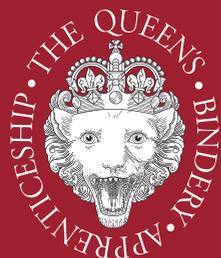


# A YEAR INTO THE QUEEN'S BINDERY APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

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
- 14–16 Public engagement
- 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

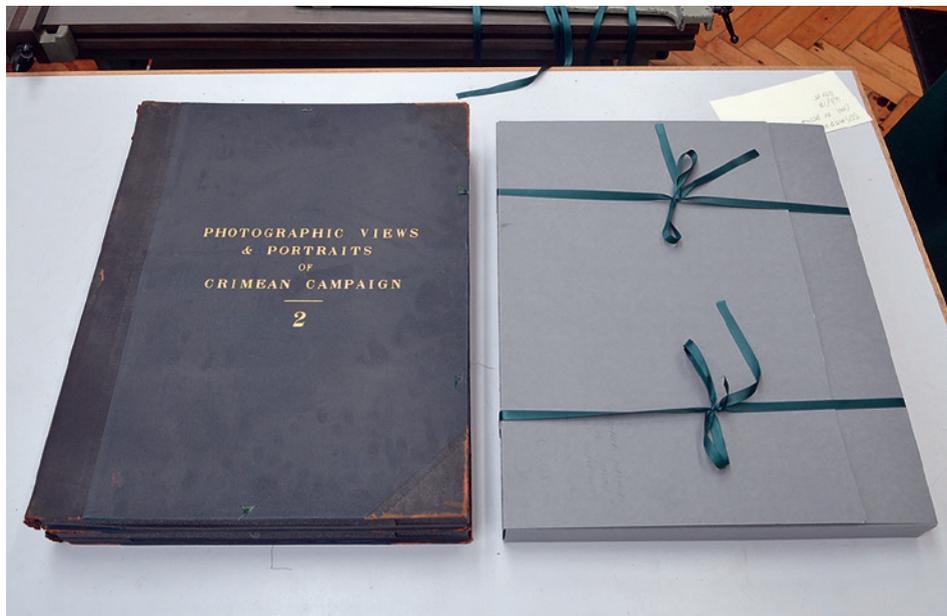
### **Rebinding journals/periodicals**

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

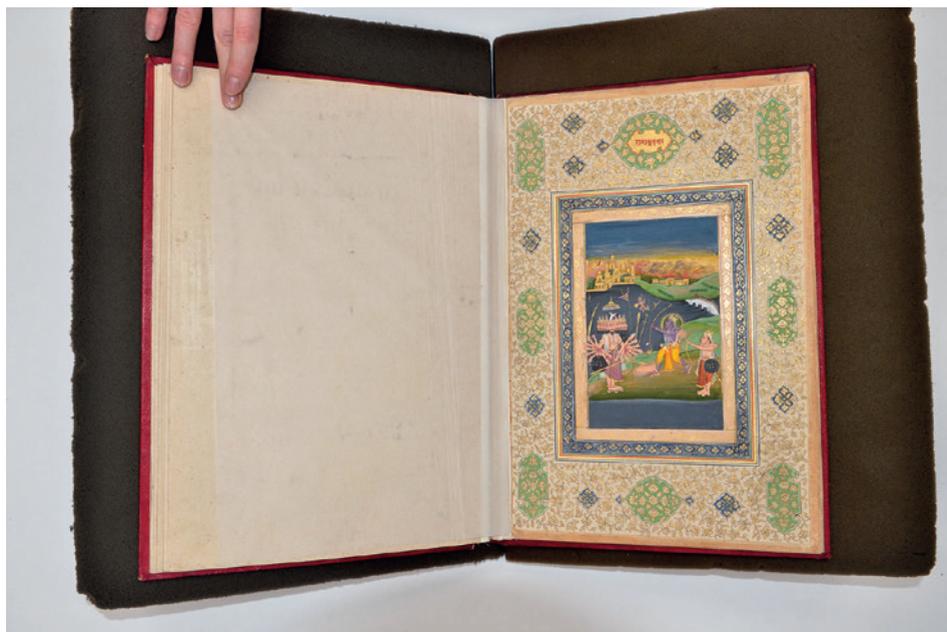
April 2017

### **Sanding and laminating new pressing boards**

July 2017



Making folders to house Roger Fenton portfolios



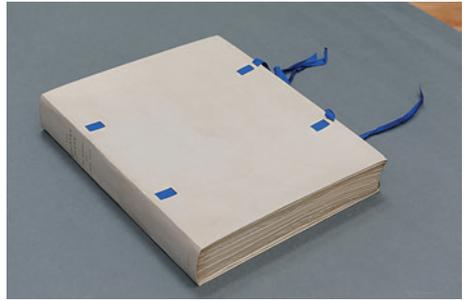
Photographing Royal Collection items

## 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

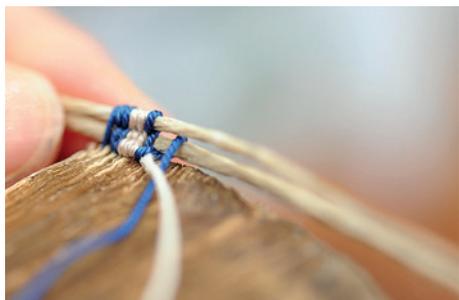
As the apprenticeship progresses and diversifies, we look forward to exploring new techniques, structures and areas of interest in bookbinding, while continuing to hone the skills we have developed so far. We will have increased opportunity to shape the course to our own interests with options to research 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



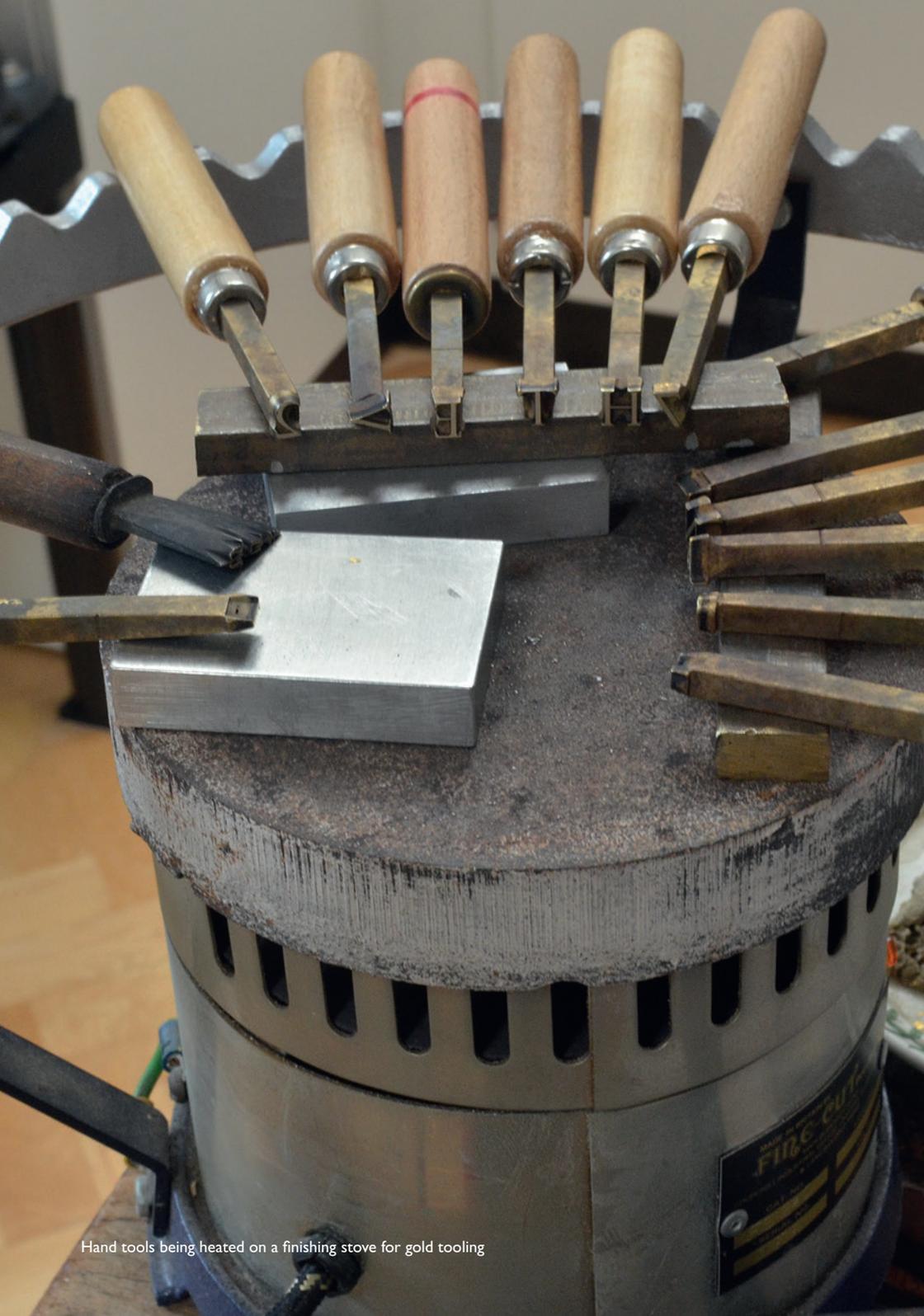
Simple paper repair



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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