THE QUEEN’S BINDERY APPRENTICESHIP

A FIVE-YEAR APPRENTICESHIP IN HAND BOOKBINDING
The Queen’s Bindery Apprenticeship

Hand bookbinding forms an important part of our national heritage. Founded by George III in 1770, the Royal Bindery now in Windsor Castle is at the forefront of preserving the high standards of craftsmanship that are the benchmark of the professional bookbinding trade.

Formal apprenticeships are vital to the long-term survival and sustainability of the craft. Expertise in techniques such as those required for fine leather work, edge gilding and gold finishing may be lost forever unless action is taken now to preserve these skills.

The Queen’s Bindery Apprenticeship scheme combines the traditional approach of the apprenticeship system with a teaching programme based on gaining vocational qualifications.

The training will equip apprentices to undertake binding work to a recognised level and to understand the business and commercial aspects of bookbinding.

Led by Royal Collection Trust, the scheme is supported by a national group of partners including City of London livery companies and the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust (QEST). It commenced in the Autumn of 2016 with a seven-year pilot taking in new apprentices over three consecutive years to follow a five-year programme.

City & Guilds assessment criteria measure and certify the apprenticeship programme and ensure it meets its statutory requirements.

Apprentices will be indentured with a livery company and upon successful completion of the apprenticeship they will be made Freeman of the company. Those demonstrating excellence will be eligible to apply for a QEST Scholarship to further their careers.

There is no substitute for learning a craft in a professional workshop. The continuance of this valuable trade requires a system of teaching that will ensure the finest standards of craftsmanship are passed on to future generations.

Oliver Urquhart Irvine
The Librarian & Assistant Keeper of The Queen’s Archives

George III’s standing press
The Scheme

The apprenticeship is for five years, during which an apprentice will acquire a broad range of bookbinding skills. The programme is divided into two parts: in the first two years they will be based at the Royal Bindery in Windsor as an Apprentice Bookbinder; in the following three years, they will train as Apprentice Journeyman Bookbinder and spend increasing time in outside workshops, gaining considerable practical experience. The final year will take place almost entirely in a participating workshop.

City & Guilds qualifications will provide the basis of the curriculum, following the set syllabus for Levels 1–3 in the first two years then a more flexible and individually tailored programme for higher Levels. Each apprentice will be individually mentored throughout by a member of one of the participating livery companies.

At the end of the second year, having gained foundation level qualifications and valuable work experience, apprentices will have learned the techniques required for entry to commercial employment should they choose to leave the programme at this point. There will be a full assessment of those wishing to continue, with successful candidates being formally indentured to their mentor and progressing to the next three years.

Apprentices will initially receive the living wage, with incremental rises in line with statutory requirements, plus assistance with accommodation in Windsor if needed during the first two years and subsidy for travel expenses.

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### APPRENTICE BOOKBINDER

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<th>FOUNDATION COURSE</th>
<th>SPECIALIST LEVELS</th>
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<td>YEARS 3–5</td>
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<td>City &amp; Guilds Levels 1–3</td>
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<td>Quarterly Appraisals</td>
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<td>25% Work Experience in Year 2</td>
<td>50% Work Experience in Year 3</td>
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<td>75% Work Experience in Year 4</td>
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<td>100% Work Experience in Year 5</td>
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<td>FINAL ASSESSMENT</td>
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<td>FREEDOM OF A LIVERY COMPANY</td>
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### IF SUCCESSFUL, INDENTURE AND PROGRESSION TO YEAR 3

© Russell Sach/TES
The first two years are designed as a foundation course covering the basic theories and practice of hand bookbinding skills. The final three years of the five-year apprenticeship will develop key specialisms of the craft.

**Apprentice Bookbinder**

**Foundation Course – City & Guilds Levels 1, 2 and 3**

**PAPER AND CLOTH BINDINGS**

This level teaches first principles, including single and multi-section sewing and cloth case-making. Apprentices will hone their hand skills by repeating processes in project work.

**PROJECTS**

- Pamphlet bindings
- Cloth and paper journals
- Sketch books

**LEATHER CASE BINDING**

Leather case-making and gold foil blocking; exploring alternative sewing structures.

**PROJECTS**

- Quarter leather case bindings
- Simple albums
- Periodical bindings

**INTRODUCTION TO LEATHER FINE BINDING**

The principles of fine leather forwarding, including sewn silk headbands, drawn-on boards, raised bands and hand gold titling.

**PROJECTS**

- Half and full leather bindings
- Doublures
- Gold tooling basics

Hand sewing a book

Full leather case binding with foil blocking and paper slipcase

Paring leather

Sewing a silk headband
Apprentice Journeyman Bookbinder
Specialist Levels – City & Guilds Levels 4 and 5

CONSERVATION
The fundamentals of book and manuscript conservation treatment, including dry-cleaning, paper repairs, disbinding, washing and rebinding.

PROJECTS
- Repairing tears ‘in situ’
- Guarding sections for resewing
- Washing and de-acidifying

RESOLUTION
Repair and restoration of bindings, retaining as much as possible of the original materials.

PROJECTS
- Repairing cloth bindings
- Recasing
- Rebacking leather books

BOX-MAKING
Box-making, including fine slipcases, clamshell boxes, archival boxes and portfolios, wooden Solander boxes.

PROJECTS
- Leather-entry slipcase
- Full leather clamshell box
- Solander box

GOLD FINISHING AND BINDING DESIGN
Principally hand tooling, edge-gilding and other edge decoration techniques, inlays and onlays.

PROJECTS
- Hand lettering & decoration
- Uses of gold leaf and foil
- Executing original designs

HISTORICAL BINDING STYLES
Period binding styles, including historical techniques and materials.

PROJECTS
- ‘Cambridge Panel’ and ‘Tree-Calf’
- Account-book bindings
- Vellum bindings

© Shepherds
‘Cambridge Panel’ in speckled calf

Period-style bindings
The Syllabus: Professional Skills

This training will be provided in a mixture of on-the-job instruction and optional formal coursework arranged by and through the scheme’s partners. It will be in step with the appropriate levels of practical development and by completion of the full programme reflect the skills and knowledge required to successfully run a small business.

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<th>LEARNING THE BASICS</th>
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| **Objective:** gain a grounding in basic administration and computer skills. | ● Keeping a written diary and timesheets.  
● Microsoft Word for writing letters, Outlook for emails and diary and Excel for basic book-keeping.  |
| ● Answering the telephone, taking messages, accepting deliveries and checking inventory. |  |

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<th>GOOD PRACTICE IN THE WORKSHOP</th>
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| **Objective:** acquire knowledge of how work is costed and the process of estimating and invoicing in a small workshop. | ● Selecting appropriate materials and avoiding wastage.  
● How to write a letter to a customer or supplier.  
● Learning how ‘time and cost sheets’ are used for estimating. Preparing a simple bill or invoice.  |
| ● Learning to cost materials and researching suppliers. Keeping a diary of the materials used on each project. |  |

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<th>BUSINESS THEORY</th>
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| **Objective:** identify the main financial and practical skills required to set up a small business. | ● Create a simple income and expenditure account, budget and cashflow in Excel.  
● How to identify potential customers, create a mailing list and set up a basic website.  
● Design a business card and simple brochure.  |
| ● How much equipment and materials are needed to start a bindery. |  |

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<th>SELF-EMPLOYMENT</th>
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| **Objective:** understand the main issues in being self-employed. | ● Alternative ways of financing a new business.  
● Working from home or finding premises.  
● Health and safety legislation and business insurance.  
● Marketing and advertising.  |
| ● The difference between Limited Liability Companies and self-employment.  
● Income Tax, National Insurance and VAT rules for the self-employed. |  |

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<th>LIMITED COMPANIES</th>
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| **Objective:** gain an overview of how to set up a small business. | ● Shareholders.  
● Hiring staff, PAYE, pensions, contracts and job descriptions.  
● Book-keeping and accounts.  
● Legal obligations and regulations.  |
| ● How to set up a new company.  
● The responsibilities of directors and company law. |  |
The Partners

Founding Partners
Charities supporting the scheme financially over the seven-year pilot:
Antiquarian Booksellers Association
City & Guilds of London Institute
The Clothworkers’ Company
The Leathersellers’ Company
The Printing Charity
Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust
Royal Collection Trust
The Stationers’ Company

Contributing Partners
Supporters contributing materials, equipment and specialist training. They include:
ABA Educational Trust, Bound by Veterans,
Brockman Bookbinders, Connolly Brothers (Curriers) Ltd, Conservation by Design Ltd, William Cowley Parchment & Vellum,
Dragon Press Bindery Ltd, Fine Cut Graphic Imaging Ltd, The Goldsmiths’ Centre,
Harmatan & Oakridge Leathers Ltd, J Hewit & Sons Ltd, The Leather Conservation Centre, Maggs Bros Ltd, Bernard C Middleton CBE, Pothi Seva, P&S Engraving,
John Purcell Paper, F J Ratchford Ltd,
St Bride Foundation, Studio Tone Ltd,
Temple Bookbinders Ltd

Interested potential contributors are invited to contact the scheme. Please see details on the back cover.

Skills & Industry Partners
Key participants who will directly benefit from employing the apprentices and in exchange contribute to the overall costs by paying a proportion of apprentices’ salaries while they gain experience in their workshops:
The Royal Bindery
Blissett Bookbinders
Shepherds, Sangorski & Sutcliffe

Oversight

The scheme is governed by a Steering Group chaired by The Librarian & Assistant Keeper of The Queen’s Archives and administered by the Royal Library. The Group includes representatives of all the Founding and Skills & Industry Partners and meet at least twice a year.

Two sub-committees have responsibility for financial and training governance. Both sub-committees report to the Steering Group on at least an annual basis and include members of the Steering Group as well as other parties as required.

Apprentices are line managed at Windsor by senior staff of the Royal Bindery.
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APPLICATION INFORMATION

Application to the apprenticeship scheme will be online via the Royal Collection Trust website at www.royalcollection.org.uk/about/working-for-us

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