

Getting hooked on crochet, one stitch at a time



The face behind “Spincushion”, Shelley Husband, pictured with her daughter, Erin, is moving in a new direction with her craft...and her daughters are part of the change.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] A
[/dropcap]rtist **Shelley Husband** can write proficiently in at least two languages: one is English, and the other is crochet.

When Shelley slips into crochet, the sentences look something like this: “ch 1, dc in same space (ch 3, skip 2 sts, dc into next stitch) x 6, 3 ch, ss into 1st dc (7 x 3 ch loops and 7 dc)”.

It is this second language that Shelley, of Narrawong, is helping to take to the world via the wonders of the internet:

it allows her to teach people from across the globe a skill that she has been perfecting since learning how to crochet about two and half years ago.

“I love stretching my brain and I love fine detailed work,” she says.

“I also love finding out how things work, pulling them apart and looking at how it fits together and crochet can be very much like that.”



A growing number of people are becoming hooked on crochet. Image: Shelley Husband

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] H
[/dropcap]aving taught herself how to crochet via books, blogs and YouTube clips, Shelley is now teaching others the step-by-step methods behind various patterns that she has developed.

“I am doing my bit, I guess, to rejuvenate the art of crochet and to get people to go beyond the granny square,” Shelley says with a laugh.

Through her website, Shelley connects with crochet novices around the world, all of whom can follow the lessons for free, or purchase her unique patterns.

For Shelley, who is also a part-time school librarian and integration aide, refining her crochet skills is the second step in a three-step progression from where she began six years ago when she started her craft line, **Spincushion**.



Shelley elevated the humble pin cushion to a collectable work of art.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] S
[/dropcap]pincushion, as it sounds, is Shelley’s “spin” on the humble pin cushion, that she has taken and developed into an art form.

After first learning how to make “everybody else’s” pincushion patterns, Shelley began to design and make her own; creating beautiful, colourful and quirky pin cushions that are more works of art than a mere accompaniment to sewing.

Her first market, at Tyrendarra, proved a hit and Shelley soon became a regular face on the South-West Victorian market circuit, while also successfully selling her pincushions online via an etsy store.

Recently, however, Shelley decided to move right away from pincushions and focus on her crochet venture, “Beyond the Granny”, and a new collaboration with two of her three young daughters, Erin (14) and Megan (16), called “Quirkery Stitchery”.

“I really, really loved making the pin cushions and am very proud of what I achieved with those, but it is time for new challenges,” she said.



Quirky drawings by daughters Erin and Megan are the basis

of Shelley's latest venture, Quirkery Stitchery.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] Q
[/dropcap]uirkery Stitchery grew from a series of quirky drawings by Erin and Megan, who, together with their younger sister Brenna (11), are as creative as their Mum. While the girls create the images, Shelley brings them to life through embroidery.

It is a lovely connection and while the quirky characters are finding their own online market, Shelley says, for her, the creative process is first and foremost about the joy of it.

Using this philosophy, Shelley makes sure that even her "mistakes" are put to good use. She recently advertised a load of unwanted yarn left over from various crochet projects and it was snapped up by a woman to use for "yarn bombing" – the covering of public objects in crocheted or knitted wool.

"I will popping that in the post and it is nice to know it is going to a good home," she laughs.

[A quick quiz: what is the difference between knitting and crocheting? If you said one involves two needles and the other a single hook, you are on your way to being crafty, unlike the author of this story.]



The gorgeous ladybug pattern was one of Spincushions signature designs.

[box] To find Shelley online, please visit her [website here](#), where you will find links to all of her craft ventures, including her online crochet classes. You can also find her on [Facebook](#). [/box]



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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.

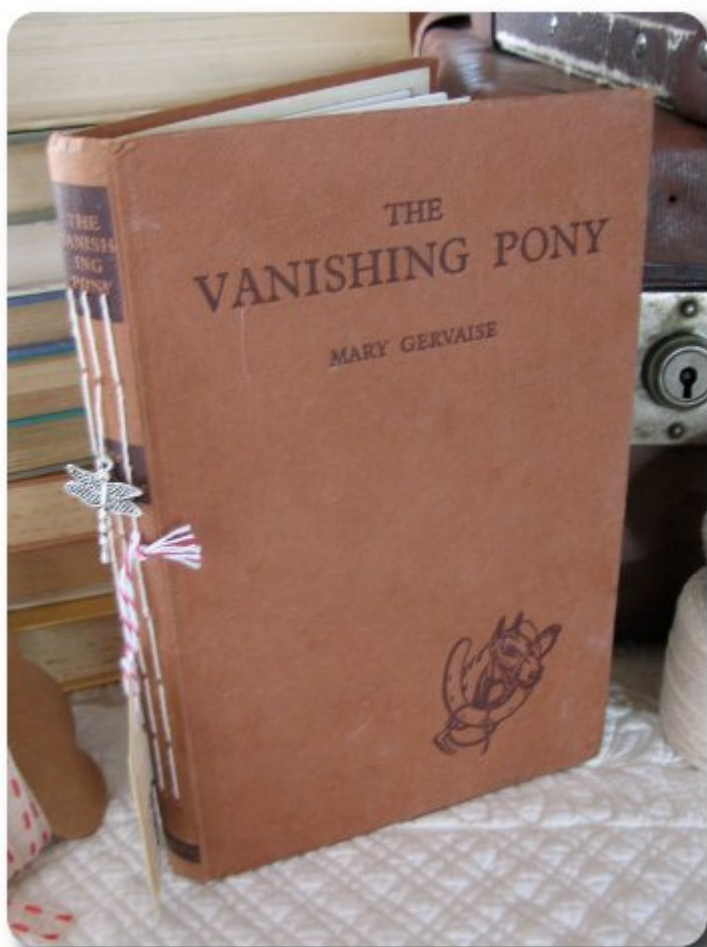


[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A5CECD;"] W
[/dropcap]hile Joe enrolled in several workshops to learn the traditional methods of bookbinding/restoration and papercraft, she has since turned those techniques on their head to create her own style.

“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]



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A long way from Pomonal to Pip

Kate Bouman, from Naringal, has taken the long way round, but she has come back to creating the delicate art she first began to explore as a child.

Is this the smallest violin you have seen?



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #DC943C;"] T
[/dropcap]his tiny violin was carved from either ivory or bone or something similar and was made by my late uncle, Ron Goodall, more than 50 years ago.

He lived in the former piano shop at 222 Timor St – featured this week in Places/My Place – and would use pieces of old piano and other materials to make this folk art.

It is in four separate parts, including a miniature scroll top, that have been glued together and finished with four ‘cat gut’ violin strings.

The piece was originally displayed on the end of a toothpick attached to a cork and kept in a glass vial.

I doubt it has played a note, but it is one of my most treasured possessions.



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This jellybean is really jumpin'

Creators like Johanna Glennen have found a way around balancing their craft with raising their children: they are taking their work online.