



# THE **PASSIONATE** APPRENTICES

A **STUDY GUIDE** BY KATY MARRINER

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## Introduction

This study guide to accompany *The Passionate Apprentices* (Roger Scholes, 2008) by Edward Street Films has been written for secondary students.

It provides information and suggestions for learning activities in English, Careers, Geography, SOSE and curriculum projects exploring the concept of sustainability.

*The Passionate Apprentices* is a three-part documentary series. Each episode runs for thirty minutes.

## About *The Passionate Apprentices*

In the valley beneath Sleeping Beauty mountain, the people of the community have rediscovered the benefits of a small town economy. Families trade with one another, swapping foods they grow and things they make. Their lives are rich and varied. They value what they know and want to pass their passions on.

*The Passionate Apprentices* narrates the stories of John Hounslow-Robinson, Yves Ginat, John Glendinning and

Shannon Ruhland. The four men are conscious of the need to live ethically and make a better world. They are passionate and proud people, keen to pass on their skills. In small communities, formal apprenticeships can be difficult to find but, through mentoring, the men are able to play a beneficial role in the lives of others who are keen to learn.

As director of *The Passionate Apprentices*, Roger Scholes' interest in filming the community was based on his sense of its uniqueness. Their way of living offered opportunities and allowed people to rediscover a sense of neighbourhood.

*The Passionate Apprentices* portrays ways of life that are about stepping more lightly on the planet. The stories of John the knifemaker, Yves the beekeeper and John and Shannon the bakers, highlight that through cooperation and collaboration a productive and viable economy can be established on far less energy – and have a positive personal, social and ecological impact.

## About the filmmakers

### Roger Scholes

Roger Scholes is the writer, director

and cinematographer of *The Passionate Apprentices*.

Scholes has been an independent film and television maker since 1983. He has worked as a producer, director, writer, script editor, cinematographer and editor in drama and documentary projects for cinema and television. Scholes formed Edward Street Films in 1988 with his partner Katherine Scholes.

Scholes' documentary credits include *Last Port of Call* (2004), *Future Shack* (2003), *Return to the Big Witch* (2001), *The Coolbaroo Club* (1996), *Home of the Brave* (1992), *The Valley* (1991) and *The Last Tall Forests* (1990). He was the writer and director of the feature film *The Tale of Ruby Rose* (1987). Scholes has also written and directed the television drama *Cable* and the television series *Stories from the Stone Age* and *The Human Journey*.

### Lynda House

Lynda House is the producer of *The Passionate Apprentices*.

Lynda House has worked in the Australian film industry since 1981. Her other credits as a producer include



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the documentaries *Kanyini* (Melanie Hogan, 2006) and *Pozieres* (Wain Fimeri, 2000) and the feature films *September* (Peter Carstairs, 2007), *Kokoda* (Alister Grierson, 2006), *Ned Kelly* (Gregor Jordan, 2003), *River Street* (Tony Mahood, 1996), *Muriel's Wedding* (P.J. Hogan, 1994), *Proof* (Jocelyn Moorhouse, 1991) and *Death in Brunswick* (John Ruane, 1991).

Melanie Sandford

Melanie Sandford is the editor of *The Passionate Apprentices*.

Sandford is one of Australia's most experienced documentary film editors having worked in the industry for more than twenty years. Her previous credits include *Maternity Unit* (Janette Howe, 2006), three-part series *Divorce Stories*, *Flight Club* (Sally Eccleston, 2003), *Horses: The Story of Equus* (Michael Caulfield, 2002), *Dream Believers* (Laura Zusters, 2000) and *The Pitch* (Clare Bonham, 1998).

Martin Kennedy

Martin Kennedy is the composer of *The Passionate Apprentices* and a member of All India Radio, a post-rock instrumental band from Melbourne. His previous soundtrack credits include *Travels With My Nose in France* (Linden Scholes, 2005), *Future Shack* and *Last Port of Call*.

It is possible to download some of the tracks that appear on *The Passionate Apprentices* at <http://www.allindia.radio.com.au>.

### Using *The Passionate Apprentices* in the classroom

Teachers may select from the following activities to support students' viewing and close analysis of *The Passionate Apprentices*.

#### Before viewing *The Passionate Apprentices*

- Use a dictionary and students' ideas to arrive at a class definition of the terms apprentice and mentor.
- Has anyone acted as your mentor?
- Do you know someone who started his or her working life as an apprentice?
- Do you think it is important to feel passionate about how you earn a living?
- Do you have a part time job? Did the job involve training? Share your experience of being mentored by your employer or a fellow staff member.
- *The Passionate Apprentices* was shot in the Huon Valley. Despite its proximity to Hobart, a forty-minute drive away, the Huon Valley is a world far removed from the hustle and bustle of city life. Locate this area on a map of Tasmania. Use print and electronic texts to find out more about this area.

#### After viewing *The Passionate Apprentices*

- Did you enjoy the series?
- Do you have a favourite episode?
- Do you find the stories inspiring?

- What are the central concerns of *The Passionate Apprentices*?
- What is the role of a documentary series like this?
- Who do you think the series is trying to communicate its messages to?
- How can the stories told by *The Passionate Apprentices* influence our future both in a personal sense and as a society?

#### Close Analysis

- What do each of the episodes reveal about the people who live and work in the shadow of Sleeping Beauty? Make notes about each of the artisans featured in *The Passionate Apprentices*, paying attention to how the filmmakers introduce them to the audience, their personality traits, their attitudes to life and their passion and pride in their work.
- What do the knifemaker, the beekeeper and the bakers have in common?
- Write a synopsis of each episode of *The Passionate Apprentices* for a television guide.
- Work with others to organize and lead a forum about one of the episodes of *The Passionate Apprentices*.
- Compile a list of key quotations from *The Passionate Apprentices*. Make sure that the list is revealing of the series' situations, participants and concerns.
- Select one of the themes explored by *The Passionate Apprentices* and work with other students to develop a multimedia presentation offering your group's stories about this theme.



# Episode 1 - The Knifemaker

**T**here's quite a lot of people in Australia that attempt to make knives. There's not many people that actually forge them. What I do nobody taught me that. It's taken me so long to learn, you know, I'd like to hand it on to a young fella that's interested. But the person obviously to do it has to have the passion.  
– John

John Hounslow-Robinson hand-makes knives for chefs, hunters and ordinary people. He has learnt the trade for twenty-five years. John wants to pass on his knowledge.

- What do you notice about John when he is at work?
- What moments and statements highlight that John is proud of his work as a knifemaker?

Merlin and Linden are adolescent boys who live in the valley. They asked John if they could learn how to make a knife. The boys have become John's apprentices. He tells them stories and teaches them the craft of knifemaking.

'The first time I hit some metal and I could see how easy it was to shape ... it kind of opened up a whole new world.'  
– Linden

'I've never met anyone else like this. I've never really seen anyone who lives like that and can still manage to be so kind.'  
– Merlin

'John's a good teacher. He's got really friendly qualities to him. He never gets angry with you.'  
– Linden

*It was really good to work with Linden and Merlin ... it was a great feeling to be able to think that you're handing on some knowledge that you've discovered. It's probably been – obviously been discovered before, but you know, because there was no one teach me I had to learn it all myself. So to actually be able to hand it on ...*  
– John

- Use these statements to initiate a discussion of Merlin and Linden's work as John's apprentices.

'A mate of mine bought a bit of land and it had this bus on it. It really suits me because I'm by myself with the dog. It's all I need really.'

- Describe John's lifestyle. Draw on the words and images of the episode to construct your response.

- Why does John value such a lifestyle?
- Do you think you could live as John does?

'And as with trading – you're happy. You give me that and I'll give you this. And you walk away and you're happy.'  
– John

Trading is important to the economy of the valley. John is a passionate trader and enjoys trading a knife for food or a service.

- What do you think of the way John trades with others in the community?

'If you've got a really good knife it helps.'  
– John

John's love of knives is directly connected to his love of food and preparing food.

- Why do you think the filmmakers show John hosting a meal for his friends from the valley?
- What does this final sequence of the episode tell you about John's lifestyle and the lifestyle of the community?



## Episode 2 - The Beekeeper

**B**eekeeper Yves Ginat makes Tasmanian honeys using traditional French methods.

Born in Southern France, Yves learnt beekeeping as a child from two master honey makers in his village. They passed on their passion for bees and honey to Yves.

- Yves' admiration and pride are evident as he tends the hives. Identify other moments in the episode that highlight Yves' dedication and commitment to beekeeping.

'Marlin, my daughter, looks after the bees with me.'

– Yves

'We have some good times, listening to them, smelling them. And tasting the honey.'

– Marlin

- Recall those moments in the episode that show Yves and Marlin working together. What words would you use to describe their relationship?

'I have a dream for my bees. I want to make a new honey that's never been gathered before.'

– Yves

*A few years ago on the coast, I met an old beekeeper. Between the coast and the mountains up on the east, he had his secret place where he gathered the honey. He gave Marlin a jar of the honey. And we tried it together. It was beautiful.*

– Yves

Yves has found the source of the finest honey he has ever tasted. It is a white honey collected from a late-blooming heather in the highlands. Yves builds new hives and takes the bees up for the winter heather flowering. Yves is assisted by Marlin. They are joined by Marlin's school teacher, Damon, who has also found a passion for bees, beekeeping and honey.

- What moments and statements in the episode highlight that Yves inspires Marlin and Damon?

'It's also part of trying to give something to someone else, the passion.'

– Yves

'... it's important for everyone to have something to keep them going.'

– Yves

- Why do you think Yves is keen to pass on his knowledge and love of bees and beekeeping to Marlin? Has your passion for something been influenced by your parents' interests?
- Were you surprised by Marlin and Damon's interest in beekeeping?

'I love to live here in this south part of Tassie looking at Sleeping Beauty. She is there every day, looking at us.'

– Yves

*Here in Tassie we're having a pure source of life for the bees and us. And*

*all the air is pure around us, so the honey that's coming from them, it's a pure crystal.*

– Yves

'On frosty mornings, the pony next door runs up and down the field to keep warm.'

– Marlin

Yves clearly values life in the valley. Marlin has inherited Yves' love of the natural world.

- Describe Yves' and Marlin's lifestyle. Draw on the words and images of the episode to construct your response.

'This year is a trying. Next year will be better.'

– Yves

'Thank you, Yves. That's worth its weight in gold, isn't it?'

– Damon

The story ends with Damon, Yves and Marlin at the kitchen table. There is white honey for the shop, a jar for Yves' parents in France, a jar for home and a jar for Damon. It is cause for celebration.

- Do you think the white honey is worth the chase?
- What does the final sequence of the episode tell you about Yves' approach to beekeeping and life?



## Episode 3 - The Bakers

**J**ohn the baker makes some of the best bread in Tasmania. With his fellow baker Shannon they have built a wood-fired oven to improve the quality of their product.

*We opened this bakery here almost ten years ago. People are always saying, how do you do it? How do you do that many hours and that sort of thing? And ... But I know it is important ... people do care about what they eat.*  
– John

*A modern oven has been made to process a large amount of bread easily. A wood-fired brick oven, it basically results in a superior product. But it is a lot more work. You've got to get wood. You've got to load the oven up with wood. You've got to fire it. You can get it wrong so you've got to cool it down, or you've got to add more fire. It's a lot of work. And a lot of bakers who have only ever worked in the modern bakery would look at what we do and think, 'Why ... why do that? That's crazy.'*  
– Shannon

- So why do John and Shannon do things the hard way?

*What we're doing is very traditional. And we're making bread without using modern yeast ... we're not mechanically mixing those. We are using a bread mixer but we're not mixing the heck out of it. We're doing it gently.*  
– Shannon

*'The sad thing is, is in our rush 100 years ago to embrace industry and technology, the old ways were pushed aside and forgotten about.'*  
– Shannon

*John and I are from different origins but we come together and we share what we've learned and combine it. And we are refiguring out all that stuff that's been lost.*  
– Shannon

- What do you think of John's and Shannon's decision to draw on traditional and less technological ways of baking?

- John speaks of Shannon's 'heart being it'. The same is true of John. What moments and statements highlight that John and Shannon are proud of their work as bakers?

*'It's a really satisfying feeling.'*  
– John

*I can't explain why I'm so into this. It's very simple really. It's just – It's just bread. It's nothing that amazing, but at the same time I'm – I can't stop thinking about it almost every time we work. It's an obsession that bizarre.*  
– Shannon

- Is it just bread to John and Shannon?

Shannon shares his story of leaving his job as a baker in Adelaide and searching for work that would give him greater satisfaction. John's bakery was exactly what he wanted to find.

*'I came from Adelaide before here. I was never really comfortable with that living in the city thing.'*  
– Shannon

*Shannon was a little bit more than an apprentice. He was already quite an accomplished baker. He had to make a few adjustments I think but not greatly. One thing he did say was he had to learn how to be much quicker.*  
– John

*'Baking is something that is essentially handed down from one baker to the next.'*  
– Shannon

- Use these statements to initiate a discussion of John and Shannon as master and apprentice.

*Every bake, John and I work together. We've got a bit of a routine happening. So we just put our heads down and get into it. There doesn't need to be too much discussion as far as what's going to happen, what goes next, which dough's here, who divides what, who shapes what, what goes in the oven when or how.*  
– Shannon



**'One day I think I would like to mill flour for our own - what I'd really like to do is go one better than that and grow our own grain, make bread from it and sell it.'** says John.

*John and I get along really well. We've both got a quirky sense of humour. We have a bit of a deal going. I laugh at his jokes, he laughs at mine.*

– Shannon

- What makes John and Shannon's relationship an interesting partnership?

*'It's an obsession enough for me that I'm going to be starting my own bakery eventually. I've got to do it. It's the logical next step for me.'*

– Shannon

*You know, I'll be really sad to lose him, but if there's anyone in the world I would like to see have their own little bakery, it has to be Shannon.*

– John

- Were you surprised by John's attitude to Shannon's ambition?

*Merlin's good at filling in for people ...*

*because he knows how to do so many things, he can fill in and do jobs when people don't show or can't be there.*

– John

*'I get Reuben up at four o'clock. He actually does quite well.'*

– John

*'Remo. Well he's only just really starting to do a bit here.'*

– John

- Why do you think the filmmakers show John's children helping out in the bakery and selling goods at the market?

*The Passionate Apprentices shows John at home grinding flour and*

*tending the family's vegetable garden.*

*One day I think I would like to mill flour for our own – what I'd really like to do is go one better than that and grow our own grain, make bread from it and sell it.*

– John

*'It would be nice one day to be able to supply the bakery with everything.'*

– John

- What moments and statements highlight John's commitment to living a self-sufficient and sustainable lifestyle?
- Why do you think the episode closes with John in his vegetable garden?

# Further Study



## Production Values

- What expectations does the opening of each episode create? How are you positioned as a viewer?
- *The Passionate Apprentices* is about real people and their lives. As a class, discuss the demands of making a documentary series like *The Passionate Apprentices*.
- Do you think the filmmakers have achieved engaging portrayals of the artisans involved in the project?
- What part does music play in *The Passionate Apprentices*? Do you find the filmmakers' choices effective?
- As a class, view a sequence from an episode of *The Passionate Apprentices*.
  - Describe the setting and action of this sequence.
  - What is the tone of this sequence? How is it created?
  - What are the effects of certain shots in this sequence?
  - What does sound contribute to this sequence?
  - How does this sequence contribute to our knowledge and understanding of the individuals depicted?
  - What important ideas are highlighted in this sequence?

## Analytic Responses

- 'Inspired people passing on their passions.' Is this an apt tagline for *The Passionate Apprentices*?
- '*The Passionate Apprentices* offers inspiration and hope.' Do you agree?
- 'A sustainable future is a matter of how we manage the social, economic and environmental aspects of our lives.' When does *The Passionate Apprentices* show this to be true?
- Spend some time researching the qualities of a review. Write a review of *The Passionate Apprentices* that

would appear in a television guide.

## Creative Responses

- Storyboard a promotional preview for *The Passionate Apprentices*.
- Write a detailed and creative description of one of the individuals featured in *The Passionate Apprentices*.
- Write a feature article about the knifemaker, the beekeeper and the bakers and the community in which they work and live.

Before you begin writing, decide on the publication that will feature your article. Are you writing for a newspaper or magazine? Your article could even appear in one of the supplements that appear in the weekend newspapers. When you have made your decision, think about your likely audience and the format of your article. Use vocabulary and adopt a tone that best suits the publication that you have chosen. Download appropriate images from the internet to include in your article. Ask your teacher to act as your editor and don't forget to devise an attention-demanding headline.

- Create an A3 collage of words and images that offers your response to the ideas explored in *The Passionate Apprentices*.

## Going Further

- What could you teach someone else? Take on the role of a mentor. Show them the ins and outs

of the activity. Highlight the skills that they will need to practice and perfect. Talk to them about your passion for the activity. Share your experience of being a mentor with the class. Make sure that you explain not only what you taught your 'apprentice' but also what you learnt.

- Interview an apprentice. You might like to use some of the following questions:
  - What is your chosen trade?
  - How long is your apprenticeship?
  - What have you learnt so far?
  - What are the benefits? The disadvantages?
  - What are you finding easy? Tough?
  - Why have you taken this career path?

Publish the interviews on the Careers page of your school's intranet.

- Spend time asking adults that you know to share their stories about teachers who they have found inspiring. Film the interviews and edit the interviews to create a short documentary. Premiere the class' documentary at a school assembly.

## References

- *The Passionate Apprentices* Press Kit, Edward Street Films, 2008.
- *The Passionate Apprentices* Post-production scripts, Clever Types, 2008.

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