

BOUND FOR

Glory

BY KATHY HELIDONIOTIS

Before the invention of binding machines, books were sewn together by hand in binderies, each one taking many hours of work. The result? Beautiful and very valuable books!

Sabine Pierard is one of the few **traditional** bookbinders keeping the art of hand bookbinding alive. After years of watching her grandfather bind books in France, Sabine became an **apprentice** bookbinder, spending five years learning her craft.

Sabine's Sydney bindery contains many unique books that she has created with her own hands from some materials that would surprise you.



Handbound books can have covers made from unusual materials.

BINDING AND RESTORING

To bind a book, sheets of paper are carefully folded along the **grain**. This is very important so that the book will close properly. Once the sheets are folded they are sewn together by hand. Finally, a cover is attached.

Restoration involves making old books look like new again. Most books that need

restoration are very important to someone, such as family bibles or children's books.

When old books are restored, the covers are usually made from leather. But if a book is newly created, the only limit is the bookbinder's imagination. Sabine has made book covers from materials such as cane toad, sea snake, stingray and emu foot leather! Covers can even be made from wood, perspex or metal.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

An essential bookbinder's tool is a bone folder. Made from smooth bone, it looks a bit like a tongue depressor. Bone folders are used to fold paper, rub things down and smooth glue. Bookbinders also use tools such as a ruler, cutting blade, cutting mat and brushes. An experienced bookbinder such as Sabine can bind a normal-sized book in about an hour. The more unusual books can take several days.

RARE SKILLS

Sabine has restored many incredible books including the first English language Bible which dates from 1579. The largest book she has bound measured 1.5 metres by 21 centimetres. The smallest measured 3.4 centimetres by 2.6 centimetres. It's so small that you need a magnifying glass to read it.

Bookbinders have to know their maths. They should be good with their hands and have some upper body strength. It's

also a good idea to be creative, patient and interested in books.

Although she has an extremely rare job, Sabine finds bookbinding fantastic! It never gets boring because every book is different. She meets interesting people and sometimes travels to wonderful places to exhibit her work.

Many people learn bookbinding as a hobby from community colleges and TAFEs. But if you dream of becoming a professional bookbinder like Sabine Pierard, your first step is to become an apprentice just as she did.

Glossary

apprentice: someone who learns their craft from an expert

binderies: places where books are bound by hand

grain: the way lines of fibre run through paper or wood

restoration: repairing something so that it looks the way it did originally

traditional: a way of doing things passed down from one generation to another

GR

Try this!

BIND YOUR OWN BOOKS

What you need:

- sheets of strong paper or cardboard (decorate them first)
- pieces of wool for ties
- a hole puncher

What you do:

- 1 Fold each piece of paper in half.
- 2 Mark out holes down the fold of the paper in the same place for every piece. Punch out the holes with the hole puncher.
- 3 Place the folded paper in a pile and line up the holes.
- 4 Thread the wool through each hole and tie a knot.



Bookbinding tools such as these stamps are used to decorate book covers.

Check this out!
www.bookbinders.com.au

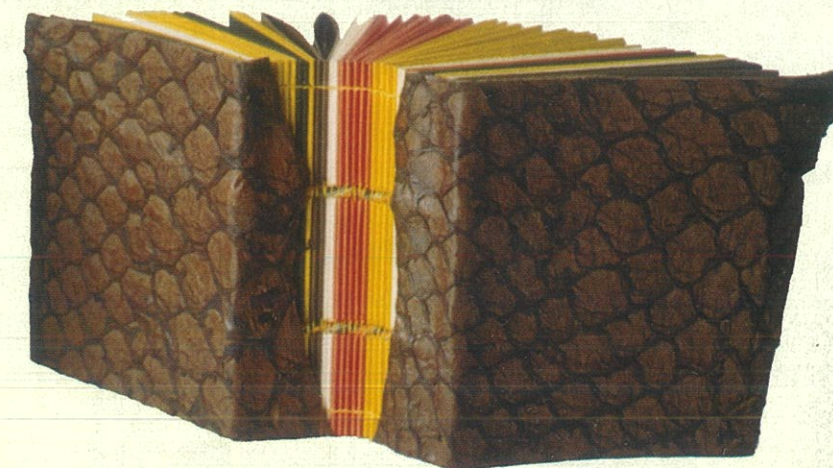


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