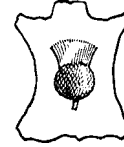




J. Hewit & Sons Ltd.
TANNERS AND LEATHER DRESSERS



Skin Deep

The Biannual Newsletter from J. Hewit & Sons Ltd.

No.12 - Autumn 2001

Features

Development of Archival Quality Leather	page 3
North Bennet Street School, Boston, MA	page 9
Study Opportunities	page 16
Tales of Ovid	page 21

Regular Items

Introduction	page 2
Company and Product News	page 13
Letters	page 15
Dates for your Diary	page 24

TANNERY

KINAULD LEATHER WORKS
CURRIE
EDINBURGH
EH15 5RS
TELEPHONE: 0131 449 2206
FAX: 0131 451 5081

www.hewit.com
e-mail: sales@hewit.com

SALES OFFICE

UNIT 28 PARK ROYAL METRO CENTRE
BRITANNIA WAY
LONDON
NW10 7PR
TELEPHONE: 020 8965 5377
FAX: 020 8453 0414

Introduction

This year we have seen the completion of a two-year Pan-European Craft Project BE-S2-3432 – “Development of Archival Quality Leather”. The project’s participants came from tanners, bookbinders and research bodies based in the UK, Germany, Italy and Greece. Through this project, we believe that the definitive method has now been developed to produce truly outstanding archival bookbinding leathers. The new ‘recipe’ and the method of tanning, allows for the production of leather with all the ‘Archival’ qualities of strength, longevity etc, but equally importantly, this new process allows for the production of leather which is eminently ‘usable’ by the bookbinder.

We are really very pleased to bring you a scaled down version of this report, explaining the background to the project, its results and its conclusions. (A fuller version of our report may be downloaded from our web site at <http://www.hewit.com/downloads.htm>.)

A subject very close to our hearts, is the state of Bookbinding education. So this issue sees an emphasis on the subject with an interesting article about the excellent North Bennet Street School, in Boston, MA. The London College of Printing have supplied details of their existing and proposed courses and we are also listing details of forthcoming short courses and workshops around the UK.

Also in this issue, Richard Smart describes his binding of ‘Tales from Ovid’ by Ted Hughes and of course there are the usual regular features, ‘Product and Company News’, ‘Letters and Feedback’ and Dates for your Diary’.

We trust that you enjoy reading this edition of Skin Deep

David Lanning - Sales Director

Craft Project - BE-S2-3432 Development of Archival Quality Leather

By Roger Barlee BSc, M.R.S.C.

Work was done in the early 1980's by Betty Haines of the then British Leather Manufacturers Research Association into resolving the long-term problem of identifying good quality bookbinding leathers. The need for a standard for archival leather was considered necessary because of the lack of any reliable guide by which a purchaser could be assured of obtaining a new binding leather with good long term stability. This arose because:

- a) Leather from a specific region could not necessarily be guaranteed to have been made using tannins from that region
- b) The PIRA test had proved to be unreliable

In addition to this, it was known that the rate of ageing of Bookbinding leathers is increased by urban pollution. The work proved that vegetable tanned leathers re-tanned with aluminium salts had a greatly improved resistance to deterioration, and that chrome/vegetable tanned leathers have greatly reduced durability, especially of the grain. The work resulted in the publication of a British Standard for Archival Bookbinding Leather – **BS 7451:1991 - Specification for Archival Bookbinding Leather** (see Appendix A). Unfortunately, although of high archival quality, the leather produced was too stretchy to pare easily and was highly water-resistant. This was partly due to the direction of the research (homing in on the archival properties), and also because of the lack of knowledge at the time regarding semi-aluminium leather production. As a result the general reaction of bookbinders was to try the material once and never come back! This therefore meant that concerned bookbinders and archivists were no better off than they had been before the work was carried out in that they were not in a position to tell a good long-lasting leather (pyrogallol tanned) from a non-lightfast leather (catechol tanned).

The work of Betty Haines was followed by two further European Union funded research projects - the STEP and ENVIRONMENT Leather projects. The result of these projects was an artificial ageing regime, along with recommendations that vegetable tanned bookbinding leathers should be manufactured using pyrogallol tannages, (already done at Hewits) and keeping the sulphate content of the leather as low as possible. The artificial ageing system that was recommended involved heating the leather to 120⁰C (later 150⁰C) for 24 hours, and then holding the leather in a polluting atmosphere of 20ppm SO₂ and 10ppm NO₂ at 40⁰C and 35% Relative Humidity (RH) for 6 days. The process being carried out 4 times in total.

Craft Project BE-S2-3432 – “Development of Archival Quality Leather” was a pan-European project intending to have a fresh look at the whole archival leather position. The group was made up of tanners, bookbinders and research bodies from the UK, Germany, Italy and Greece, and the major objectives at the start were as follows:

1. Evaluation of leathers currently used for bookbinding across Europe.
2. To develop a leather quality testing scheme, that defined binders requirements in an objective manner understood by both the tanner and the binder.
3. Optimisation of semi-metal tannage, whereby a leather with all the required properties could be produced with a life expectance of twice the normal life of the vegetable tanned leather stored in polluted atmospheres.
4. To investigate the applicability of innovative “metal-free” tannery processes to consistently produce archival quality tannages.

During the first year of the project 72 modern bookbinding leathers representing the whole spectrum of European bookbinding and archival quality leather production were studied. The leathers were tested for their physical and chemical properties, and in addition the bookbinders graded the leathers on their feel and handle as well as on how easily they pared and could be used for binding. These ‘organoleptic tests’ (as they became called) graded the leathers from 0 (completely

unsuitable) to 4 (ideal), with an overall result of 3 (or 4) needed for a “pass” – not surprisingly it was **ONLY** the leathers produced by specialist bookbinding tanners like J. Hewit & Sons Ltd that passed!

As one can imagine, this resulted in a mass of data from which it became apparent that there was correlation between some of the physical tests carried out on the leathers and the organoleptic tests. However the best correlation invariably resulted from new objective tests specifically aimed at mimicking the handling and working of the leather by the bookbinder. During the second year the physical tests were narrowed down to the following:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Softness: | a measure of how soft and elastic the leather felt |
| Wettability: | new test indicating the absorbency of the leather to paste and glaire |
| Mouldability: | new test correlating to how easily the leather may be moulded and retain its shape during bookbinding |
| Notch Sensitivity Factor: | new test to assess how easily a leather could be pared or shaved during bookbinding |

In addition to the above, **the Resistance to Flexing whilst under strain** was measured as an indication to the strength of the leather on the joint. Together these tests resulted in a specification for a craft bookbinding leather (Appendix B).

Whilst this work was been carried out, work was also under way into looking at the accelerated ageing of the 72 leathers using an artificial ageing chamber. Initially the leathers were tested using the procedure used from the STEP project, however it became clear that this test produced anomalies compared with known results of leathers over the last few hundred years – both alum tawed leather and vellums failed quite dramatically.

As was stated above, the original ageing process involved periods in the ageing chamber along with repeated periods at a temperature of up to 150°C, and it soon became apparent that it was the heating of the leathers that was causing the problems. The process was then refined without the heating stages, and leathers of known tannage were tested over increasing periods. The ageing regime that was finally implemented involved holding the leather in a polluted atmosphere containing 25ppm SO₂ and 5ppm CO₂ at 40°C and 35% RH for 12 weeks. After the 12 weeks the residual shrinkage temperatures (Ts) were measured in order to look for leathers with either a high residual Ts, or a low drop in Ts. The results in line with known natural ageing - Chrome tanned leathers being the best, followed by alum tawed and vellum, with vegetable tanned leather being the most degraded.

One unusual result was that some purely native processed Nigerian goats did far better than expected, however when Nigerian leather were further processed (shaved, dyed and retanned) they fared similarly to other vegetable tanned leathers. Whilst some work was carried out to try to identify why this was the case, the emphasis of the project then swung back to the earlier work on semi-aluminium tannages, although other combination tannages were also looked into.

The work carried out to date by J. Hewit & Sons Ltd. has been on our Chieftain Goatskin. Using our experience of semi-aluminium leather production over the last 15 years along with some new ideas that came from the research bodies, we were able to produce leathers that met all the conditions fairly early on in our trials. To ensure that the leathers were indeed suitable for bookbinders, we distributed skins widely to regular Chieftain Goat users around the world, and had a very favourable response. As a result we made the decision to move our whole production over to the newly developing leather at the beginning of 2001. If you have been buying Chieftain Goats regularly over the last year you will no doubt have already encountered the new tannage. Unfortunately scaling up of trials to full-scale production has not run perfectly, and the 16–20 week testing turn around from start of production of a batch to results from the ageing trials has not helped matters. That being said we are now very close to achieving not only the full specification from the craft project, but also the much tighter specification of the British Standard as can be seen below.

NEW HEWIT CHIEFTAIN vs. BS STANDARD

Al content	around 2.8% can be achieved whilst still complying with Craft physical tests. Currently slightly short in bulk production. Best result 2.8%, current average 2.6%
pH	PASS - approx. 4.5
Shrinkage Temp	>115 is achievable - currently averaging 114°C
Tear Strength	PASS - averaging around 35N (range 30 - 48N)
Flex Test	currently being achieved in approximately 70% of the leathers
Surface shrinkage	Not tested

In the summary table (See Appendix D) we have results for some of the many different European bookbinding leather types tested in the project. (We have concentrated solely on goatskins since to date we have carried out no development work on semi-aluminium Calfskins). You can see that, in addition to the known good materials, alum and vellum, the only leathers that pass the organoleptic tests, the physical tests and the ageing tests are the semi-aluminium leathers. The results to date for the new Chieftain Goat are extremely encouraging. We feel confident in stating that, on the basis of the work carried out, we are now meeting the 3rd of the Craft Project objectives – that of twice the life expectancy of a normal vegetable tanned bookbinding leather.

Appendix A - British Standard for Archival Bookbinding Leather – BS 7451:1991 - Specification for Archival Bookbinding Leather .

Chemical Properties

Test	Method	Required Result
Aluminium Content (Al ₂ O ₃)	BS 1309:1974 :15	Not less than 2.8%
pH	BS 1309:1974 : 8	Not less than 4.0

Physical Properties

Test	Method	Required Result
Shrinkage Temp	BS 3144:1968 : 17	Not less than 115°C
Tear Strength	BS 3144:1968 : 6	Not less than 25N
Flexural Endurance	BS 5131:4.2	Not less than 100,000
Surface Shrinkage		Not greater than 2%

Appendix B – Craft Project Guidelines for Bookbinding Leather

Test	Method	Required Result
Flexural Endurance	BS 5131:4.2	Not less than 2,500
Wettability	See Appendix D	Less than 2 minutes
Mouldability	See Appendix E	Less than or equal to 75°
Notch Sensitivity Factor	See Appendix F	Not less than 2.2
Softness	IUP 6	3.0 – 8.0mm

Appendix C – Craft Project Recommendations for Bookbinding leathers to be used for archival purposes.

Test	Method	Required Result
Shrinkage Temperature	IUP 16	Not less than 70°C, or Reduction less than 20°C
Flexural Endurance	BS 5131:4.2	Not less than 1,000

Appendix D

Leather Type	Tannage	B/B tests	Phys Tests	Age Tests
Indian Goat	Veg + Chrome re-tan	Fail	Fail	Pass
Indian Goat	Full Chrome Tannage	Fail	Fail	Pass
Nigerian Goat	Native + Veg (UK)	Pass	Pass	Fail
Nigerian Goat	Veg (native tanned)	Pass	Pass	Pass
Indian Goat	Chrome + Veg	Fail	Fail	Pass
Indian Goat	Veg Chieftain Goat	Pass	Pass	Fail
Indian Goat	Archival - Best Result	Pass	Pass	Pass
Indian Goat	Archival - Average to date	Pass	Pass	Pass
European Goat	Vellum	Pass	Pass	Pass
European Goat	Alum Goat	Pass	Pass	Pass

Notes: Leathers in bold are from J Hewit & Sons Ltd.

A full version of this article may be downloaded from our web site, together with comprehensive tables showing more detailed results and descriptions of the various methods used in testing.

North Bennet Street School, Boston, MA

At a time when many bookbinding training programs seem to have an uncertain future, the North Bennet Street School remains deeply committed to its two-year, full-time bench bookbinding program. Established in 1986, the course meets in Boston's North End, 30 hours a week, 10 months each year-the only such program in North America.

The oldest trade school in the United States, the North Bennet Street School was established in 1885 and still occupies its original building. In addition to bookbinding, the school has full-time programs in cabinet and furniture making, piano tuning and rebuilding, locksmithing, jewellery making, violin making, carpentry, and preservation carpentry. Typically there are about 150 students at the school. The average age of an NBSS student is 34 years.

Six students are admitted each year into the bookbinding program. Bookbinding students in recent years have come from diverse backgrounds and have ranged in age from 19 to 60 years. Students have come from North and South America, Europe, and Asia and bring a rich variety of experience

with them. Before becoming bookbinders, recent students have been in a variety of other professions-graphic and studio arts, library science, conservation, Wall Street finance, education, plumbing, and carpentry.

The program does not require a large amount of bookbinding experience of its applicants, but does look for hand skills along with an understanding of the profession into which the graduate will enter. Some of the best students in the program came with very little bookbinding experience, but had highly developed hand skills and a willingness to learn.

At NBSS, the bookbinding program provides a foundation upon which graduates can build careers in book repair and conservation, fine binding, and edition work, or in the creation of books as art. Approximately two-thirds of the curriculum involves skills and techniques training through a variety of assigned projects. The remaining third is open for students to pursue their own special interests, with the guidance and support of the instructor. However, since the majority of graduates choose to work in book repair and

conservation the curriculum slants slightly in that direction. All students are expected to finish several cloth and leather repairs, including paper repair, before they graduate.

Upon satisfactory completion of the coursework, an NBSS student receives a certificate in bookbinding.

In their first year at North Bennet Street School, students learn basic bookbinding techniques. They begin the year with three non-adhesive bindings. After learning several full and half cloth binding structures the students begin learning book repair and conservation. Conservation and repair projects include repair of cloth and paper bindings, paper repair, making boxes and enclosures, and documentation. Towards the end of the first year two leather bindings are introduced, a limp leather and a half leather case. The year ends with a half leather rounded spine box. First year students make approximately 12 different binding structures, in addition to their repairs and enclosures. The second year curriculum provides a comprehensive overview of 18th, 19th and 20th century leather bindings, finishing,

and rebacking and repair of leather bindings. Second year students will make approximately 9 full or half leather bindings from the English, German and Northern European bookbinding traditions. Included in those bindings are single and double flexible full calf, a set of millimetre variations, and at least one fine binding. They are required to conserve at least three leather bindings (repairs which much include various methods of board attachment), and will have the opportunity to repair several more if they wish to emphasise repair and conservation.

Throughout both years the course, students have many opportunities to repair books for clients and institutions. We are entering the third year of a grant funded project which provides the students the opportunity to work on books from the Special Collections of the American School for the Deaf, the oldest special education school in North America. In addition students have had the opportunity to repair books for the Special Collection Library at Tufts University and the Appalachian Mountain Club.

NBSS is committed to graduating bookbinders who can begin new careers with strong hand skills, the ability to think a book through



before beginning binding, and who have had exposure to all the essential elements of bookbinding. Students also understand that they still have much to learn. Our current graduates work at institutions across the country including Harvard, Library of Congress, The Boston Athenaeum, Pierpont Morgan library. Several have set up their own shops.

Mark Andersson heads the program and is an alumnus of the school. After graduating in 1992 he worked at the University of Washington in Seattle and built a private conservation practice with institutional and individual clients from across the United

States. In 1996 he received a Fulbright Scholarship for the study of Scandinavian bookbinding and European conservation practices at the Carolina Rediviva Library in Uppsala, Sweden, where he studied for one year. He has been teaching at the school since 1998.

In addition to the full-time bookbinding course, NBSS also offers five day workshops. These courses include non-adhesive binding, case binding, introduction to leather binding, book repair, boxes and enclosures as well as other aspects of bookbinding. The workshops are offered on weekdays during the summer and on Saturdays during the school year.



For more information, including a list of assigned class projects in the full-time program please contact the admissions officer of the school at admissions@nbss.org or write to:

Mark Andersson
North Bennet Street School
39 North Bennet Street
Boston, MA 02113, USA

or e-mail him at

bookbinding@nbss.org.

Information on workshops and all the full time programs can be found at the school's web site:

www.nbss.org

Product & Company News

Teflon Folders

These wonderful folders are machined from a solid block of Teflon and can be used as an alternative to bone folders. They will not mark, burnish or damage delicate paper, cloth and leather. One end is pointed and the other is straight.

Small - 150mm x 15mm x 6mm @ £14.34 each
Large - 160mm x 20mm x 10mm @ £15.92 each



JHS Ready Made Glaire

This new product has been introduced for our customers who prefer an alternative to the Albumen Crystals. The aqueous shellac solution is based on a traditional formula first used in the early 20th Century. As there is no preparation involved, the Glaire can be used straight from the bottle. It is extremely easy to use and has the advantage of a long shelf-life. We manufacture JHS Ready-Made Glaire in our Edinburgh Tannery. We will be supplying the glaire in the following sized bottles:

150ml bottle - £6.55 each
500ml bottle - £10.64 each
5 litre bottle - £69.32 each

Japanese Drill Punch



This very clever product is now available from Hewit's. The brass chuck holds one of the 7 drill bits supplied with the Punch. Pressure exerted downwards, causes the bit to spin, drilling through paper and board without 'snagging'. Excellent for drilling through paper, leather, board, etc. The drill comes with 7 bits - 1.0mm, 1.5mm, 2.0mm, 2.5mm, 3.0mm, 3.5mm and 4.0mm. Spare sets of Bits are also available:

Japanese Drill Punch £46.64 each
Spare set of Bits £23.12 per set

Spare Blades for Paring Machine

We now have available replacement blades for the Brockman Paring Machine. These heavy duty, durable blades are packed in boxes of 10 at a cost of £2.10 per box

All above prices are subject to shipping charges and vat @ 17.5%

Clansman Goat

Following requests from many of our customers, we have re-formulated the finish of our Clansman Goat in order to produce the fully aniline Nigerian Goat typically associated with this type of leather. The result of this change is that the new leather will have an enhanced 2-tone finish rather than the flatter overall colour we used to make. Some alteration in colour will be inevitable although we will do our utmost to keep this to a minimum. Production of the new look Clansman started about a month ago, and we will continue to replace shades with the new leather as the old stocks diminish. The full range of shades should be in place by the beginning of 2002.

Letters & Feedback

Paste Washing

I have a question about paste washes and their effect on leather. Does paste washing help preserve leather as John Mitchell says in his book on gold tooling? Could this question be directed to one of the editors of Skin Deep?

Michele Brown
Book Conservator
Preservation and Conservation
Cornell University, NY

Like so many bookbinding techniques, there are often varying opinions as to the suitability of any one particular

process. Processes such as the application of leather dressing, leather dyes and of course paste washing often come under close scrutiny. As a rule, we will not offer our opinions as to the pros and cons of a particular process, since the monitoring of these procedures and the assessing of their suitability are outside of our control. However, We would welcome a discussion within the pages of Skin Deep and would be delighted to publish a letter or article on the subject of Paste Washing. Any volunteers?

- Ed

Study Opportunities

Bradford, Yorkshire

Japanese Bookbinding - taught by Midori Kunikata-Cockram

10th – 11th November 2001 10.00 to 16.30

Cost £120.00

An introduction to Japanese bookbinding. The course will consist of the making of two Japanese books (Fukuro Togi) and a wrap-around box (Chitsu). Please note that a packet of specialist materials will be included with this course.

Cut Flush and Tight Back Binding – taught by David Sellars

8th – 9th December 2001 10.00 to 16.30

Cost £110.00

A binding designed for small slim books where a heavier style of binding would be unsuitable. The structure allows for ambitious creative design. This course is suitable for people who already have some experience in bookbinding and would like to learn more in terms of artistic expression.

Account Book Binding – taught by Stephen Conway

8th – 11th April 2002 09.30 to 16.30

Cost £280.00

Also 29th April – 2nd May 2002

Mid-14th Century Student Monastic Binding – taught by Mark Cockram

15th April 2002 09.30 to 16.30

Cost £70.00

Boxmaking – taught by Stephen Conway

13th – 15th May 2002 09.30 to 16.30

Cost £215.00

Also 27th – 29th May 2002

Basic Bookbinding Repair Work – taught by Richard Mouncey

10th – 11th June 2002

Cost £110.00
Also 15th – 16th June 2002

Open Studio Week

The studio will be open during the week for anyone wishing to use the facilities. There will be a professional bookbinder available at all times to offer advice and assistance.

1st – 5th July 2002
Cost £115.00

Masterclass – Aspects of Design Binding – taught by Angela James and David Sellars

29th July – 2nd August 2002
Cost £445.00
Also 26th – 30th August 2002

All of the above courses are being run in Bradford at the studio of Stephen Conway. Further Details are available from:

Stephen Conway
Cheapside Chambers
Rooms 85-88 3rd floor
43, Cheapside
Bradford, BD1 4HP, UK

Tel: +44 (0) 1274 776649, E-mail: fullbound@aol.com

Grimsby, Lincolnshire

Beginners classes in Bookbinding commencing in the Autumn of 2001 are being held at Grimsby College, School of Art and Design.

Contact Mark Ramsden - Course Tutor - +44 (0) 1472 603714

or

Grimsby College - Claire Garratt Tel: +44 (0) 1472 311231 ext. 516

London College of Printing, London

New higher education framework (DoE) outlines the different levels of courses offered in colleges and universities. There are now 5 levels of course within the higher education sector;

- Level 1 **“C”** level certificates in Higher Education

- Level 2 **“I”** level Foundation degrees, ordinary (BA) degrees, Diploma in Higher Education, other higher diplomas.

- Level 3 “H” level Bachelors degrees with Honours, Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas.**

- Level 4 **“M”** level Masters Degrees, Postgraduate Certs . and diplomas.

- Level 5 **“D”** level Doctorates

The new courses now being developed and offered are at level H, and will be short courses and professional “conversion” courses based on undergraduate material. Those who are already graduates in another discipline, or have extensive experience in the area where accredited prior learning (APL) will count would take these. These would lead to Graduate Certificates or Graduate Diplomas.

We expect to develop both qualifications in bookbinding and bookarts, possible combinations are being discussed such as fine print design (e.g.) which would be both letterpress printing and craft bookbinding. These courses hopefully will fill the gap, offering people with degrees in related areas such as graphics or design a chance to learn advanced bookbinding or bookarts, not to mention people with bookbinding skills who would like some qualification.

Graduate Certificate in Bookarts & Crafts.

This is a 10 week course providing the student with the opportunity to enhance their skill and design application within the area of Artist’s Books.

The course includes study areas; Book in Context, where innovation coupled with advanced craft applications will allow you to develop an original creative work and further develop previous skills. Form and Function, where language both visual and written will be the basis of book structural design. Both these modules are practical project based and include craft printing (printmaking) and craft binding.

Graduate Diploma in Bookarts & Crafts

This is a 1 year programme and provides the graduate with the opportunity to further develop graphic/illustration and design skills within the context of Book Arts & Crafts.

The course covers advanced applications in Printmaking, photography, computer aided design, letterpress/craft printing techniques and book structure and making skills. The course is project led and has a practical bias.

The first 10 weeks of this programme is the same as the Graduate Certificate.

Graduate Certificate in Craft Bookbinding

This is a 10 week advanced course in Design Bookbinding. The programme includes advanced book design, material applications and suitability.

All advanced techniques are including, for example inlay, onlay, gold tooling, tree marbling, sculptured boards.

During this intense course you will produce a Design binding to the highest craft level. The programme also includes book container design. The course is practical project based.

Graduate Diploma in Craft Bookbinding

This course is spread over one year and has been designed to offer Craft Bookbinding skills at advanced level to graduates in related areas such as Conservation and restoration or Bookartists who wish to

enhance their craft skills to a professional level. The programme covers all aspects of craft bookbinding and includes advanced book restoration and conservation, Oriental and Islamic styles, Design Bookbinding, material application and usage. The course includes a module on Historical Bibliography and Contextual studies.

Further details on all these courses are available from:

Mike Brunwin , Ken Olney or Terry Buckley,
School of Printing & Publishing, London College of Printing
Elephant & Castle, London, SE1 6SB, UK

+44 (0) 207 514 6700/6660.

E-mail: m.brunwin@lcp.linst.ac.uk

Residential Courses at Urchfont Manor

5th - 9th November 2001

Bookbinding & Conservation

Tutor: Maureen Duke - Basic Techniques

11th – 15th February 2002

Bookbinding & Conservation

Tutor: Maureen Duke - Basic Techniques

8th – 12th April 2002

Bookbinding & Conservation

Tutor: Lori Sauer- Basic Techniques and Japanese Bookbinding

27th – 31st May 2002

Bookbinding & Conservation

Tutor: Maureen Duke - Basic Techniques and Finishing with Decorative Tools

Further information on these courses is available from the Secretary,
Urchfont Manor College, Urchfont, Devizes, WILTSHIRE SN10 4RG
Tel: +44 (0) 1380 840495

Tales from Ovid by Ted Hughes

A Binding By Richard Smart

This book was given to me in order to produce a fine binding in leather. The book itself is a paperback signed by Ted Hughes, in orange terracotta with a very intricate illustration on the front cover. The illustration is (*Narcissus at the Source*) a book illumination for *Roman de la Rose* by *Guillaume de Lorris* and *Jean de Meung*, courtesy of Bibliotheque Nationale de Paris & AKG Photo, London.

The Book was firstly dis-bound and pulled for sewing, it was then gilded on all edges. It was then rounded & backed and boards were cut and laced on. Headbands were then sewn using gold, terracotta and blue silks.

Finding the correct colour leather was easy. Firstly, I tried going through the different leather swatches of the various leather suppliers, whilst, at the same time, working out how to stain a skin myself to the required colour, if the need were to arise. One of our suppliers did have a colour match close to what I wanted but not close enough. As luck would have it when I rang them and explained exactly what I wanted, they said they had one skin that went 'wrong' in the dying stage and that it may be suitable. They posted it to me and on arrival, it was a perfect match.

The book was then bound in full 'terracotta' morocco and then put in a press to dry and settle.

I then started the illustration that was to use over 120 individual pieces of leather to make up the picture. I began by paring down the different colour leathers to the same thickness. Starting with the corners and four edge pieces (which were cut out to the exact size as the original illustration), I pasted them to a thin paper mounted by it's edges to a piece of board. Each square was cut out making sure every piece was the same in every way, it took 18 hours just to get to this point. Once all the background was in place I was then left with the shape of the figure of Narcissus, the grass and the tree to complete. I cut-out the shape of

the tree and the grassy area as one piece. This was then carefully inlaid. I then cut out the area of the reflection and inserted a piece of fair calf pared to the same thickness as the morocco leather; this was then inlaid. The next pieces to be cut and inlaid were the cuffs and finally the shoes and the hands of the figure were inlaid separately.

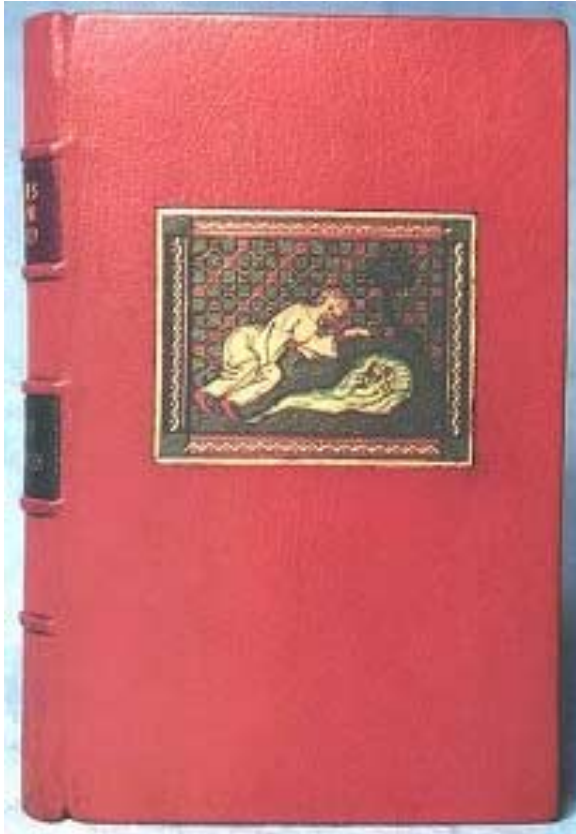
The figure of **Narcissus** was achieved by paring a piece of fair calf and mounting it on tissue paper. The face of the figure and the clothing were drawn in with Indian ink. The face on the reflection was also drawn in with ink. The figure was then cut out carefully and inlaid. This completed the picture.

The black lines on the inside of the picture were drawn in and the tree and grass were also outlined with black ink. The book was now ready for the gold finishing of the background. To create the desired effect I used three finishing tools that I had specifically shaped, to achieve the fine detail required; a short line, a dot and a slightly longer line to join the squares together. It took many hours putting each individual impression in place.

With a very fine fillet I put in the inner lines on the edge of the border. The only brass decorative strip I could find with a wavy line that was the same as the original picture, did not have the dots on either side of it. I had a decorative strip specially made that I was going to use in a type holder. I then cut the strip to the exact size for each side. After the line had been put in place I tooled in the dot's to complete the tooling of the border.

The picture was cut away from its mount, and the exact size was copied across to the book, which had been marked out carefully. I then cut out both the edge of the picture and the joining edge of the cut out in the front cover. This was done at a slight angle to allow tooling directly on the joint, thus giving a more stable join. The book was then placed in the press for a few days to consolidate the picture and cover.

Using a thick single gold line I put in the gold border of the picture carefully along the join where the picture was inlaid. Black lines were



drawn in on the inside and outside of the gold tooling. Once in place the book was placed back in the press for the rest of the day.

The book was now ready to be labelled, single gold lines were added to the edges and inner edge of the boards. The end papers were laid down and the leather was dressed and varnished.

In 1988 Richard Smart decided follow in his father and grandfathers footsteps and learn the trade of antique book restoration. At this point there were no full time courses available on restoration apart from workshops and evening classes. It was therefore decided that Richard's father, John would teach Richard to a proficient standard . With ten years experience working along side his father, Richard has developed skills in the restoration and conservation of paper and documents and the undertaking of new & fine bindings.

Richard now lives in Vancouver, Canada where he runs his own business, The Old English Bindery.

Dates for your Diary

10th – 11th November 2001

***U.K. Fine Press Book Fair**

Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, England

Saturday – 11.00 – 18.00 and Sunday 10.00 to 17.00

Further details from Michael Taylor 01379 853889

or e-mail: michael@hoblins.demon.co.uk

J. Hewit & Sons Ltd. will have a booth at this event

6th November 2001

Designer Bookbinders – Tuesday Lecture

David Esslemont – Designing, Printing and Binding Fine Books

18.30 - The Art Workers Guild, 6, Queens Square, London WC2
(Holborn Tube) - £3.00 admission

For further information please contact Keith Adams 020 7981 4493

4th December 2001

Designer Bookbinders – Middleton Lecture

**Roderick Lane – The Restoration of the Shahnama at The Royal
Bindery, Windsor**

18.30 - The Art Workers Guild, 6, Queens Square, London WC2
(Holborn Tube) - £3.00 admission

For further information please contact Keith Adams 020 7981 4493

8th December 2001 – 20th January 2002

The Bookbinding Competition - Designer Bookbinders

Open – Library hours - British Library, 96, Euston Road, London NW1