

# Skin Deep

The Biannual Newsletter from J. Hewit & Sons Ltd.

No.17 – Spring 2004

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Authors aren't the only ones to get dressed up for the Man Booker Prize night. Books, too, put on their finery.

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Useful advice and information on the preparation, cleaning and repair of text prior to the binding of the book

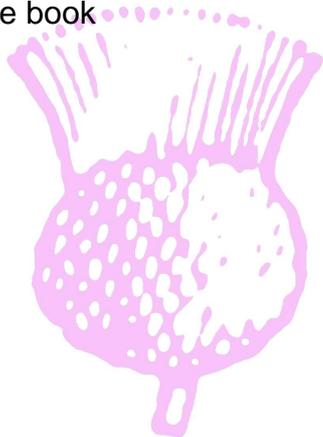
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# Binding the Booker

by Angela James

*This article was first published in the October 2003 edition of the 'Antiquarian Book Review' ([www.rarebookreview.com](http://www.rarebookreview.com)) and is reprinted here with their kind permission.*

The typical response to a fine binding falls into one of two camps: those who ask: "Why would you bother?" and those who respond to the binder's interpretation of the book and who feel that the binding enhances it.

So, why do we bother and why the Booker? Because those of us who undertake this kind of work do so for two main reasons – we like the books *per se* and we like interpreting and designing and combining artistic endeavour with skilled craftsmanship – what has neatly been defined as 'head, heart and hand'.

And why the Booker? Because we were asked.

Let me explain some of the background. 'We' are the Fellows of Designer Bookbinders; the principal society in Britain devoted to the art and craft of the handbound book. There are some twenty practising Fellows who undertake commissions for private collectors, organisations and libraries and produce their own work for exhibitions both at home and overseas and some teach. In 1991, the Booker Prize committee approached Designer Bookbinders to ask if six Fellows would be interested in taking on a commission, each to bind one of the six short-listed novels. Six binders expressed a willingness to take up the challenge and having had no prior knowledge of the shortlist, were required to read, design and bind a copy of their allocated book, complete with a protective container, in the five weeks (sometimes four) between the announcement of the shortlist and the final winner at the Booker Prize Dinner. Many binders find that they cannot work to such a tight deadline but enough of us find the buzz from that kind of concentrated work becomes quite addictive and acts as a spur to creativity.

Speaking personally, I have been involved with the Booker bindings since the start in 1991 and have bound six of the shortlisted titles over the last twelve years. Each one has been very different, ranging from Ben

Okri to Pat Barker, Arundhati Roy to Carol Shields, Trezza Azzopardi to Sarah Waters and each author's work has offered the opportunity for very different responses in the binding designs. I have enjoyed the intensity of the work, the thrill of the chase when tracking down a tiny fossil, an old photograph of the Cardiff dock area, a pair of white kid gloves or an image of a particular moth. I have enjoyed, too, the background research and the wider understanding that has given me. Julian Thomas, who bound *Breakfast on Pluto* by Patrick McCabe felt he was getting odd looks from passers-by as he rummaged through boxes at Machynlleth street market looking for lace edging and off-cuts for something 'suitably feminine' with which to emboss the gilded leather for one of the onlays.

Even the frustration of not always receiving the books, or better still the uncut folded sheets, from the publisher until a few days before adds to the *frisson*, although I will admit that the lateness of their arrival can badly affect what one is able to do in the severely limited time. Many publishers cannot understand the urgency. In the commercial world it takes only a matter of hours to bind a book. Not if it is handbound – more like 100 plus hours.

Six books, six binders and six very varied bindings at the end of it. Bindings of goatskin, calf, vellum, wood, paper. Traditional structures, exposed sewing, unusual artefacts – all are used to express the binder's ideas.

The ideal combination is obviously to try to pair the binder with a book which has a strong appeal for him/her, not always easy, but it does happen and the results are then more satisfying for the artist and probably more so for the recipient too. Faith Shannon speaks of having the author very much in mind when binding the Booker and not trying to make a 'great I AM' binding. Her three Bookers: *Scar Tissue* by Michael Ignatieff;

*Grace Notes* by Bernard MacLaverty; *Fasting Feasting* by Anita Desai, called on her experiences of her father's death, her childhood in Belfast and her very early years in India, eliciting very different responses to each book. All of those who have been involved over the past 12 years have had their favourites and feel particularly attached to them. Jenni Grey, who has bound several Bookers, probably sums it up for all of us when she lists the best things about the Booker binding commissions: the opportunity to just sit down and read for hours on end without feeling guilty about everything else that you ought to be doing; reading authors and work that you might not normally have selected; being given more scope for experiment than other commissions when the commissioner tends to want something along the lines of a binding they have seen before; and the fact that the tight deadline makes you think and work differently which can be not only stimulating but can also feed into your other work.

So what do these bindings do for the books? To start with, if we receive uncut sheets we have folds and the sections can be properly sewn. Very few hard-backs are sewn now and are really no better than paperbacks with a hard case. The structure of a handbound book and the sound materials used mean that the binding should last for decades if not centuries. The quality of the paper used for printing often leaves too much to be desired and almost always the grain direction is wrong. These are things beyond the binder's control but the quality of the binding should be a high priority. The feel of a well bound book in the hands is something which many people value, added to which there is the smell of the leather (if used) and the joy to the eye of a piece of fine craftsmanship — three senses involved — which helps to explain why we do it. One criticism of design bindings is that they cannot be handled or read and although this may sometimes be true of bindings with very tight joints and the thinnest of leather, I would say that all the Booker bindings can most certainly be picked up, opened and read — not perhaps the sort of book you would take to bed and read but very much something you can enjoy and take care of. Not just a book to be slotted onto a bookshelf but an object to be displayed and appreciated.

What do the authors make of what we have made of their work? That question is often not answered. It is not always possible to meet one's author at the noisy crowded Booker Dinner (where the bindings are displayed prior to presentation). Often there is no feedback at all, which leaves the binder in ignorance of the reaction — perhaps that is sometimes just as well. I do not suppose all authors like what we have done with their books, or are even interested. Some probably fall into the 'Why would you bother?' category, but there have been many occasions when author and binder have met and the response has been one of surprise, interest and appreciation. I have been the recipient of two or three letters of thanks from 'my' authors and in 1991 when I bound *The Famished Road* by Ben Okri, which won the Prize that year, I met the author before the dinner and showed him the binding. He asked what would happen to it and I told him it would be presented to him during the course of the evening, to which he replied: 'I should have written a better book.' What higher praise could a binder ask for?

To date, Fellows of Designer Bookbinders have bound 71 books for the Booker Prize (only five books were shortlisted one year) and it is an association which I hope will continue for many years to come. In 2002, the sponsorship of the prize was taken on by the Man Group plc and it has become the Man Booker Prize, with increased prize money for both the outright winner and the other five authors.

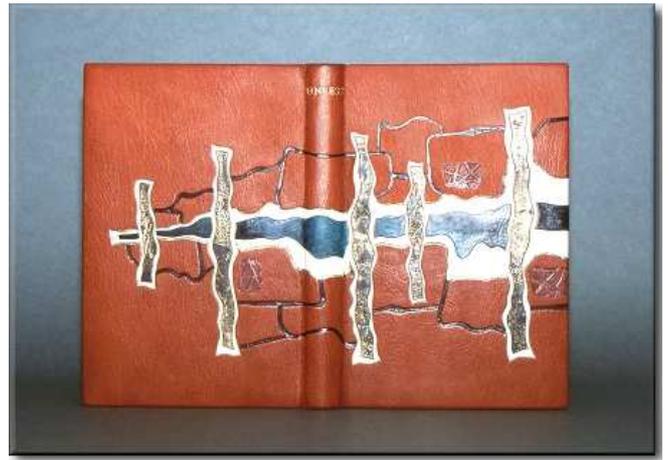
I hope the addition of a fine binding on their work gives them as much pleasure as it gives those of us who make them. Long after their moment of glory and long after the prize money has been spent, perhaps the fine-binding on their book will become their most valued reward.

*Angela James* – has been a Fellow of Designer Bookbinders since 1975 and was President from 1990–96. After taking a degree in Textile Design with bookbinding as a subsidiary subject at Glasgow School of Art, she went on to work at the Cockerell Bindery, later joining James Brockman in setting up the Eddington Bindery. She set up her own bindery in 1977. Angela organises the bindings of the six short listed novels for the annual Man Booker Prize.

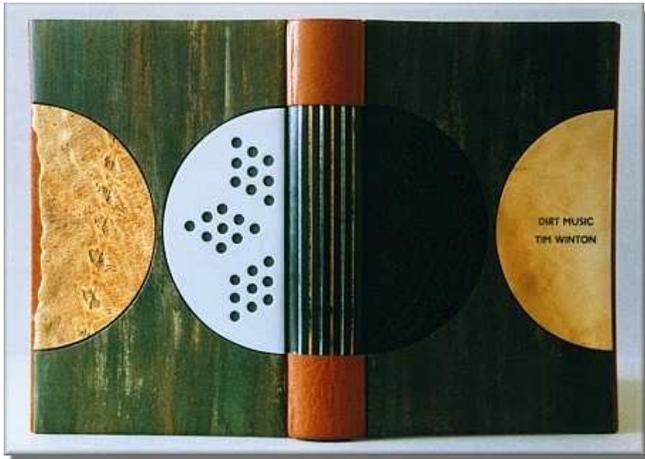
## The 2003 Shortlisted Booker Bindings



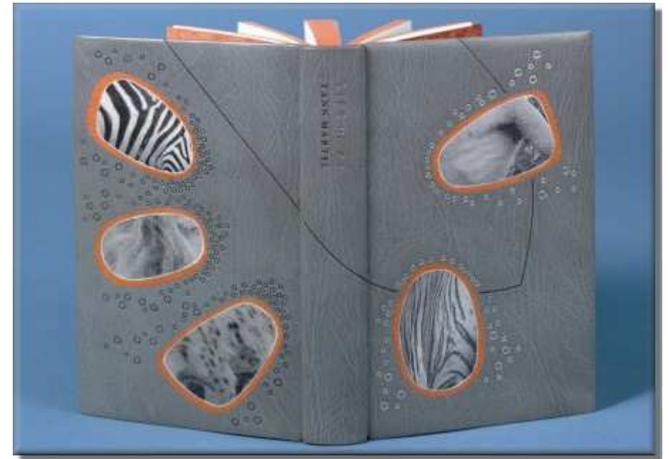
*Fingersmith* by Sarah Waters  
bound by Angela James



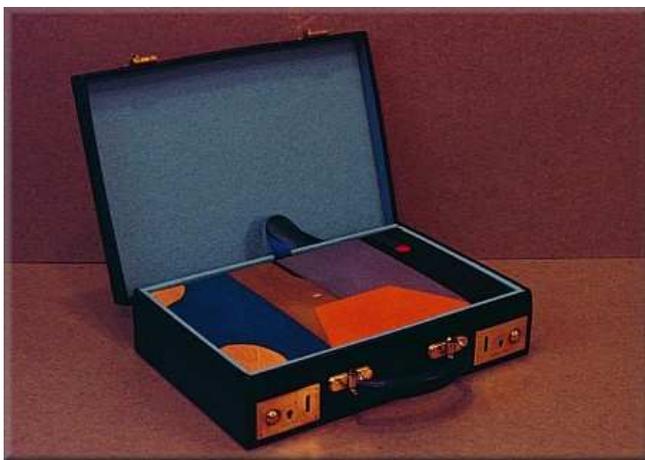
*Unless* by Carol Shields  
bound by Julian Thomas



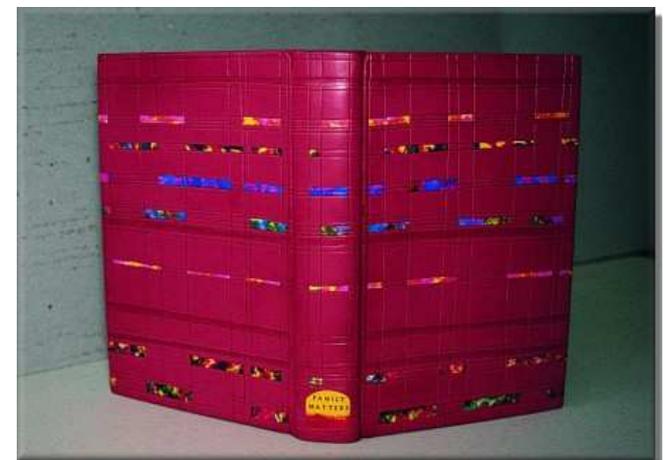
*Dirt Music* by Tim Winton  
bound by Stephen Conway



*Life of Pi* by Yann Martel  
bound by Glenn Bartley



*The Story of Lucy Gault* by William Trevor  
bound by Peter R. Jones



*Family Matters* by Rohinton Mistry  
bound By Lester Capon

# Product & Company News

## Coming Home

You will almost certainly have heard by now that on the 1st April, 2003, all of our production, warehousing and despatch functions were consolidated within one location - our factory and head-office premises in Edinburgh.

Apart from a few days of absolute chaos where stock and staff were to be found at various locations between London and Edinburgh (and elsewhere), the move went extremely well. There was little interruption to our normal despatch service and we trust that you, our customers experienced no problems with the way we dealt with and despatched your orders.

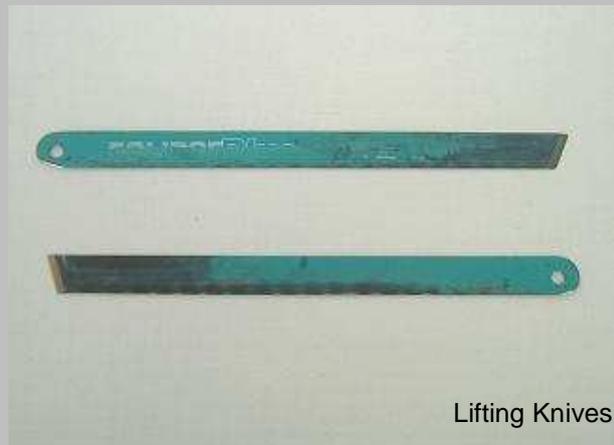
Our warm thanks to all our customers and friends who contacted us with good wishes regarding our relocation. Your kind thoughts were truly appreciated.

If you have any queries about our move, please do not hesitate to contact Roger Barlee, David Lanning or William McLean on [sales@hewit.com](mailto:sales@hewit.com) for more information.

## Traditional Paring and Lifting Knives



Traditional Paring Knife



Lifting Knives

Our new traditional shaped paring and lifting knives are manufactured from hardened steel. Made from reclaimed mechanical hacksaw blades, they are hand-ground to a perfect edge for paring and lifting. The lifting knives are ideal for getting into those awkward places and for lifting cloth, leather and paper from boards, spines, etc.

Approximate sizes:  
For Lifting Knife - 150mm x 12mm  
For Paring Knife - 160mm x 30mm

Prices:  
Lifting Knife - £3.75 each  
Paring Knife - £12.50 each

(subject to shipping and handling charges and VAT where applicable)

[Zenith Paper Punch](#)



With a quick twist of your hand, our new hand held paper punch can perforate accurately and quickly, paper, cloths, leather, etc. with a 5.5mm diameter hole. The Zenith Paper Punch is ideal for punching-out the correct size holes for Binding Posts (Interscrews) and ring binders.

Cost - £11.00 each

*(subject to shipping and handling charges and VAT where applicable)*

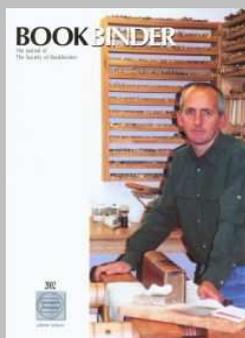
## Finishing Foils

We are pleased to announce that since sourcing a new supplier of metallic and pigmented foils, we have been able to reduce the selling price of our foils by 50%. The new pricing details may be found on our web site.

## Paring Machines

We regrettably advise, that the Brockman Paring Machine has been discontinued by the manufacturer. A newly designed version is currently under development and we hope to be able to bring you news about this new model by July/August 2003. Spare blades for the Brockman Paring Machine are still available.

## Society of Bookbinders Journal 2002 - Volume 16



Available now online  
£18.00 each

*(subject to shipping and handling charges)*

## Self Adhesive Felt

\*\*\*Coming soon\*\*\*

Self adhesive felt, in a range of six colours that will be ideal for lining slip-cases and boxes.

# Letters & Feedback

## Why are we in such a bind?

*The Institute of Bookbinding and Allied Trades writes an open letter to the British Bookbinding Industry.*

As a long standing industry organisation the Institute of Bookbinding and Allied Trades has begun a debate to address the concerns of our members both in recruitment and quality of training.

Our first concern has been the demise of any form of commercial bookbinding skills and knowledge courses off the job except for one FCP course we are supporting. It is now not possible to obtain a day release course anywhere on this subject. With one or two exceptions, print finishing courses have disappeared. These two factors, we believe, have contributed to the devaluation of this industry sector as far as training is concerned and it has affected recruitment of skilled staff.

With so many jobs going wrong these days, either subject to arbitration or court cases, we believe the industry is losing its way on a number of fronts and this is such a complex subject we can only summarise at this stage.

Basically, because of the fragmentation of many large companies and the setting up of specialist firms (prepress, printing, finishing) as separate entities there is no throughput of knowledge on what a job should look like when it is finished. (This does not generally apply to large firms with all through processes.) The post-process knowledge is no longer present and we believe has not been present in any of the training schemes of the last ten years. It was contained in City & Guilds courses prior to the current one.

We also believe changes in technology have contributed, in that training and knowledge have become more single option in context.

### **Prepress**

Since the transition from hot metal to film planning we believe some basic imposition skills were lost and to compound this, the transition from film planning to digital files has

lost some more basic imposition skills. In summary we can, when asked what imposition is wanted for a job, rarely find anyone who can put one together by hand anymore.

### **Printing**

In the quest for ever improving images we believe that less knowledge is being applied to the finished outcome again, with diminishing knowledge on these aspects required to understand the finishing process. The last consideration now is grain direction, when it used to be the first. It is expected that whatever is printed with a high content of solvents in ink and the wrong grain direction of a 150gsm substrate somebody out there will expect it to hold together with one layer of adhesive. The evidence for us is that very few have sufficient knowledge to carry a job to conclusion.

### **Binding and print finishing**

It used to be the case that bookbinding apprentices who completed work-based training together with day release were able to put a book together by hand from a set of fiat sheets and materials.

It is now difficult to find any person able to do this aged up to 35, which we believe is further inherited evidence of training decline.

It is not all doom as increasing use of computer controlled equipment in finishing and binding does call for different skills. However, this does not apply to hand binding operations.

This is of concern in the failure to deliver a meaningful system of training for this specialist area. There is a proposal from some of our members to make alternative arrangements for this sector in bookbinding training, otherwise the trade would eventually be lost, probably to overseas competitors.

This can only be a summary of our views and there are many more aspects under consideration. The debate is ongoing and we expect to conclude our discussion by March,

when we, together with other societies and organisations, will go public.  
If the whole of this letter could be summarised in one sentence it would be: "That there is a high level of skill present in the industry for individual operations but in general not many seem to know why and in what context they are doing it.

We know from many sources the view is that this sector of the industry is not getting a fair deal in training. We also believe we have moved to the computer age in running much of the equipment now in use in the industry. We also believe there continues to be an over emphasis in the prepress area to the detriment of the rest.

It is also believed that the ethos of a traditional apprenticeship has been lost where the industry does not own or control its apprenticeship or the arrangement of the content. So much so, employers find the current system and constant changes confusing and do not wish to be part of it.

In short, our members feel that by accepting government grants the industry believes it has been press ganged into a complex paper driven system that does not work for them and longs to return to one of the previous schemes that did.

We hope anyone who is responsible for training in the industry is listening.

# Study Opportunities

## Courses

### American Academy of Bookbinding, Telluride, CO

#### French Style Leather Binding

Date: 3rd - 14th May 2004 (not including weekend) - Instructor: Tini Muira

During this course two full leather bindings with a choice of doublures are scheduled: a) leather doublures ending at the edge of the cover boards. b) leather doublures pulled over the edge ending in a tooled line on the standing squares. c) sunken doublures, suede or other material, framed by a leather strip. Fifth year students may elect to bind one book and a free piece like a dos-a-dos binding or construct a piece of their own choosing. This class is open to all skill levels and is limited to 12 students. *For advanced students who have attended at least three years.*

#### Design

Date: 17th - 21st May 2004 - Instructor: Tini Muira

During this course students will explore the history of book design and marbled paper and then work under given, restricted methods; i.e., using only one colour, lines or dots to express impressions and emotions. Designs will be executed through drawing and painting. Tini will discuss symbolism of colours before renaissance and colours that are used today for certain purposes. As a final practicum, students will also design covers for given titles.

#### French Style Leather Binding

Date: 24th May - 4th June 2004 (not including weekend) - Instructor: Monique Lallier

This course is for students who have attended at least one of the French Style Leather Binding classes. Students will bind two full leather bindings with flat spines or raised cords which will have edge decoration and hand sewn silk headbands. Second year students make one leather doublure while third year students make two. One doublure will end at the edge of the cover board while the second binding will feature a doublure which is pulled over the edge into a tooled line on the standing squares. *For second and third year students.*

### **Vellum on Boards**

Date: 7th - 11th July 2004 - Instructor: Peter Verheyen

During this one-week course students will learn how to bind in vellum over boards. While vellum has a long history in fine binding, it has fallen out of favour due to its tendency to warp. Based on a variation of the German case binding technique, this workshop will demonstrate how vellum can be controlled and used to create distinctive bindings. In the course of the week, students will completely bind two books, one of which will be bound in full and the other in quarter vellum, as well as experimenting with different design options on practice boards. Competency in case binding is a prerequisite.

### **French Style Leather Binding**

Date: 22nd June 2nd July 2004 (not including weekend) - Instructor: Monique Lallier

In this two-week course students will be introduced to fine leather binding in the French tradition with a few alterations. Participants will bind one half and one full leather binding. Edge decoration and self made headbands covered in leather, finely woven cloth or Japanese decorated paper will be made. The paste down fly leaves may be plain or decorated. The sewn in flyleaf sections, consisting of two folded sheets of paper each should be plain, not fancy paper. Experience in leather binding is preferred. For beginning students.

### **The Logic of Fine German Binding**

Date: 5th - 16th July 2004 (not including weekend) - Instructor: Frank Mowery

During this two week course students will complete one full leather binding with an embossed design that spans the back cover, spine and front cover. Dies will be made from designs submitted by each student prior to the start of the course, so attention should be given to selection of book, colour of leather and the development of the design. Students will also complete a silk lined and leather edged slipcase for their books. Note that there is an additional cost for the die. Experience in leather binding is preferred.

*Further information may be found on the American Academy of Bookbinding's web site at:  
[www.ahhaa.org](http://www.ahhaa.org)*

### **Residential Courses at Urchfont Manor, UK**

#### **Bookbinding: Repair & Conservation**

Date: 3rd - 7th May 2004 - Tutor: Maureen Duke

General Topics plus special topic: Bible Repairs

#### **Bookbinding: Repair & Conservation**

Date: 5th - 9th July 2004 - Tutor: Lori Sauer

General Topics plus special topic: Edge Decoration

#### **Bookbinding: Repair & Conservation**

Date: 23rd - 27th August 2004 - Tutor: Maureen Duke

General Topics plus special topic: Leather Work

#### **Bookbinding: Repair & Conservation**

Date: 8th - 12th November 2004 - Tutor: Maureen Duke

General Topics plus special topic: Binding Miniature Books

*Further information on these courses is available from the:*

*Secretary  
Urchfont Manor College  
Urchfont, Devizes,, WILTSHIRE, SN10 4RG, UK*

*Tel: +44 (0) 1380 840495*

*Fax: +44 (0) 1380 840005*

*E-mail: [urchfont@wccyouth.org.uk](mailto:urchfont@wccyouth.org.uk)*

## Leeds College of Technology, Yorkshire, UK

Last year with great success, Leeds College of Technology, Yorkshire, UK, ran a basic craft bookbinding course. They had a good response, with eight enrolling on the course, most of who would like to move on to more advanced level. They have also had a few interested enquiries for the next basic course. This has prompted them to set up an Intermediate Craft course, which will start in February, following on from the beginners course in September. The new course will again have a certificate from NCFE after successful completion. They intend to move on to quarter and half bound case books and quarter and half bound leather bindings.

The courses will run on Wednesday evenings, 5.00-8.30 pm., 18 weeks each course. The fee will be £150 plus a small enrollment fee. For more information: Contacts: Mick McGregor at Leeds College of Technology Tel: +44 (0) 113 297 6438, e-mail [m.mcgregor@lct.ac.uk](mailto:m.mcgregor@lct.ac.uk) or Student Services: tel +44 (0) 113 297 6481.

## London College of Printing, London, UK

**BA(HONS) Book Arts and Crafts** - a course designed to develop a creative and innovative approach to the art and craft of designing and making books, as functional artifacts and art pieces. This programme of study is unique in the United Kingdom, being the only course available specifically in book arts & crafts. The course is spread over three years, year one is mostly skills based and covers a variety of bookart areas, year two includes a range of electives allowing the student to focus on certain areas in detail. This year also includes work experience. Year three includes 2 major practical projects and a dissertation in a related area. The course starts in year one as tutor led and gradually becomes student led.

During the course visits are arranged to museums and galleries, field trips abroad and the possibility of engaging in the college exchange programme. A range of methods delivers the course: e.g. practical demonstration, lectures, seminars and tutorials.

Bookart projects are practically based and detailed feedback is always given on student's work either through assessment sheets or in tutorial. Written projects are required in the Cultural Studies and Personal and Professional Development modules.

Here is an outline of each year

**Year 1** - Modules include basic skills in Printmaking, Craft bookbinding, craft printing (letterpress and screen), visual studies (drawing & illustration), photography and creative bookarts. Computer studies (computer-aided design), Cultural studies and Professional development. (CS & PPD run throughout the course). Year one is intense and requires attendance over 3/4 days.

**Year 2** - Modules include advanced bookart structures and fine print production, electives include advanced printmaking & illustration, design bookbinding, artist's books, historical / oriental structures, conservation techniques and CAD etc. Students may now focus on particular area or specialism and drop areas they do not wish to pursue. PPD not only helps arrange work experience, but sets up student exhibitions in various galleries and the London Artists Bookfair each year.

**Year 3** - This year is assessed over 2 major projects and 2 lesser projects. You will be expected to produce a dissertation of around 5000/6000 words and produce a Major Elective Study, which is assessed by exhibition. Projects are student led, this year of the course using a supervision/tutorial system for major projects. Students also set up their own exhibition in a private gallery during this final year. Technical help and advice is always available and most tutors operate an "open door" policy for students who need one-to-one help.

**Exit Profile** - Over 70% of graduates find employment in areas related to the course programme,(2002). Some have gone into teaching (PGTC) some onto post graduate education, (MA Bookarts, MA Fine Art, MA Product Design and MA Publishing etc.)

This art and design course using as it does a range of 3D graphics and the book as a medium has a wide range of applications. Graduates work as makers in bookbinding, printers in Fine press (Limited Edition), printmakers, illustrators, book designers using the latest computer applications, in art departments for publishers, paper engineering (pop-ups), board-game and package design, book & card production and as exhibiting book artists.

Students have exhibited to acclaim in major galleries and won international awards in France, UK, USA and Holland. This (undergraduate) course has been generally recognised as being the best available in this field. Resources are second to none, fully equipped workshops coupled with experienced staff all of whom practice within their specialism, professionally, (e.g. printmaking is taught by Tessa Holmes, exhibiting printmaker and Visual studies by the artist Daphne Plessner) Full-time students at the LCC (lcp) ,also have the advantage of being offered a large range of related "bolt-on" courses, free, to enhance their studies. The course is relatively small, targets for each year being only 25. The age range is from 18 years, at present there is a 65/35 ratio women to men. Retention rate is 92% (2002/03). HEFC inspection rating is 22/24. Students come from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds, e.g. Taiwan, Germany, France, Sweden, USA, Brazil, Spain, Greece, Japan and Korea.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to visit the college. For full curriculum details and further information, please contact Mike Brunwin at: [m.brunwin@lcp.linst.ac.uk](mailto:m.brunwin@lcp.linst.ac.uk)

or telephone on 0207 514 6500 (ex.6660) or write to:

UCAS entry codes;

Route A Linst L65 WW27 Ba/BArts

Route B Linst L65 EW 27 Ba/BArts

London College of Communication (formally London College of Printing) School of Printing & Publishing, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6SB  
(The London Institute becomes the "University of the Arts,London" in May 2004)

### **North Bennet Street School, Boston, MA, USA**

The North Bennet Street School summer workshop. They have several new and exciting courses this summer. No experience is requisite for any of these workshops.

#### **Bookbinding for Book Artists**

Date: 7th - 11th June 2004 - Teacher: Margot Ecke

Margot Ecke, who will be an NBSS grad and has an MFA in printmaking from RISD will be teaching bookbinding techniques and their applications for those in the book arts community.

#### **Non-Adhesive Bookbinding**

Date: 14th - 18th June 2004 - Teacher: Mark Andersson

Mark Andersson will teach Coptic, historic longstitch, and other new and old non-adhesives.

#### **Cloth Case Binding**

Date: 21st - 25th June 2004 - Teacher: TBA

This introductory course will teach sewing and covering cloth bound books.

#### **Boxes and Enclosures**

Date: 6th - 9th July 2004 - Teacher: Amy Lapidow

Amy Lapidow will teach drop spine boxes and other simple enclosures.

#### **Album Structures**

Date: 6th - 16th July 2004 - Teacher: Stacie Dolin

Stacie Dolin will teach stiff leaf albums (and other structures as time permits).

### **Medieval Leather Structures**

Date: 19th - 30th July 2004 - Teacher: Adam Larsson

Adam Larsson will come over and will teach the Carolingian, Single Quire, and Double Board Coptic bindings. We think a fourth binding will be taught as well, if time permits. Sewing experience would be helpful, though not a requisite.

### **Cloth Case Binding**

Date: 2nd - 6th August 2004 - Teacher: TBA

This introductory course will teach sewing and covering cloth bound books.

### **Non-Adhesive Bookbinding**

Date: 9th - 13th August 2004 - Teacher: Stacie Dolin

### **Japanese Bookbinding**

Date: 16th - 20th August 2004 - Teacher: Kioshi Imai

### **Gold Tooling & Finishing**

Date: 23rd - 27th August 2004 - Teacher: Mark Andersson

Mark Andersson will teach gold, carbon and blind tooling. Leather inlays and other decorative techniques will be covered as time permits.

For more information contact Mark Anderson at: [workshop@nbss.org](mailto:workshop@nbss.org)

### **The Churchyard Inn in Uniontown, WA, USA**

Timothy Ely is offering three, 4-day intensives at The Churchyard Inn in Uniontown, Washington.

Date: 7th - 10th June 2004

**Drum Leaf Structure** (arrival June 6 afternoon, departure June 11 after breakfast)

Date: 21st - 24th June 2004

**The Painted Book** (arrival June 20 afternoon, departure June 25 after breakfast)

Date: 28th June - 1st July 2004

**Drum Leaf Structure** (arrival June 27 afternoon, departure July 2 after breakfast)

The cost including 5 nights room and most board for 4 days, workshop fee, materials and sales tax is \$1200. Please email Timothy Ely if you want details at [axt1221@aol.com](mailto:axt1221@aol.com) or telephone between 9 and 5 Pacific Time (509) 3973573.

### **GBW Workshops Offered in Delaware Valley**

#### **German Leather Binding**

Date: 25th - 29th June 2004 - with Don Rash

This workshop offers a wonderful opportunity to construct a leather bound book in the traditional German style. Participants will learn leather techniques of endbands, paring, and binding. Titling will not be covered. Participants should have some binding experience.

WHEN: Friday, June 25 through Tuesday, June 29, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

WHERE: 2nd Floor Bindery, Arronson Hall, 333 S. Broad Street, University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA

COST: \$300 GBW members, \$325 non members (A check holds your spot.) Fee is non-refundable after June 4. Special Preparation: students should arrive with a textblock of 15-20 signatures sewn on 4-5 raised cords. Specifics will be mailed. Materials: students will purchase ahead of time 1 second-quality goat skin of about 6 square feet. Available through Talas for about \$100-150. Limit, 8 participants. Make check payable to Guild Of Bookworkers and mail to: Jennifer Rosner Library Company 1314 Locust Street Philadelphia, PA 19107

QUESTIONS: Call Patty Hammarstedt at 610-518-5214 or e-mail [pattyham@comcast.net](mailto:pattyham@comcast.net)

## Private Tuition

### Bookbinding Tuition in Summerfield, North Carolina, USA

Monique Lallier, teaches in her studio at home, one-on-one or up to a maximum of 4 students at a time. She teaches every Monday, afternoon or evening or both to regular students that come every week or other week. Monique also teaches on a weekly basis for out of town students. Lessons may be booked for one week or longer at a cost of \$500 per week for a 6 hours a day. In all cases, the tuition program is tailored to meet the specific needs and abilities of the student, where each student has an individual program. All aspects of bindings are taught as well as box making. For further details, please go to Monique Lallier's web site at:

[www.moniquelallier.com](http://www.moniquelallier.com), or e-mail her at: [folium@triad.rr.com](mailto:folium@triad.rr.com)

### Learn to Bind with Marysa de Veer at the Otter Bindery in Surrey, England

The Otter bindery specialises in one to one tuition and small groups of a maximum of three. We offer three workshops:

**Workshop 1** - Beginners - Learn about why paper folds easier one way than the other (grain direction) and it's importance as a fundamental of book binding. Then sew and create a single section note book. The course is designed for those with little or no experience but who have an interest in the craft of bookbinding. Marysa will show you various other simple projects that you can either do at the workshop or take home with you. The idea behind this is to teach you the basic skills and show you how, with minimal materials you can produce beautiful creations from your own home.

**Workshop 2** - Learn how to repair a favourite paper back and take the skills home with you to carry on with minimal equipment. Following on from the above course learn some more complex structures as well as simple methods of creating photograph albums, scrap books and portfolios.

**Workshop 3** - For the more experienced, an exploration into leather, the different types of leather used in bookbinding and why. You will then have an opportunity to create and cover a book in leather.

Please note the above courses are designed to run for one and two days. The workshop descriptions are a guide only. Suggestions are always welcome and changes can be made to the workshops to fit in with your requirements. Accommodation is available if travelling from afar. The Otter Bindery welcomes experienced bookbinders wishing to visit and share knowledge. Please contact Marysa de Veer for further information on prices, accommodation, times.

The Otter Bindery  
42 Hare Hill, Addlestone, Surrey KT15 1DT  
Tel/Fax +44 (0) 1932 845976  
[www.otterbindery.co.uk](http://www.otterbindery.co.uk) e-mail [marysa@deveer.co.uk](mailto:marysa@deveer.co.uk)

### Bookbinding Tuition in the North East of Scotland

Weekend and week-long sessions available in all aspects of bookbinding. Tuition tailored to suit the needs of the individual. All aspects and levels of craft and design binding, including repair and renovation work, may be undertaken under professional instruction in a private, well-equipped bindery in the Scottish countryside. For further details call:

Mark Ramsden +44 (0)1467 671581 evenings. E-mail: [bookman@bti](mailto:bookman@bti)

**If you would like to advertise your course(s) or tuition services on this page, please send us an e-mail to [sales@hewit.com](mailto:sales@hewit.com). It is our pleasure to offer this service free of charge.**

# Preparation of a Book for Binding

By Arthur W. Johnson

## Introduction

Books are a valued commodity to the bookseller, a source of knowledge to the scholar and precious acquisitions to the collector. Binders are responsible for the books in their care, therefore it is wise to insure against loss or mishap. First editions are valuable in their original covers whatever their condition and antiquarian books are bound in sympathy with their period. However if a more durable or practical binding is required, a modern construction is preferable. Work is discussed with the owner to determine the binding and covering styles, preference for colour and the quality of materials. Books are examined for damage or defects and these noted to avoid later misunderstanding. An order form is completed with the work details and such information as the correct title and whether it should read up or down or across the spine. Costs are high and it is better to state a price rather than estimate for the work. The rule is never to do more than is requested. A signature should be given for a valuable book. These initial arrangements promote confidence and reliance on the binder's ability. The 'history' of the binding consists of title labels, end papers, ex-libris and dealers' stickers, signatures and notations, inserts, registers and page markers; all of these should be retained and included in the rebinding if required by the owner.

## Checking And Collating

No book is 'pulled' until it has been examined for defects. Tears, missing leaves, acidic tissues, loose plates, amateur repairs, stains, wormholes, fungal spores, unusual section arrangements and similar problems are reported to the client for comment. The bookseller records every leaf of a valuable book therefore no part is discarded. The rule does not apply to endpapers for they are of the binding and not the text.

Some early books had signatures or numbering out of sequence, missing or repeated although the book was complete. These errors occurred when more than one printer was involved in production. An aid for checking the sections is the catch word that is printed at the foot of a page and is repeated as the first word of the next page.

The letters of the alphabet, except for J and Q, are used for the sequence of the sections and are called 'signatures'. These are printed at the bottom of the first page of each gathering. Should there be more than twenty-four sections, these are signed AA or BB and so on. The first section of a book is the 'preliminary' matter made up of the title page, contents, etc. and is rarely signed. These pages may be numbered with Roman numerals. Page 1 begins the second section and is signed B.

Mass machine printed books are not always signed but the pages are numbered. These sections must be kept in order when separated. Fortunately each gathering will have a black line printed on the fold in a 'step' formation making it simple to see if a section is misplaced or missing.

## Pulling

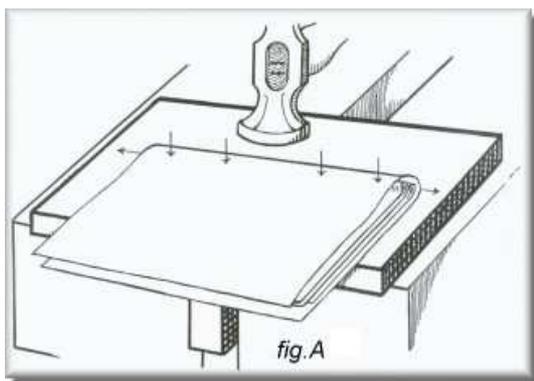
The sections are separated with care in order to minimize damage. Slice down the hinges through tape, cord, and linings with a knife and remove the covers. Hollow backed books are simple to pull but the spines of tight backed leather volumes are first coated with a thick layer of paste. The leather is softened by the moisture in five minutes and removed by scraping with the back of a knife. The process may have to be repeated in order to clean the spine thoroughly. Titling labels, that are to be preserved, are carefully peeled off before scraping. The numbers of leaves to a section vary according to the paper thickness and quality of publication. Most books have sixteen

pages (eight leaves) to the section. Fewer have twenty-four or thirty-two pages. Variations occur when illustrations or insets are included. Plates may be single sheets tipped in at their place of reference, others could be double leaves distributed within the sections. Books on art invariably have complete sections of illustrations either spaced within the book or as a group at the back of the volume.

The endpaper flyleaves are eased away.

The first section will have a ridge of dry adhesive and old linings along the spine. This is broken away with the thumb or back of a knife. The first section consists of 'prelims' and may not be uniform with the remaining sections. Omitting the frontispiece plate, if present, count the number of leaves until the stitching is revealed. Cut the stitches carefully, for machine-sewn books have double threads. Count the same number of leaves to the end of the section. Check that the signature B is on the next page before pulling away the whole section in a parallel direction. With the section free run thumb and finger down the outside fold to remove nubs of glue and check the centre for debris and loose threads. Again break away the hard ridge of B section and count to the stitching. This should establish the make up of the sections and after cutting the threads the leaves are counted until the next signature C is visible. It is expedient to check also the numbering and if applicable the catch word before pulling. This procedure is similar for all sections. Sections of leather bound books are separated when the spine is dry.

Keep the sections in order.



### Knocking Out the Original Groove

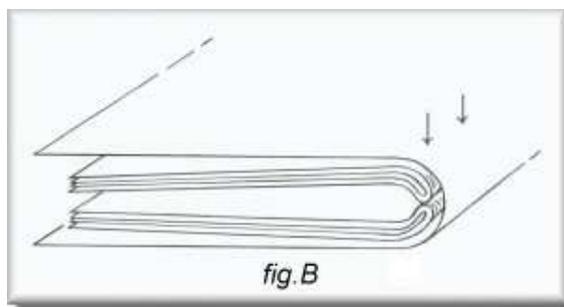
The folds of the separated sections are distorted by the previous backing and these are flattened in order for work to proceed. Fix a knocking down iron to the end of a laying press, clean the face of a backing hammer and fold a sheet of strong paper cut to the length of the section.

The number of sections that can be flattened at one time depends on the thickness and quality of the paper. Generally three or four are put within the fold of the

paper, placed on the iron and are hammered along the original groove. To avoid cutting the paper by misalignment on the edge of the iron it is preferable to bounce the hammer in the centre of the iron and move the sections from side to side. See *fig.A*

It may be necessary to hammer the grooves twice in order to flatten them. When knocking out sections of hand made paper or similar, it will assist if two sections are counter positioned together after knocking them up to the foreedges. See *fig.B*

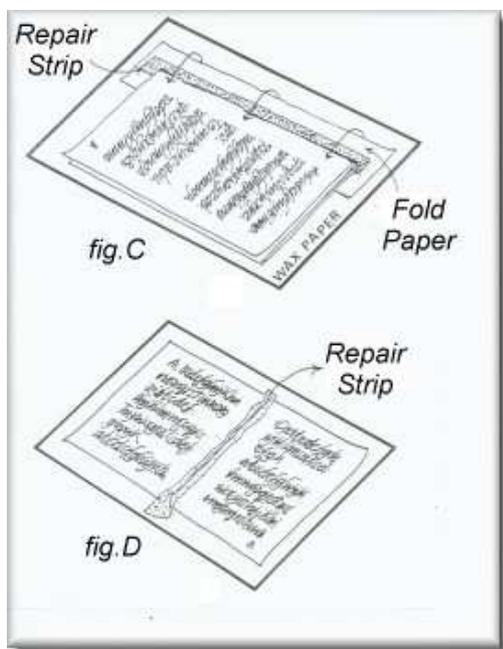
Violent blows will damage and reduce the thickness of paper. Remaining signs of the old groove will disappear after pressing.



### Repair

Extensive repairs to sections result in an uncontrollable swell, therefore guarding is contained to the essential. Swell can be reduced by thin repair paper, reduction by hammering, sewing 'two or three up' or by using a thinner thread and packing the sections when backing. These methods can be detrimental to the strength of the binding. The grain direction of text and repair paper must be

the same. Repair guards should have strength without too much substance. All repairs are done with paste as it is colourless, flexible and has a stronger bond. Economical work is guarded with bank or bond paper and the strips may be cut, torn or scored with a needle before separation. They can be reasonably wide and this width can vary in order that the swell is not concentrated in one place. Their length is 25mm longer than the section for convenient handling. A complete section is guarded round the outer fold if necessary. Should inner folds need repair the outer double fold is removed in order to continue. See fig.C



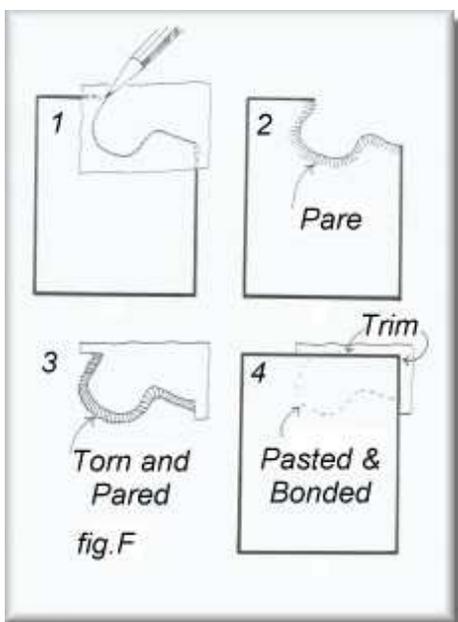
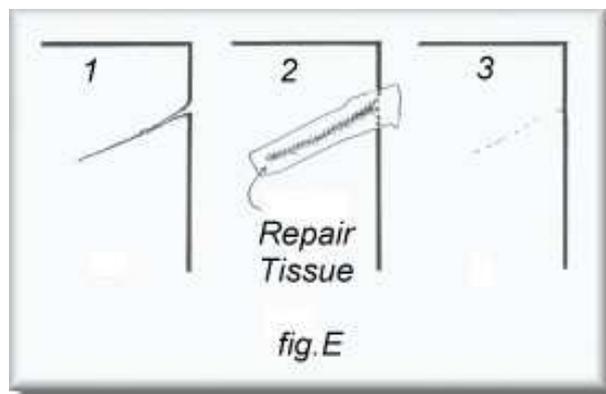
Well used books may have the entire lower parts of the folds damaged. The solution is either to repair the inner and outer folds or raise the position of the kettle stitch to the sound paper. Rare and antiquarian books are treated sympathetically and the repair paper is selected to be strong and to tone in with the text paper. Strips are torn by hand or 'needled' 3mm wider either side of the damage. The four page folds are laid flat and the repair paper is pasted and modelled down with a folder on the outsides. See illustration D. After repair the sheets are assembled and folded as sections.

Sections of stout paper are repaired with thin handmade paper or archival linen. Guard the first section on the outside fold whilst the next is repaired on the inside of the outer fold, as linen does not readily adhere to linen.

Vellum sections are guarded with sausage skin membrane or hand made paper.

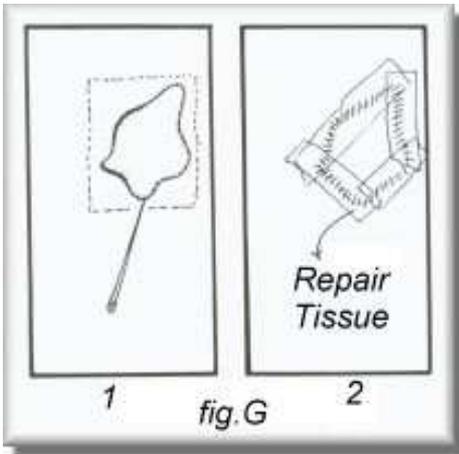
### General Paper Repairs

The range of toned repair paper should be reasonably strong and also as translucent as possible. Check the grain. A simple tear is painted with paste for 3mm all round. The edges are wedged together and a larger piece of matching tissue is bonded down with a folder. Both sides are done and when dry the excess tissue is rubbed and trimmed away. See figs. E1, E2 and E



The missing area of a leaf is replaced and there are two methods. Method 1 - See figs. F1, F2, F3 and F4

- Draw the profile of the missing piece on matching paper.
- Tear this larger by 3mm. Pare both edges.
- Paste both edges and marry them together using a bone folder. Trim the excess. If necessary the torn part can be reinforced with repair tissue. The loss of print is inevitable and should be kept to a minimum.
- Do not replace text by hand unless requested.

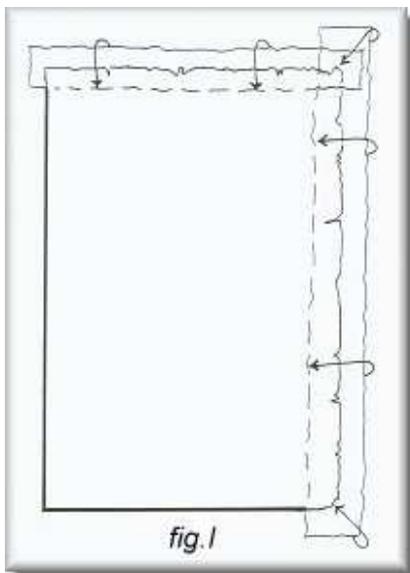
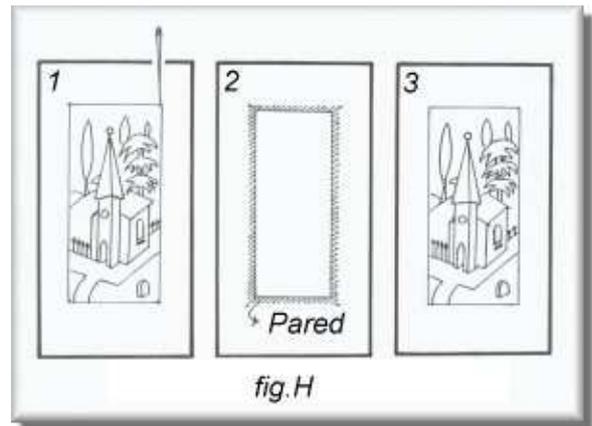


Method 2 – see *figs. G1 and G2* With this method, the loss of text is less.

- Place matching paper under the missing part and scratch the outline with a needle point. Gently tear away the excess.
- Manipulate the piece to fit, paste the edges for 3mm and bond together with tissue as described above. Both sides are done and excess tissue rubbed off.

Plates which are smaller than the book page size may be mounted on sheets of similar format. See *figs. H1, H2 and H3*

- Cut the required sheet and position the plate. Mark each corner with a needle point
- Cut out the panel 3mm smaller all round and pare the edge. The plate can also be pared on the back if needed.
- Paste the pared edges and lay the plate into position and bond down with a folder.



Damaged edges of sheets are strengthened with torn lengths of repair tissue with the correct grain direction. If the tissue is too thin to paste, adhesive is brushed on the leaf. Tissue is cut longer (or wider) and twice the width required. Place the tissue on the pasted area for half the distance, nib down, turn the leaf over, paste and fold the tissue onto the reverse side. Excess tissue, at top and bottom is used to reinforce and replace damaged corners. See *fig. I*

#### Other repairs and treatments

Dampen the edges of dog-ears and flatten them, but if they are weak reinforce with matching tissue.

Transparent heat set and pressure sensitive archival tape are ideal for minor tears and strengthening. These are less noticeable if torn small.

A soft eraser moves dirt more efficiently than powdered rubber. The eraser is worked towards the centre of the page as if edges are caught they will tear or crease.

Single plates that were originally tipped in are guarded around the fold nearest their point of reference.

Sheets of tissue facing illustrations were placed there should the ink offset. Invariably they will be creased or stained and are best replaced with neutral new tissue.

Grease marks are removed by painting them with carbon tetrachloride. Work in the open air as the chemical is carcinogenic.

Worm holes are filled with a mixture of paper scrapings and paste. Press this into the holes with the point of a needle working on waxed paper and a hard surface. When dry reduce the bumps with a scalpel.

The usual adhesives will not work on plastic surfaced paper. With care the laminate only is cut 5mm from the back edge of the paper and stripped off. It may be then guarded round a section.

The removal of Sellotape and similar products is problematic. Recently applied tape should be lifted at a corner and touched with a solvent such as lighter fuel. The liquid runs under the tape and the backing lifts but a sticky medium remains. Dissolve this with frequent applications of solvent, it should not be allowed to dry until clean. The backing of old tape is easily lifted but it leaves a hard ridge of brown medium which is impervious to solvents. This can be reduced by scraping with a scalpel or it can be disguised by a layer of repair tissue. Powerful solvents will destroy the cellulose of the paper and dissolve printing ink, therefore the removal of tape depends on the quality of paper and print. Pulling off tape will lift the surface of the paper, and rather than this, it is wise to let it remain.

A few fox marks may be ignored for it is more harmful to the paper to remove them. However sheets can be soaked in a weak solution of Chloramine T, well washed in running water and the paper resized.

Water stains are the result of moisture spreading the paper size but soaking the leaf will extend the stain off the paper. It is essential to resize.

Fungus spores are present in many old books. Some are hardly detectable but others appear as foliated growths coloured generally brown, grey or green. Moisture reactivates the spores. A soft brush will remove dry surface growths but the paper should be soaked in a solution of 20gms Thymol in 1 litre of industrial methylated spirits for fifteen minutes and washed for one hour and resized. It is essential to wear a face mask to avoid respiratory problems.



Folding maps or diagrams tipped in the book (insets) are removed and repaired. They are not pressed with the text otherwise adjacent sections will be indented but are refolded and nipped. Make up the map with stubs of paper to the thickness of the section and hinge this with a thin linen guard and sew as an extra section. See fig.J

Loose maps or other matter (inserts) are folded and placed in a paper or cloth wallet. This is attached to a stub and sewn as above.

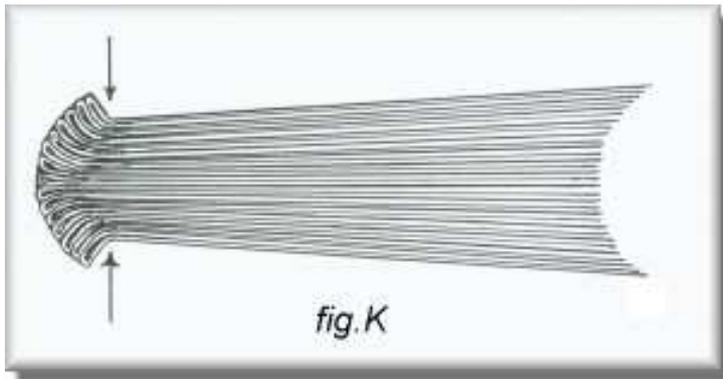
Should it be necessary to replace missing pages, facsimiles can be produced. From another copy of the book, a photograph is taken of the page and a printing block made from this. With a subtle blend of ink, carefully selected paper and artful printing by means of a nipping press a faithful facsimile will result. This is a highly skilled and expensive procedure. It is wise, if the facsimile is bound in, to acknowledge the sheet as a copy, noting the name and date on the inner fold.

An alternative is to bind in a blank leaf in the hope that it can be replaced in the future with a genuine sheet. Photocopies are not an option unless requested by the owner.

## Pressing

When all repairs have been completed the sections are 'gathered' and thoroughly collated. Ideally the sections are knocked up to the head and spine, placed between pressing boards in the centre of a press. Pressing should continue for at least one week and the screw tightened every other day.. The result should be a solid text block with all the air excluded from between the sheets. This is the true measure of a book, making subsequent operations easier.

A number of books can be pressed at one time by placing larger volumes on the base and building up according to size. Each book has separate boards. Books are centred under the screw and it will assist if a piece of card the same size as the base plate is prepared with a number of lines drawn parallel to the edges and towards the centre.



Failure to press or weak pressure could result in compression in one place when the book is backed. See fig.K Therefore the worker should not be satisfied with amateur made or junior presses as their pressure is insufficient for the work.

A difficulty is that sections tend to be thicker at the folds because of the swell caused by guarding and repair. In this instance the text is divided into groups and placed between boards, spines

above foreedges, until approximately the same thickness.

The foreedges of photo albums and similar guarded books are half the thickness of the spines. These are packed with waste sheets until equal before pressing. Any hard surfaced boards can be utilised for pressing. Only one face is used against the book and this is kept smooth and clean.

Illustrated volumes must be studied. Some fresh from the printer, or unusually produced, may be sticky and cannot be pressed immediately although they can be interleafed with a silicone paper. Some artistic engravings are embossed to create added interest and pressing would destroy the effect. The engravings should be removed and guarded in after pressing the remainder of the book.

Old books printed by hand presses on handmade paper are invariably distorted by cockling in the type area only. The heavy pressure of printing on damp paper spreads the fibres and this is impossible to remove by pressure.

## Conclusion

Preparation is the first stage of the exciting and creative process of rebinding. The work is exacting but pleasurable and if executed efficiently the remaining operations should proceed without difficulty. There may be some anxiety over the responsibility of caring for and rebinding books belonging to other people but that is the challenge of the craft.

*Arthur W. Johnson - was born in 1920. As well as holding an Art Teacher's Diploma and a National Diploma in Design he is also an Honorary Fellow of both the Institute of Craft Education and Designer Bookbinders. Arthur has held teaching posts at Hornsey College of Art, Hammersmith School of Art, Willesden College of Art and the London College of Printing. He retired from teaching several years ago. He has also lectured extensively in England, Canada and New Zealand. His work has included Calligraphy, Fine Binding and Antiquarian Book Restoration and his bindings can be found in many public and private collections, including the British Museum.*

# Dates for your Diary

## 7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> May 2004

### **\*Society of Bookbinders – Training Standard Seminar and AGM**

Birmingham, England. Speakers to include:

Bernard Middleton	Facsimile title pages
Maureen Duke:	There is another way
Paul Delrue	The painted edge
George Davidson	End papers
Michael Burke:	Guarding Sections for re-sewing
Kate Hore	Headbanding
Dominic Riley	The Cambridge panel
Gene Mahon	A limp vellum binding
Stephen Conway	Alternative methods of paper decoration

For further details and booking information, go to the Society's web site at:

[www.societyofbookbinders.com](http://www.societyofbookbinders.com)

## 17<sup>th</sup> May 2004

### **Hand Bookbinders of California are hosting a talk by David Lanning, titled 'The Brief History of Bookbinding Leather and a Virtual Tour of the Hewit Tannery in Scotland**

6:00 pm at the Book Club of California, Fifth Floor,

312 Sutter Street, San Francisco. The talk is free and open to the public. All are welcome!

Refreshments. Further details available from Signa/Judy Houghteling: [judy@signah.com](mailto:judy@signah.com) or

(415)771 1743

## 20<sup>th</sup> May – 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2004

### **'In Flight' – An Exhibition of the Guild of Bookworkers**

Schatten Gallery, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia

## 16<sup>th</sup> July – 28<sup>th</sup> August 2004

### **'In Flight' – An Exhibition of the Guild of Bookworkers**

Columbia College Chicago, Center for Book and Paper Arts, Chicago, Illinois

## 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> September 2004

### **\*L-4-Leather - a weekend of all things leather!** (To be held somewhere in West England)

A provisional program has been suggested which will include a Presentation by Hewits on leathers  
Modifying a spokeshave for leather paring and sharpening of tools. Demonstration of dyeing  
leathers and staining with aniline dyes. Historical techniques of sprinkling, staining and marbling.  
Tree calf. Plating and varnishing. Leather dressing. Demonstrations including, cutting out leather  
for covering, leather paring, covering full leather bindings, inlays and onlays, leather joints and  
doublures. Further details will be published soon in the 'Latest News' section of our web site.

## 11<sup>th</sup> November – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004

### **'In Flight' – An Exhibition of the Guild of Bookworkers**

Columbus College of Art & Design, Columbus, Ohio

## 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> November 2004

### **\*The Guild of Bookworkers annual Standards of Excellence Seminar**

will be held in Providence, Rhode Island

Details will follow in the next edition of Skin Deep

\*We will have a trade stand at these events.