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## **The Queen's Bindery Apprenticeship to preserve the skills of hand bookbinding**

The increasingly rare skills and expertise of the hand bookbinding trade will be preserved in the UK through a unique new training initiative, The Queen's Bindery Apprenticeship, which launches today (11 July).

The scheme, due to begin in Autumn 2016, will be the only bindery apprenticeship available in the UK and the first since the 1970s. Over a seven-year period pilot, up to six apprentices will gain unparalleled experience working in the Royal Bindery at Windsor and external workshops, acquiring a broad range of bookbinding skills, including fine leather binding, edge-gilding and gold finishing, which may otherwise be lost for ever. City & Guilds qualifications will be received upon completion of the five-year training programme.

The Royal Bindery in Windsor Castle was founded in 1770 by George III, a noted bibliophile, and has been in operation ever since, with many of the tools it houses having been used for centuries. Today, it is at the forefront of preserving the high standards of craftsmanship that are the benchmark of the professional hand bookbinding trade.

The seven-year pilot will cost around £500,000 and be supported by eight charity Founding Partners: Royal Collection Trust, Antiquarian Booksellers Association, City & Guilds of London Institute, The Clothworkers' Company, The Leathersellers' Company, The Printing Charity, Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust and The Stationers' Company. In addition, there are three Skills & Industry Partners who will benefit from employing the apprentices and contribute to costs: The Royal Bindery, Blissett Bookbinders and Shepherds, Sangorski & Sutcliffe.

Oliver Urquhart Irvine, The Librarian & Assistant Keeper of The Queen's Archives, said: "There is no substitute for learning a craft in a professional workshop. The Queen's Bindery Apprenticeship will ensure that the finest standards of craftsmanship of this valuable trade are passed on to future generations."

Applicants from a range of backgrounds are encouraged to apply as no previous experience or qualifications are necessary. All relevant skills will be taught as part of the scheme, but applicants should be creative and have an interest in the field.

**Ends**

**Application to the apprenticeship scheme will be online via the Royal Collection Trust website [www.royalcollectiontrust.org.uk](http://www.royalcollectiontrust.org.uk)**

**For further information and images, please contact the Royal Collection Trust Press Office, T. +44 (0)20 7839 1377, [press@royalcollection.org.uk](mailto:press@royalcollection.org.uk)**

### **Notes to Editors**

**Royal Collection Trust**, a department of the Royal Household, is responsible for the care of the Royal Collection and manages the public opening of the official residences of The Queen. Income generated from admissions and from associated commercial activities contributes directly to The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity. The aims of The Trust are the care and conservation of the Royal Collection, and the promotion of access and enjoyment through exhibitions, publications, loans and educational programmes. Royal Collection Trust's work is undertaken without public funding of any kind.

**The Royal Collection** is among the largest and most important art collections in the world, and one of the last great European royal collections to remain intact. It comprises almost all aspects of the fine and decorative arts, and is spread among some 15 royal residences and former residences across the UK, most of which are regularly open to the public. The Royal Collection is held in trust by the Sovereign for her successors and the nation, and is not owned by The Queen as a private individual.

Explore the Royal Collection at [www.royalcollection.org.uk](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk)

Admission to Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and the Palace of Holyroodhouse is managed by The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity in England and Wales (1016972) and in Scotland (SCO39772).