Different life stages for pages

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] G [/dropcap]iven **Joe Logan** is a reader, an English teacher and a bibliophile, what she does to used and old books can only be described as tough love.

In order to create her craft as an upcycler of pre-loved books, she first needs to pull them apart or, at the very least, remove several pages, fiddle with the spines, or redecorate the covers with an assortment of creative twists.

"The first hard cover book I had to pull apart was very hard, but it does get easier: you do get over the desecration," Joe, from Portland, laughs.

During the working week, Joe teaches senior English classes at Portland Secondary School, but in her spare time she works as

one half of luciandjoe (pronounced Luci and Joe) creating new-from-old pieces using bookbinding and papercraft techniques.

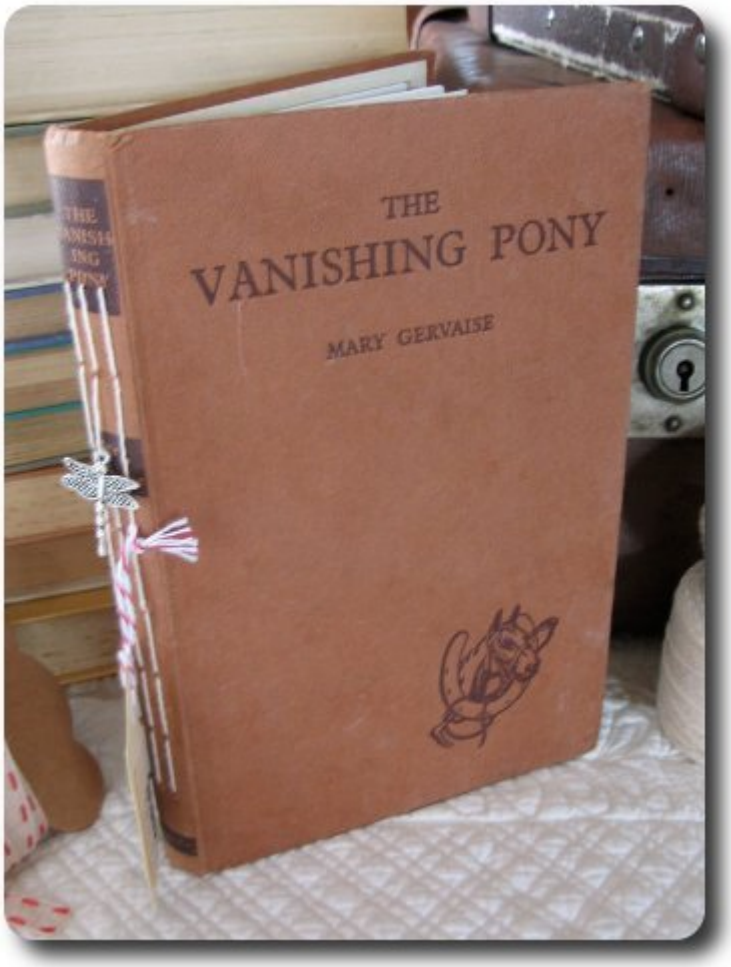
[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] W [/dropcap]hile Joe enrolled in several workshops to learn the traditional methods of bookbinding/restoration and papercraft, she has since turned those techniques on their head to create her own style.

"Basically I learned how to do things the proper way and then butchered those techniques to create something very individual, but which still maintains the integrity of the original book," she says.

Joe scours op-shops, tip-shops and secondhand stores for pre-loved books that may be a bit crusty, but still have a certain

charm or character: perhaps an interesting cover, for example, or some lovely illustrations.

The books are then transformed into something useful and beautiful by having fresh, blank pages added, some old pages removed, and a freshening up of their covers through beading, or stitching, or by adding a special trinket.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] T [/dropcap]hrough this technique, an old encyclopaedia starts a new life as a funky travel journal, a cookbook can become a photo album, or a long-forgotten adventure book is reborn as a diary.

"Every book I select has its own character and I keep that character, because that is also what makes each piece individual and appealing," Joe explains.

Like most creators, Joe started out making gifts for her friends about 10 years ago, before **Megan Langdon**, from The Little Bookshop, in Portland, saw the potential in the unique products and began to stock a few pieces. The response prompted Joe to "go public" and, in the past three years, she has started a market stall that visits Warrnambool, Ballarat, Port Fairy and Geelong, while also setting up a shop online.

"People still really love books – they love the tactile nature of a book," she says.

"And, at the same time, there is a resurgence in crafts and people are more appreciative of hand-made, quality possessions."

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] A [/dropcap]side from upcycling books, Joe creates a range of cards using her own photographs (such as those taken during a trip to Paris), or screenprinting her own designs.

“I am enjoying exploring the papercraft side of things a bit more and seeing what can be done with screenprinting and embroidery, for example, which brings together my love of paper and fabric,” she says.

People can also commission Joe for a one-off piece of work – perhaps using a book they have chosen – but she has had to knock back customers looking for a book restorer.

“When people ask me if I can restore one of their treasured books, I say ‘you might want to take a closer look at what I do to books!”’

Now we did mention earlier in this story that Joe is one half of luciandjoe, which means there is another half: Joe’s silent partner, Luci.

Luci is 11, white-haired and, despite having four paws, is not particularly dextrous. She is, however, Joe’s beloved Maltese Shih tzu and loves nothing more than a dog-eared book.

[box type=”bio”] Joe Logan will run a series of workshops at the Julia Street Creative Space, Portland, in March. Contact the space (03 5523 6566) for more details. Visit the luciandjoe online store here or find them on Facebook here.[/box]

If you enjoyed this story, you might enjoy…

Happiness is a home full of pins and needles: Kristi Packham

Hot glass melts hearts: Robert Gatt and Freya Marriott

A long way from Pomonal to Pip: Kate Bouman

Finding inspiration in the natural world: Jill Edwards

No time limit on this wearable art: Helen Bunyon