

A YEAR INTO THE QUEEN'S BINDERY APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

A REPORT BY THE FIRST
INTAKE TO THE SCHEME:
ELEANOR LANHAM
AND MATTHEW STOCKL





Sewing a textblock

A year into the Queen's Bindery Apprenticeship Scheme

The Queen's Bindery Apprenticeship has been a varied and expansive introduction to bookbinding. A year into the scheme and we have not only begun learning the basics of bookbinding but have also been involved in workshops and taken advantage of expert visiting tutors. The scheme has enabled us to follow the City & Guilds curriculum and also engaged us in real work from other departments of the Royal Household which has meant getting practical experience on an almost daily basis.

Ellie Lanham

Coming from a design background I have been looking forward to reaching the stage where I can work creatively although I have been halted by a need to master basic skills and gain a comprehensive knowledge of various materials, tools and equipment. Having completed a year I feel I have come so far, from initially struggling to make a single section pamphlet binding to now working with leather and understanding the materials and tools well enough to experiment.

The City & Guilds assignments are a good basic structure to follow and allow and encourage research of materials, techniques and processes, which, combined with being surrounded by experienced bookbinders makes an amazing learning environment. The apprenticeship has been an immersive experience into the world of books, from visits to libraries and binderies to strapping up books for display. It's been a fabulous insight into working for an institution with a working collection and has offered insights into conservation, restoration and the historical context of bookbinding practices – I feel, a brilliant start to becoming a bookbinder.

Matt Stockl

Looking back on the previous year I realise how far we have come and how much we have learned in a relatively short space of time. Starting with basic instruction in the properties of materials and the use of

tools, we have been allowed the time and resources to practise and repeat, to make mistakes and to learn from them, progressing from pamphlets to case bindings to albums, boxes and inboard binding. With training and repetition we have gradually begun to understand the materials and their properties, the tools and techniques of binding, and are gaining confidence in our work and the knowledge we have gained so far.

Our working environment is immersive and supportive and each day presents new and varied challenges. As part of the library and bindery we find ourselves installing works of art and manning exhibitions, learning as we go. We have made boxes to house and protect collection items; observed the repair, maintenance and bespoke binding performed by bindery staff, and travelled to Sandringham to perform condition checks in the library, as well as lending a hand wherever we can in the day-to-day work of the Royal Library at Windsor, and the Royal Collection Trust.

We have also begun to learn a little of the bookbinding world and our place within it, attending events such as the Society of Bookbinders conference, as well as various other lectures, workshops, visits and social gatherings.

Looking back on year one I feel proud of what we have achieved and fortunate to be a part of the apprenticeship scheme. I look forward to next year and a lifetime of learning to follow.

Structure of Report

This document is split into the following categories and aims to summarise our experiences of the Queen's Bindery Apprenticeship Scheme so far:

- 5–7 Workshops, lectures, external training and visiting tutors
- 8–11 Technical training
- 12–13 City & Guilds
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- 17–18 Exhibitions & displays
- 19–20 In-house work
- 21 Ongoing independent study
- 22–23 Next year

Workshops, lectures, external training and visiting tutors

As well as the hands-on training that we receive from bindery staff on a daily basis, we have spent time participating in various external workshops, attending talks and lectures on a range of related subjects, and learning in-house with visiting tutors.

Society of Bookbinders (SoB) London & South Region Christmas meeting

Networking with other SoB members and listening to a short lecture by Rob Shepherd about his career and the start of Shepherds bookbinders

December 2016, Society of Bookbinders, London

Pastel workshop with drawings conservation, Leila Savage, Rijksmuseum

An insight into drawings conservation and the complexities of conserving pastels

January 2017, Windsor Castle

British Association of Paper Historians Spring meeting

A series of lectures by prominent paper historians which offered an insight into paper making and the history of paper production

February 2017, St Brides Institute, London

History of Western Bookbinding seminar, Michael Burke and Dominic Riley

A one day workshop running through a brief condensed history of Western bookbinding through examples and slides

February 2017, Windsor Castle

Craft and Design 3 day workshop, Shepherds

Starting the craft and design elements of the City and Guilds syllabus, which included:

exploring design ideas; making samples; experimenting with materials; making paste, paper and a simple portfolio

March 2017, Daffodil Barn, Wiltshire

Prints that have been altered or interfered with lecture, Rebecca Whiteley, former RCT intern

Exploring how items from the print collection have been historically altered or interfered with

March 2017, Windsor Castle



Binding historians in the Royal Library

Letters on book covers workshop,

Sue Hufton

A basic introduction to letter spacing and methods of drawing proportionally correct letter forms

March 2017, Society of Bookbinders, London

Edge decoration workshop, Kate Holland

A practical introduction to the techniques and processes required for book edge decoration

April 2017, Society of Bookbinders, London

Camberwell Conservation Symposium

A series of talks by students presenting their final year projects in book and paper conservation with an accompanying exhibition

June 2017, Camberwell College, London

Book historians seminar of the 'Holmes' bindings

A display of fine bindings from the Holmes catalogue in the Royal Collection. Experts including Dr Nicholas Pickwood were invited to a study day, examining fine bindings

from the Royal Library listed in the 1893 catalogue and contributing to ongoing work to update the catalogue

June 2017, Windsor Castle

Artists' books workshop, David Mills

Lecture and demonstration of artists' books, their various structures, concepts and bindings

June 2017, Society of Bookbinders, London

Knife sharpening, 3 day workshop, Royston Hayward

Learning different sharpening techniques, making a paring knife using a good quality steel hacksaw blade, sharpening an English paring knife, altering a spokeshave for bookbinding use, sharpening a spokeshave, making a strop

July 2017, Windsor Castle

Society of Bookbinders Conference

Attended a variety of lectures including Paul Johnson; Pop-up books, Kathy Abbott; Limp Vellum books, Royston Hayward; Forwarding, Pamela Smith; Marbling, Consuela Metzger; Tacketed Structures and John Mumford; Islamic Bindings

August 2017, Keele University

Designer Bookbinders International Competition Exhibition

Visited the exhibition to research and observe design, structures, materials and techniques used

August 2017, Bodleian Weston Library, Oxford

Non-adhesive binding styles, 3 day workshop, John Mumford

Learning about and making Coptic style bindings

September 2017, Windsor Castle



Royston Hayward demonstrating how to sharpen a spokeshave



John Mumford demonstrating Coptic binding

Technical training

Having both begun the apprenticeship scheme with only a rudimentary knowledge of bookbinding, our technical training began with the very basics (determining grain direction; cutting and folding etc.) and continued from there, incorporating the use of tools, materials and processes essential to the craft of bookbinding. Alongside our practical tuition we have the opportunity to shadow and observe the bindery staff as they go about their work, allowing us to learn and absorb as much as possible.



Glenn Bartley demonstrating how to cut a board accurately

Basic tools and equipment training

Given an introduction to using the board chopper, nipping press and guillotine
October–November 2016

Learning basic material characteristics

Grain direction, folding, cutting, trimming, identifying book cloth, identifying leathers and identifying papers
November 2016

Learning basic bookbinding terminology

Listening to colleagues, talking about our own work and reading technical and historical literature regarding binding
November 2016

Observing/shadowing colleagues

Throughout the apprenticeship we have been observing colleagues working on various projects, from state gifts to general conservation, and have also spent time shadowing colleagues assessing books for exhibition and condition checking
November 2016–ongoing

In-house training: CMS, DAM

Training from the Royal Household on how to create condition and treatment reports using the Collection Management System and how to manage images in the Digital Asset Management software
October–November 2016

Endpapers

Tipping on single folded endpapers, making made-end style endpapers, using paste or PVA, gluing out large areas
November 2016

Sewing textblocks

Using a sewing frame, varieties of thread spool and skein, varieties of tapes, kettle stitch, weaver's knot, French sewing, straight along sewing
November 2016

Leather paring

Using Schärff-Fix and Brockman paring machines, all over paring, edge paring, testing different leathers
November 2016



Applying spine linings to a textblock © Russell Sach/TES



Condition checking at Sandringham



Sewing a textblock



Backing a textblock



Cutting bolts with a shoe knife



Working with leather © Russell Sach/TES



Using a spokeshave



Sharpening a spokeshave

Case binding

Learning how to make up a case in quarter, half and full cloth, casing in, rounding the textblock, making an Edelpappband case binding

January 2017

Sewn headbands

Making rectangular and circular cores, different types of thread, 1, 2 & 3 colours on a single core

February 2017

Making paste

Learning how to make up fresh paste using strong white flour and water, storage requirements, characteristics and longevity

March 2017

Board attachment

Split-boards, laced-in cords, rounding and backing the textblock, creating a hollow, overcasting, removing glue with belt sander

April 2017

Leather paring

Using an English paring knife to edge pare and using a spokeshave to overall pare

May 2017

Condition checking

Inputting a book's condition into a data management software for collection care

May 2017, Sandringham

Portfolios

Learning how to make a portfolio with and without flaps in quarter, half and full cloth

July 2017

Tooling demonstration

Watching a demonstration of tooling a spine with gold leaf and a type holder and individual hand tools, introduction to set up, letter spacing and equipment

July 2017

Box making

Making a drop-back box and a lift-off lid box in full cloth

August 2017



Sewing a headband



Setting up a sewing frame

City & Guilds

During the first year of the Queen's Bindery Apprenticeship we were expected to achieve Levels 1 and 2 of the City & Guilds qualification in bookbinding, not only have we done this, we have also started on Level 3. For each assignment listed below we made numerous samples and a final presentation piece with a record of time taken and the techniques, process, and materials used.



Quarter cloth case binding, Matt Stockl

Level 1 – Exploring design ideas

Experimenting with a range of materials, colour theory, mark making, exploring a range of mediums

Level 1 – Using sampling techniques for 2D & 3D work

Making design samples of books, making maquettes and evaluating design, composition and colour

Level 1 – Making a multi-section sewn journal

Single section pamphlet binding, perfect binding, multi-section case binding, Edelpappband binding, quarter, half and full cloth

Level 1 – Making a multi-section photograph album with slipcase

Folded guards, calico guards, screw-post album with and without flange, landscape single wall slipcase

Level 2 – Developing design ideas

Developing material experimentation, using leather, inlays, onlays, embossing, sewing

headbands, designing a book, researching for design ideas

Level 2 – Using sampling techniques and processes for 2D & 3D work

Making design samples of books, making maquettes and evaluating design, using leather, designing sewn headbands

Level 2 – Making a book with a half leather case binding

Leather paring, covering with leather, leather corners, pleated corners, pinched corners, sewn headbands, made endpapers

Level 2 – Making a book with a non-adhesive stitched binding and integrated cover

Coptic binding, longstitch binding, limp vellum binding, using found objects

Level 3 – Storage and enclosures

Making a drop-back box, making a box with a lift-off lid, covering in full cloth



Half leather case binding, Matt Stockl



Quarter cloth case binding, Matt Stockl



Photograph album and slipcase, Matt Stockl



Non-adhesive binding, Matt Stockl



Half leather case binding, Ellie Lanham



Full cloth case binding, Ellie Lanham



Photograph album and slipcase, Ellie Lanham



Non-adhesive binding, Ellie Lanham

Public engagement

As the first appointed QBAS apprentices we have often been called upon to represent and promote the scheme. This has arisen in various forms including articles in the *Times Educational Supplement*, an interview for German television station ZDF and an introductory piece in the *Designer Bookbinders* magazine. We have also taken part in more active public engagement during events such as the ABA book fair at Kensington Olympia, as well as internal events promoting the apprenticeship to partners of and contributors to the scheme. Working within the Royal Collection Trust has also afforded us the opportunity to man stalls at state functions and receptions, helping us improve our confidence in public facing situations, and allowing us to discuss the QBAS with anyone who may be interested. We will shortly be launching a blog (hosted by the Stationers' Guild), and are endeavouring to develop the scheme's online representation, through this and other social media channels.

Internal visits

Print room, Library, Paper Conservation, Archives, Photographs, Painting Studio, Clock Workshop, Marlborough House conservation studios
October–November 2016

Visit to Stationers' Hall to meet with mentors

A tour of Stationers' Hall by William Alden, Clerk of the company, where we explored the archives and met our mentors Helen Esmonde and Robin Shearmur
November 2016, Stationers' Hall, London

Visit to St Bride Institute

A tour of St Bride Institute looking at their expansive collection of lead type, collection of Eric Gill's sketches, and even the empty swimming pool below the theatre stage
November 2016, St Bride Institute, London

Article in the *Times Educational Supplement* (TES)

Interviews with TES about the apprenticeship, what interested us in bookbinding and what makes the scheme special – published in TES 03/03/17
November 2016

Visit to Temple Bookbinders

A visit and tour of Temple Bookbinders, a chance to meet the employees and see a working bindery
November 2016, Temple Bookbinders, Oxford

Interview with ZDF TV about QBAS

Broadcast feature on ZDF. Filmed segment about the apprenticeship, including interviews, shown on German television station ZDF 14/02/17
January 2017, Windsor Castle





Feature in the Times Educational Supplement



Meeting Bernard Middleton



Visit to Temple Bookbinders, Oxford



Visit to Conservation by Design, Bedford

India Reception table monitor

Monitored a table of Indian and Persian books at an evening reception celebrating UK – India connections

February 2017, Buckingham Palace

The Mary Datchelor Lunch at the Clothworkers' Foundation

Attended this annual lunch to network with other recipients of Clothworkers' sponsorship

February 2017, the Clothworkers' Foundation, London

Internship/Apprenticeship Reception

Attended event to meet past and present Royal Collection Trust interns and promote the Queen's Bindery Apprenticeship

March 2017, Buckingham Palace

Visit from Jeff Altepeter, Head of Bookbinding at North Bennet St School, Boston

Jeff Altepeter visited to learn more about the Apprenticeship Scheme

April 2017, Windsor Castle

Visit to Conservation by Design

Visited to learn about the production processes behind some of our materials

May 2017, Bedford

Visit from the Library of Congress

Members of the Library of Congress visited the Royal Bindery as part of the Georgian Papers Project

June 2017

Visit to the Wormsley Library

Visited Sir Paul Getty's Library where a display of books had been laid out

June 2017, Wormsley

ABA London Book Fair

Joint stand with Shepherds, Sangorski & Sutcliffe where we promoted the Apprenticeship Scheme and demonstrated some paring and how to sew a textblock

June 2017, Kensington Olympia

Visit to Blissetts Bindery

A visit and tour, a chance to meet the employees and see a working bindery

June 2017, Blissetts Bindery, London

Visit from John Mumford, Head of Conservation & Preservation at the Thesaurus Islamicus & Dar Al Kutub Manuscript Project

John Mumford visited to learn more about the Apprenticeship Scheme and discuss hosting a workshop on Coptic and longstitch binding styles

June 2017, Windsor Castle

Visit from Edward Cheese, Conservator of Manuscripts and Printed Books at the Fitzwilliam Museum

Edward Cheese visited to learn more about the Apprenticeship Scheme

August 2017, Windsor Castle

Visit from Don Etherington and Monique Lallier

These internationally-respected figures in the worlds of bookbinding and book conservation returned to the Royal Bindery to see how it has changed since their last visit, and to meet the apprentices

August 2017

Visit to the Bodleian

A visit and tour of the Bodleian Weston Library, a chance to meet the employees and see another conservation department

September 2017

Exhibitions & Displays

From our very first week at the bindery we have been involved in the creation, set-up and take-down of numerous exhibitions, both state and public, between Buckingham Palace and the Royal Library at Windsor. We have shadowed colleagues, and been instructed in the packing, transportation and setting up of exhibitions.



Display for the Spanish State Visit

Assisting in set-up of the Colombian State Visit display

Packing and unpacking books for transportation, strapping books for display, hanging items for display

October 2016, Buckingham Palace

Assisting in set-up of the Portrait of the Artist exhibition

Assisting hanging items for display, concealing wiring in exhibition space, observing exhibitions team

October 2016, Buckingham Palace

Assisting with dismantling Shakespeare exhibition

Removing books and works of art from cabinets, unstrapping books

December 2016

Assisting in set-up of the India Reception

Packing and unpacking books for transportation, strapping books for display, hanging items for display

February 2017, Buckingham Palace

Assisting in set-up of the Dine and Sleep

Packing and unpacking books for transportation, strapping books for display, hanging items for display

March 2017, Windsor Castle

Assisting in set-up of the Spanish State Visit display

Packing and unpacking books for transportation, strapping books for display, hanging items for display

July 2017, Buckingham Palace



Spanish State Visit © Royal Communications



ABA London Book Fair

In-house work

Aside from the work we are expected to produce as part of the City & Guilds curriculum we are increasingly involved in in-house projects, helping where we can as staff in a working bindery, and learning as we go. This may be devising and producing protective boxes and folders for Royal Collection items, or pulling periodicals from the photographic archives to overcast into sections

and bind into annual volumes. We have also been taught how to check the condition of Royal Collection items and input this information into the internal database, and spent time during the year condition checking the library at Sandringham.



Rebinding of quarterly periodicals into annual volumes

Limp leather sketchbooks

Making a limp leather binding alongside

Philippa Räder

November 2016

Checking stock levels of materials

Checking and noting stock levels of materials and mentioning if stock needs to be re-ordered

November 2016

Making leaves for Her Majesty The Queen post-bound photo album

Making up multiple leaves for a post-bound photo album

November 2016

Researching price for new board chopper

November 2016

Photographing Royal Collection items for condition/treatment reports

December 2016

Carrying out treatment/condition reports for items in the collection

January 2017

Making folders, boxes, dust jackets or sleeves for items in the collection

January 2017–present

Observing condition checking of the incunabula collection

January 2017

Rebinding journals/periodicals

Pulling *The History of Photography* periodicals, overcasting into sections, sewing textblock, rounding and backing, using two methods of board attachment: split board and laced-in cords, making hollows, covering in full cloth

April 2017

Sanding and laminating new pressing boards

July 2017



Making folders to house Roger Fenton portfolios



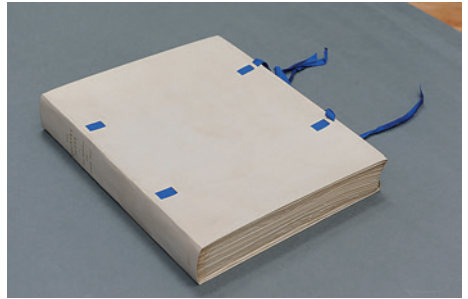
Photographing Royal Collection items

Ongoing independent study

Apart from our time spent in tuition and observation of practical work, we continue to research and study the theory and history of bookbinding. This may be guided by the work we are undertaking at a given moment or by our own personal interest in a particular area.



Marbled paper research



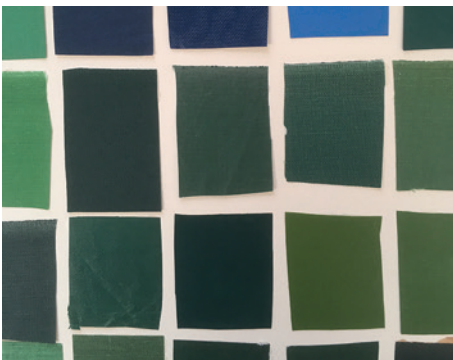
Limp vellum structures



Stock check and organisation



Types of leather



Types of cloth



Historical bookbinding research

Next year

As the apprenticeship progresses and diversifies, we look forward to exploring new techniques, structures and areas of interest in bookbinding, while continuing to hone the skills we have developed so far. We will have increased opportunity to shape the course to our own interests with options to research and investigate various topics within the craft as a whole. We will begin our external placements, giving us an insight into working practices within different commercial binderies and institutions. As the two new apprentices join the bindery we will be given an opportunity to help in their instruction and pass on what we have learned so far, solidifying through explanation the knowledge we have gained this year.



Gold finishing



Volumes re-backed in cloth



Double core headbands



Simple paper repair



Laced-on boards



Spine removal for re-backing in leather



Hand tools being heated on a finishing stove for gold tooling

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