITIONS/ FROM THE OFFICE AT FIVE BLOOMSBURY SQUARE, LONDON, W.C./ JUNE 1927/ [decoration]
   8p, stapled, yellow title wrapper, 195 x 139 mm.

3. FOR/DISCERNING COLLECTORS/ ONLY/[Norman Lindsay illustration]/ THE AUTUMN BOOKS/ OF THE FANFROLICO PRESS FROM THE OFFICE AT FIVE BLOOMSBURY SQUARE, LONDON, OCTOBER 1927
   4p, 260 x 158 mm.

4. THE FANFROLICO PRESS/ CATALOGUE & ANNOUNCEMENTS/ JANUARY 1928/ [Norman Lindsay illustration]/ FIVE BLOOMSBURY SQUARE/ LONDON, W.C. 1
   12p, stitched, yellow title wrapper, 217 x 136 mm.

   36p, bound in boards and mendicant parchment, 224 x 142 mm.

The Ephemeral Publications of the Franfrolico Press
An important catalogue. There were two issues, the one described above which was limited to 500 numbered copies and sold for 2s. 6d. and a wrappers edition which was distributed gratis.

6. FANFROLIC SOME BOOKS/ [illustration]/ "A Land Fit for Eros to Live In"
8p, stitched, light red wrapper with illustration by Norman Lindsay on front and back, 240 x 160 mm.

Issued July/August 1928. There were also two distinct issues for American distribution which varied in the following way:
1. Red wrapper on different paper and does not have the London address.
2. The word 'London' has been added to the effective half-title on the inside front wrapper.
3. In the superior issue 'A land for Eros to live in' is not present on page one but the following has been added: To be Obtained in the United States of America/ from/ WALTER V. McKEE/ (INCORPORATED)/ 32 UNIVERSITY PLACE/ NEW YORK CITY
4. Inferior edition is printed on poorer quality paper and with the address of American publisher on verso of cover.

7. [Norman Lindsay illustration]/ SPRING 1929/ THE FANFROLICO PRESS/ FIVE BLOOMSBURY SQUARE LONDON
12p, stapled, light blue wrapper, 280 x 192 mm, plus insert (see below).

plus one leaf insert 253 x 158 mm, printed on one side only and headed 'A NOTE FOR COLLECTORS', giving details of Norman Lindsay's etchings.

Issued February/March 1929. The insert is not present in all copies examined and may have been issued separately or with another publication.

8. THE FANFROLICO PRESS/ AUTUMN/ 1929/ an important announcement/ [Norman Lindsay illustration]/ FIVE BLOOMSBURY SQUARE LONDON
8p, stapled, 190 x 127 mm.

9. PROSPECTUS/ autumn/ 1929/ [Norman Lindsay illustration]
4p leaflet, 252 x 191 mm.
Although called a Prospectus, classed as a catalogue because it includes a statement of aims and details of forthcoming titles. It was issued to announce that the press would now be printing its own books. Of the eight listed as being in preparation only three appeared.

10. A NEW FANFROLICO SEASON
4p leaflet, 228 x 147 mm.

The publishers' note begins 'The Fanfrolico Press has just completed another programme', then details the three recent works, viz., *Catullus, Cyril Tourneur* and *Theocritos*. Issued early in 1930.

20p, stitched, grey wrappers, 216 x 139 mm.

Issued mid 1930. An important catalogue as it details plans to revitalize the press and change its direction. These fell through partly due to the sudden death of a promised financial backer (see Jack Lindsay, *Fanfrolico and After*, chapters 13-18). Of the ten books announced as being in preparation only five were published.

12. [within decorated border]. A Retrospect of the Fanfrolico Press by Jack Lindsay
[leaf] with a list of Fanfrolico Press Books of which the Limited Editions are offered at substantial reductions/ [decoration]/ The Remainder Department/ Simpkin Marshall, Limited/ Stationers' Hall Court, E.C.4
8p, stitched, cream title wrapper, 233 x 182 mm, plus insert (see below).

Issued late 1930. In chapter 17 of *Fanfrolico and After* Jack Lindsay describes how he ended the activities of the Press and paid off its creditors by selling off the remaining stock to Simpkin and Marshall. The insert lists thirty-one titles offered at remainder prices.
PROSPECTUSES

The prospectuses of the Fanfrolico Press are of interest for the information they give on the various publications, especially where the proposed details differ from the books themselves. The majority consisted of a folded leaflet (giving an effective four pages) plus a loose order form. Several had specimen page inserts. The front (or page one) was usually a facsimile of the book’s actual or intended title-page.

I have been unable to locate prospectuses for Robert Eyres Landor, Propertius in Love, A Homage to Sappho, and Inspiration, but I suspect that they were issued, and I have included them in the listing. I have not included the following titles: The Passionate Neatherd (Chaplin, p.53), Madam Life’s Lovers (Chaplin, pp.53-54), Hereward (Chaplin, pp.55-56), Festival Preludes (Chaplin, p.63), Morgan in Jamaica (Chaplin, p.64), Fleas in Amber (Chaplin, p.65), A Defence of Women (Chaplin, p.66), Guenevere (Chaplin, p.67), Patchwork Quilt (Chaplin, p.68), The Letters of Philip Stanhope (Chaplin, p.69), and Older Than Earth (Chaplin, p.70). All were published in the last years of the Press, after P.R. Stephensen had left and Jack Lindsay had changed its direction (see item 11 above), and I have assumed that no prospectuses for them were issued.

* Not seen. Issued?

Although not strictly a Fanfrolico book it is included here because it was the starting point for the Kirtley/Lindsay partnership. No prospectus located but likely to have been one issued as the book was for sale to subscribers only.

14. Lysistrata (Sydney issue; October 1925, Chaplin, pp.7-10.)
*1p, 268 x 225 mm.

This book is the most important Literary Production in Australia since "Idyllia".

The Sydney Lysistrata was actually issued in editions of 64 and 136 copies. The only known copy of the prospectus is held by the State Library of Victoria and is on the letterhead of Angus & Robertson Ltd.

15. Lysistrata (London issue; December 1926, Chaplin, pp.15-16)
*4p, 381 x 283 mm, plus order form, 128 x 225 mm.


16. Earth Visitors (February 1927, Chaplin, p.17)
4p, 255 x 190 mm, plus order form, 127 x 190 mm.


Although both the book and the prospectus title-page have 1926 as the date of publication the book did not appear until the following year.
17. *Marino Faliero* (March 1927, Chaplin, pp. 18-19)

4p, 250 x 189 mm, plus order form, 210 x 133 mm.


The title-page reproduction bears the date 1926 although the true title-page has the actual year of publication.


* Not seen.

Reference to a prospectus in Lindsay correspondence in Stephensen Papers in the Mitchell Library (see note 11). Lindsay, in inscribing a copy of the book belonging to Harry Chaplin, stated that the design and concept of the book was completely the work of its editor, Eric Partridge, who also put up the money for the work. (See Chaplin, p.20.)

19. *Petronius* (July 1927, Chaplin, pp. 22-23)

*4p, 320 x 235 mm, plus inserts (see below).


plus two specimen illustrations ('The Fight at the Inn' and 'The Embarkation'), both printed on art paper, 316 x 248 mm.

There was also an edition of 100 copies for the Australian market.


4p, 190 x 127 mm.


A revised edition was published in July 1929. If a prospectus was issued it has not been located.


* Not seen.

This was limited to 75 copies and sold at 15 guineas. The London wholesaler Simpkin Marshall took 34 copies at 40% discount on the proviso that the Press supply 250 prospectuses. (Letter to Fanfrilico Press, 16 March 1927, P. R. Stephensen Papers, Mitchell Library, see note 11). In addition, Jack Lindsay, in annotating a copy belonging to Harry Chaplin, refers to Kirtley issuing a prospectus for the book. (Chaplin, p.26.)

22. *Metamorphosis of Ajax* (November 1927, Chaplin, p. 27)

8p, stitched, 250 x 149 mm, plus order form, 147 x 228 mm.

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23. *Delighted Earth* (December 1927, Chaplin pp.28-29)
   4p, 241 x 154 mm, plus order form, 204 x 126 mm, plus inserts (see below).
   p.[1] title, pd, es (1-25,26-550); p.[2] specimen (page 4 of 'Introduction'); p.[3]
   specimen (page 13); p.[4] pn. *plus* sample illustration ('Come, Sons of Summer'),
   page [29]), 239 x 154 mm.
   *plus* 'Now Ready' notice, 184 x 124 mm.

24. *Loving Mad Tom* (December 1927, Chaplin, pp.29-30)
   4p, 290 x 224 mm, plus order form, 145 x 227 mm, plus insert (see below).
   *plus* specimen illustration ('The Moon's My Constant Mistress') on art paper, 288
   x 223 mm.

25. *Helen Comes of Age* (January 1928, Chaplin, pp.30-32)
   4p, 254 x 189 mm plus order form*
   Page two of the prospectus refers to an order form being enclosed. Although
   both the book and the prospectus title-page have 1927 as the date of
   publication the book did not appear until the following year.

   4p, 204 x 125 mm, plus order form, 199 x 124 mm, plus insert (see below).
   p.[1] title, es (75 and 625); p.[2] specimen (page 20); p.[3] specimen (page 21);
   *plus* specimen illustration sheet ('The Slasher' and 'The Falkener'), on art paper,
   201 x 124 mm.

27. *A Homage to Sappho* (May 1928, Chaplin, p.34)
   *Not seen. Issued?*
   This was the finest and most expensive of the Fanfrolico books and a prospectus
   would have most likely been issued.

28. *Satyrs and Sunlight* (May 1928, Chaplin, pp.35-36)
   4p, 292 x 232 mm, plus order form, 228 x 145 mm, plus inserts (see below),
   p.[1] title; p.[2] pd, es (550); p.[3] specimen (page 93); p.[4] 'A NOTE ON HUGH
   McCRAE'.
   *plus* 4 page (folded sheet) brochure, 204 x 128 mm, containing sample poem and
   etching from the book.
   *plus* one leaf insert printed on art paper, 291 x 231 mm, containing on one side
   'Some specimen's of Hugh McCrae's lyrical poetry' and on the other, four
   illustrations by Norman Lindsay.
   *plus* one leaf publicity sheet for book headed 'Have you seen this new Fanfrolico
   Press Book?', 285 x 219 mm.
   This was the most elaborate of the Fanfrolico prospectuses.
29. *Inspiration* (June 1928, Chaplin, pp.37-38)

*Not seen. Issued?*

Although a prospectus has not been located one was probably issued. In various Press catalogues (see above) *Inspiration* is cited as being fully subscribed. However, it is also included in the list of Fanfrolico titles available at remainder prices issued with *A Retrospect of the Fanfrolico Press* (item 12).

30. *Hyperborea* (June 1928, Chaplin, p.38)

2p, 291 x 222 mm.


*4p, c.190 x 122 mm.


32. *Beddoes* (October 1928, Chaplin, pp.42-44)

4p, 255 x 156 mm plus circular note, 220 x 146 mm. (see annotation).


This was not strictly a prospectus but a publicity leaflet issued after the book was published. There may have also been a prospectus but this seems unlikely given the existence of this leaflet. The Fanfrolico Catalogue of January 1928 (item 4) announced that the 75-copy edition would be signed by the editor, Sir Edmund Gosse, but his sudden death shortly before the book was published prevented this. It was then decided to include a facsimile signature and letter but this did not eventuate as the appropriate letter was lost. A typed note on the press letterhead explaining this was inserted into the 75-copy edition before they were distributed.


*4p, 370 x 287 mm, plus order form, 255 x 159 mm.


34. *Dionysos* (November 1928, Chaplin, pp.44-45)

4p, 261 x 190 mm plus insert (see below).


*plus folded insert, printed on art paper, 248 x 198 mm, containing two specimen illustrations, 'Procession of Silenus' by Rubens and 'Dionysos' by Norman Lindsay.*

35. *Ellynour Rumming* (November 1928, Chaplin, pp.49-50)

4p, 274 x 197 mm, plus order form*, 208 x 132 mm.

36. *Homer's Hymns to Aphrodite* (January 1929, Chaplin, pp.50-51)
   4p, 252 x 192 mm, plus order form*, 206 x 130 mm.

37. *Manfred* (April 1929, Chaplin, pp.51-52)
   4p, 280 x 190 mm, plus order form, 201 x 137 mm.

38. *Women in Parliament* (June 1929, Chaplin, p.56)
   4p, 206 x 149 mm, plus order form, 202 x 142 mm.

39. *Mimes of Herondas* (October 1929, Chaplin, p.61)
   4p, 194 x 128 mm plus order form, 186 x 128 mm.
   Published as *The Mimiambes of Herondas*.

   4p, 276 x 191 mm, plus order form, 200 x 126 mm, plus insert (see below).
   plus insert of specimen illustration ('The two reapers', opp. page 52); p.[4] pn.

41. *Catullus* (December 1929, Chaplin, p.62)
   4p, 192 x 129 mm, plus order form, 196 x 125 mm, plus insert (see below).
   plus specimen illustration (accompanying poem LXXVII in text) on art paper, 122 x 183 mm.

42. *Cyril Tourneur* (April 1930, Chaplin, pp.59-60)
   4p, 192 x 127 mm, plus order form, 186 x 125 mm.
OTHER EPHEMERA

43. THE FANFROLICO PRESS / announces a small number of interesting editions for Autumn
   *1p, c.137 x 92 mm.
   Leaflet announcing 4 books, issued mid 1927.
   Measurements taken from photocopy.

44. THE FANFROLICO PRESS / A YEAR’S ACHIEVEMENT
   *1p, 379 x 215 mm.
   Publicity sheet probably issued mid to late 1927.
   Lists details of availability of first six Fanfrolico titles, and three forthcoming autumn publications.

   *1p, 162 x 134 mm.
   A small leaflet printed on one side only giving details of subscription terms.

46. The London Aphrodite
   *Post card, 89 x 138 mm.
   Printed acknowledgment of subscription receipt.

47. NORMAN LINDSAY / DOES NOT CARE / An Outburst / by P.R. STEPHENSEN / [Norman Lindsay illustration] / FANFROLICO PAMPHLETS
   No. 1 / Price One Farthing
   4p leaflet, 124 x 95 mm.
   Published in 1928. No other such Fanfrolico Pamphlets were issued.

48. THE FANFROLICO PRESS / Three Specimen Pages:
   4p leaflet, 299 x 244 mm.
   Includes specimen pages from Catullus, Cyril Tourneur and The Mimiambes of Herondas. Issued early 1930.

49. Letterheads. There were at least four letterheads:
   i. Late 1926: 19 Buckingham Street, Adelphi, WC2
   ii. 1927-mid 1928: Five Bloomsbury Square, London, WC2
   iii. 1928-1929: 30 Museum Street, London, WC2
   iv. 1929-1930: 71 High Holburn, London, WC5

50. Change of management notice. Leaflet issued late 1927 announcing that as from the publication of the Complete Works of Gaius Petronius, the management of the above business is transferred from Mr J.T. Kirtley to Messrs J. Lindsay and P.R. Stephensen.
ADDENDA

A NOTE FOR COLLECTORS
1p, 254 x 157 mm
Leaflet printed on one side giving details of the work of Norman Lindsay. Probably issued as an insert to the Press's Spring 1929 catalogue (item 7).

Lysistrata (London issue)
*5 sheets, each 279 x 216 mm.

One sheet has text headed ‘Four episodes in the comedy of Lysistrata’, the other four are reproductions of Norman Lindsay's illustrations for the text. This is almost certainly not a Fanfrolico Press issue. Although dated 'London, 1926' the paper and typeface have a thirties or forties look about them. It is possible that they were printed in America (from where they were recently purchased) to promote the various pirated editions of the Fanfrolico Lysistrata published in New York in the forties.

John Arnold,
Monash University.

NOTES
1. From Fanfrolicana (see item 5).
2. The exact number is open to conjecture, depending on whether one includes Fauns and Ladies, two or three minor Sydney publications, the revised edition of William Blake, and Fanfrolicana in the overall tally.
7. Tradition has it that it was Norman's idea. Craig Munro (Wild Man of Letters: the Story of P.R. Stephensen (Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 1984), p.45), supports this, while Kirtley in a letter to Harry Chaplin written c.1959 (quoted in Chaplin, op.cit., pp.8-10) says that the suggestion came from Jack.
13. See foreword to the Press's 1930 catalogue (item 11).
14. Elza de Locre (c.1900-c.1945). See Jack Lindsay, Fanfrolico and After, passim.