
Sidney F. Huttner

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Brief review by Sidney F. Huttner, [RBML Book Review Editor].

In her preface, Tidcombe writes, “The main focus is on the three most famous women binders of the period, Sarah Prideaux, Katherine Adams, Sybil Pye, and the Guild of Women Binders, but almost all the other women who exhibited bindings from about 1880 to 1920 are also included.” “Mentioned” might be more accurate than “included” as very little could be discovered about many of the women listed, for example, in the appendices “A List of Women and Groups Associated with the Guild of Women Binders” and “List of British Women in charge of Bookbinder’s Shops, 1648-1901.”

This is, however, as full an account as we are likely to have for some time of the British women, who toward the end of the last century began to move in substantial numbers into careers as design binders and, less frequently, into the male-dominated binding trade. American women binders are mentioned from time to time, and a ten-page chapter summarizes Tidcombe’s research on “Women Bookbinders in America and Elsewhere Abroad.”

Not an easy read – overlong paragraphs become clogged with dates and the genealogy is occasionally precious – *Women Bookbinders* nonetheless brings together an impressive amount of information, handsomely packaged with excellent illustrations. It is an important reference work and should stimulate more research in this subject area. -- SFH

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