

# FINE



THE WORK OF JOHN TONKIN

## **FINE: THE WORK OF JOHN TONKIN**

Civic Library Mezzanine Gallery, London Circuit, Canberra City

1 – 24 April 2015

Mondays - Fridays 10.00am – 5.30pm

Saturdays 10.00am – 4.00pm

Closed Sundays and Public Holidays

*Cover Image: Australia the Untamed Land (detail of bark impressions to front board)*

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION

The Canberra Craft Bookbinders' Guild welcomes this opportunity to feature the works of member John Tonkin, brought together for the first time for this exhibition.

The exhibition reveals a wide range of binding styles, using traditional, contemporary and experimental materials and techniques. Geometric and fluid lines and found objects all resonate with book content and title.

How enticing they are.

Your hands want to slide a chemise from a slipcase and open the chemise to reveal the book in its finery. You imagine your eyes beginning to explore binding, title, headbands, edge decoration, covering materials. Each piece has its own elegance but the pieces collectively stun with their truly exquisite craftsmanship.

Imagine holding them in your hands. Feel the size, weight, and balance. Open the covers and touch the leather doublures or suede fly leaves.

Reflect on the thought, patience, precision, time and commitment needed to produce these works of art.

Thank you John Tonkin for exhibiting your work, sharing your exemplary skills with the community and continuing to support and inspire experienced and novice binders.

Our appreciation and many thanks to Terence Uren who has curated this exhibition, photographed the works, and designed and produced the catalogue.

Thanks also to Libraries ACT for your support of this exhibition and to all those individuals who contribute behind the scenes.

This catalogue is a two dimensional taster. Be enticed to view it in 3D at the exhibition – a *Fine* experience!

*Vicki Woolley*

*President*

*Canberra Craft Bookbinders' Guild*

## ABOUT JOHN TONKIN

John Tonkin's interest in bookbinding dates from his enrolment in evening classes at the Canberra College of Technical and Further Education (now Canberra Institute of Technology) in the late 1970s. Whilst his intention was to develop the skills he needed to repair books in his personal library, he was soon side-tracked by the delights and pleasures of design bindings.

In the mid-1980s, he undertook formal studies at the Centro del Bel Libro in Ascona, Switzerland and at l'Atelier d'Arts Appliqués du Vésinet in Paris. John's body of work is consequently a unique blend of English, French and Swiss craft practice.

This body of work demonstrates an understanding of the importance of the relationship between text and binding; a real mastery of the challenges of working within fine tolerances; and an exquisite attention to detail. It regularly extends the boundaries of the way in which things are traditionally done, often through the innovative use of non-traditional materials, including natural fibre, timber and metal.

For many years, John has been a generous mentor to other binders. He has taught at le Vésinet, the Canberra School of Art and Canberra T.A.F.E. and at various institutions in Canada and the USA. He now offers workshops in a range of techniques to both novice binders and experienced practitioners through his Bookarts Bindery. John has also been the driving force behind a number of national gatherings of bookbinders.

Since 1986, John has exhibited regularly both in Australia and overseas and his work is represented in public and private collections in Australia, the USA, France and elsewhere.

*Terence Uren  
Fine Exhibition Curator  
Canberra Craft Bookbinders' Guild*

# AUSTRALIA THE UNTAMED LAND

Richard Wollendorp

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Photographs of landscapes from all around Australia.

Full leather Simplified binding. The continuous cover design is from bark impressions on front and rear boards and across the spine with onlays of split rock. The title *Australia* has been formed from impressions of letters cut from bark.

340mm x 260mm x 24mm

## PRINTING POETRY

Clifford Burke

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A treatise on the arts of designing, printing and binding of a book.

Full leather Simplified binding. The boards have been covered in box calf leather. The decoration pieces are inlaid and onlaid.

280mm x 185mm x 22mm

**STADBUMMEL DURCH BERN**  
**Serge Phillipona**

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Black and white photographs of scenes in and around Bern, Switzerland.  
Full leather Simplified binding. The boards are covered in merino sheepskin. The title is set on a strip of plastic below the level of the sheepskin and formed from letters cut from aluminium sheet.

430mm x 290mm x 15mm



# INDIAN ARMY UNIFORMS

Michael Glover

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Descriptions and colourful illustrations of dress uniforms of various regiments of the Indian Army.

Full leather Simplified binding. The boards are covered in morocco and oasis leathers with a puckered box-calf strip running across.

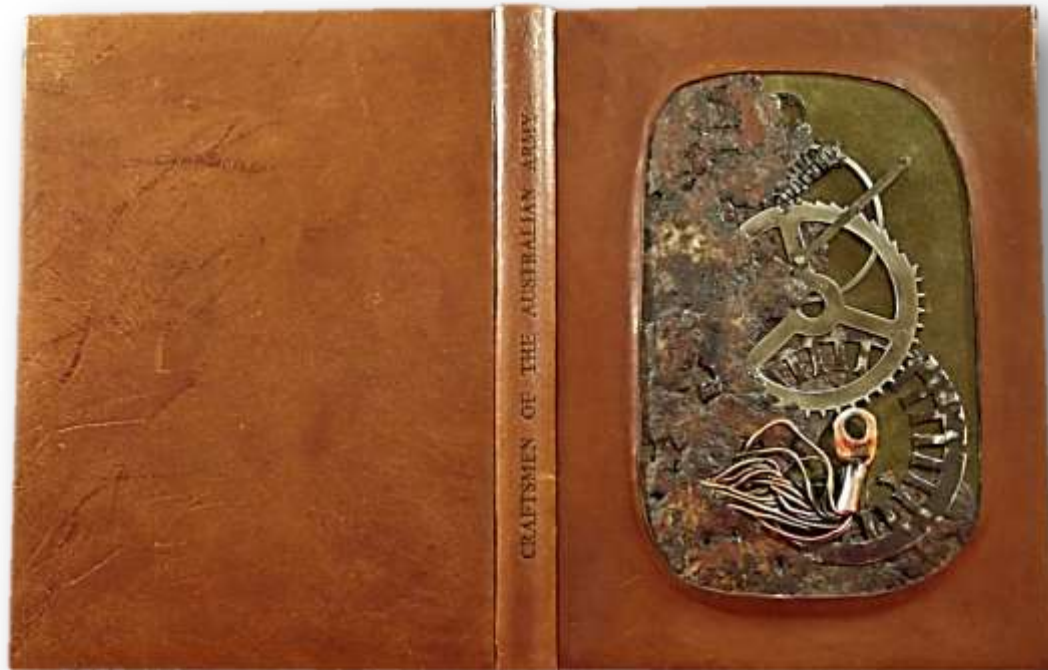
235mm x 170mm x 22mm



## CRAFTSMEN OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

Various Authors

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A history of Australian Army Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.  
Simplified binding in kangaroo leather. The design is a collage of metal and brass 'found' pieces. Leather doublures with suede flyleaves.

295mm x 220mm x 30mm

## L'ENCYCLOPEDIE IMPRIMERIE, RELIURE Diderot et D'Alembert

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A reproduced 18<sup>th</sup> century encyclopaedia of the arts and crafts of papermaking, printing and binding.

Full leather Simplified binding. Boards are covered in box calf. The title on the boards has been formed from letters cut from aluminium and painted black Leather doublures and flyleaves.

315mm x 235mm x 20mm

## THE WASP IN A WIG Lewis Carroll

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A chapter of Lewis Carroll's 'Alice through the Looking Glass' deemed to be too long and deleted from the original text.

Full leather Simplified binding. The spine leather in rose coloured box calf has impression of strips of cane. The kangaroo leather boards have impressions of pieces of bark which have left a fine pellicle of the bark in the recess.

215mm x 140mm x 20mm

# HOW THE GREEKS SAVED EUROPE

J.A. Brendon

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An illustrated classical history of Europe aimed at young readers..

A millimetre binding with fore-edge strips. Cover boards decorated with paste papers.

180mm x 130mm x 9mm

## GATHERING NOTES 2011 Canberra Craft Bookbinders' Guild

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Papers from the 2011 Gathering of Bookbinders Conference.

Floating boards technique. The boards have been covered in paste papers. Suede flyleaf.

235mm x 170mm x 20mm

# L'ECHARDE

Paul Wenz

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A limited edition of a story of Australia. Published in 1986 by the Association Culturelle Franco-Australienne.

Floating boards technique. The boards are covered in wood veneer, the attachments of the vellum sewing supports to the boards are hidden by onlays of armadillo leather.

200mm x 130mm x 30mm



## NOTES

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A notebook.

Floating boards technique. The boards are covered both sides with a single sheet of decorated paper. The attachments of the cord sewing supports to the boards are covered by onlays of ragged-edged leathers.

200mm x 115mm x 25mm



## CUTS OF CRAFT WORKERS

Jost Amman

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Wood-cuts of craft workers by Jost Amman 1539-1591.

Floating boards technique. The boards are covered both sides with a single sheet of decorated paper. The attachments of the cord sewing supports to the boards are highlighted by leather onlays.

200mm x 135mm x 20mm

**TEWARI**  
**D. & H. Hogg**

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A children's story set in rural India.

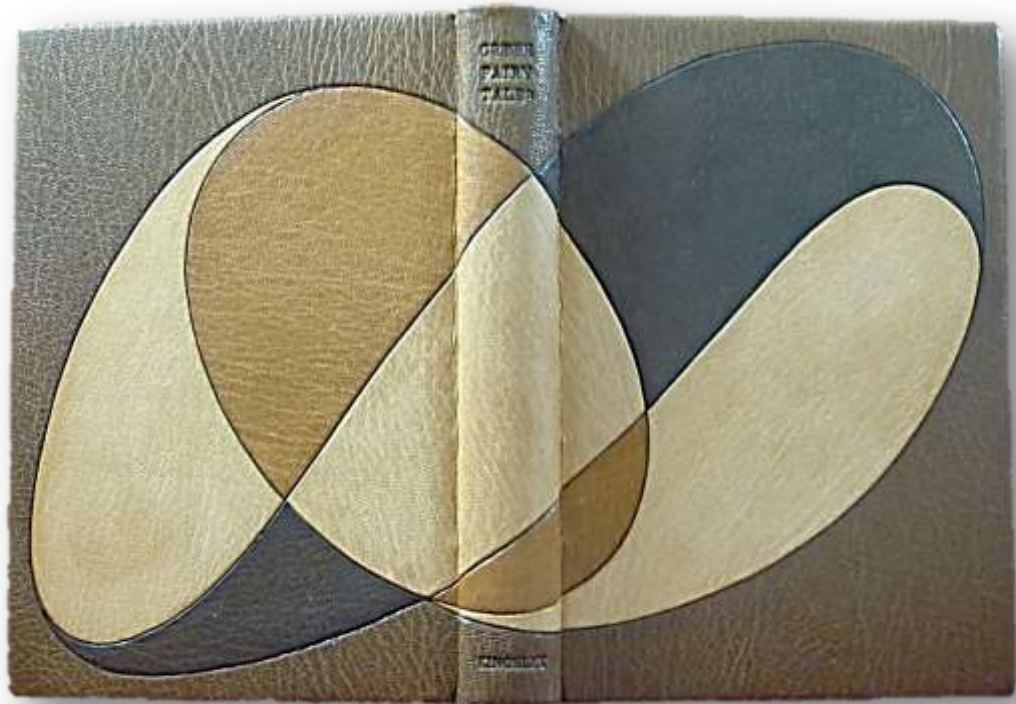
Full leather Franzband binding in oasis leather. The decoration and title pieces are inlaid. Gold head decoration, sewn headbands.

180mm x 130mm x 22mm

# THE HEROES – GREEK FAIRY TALES FOR MY CHILDREN

Charles Kingsley

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Illustrations by the author. First published 1855 – this edition 1904.

Full leather Franzband binding in oasis leather. Onlays, also of oasis, are defined in blind tooled lines. Head decoration in gold and gaufered. Sewn headbands.

185mm x 135mm x 30mm

# **NAPOLEON AND HIS MARSHALS**

**A.G. Macdonell**

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A history of Napoleon's campaigns set against biographical stories of his marshals.

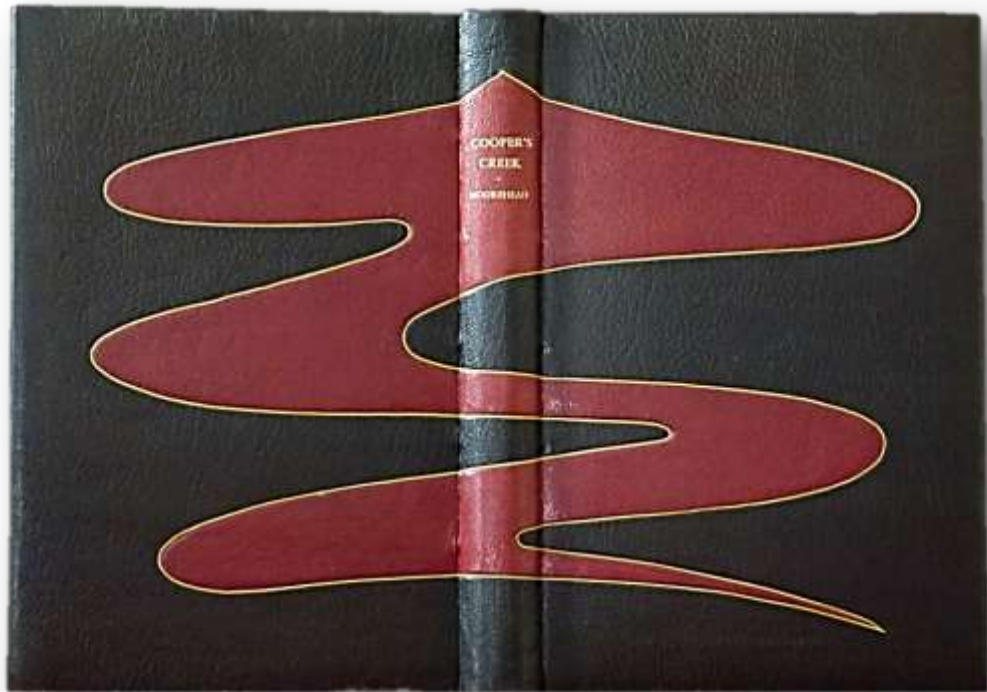
Full leather Franzband binding in calf leather. An onlay of buffalo leather is across the spine. The title is tooled onto red, white and blue box calf onlays. Gold head decoration.

190mm x 135mm x 35mm

## COOPER'S CREEK

Alan Moorehead

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The story of the ill-fated Bourke and Wills Expedition of 1860.

Full leather Franzband binding in oasis leather. The onlays are in oasis leather and have been defined by strips of yellow box calf leather. Gold head decoration. Sewn headbands.

210mm x 145mm x 30mm



## SERMONS ON DIFFERENT SUBJECTS

### Samuel Horsfall, Curate of Silverstone

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Published in 1812.

The style is full leather Franzband binding in marked and scarred kangaroo leather. The abbreviated title 'Sermons 1812' has been cut out from the boards before covering: (the cut-out pieces have been used to go on the boards of the full leather box in which the book is housed). Leather doublures, suede flyleaves and sewn headbands are featured.

220mm x 145mm x 20mm

## BURLY GRYPHON

Ingeborg Hansen & Phillip Day

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A limited edition of quirky stories written by Ingeborg Hansen and illustrated with copperplate etchings by Phillip Day. Published 1997. Simplified binding. Boards are covered in coloured corn-cob leaves.

195mm x 145mm x 20mm



## THE CAST IRON CANVASSER A.B. Paterson

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An amusing short story by the famous Australian 19<sup>th</sup> century author. This edition reproduced in miniature by Bookarts Press in 1995. Illustrations are by Phillip Day.

Simplified binding. Boards have been weighted before covering to aid closing. Board covering material is coloured corn-cob leaves. Both the spine and container are covered in buffalo leather.

55mm x 45mm x 7mm

## THE WASP IN A WIG/LE FRELON AU PERRUQUE

Lewis Carroll

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A chapter of Lewis Carroll's 'Alice through the Looking Glass' deemed to be too long and deleted from the original text. A bilingual edition

Full leather Simplified binding with a fore-edge flap. Boards are covered in leather and corn-cob leaves. The title is blind tooled in both French and English. The illustration shows the partly opened book in front of the slipcase and chemise which protrude from a wooden stand.

215mm x 140mm x 20mm

**SPELLER/MONGREL BUSH/SOMEBODY LOVES ME  
A&R/Mark O'Connor/Capital Bible Church**

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A 'new syllabus' spelling primer, an original poem and a religious tract.  
Set of three single section bindings.  
Exhibited as 'Bless 'em all: the Long and the Short and the Tall'. Wood  
and ebony pieces on the boards.

215mm x 70mm x 8mm/ 65mm x 45mm x 8mm/ 65mm x 135mm x 8mm

## MICHAEL ANGELO'S DRAWING SCHOOL

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The full title is 'The Drawing School for Little Masters and Misses: containing a most easy and concise Rules for Learning to Draw without the Reliance of a Teacher'.

Simplified binding. Boards are of ebony wood. Doublure is morocco leather. All three edges are polished with graphite.

70mm x 55mm x 15mm

## A NEW GEOGRAPHY

Danie Mellor et al

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A collection of Ex Libris prints designed and printed in the Graphic Investigation Workshop, School of Arts, in September 1992.

Simplified binding. The flexible boards are formed from slats of ebony. The board onlays are of kangaroo tail leather. Leather cords go across the spine. The box is covered in morocco leather with kangaroo tail onlays.

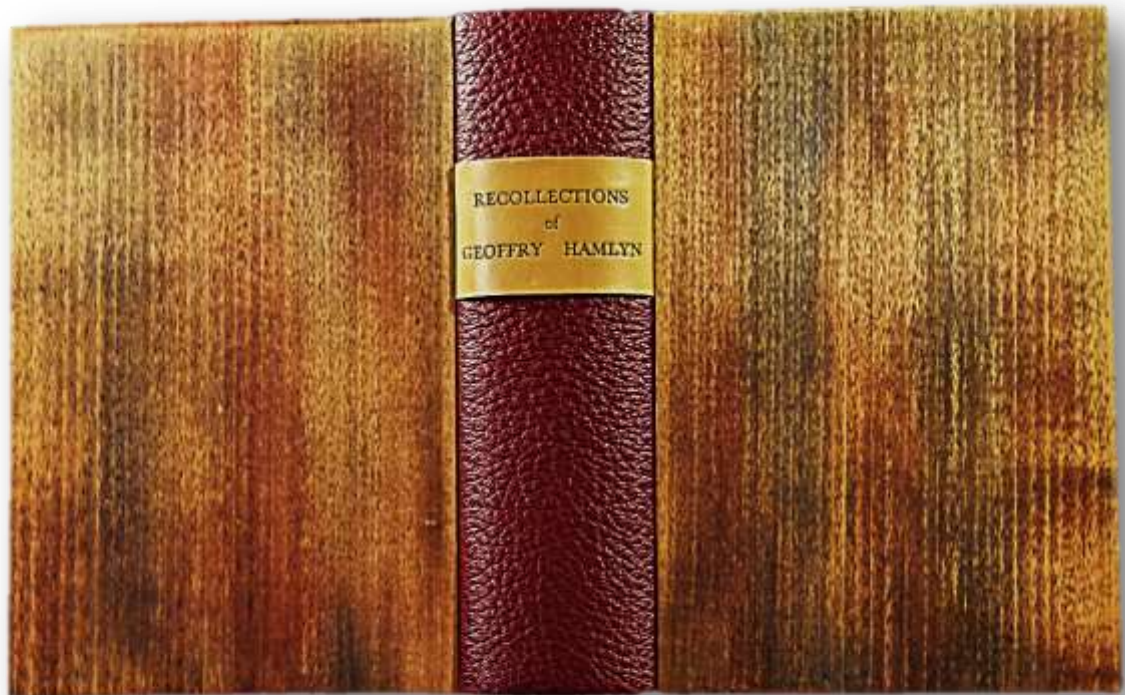
160mm x 115mm x 10mm



# RECOLLECTIONS OF GEOFFRY HAMLYN

Stanton Mellick, Patrick Morgan & Paul Eggert (eds)

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A literary classic.

Simplified binding. Boards are of wood which has been stained with various colours. The spine is covered in deep grained morocco leather. The title piece is a contrasting light coloured box calf. Sewn headbands, graphite head.

215mm x 160mm x 55mm

## THE GEOMETRIC & MILITARY COMPASS

Galileo Galilei (translation Stillman Drake)

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The full title is 'Operations of the Geometric and Military Compass'. The work is Galileo's first acknowledged printed book – a textbook for mathematicians, surveyors and gunners. Original edition 1606.

Simplified binding. The boards are slats of ebony wood. The spine is covered in waxed crocodile suede. The book is housed in a military style lidded slipcase.

275mm x 205mm x 18mm



## ADVICE TO A YOUNG LADY IN THE COLONIES 'Mrs E' of England

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'Being a letter sent from Mrs E of England to Maria Macarthur in the colony of N.S.Wales in 1812'.

First published in 1979.

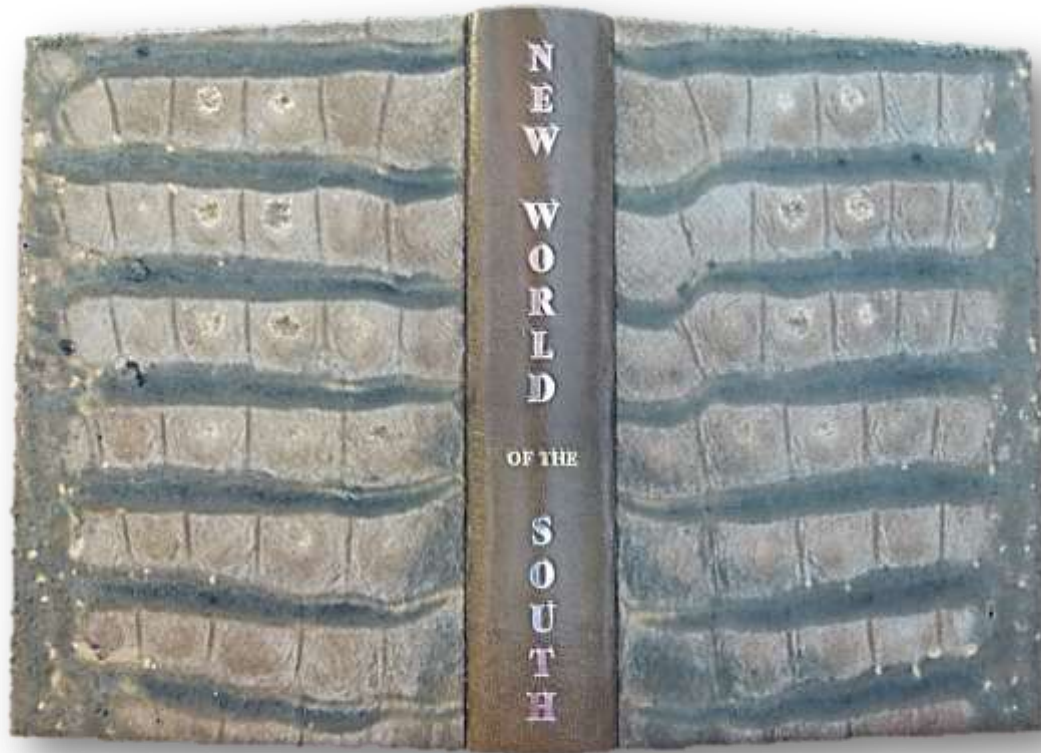
Simplified binding. Crocodile suede boards and doublures. Housed in a crocodile suede chemise and decorated paper slipcase.

215mm x 125mm x 15mm

# THE NEW WORLD OF THE SOUTH

W.H. Fitchett

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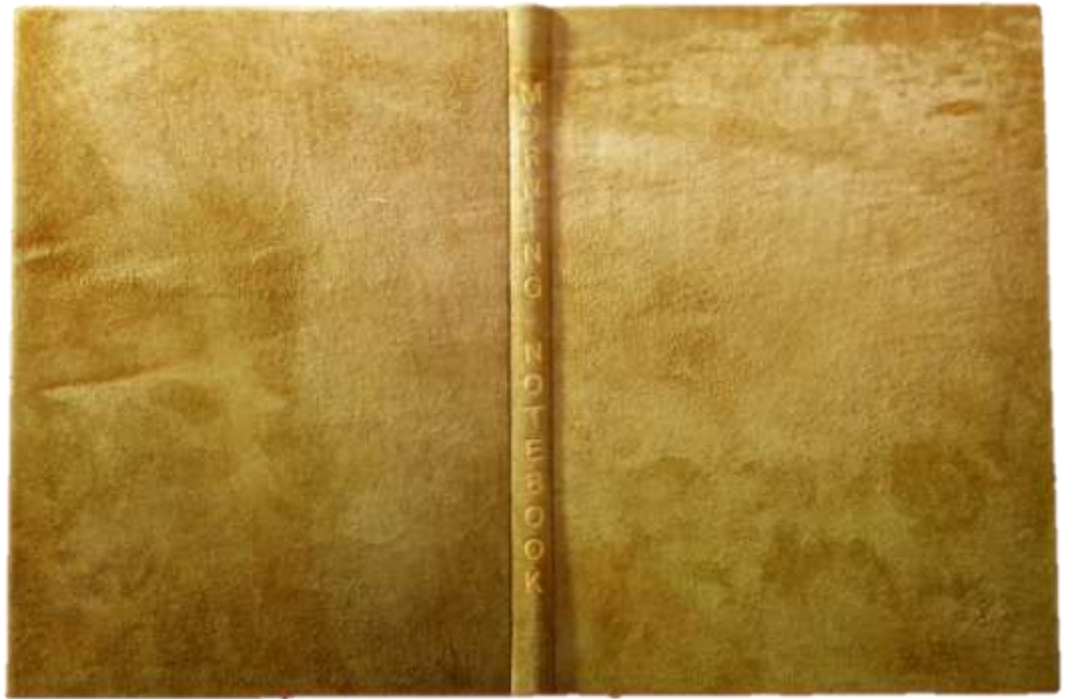
The full title is 'The New World of the South: The Romance of Australian History'. First published 1913.

Simplified binding. Crocodile suede boards, calf leather spine, graphite head decoration. The title is in silver and gold.

185mm x 130mm x 40mm

**MORNING NOTEBOOK**  
**Edward Kessler & Anne Walker**

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A very fine edition of poems and etching by Edward Kessler and Anne Walker published in Paris in 1979.

Simplified binding. Full suede boards, doublures and flyleaves.

235mm x 180mm x 15mm

## FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE Craft Bookbinders' Guild Inc

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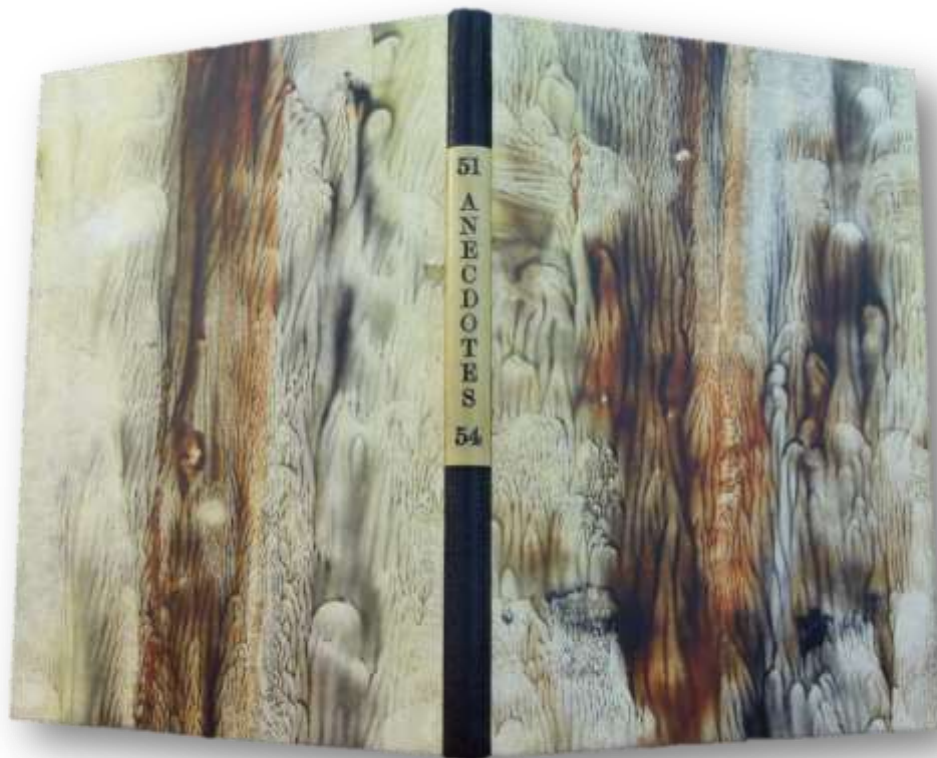
Conference notes from the First National Conference of Craft Bookbinders Australia in November 1984.

Simplified binding, decorated paper on boards, title 'en Chinoise' on the spine.

255mm x 185mm x 10mm

**5154 ANECDOTES**  
**Various Authors**

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Short stories by various authors.

Simplified binding, decorated papers on boards, title 'en Chinoise' on the spine.

205mm x 150mm x 15mm



# WHY I NEVER BECAME A GENERAL

Alex Weaver

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Simplified binding, decorated papers on boards. Title is tooled onto a tear-shaped onlay on the front board.

285mm x 200mm x 8mm

# MODERN BOOKBINDING

Alex J. Vaughan

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Simplified binding, decorated papers on boards. Title tooled onto a box calf piece across the spine.

205mm x 150mm x 20mm



# THE MUTINY ON THE HMS BOUNTY

William Bligh (edited by Robert Bowman)

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Simplified binding. The decorated board papers and endpapers are the one continuous sheet.

250mm x 175mm x 15mm

# THE SIMPLIFIED BINDING

John Tonkin

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Simplified binding.  
A textbook describing the Simplified binding technique.

210mm x 150mm x 10mm

## HARRILD & SONS CATALOGUE 1892

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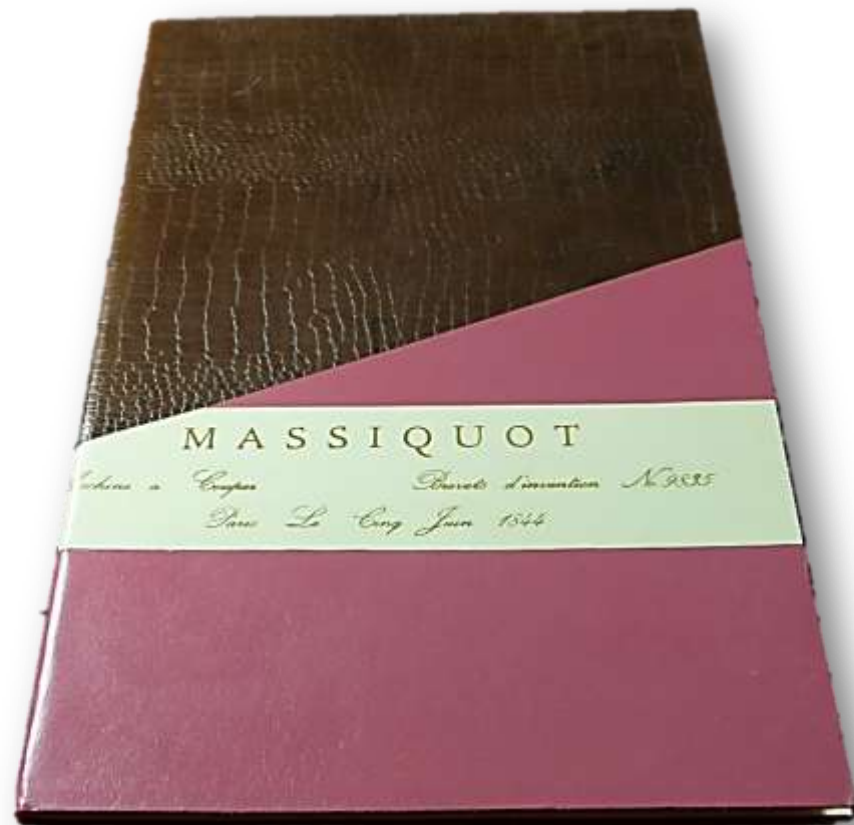
This is a photo-reduced reproduction arranged by the NSW Guild of Craft Bookbinders in 1988.

Simplified binding. Puckered decorated Japanese papers on the boards which have been sealed with varnish.

320mm x 225mm x 15mm

## MACHINE À COUPER: BREVET D'INVENTION N° 9835

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This is a copy of the patent papers of the paper guillotine dated 5 June 1844.

Single section flexible binding. Board edges are 'clean cut'. Leathers on the boards are box calf and machine-impressed kangaroo.

445mm x 275mm x 7mm

## UNTITLED

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### A Feral Guest Book

Single section binding in kangaroo, decorated with found objects.  
Housed in a lidded box.

160mm x 110mm x 7mm



# THE GRUB IN THE WOOD OF TIME

Mark O'Connor

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A poem by Canberra poet Mark O'Connor which was written about the worm-eaten wooden boards. The edition of four copies was the collaborative effort of four people.

A single hinge binding. Each leaf is attached to two 'serviette rings'. The assembly is kept in place by a rod running through the centre.

390mm x 175mm x 40mm

## UNTITLED

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Artist's Book.

Text of hand-made papers. Boards are palm leaves. The text block has been sewn onto the raised cords with a packed sewing technique.

Dimensions variable

## A DISPLAY OF MINIATURES

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## A DISPLAY OF MINIATURES

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### UNTITLED

Full leather Lumbeck binding fitted to the eye of a needle. Tooled with the outline of a tortoise

Ultra miniature

### STAFF OFFICER'S NOTEBOOK

Full leather Lumbeck binding.

Ultra miniature

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### DECLARATION DES DROITS DE L'HOMME ET DU CITOYEN

Simplified binding. The text was produced to mark the 1789 French revolution bicentennial.

Doll's house edition

### ABC

An alphabet book. Simplified binding with paper covered boards and leather onlays.

Doll's house edition

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### THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF COCK ROBIN

Simplified binding with vellum boards. Text reduced from original artwork by Rosemary Hunt.

Doll's house edition

### BUSH IMAGES

Single section binding of pencil sketches of bush scenes. Onlays of split rock

Doll's house edition

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### NZ ABC

A phonetic alphabet New Zealand style. Simplified binding in box calf. Onlays of sheep stomach leather with pieces of paua shell

Less than 75mm

### A COLONIST'S VOYAGE TO NZ

The story of a 19<sup>th</sup> century voyage. Simplified binding with lead boards covered with box calf, lichen and birch bark decoration.

Less than 75mm

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## A GLOSSARY OF BOOKBINDING TERMS

**Artist's book:** A medium of artistic expression in which the creative process is informed/inspired by the form and/or function of the book.

**Doublure:** The final 'lining' with paper or leather of part or the whole of the inside of the boards, pasted down as a separate piece.

**En chinoise:** A form of titling in which lettering is arranged vertically one character to a line.

**Floating boards technique:** A binding style in which the boards are connected to the spine by cords (or tapes) alone.

**Franzband binding:** Traditional French laced-in binding in which the boards are attached to the book block sewing supports before covering – similar to an English 'Laced-in Binding'.

**Full binding:** A binding covered entirely in the same material, particularly leather.

**Gaufering:** An edge treatment where a tooled design is impressed into a gilt or graphite surface.

**Headbands:** Woven silk threads or leather formed over a beading core and attached to the head and tail of a book at the spine.

**Inlay:** A decorative technique in which a piece of leather is cut out and replaced by another which exactly fills the resulting hole.

**Lumbeck binding:** A method of joining single sheets together by applying adhesive to the spine edge of the knocked up sheets.

**Millimetre binding:** A frugal style which, due to wartime shortages, was developed for binding slim volumes using a minimal amount of leather.

**Morocco:** A type of goatskin.

**Oasis:** A type of goatskin.

**Onlay:** A decorative technique in which one material, usually leather, is laid on top of a base material, also usually leather.

**Paste papers:** A decorative technique in which a mix of paste and pigment is applied to a sheet of paper and worked in its wet state.

**Section:** One or more sheets of text arranged in sequence and folded once.

**Simplified binding:** A binding style in which the spine assembly is fixed to the book block separately from the boards.

**Single section binding:** A simple method of binding in which the cover, endsheets and text block are sewn together in a single operation.

**Vellum:** A calf skin parchment



Established in 1981, the Canberra Craft Bookbinders' Guild seeks to promote the traditional skills of hand bookbinding and to exert a progressive influence on bookbinding design and technique.

The interests of Guild members include traditional craft bookbinding, contemporary design bindings, book repairs and conservation, letterpress printing and alternative book arts experimentation.

The Guild meets every second month and welcomes new members.

<http://www.canberrabookbinders.org.au>

