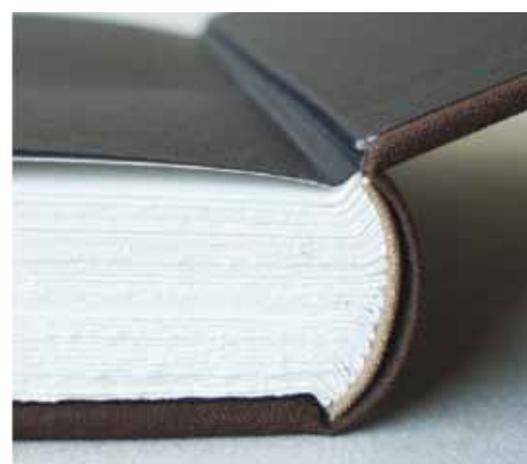
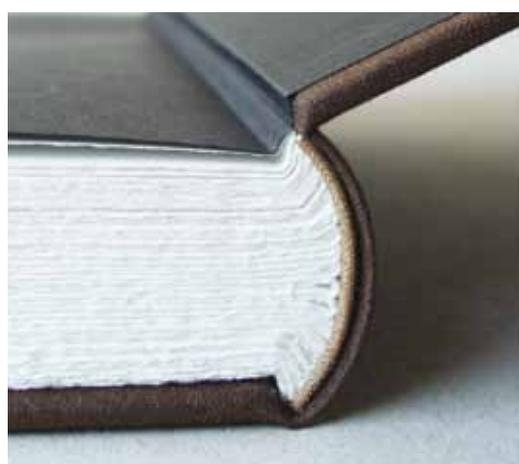
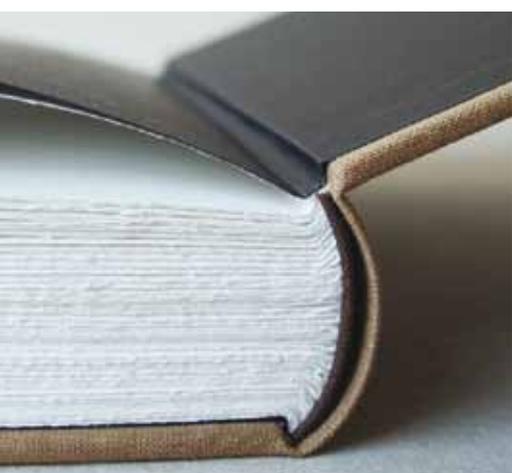
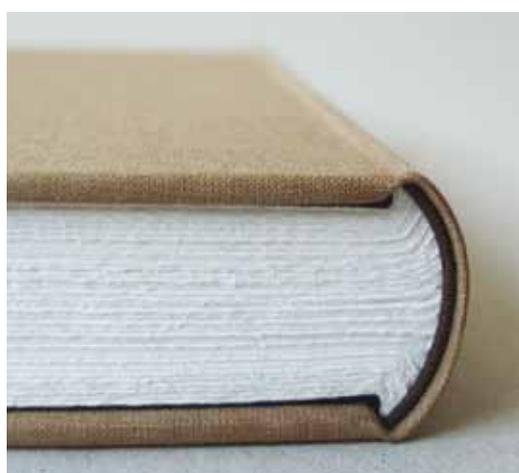
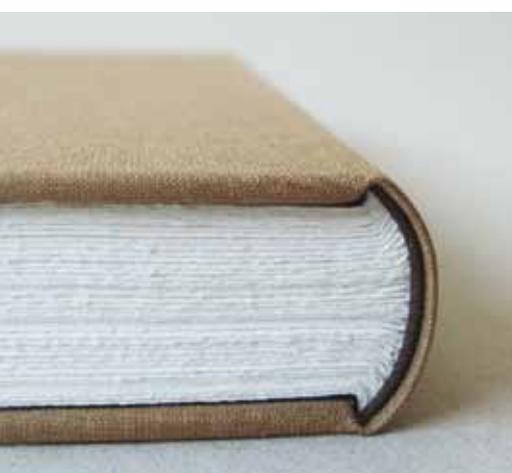


# designer bookbinders

contemporary book arts

NEWSLETTER OF DESIGNER BOOKBINDERS NO 175 AUTUMN 2016



# 2 db introduction

Find out more at: [www.designerbookbinders.org.uk](http://www.designerbookbinders.org.uk)

NEWSLETTER OF DESIGNER BOOKBINDERS NO 175 AUTUMN 2016

## Editorial

Is it just me that finds it almost entirely impossible to garner my creative energies during good weather? I think the summer months are the least productive of my entire year. I just seem to find myself staring out of the window at a sunlit garden wondering whether I should in fact be walking the dog so that I may consider whatever the problem at hand is, just that little bit longer. Then I will either find myself sitting in said garden sipping something cool and usually alcoholic or wandering around the park planning something cool and probably alcoholic, my creative juices flowing only towards what kind of marinade would suit my mood for the barbeque I am now intending. Maybe there is Mediterranean lineage in me that only shows itself when the sun appears. It surely can't just be me that finds my motivation wanes when my wardrobe leans towards shorter clothing - please tell me it's not.

But then Autumn comes around and I am back on, panicking about the deadlines that have been niggling away in the back of my head, the guilt just taking the edge off the afore mentioned something cool and my almost horizontal summer attitude. The leaves change colour, the air cools, the evenings draw in and somehow everything starts to flow again. Usually the deadlines have become sufficiently close that pontification has ceased to have room, procrastination flies out of the window; and decision-making and action necessarily become the orders of the day. Most pressing for me currently is the DB International Competition deadline and just how I am going to sort through and then pull off the absurd half thoughts I was 'musing' over during the summer.

Despite Brexit, work has been piling in throughout the summer months, which is unusual for the time of year. Normally halfway through July tumbleweed starts building up in the doorway and we start on the big jobs that we have sidelined for that purpose. This year however, I seem to have become flavour of the month in the Middle East and I seem to be fielding more inquiries from the other side of the Atlantic. I guess there are some advantages to a weak pound. It's different but nothing political or otherwise surprises me anymore. My incredulity glands have simply dried up through over use over the past few months.

At a party the other day, on hearing of my profession, someone asked me whether I was worried that in a few years time there wouldn't be any books being produced at all and I would have nothing to bind. Admittedly she had no connection to the world of bookbinding and really had no idea what I do despite my valiant attempt at an explanation. I did say that far from living in the past I too am a Kindle reader (sorry if that shocks you) but that books will never actually disappear. Paperbacks maybe; some periodicals, newspapers and magazines, but reference books, the hardback? Of course not! People love them too much. I further tried to explain that rather than threatening our profession, digital publishing actually drives both books and us bookbinders further into a niche corner where we already exist and where we are already very comfortable. It was all on deaf ears though. My new acquaintance was apparently more expert than me on the subject and seriously advised me to find an alternative livelihood - but that was just before she spilt wine all over the table and herself.

Happy Binding!

Daniel Wray

## Autumn Spotlight 2016

I'd like to ignore the fact that it's already August when I'm writing this. Time slips away too quickly and it's a reminder not to get behind in making all those bindings that exist only in the sketchbook.

Since the last Newsletter, a Memorial Service was held for Lisa von Clemm who died in March. It was well attended by many friends and a fitting tribute to such a talented binder and wonderful supporter of all things DB.

Plans are afoot for an Associates' Day Open Exhibition and I hope as many of you as possible will take part. Why haven't we done this before? - it's such a great idea. Please see the notice published later in the Newsletter.

The F&L are getting ready for Collect, the premier exhibition for contemporary craft, which takes place in February 2017, at the Saatchi Gallery. It's a new venture for DB with a fresh market in which to promote modern bindings. It should go a long way to educate the public about what we do and raise the profile of our craft.

My summer has been spent moving house. Not far, just down the road from my old place, but it gives me more space and I can't wait for my new studio to be built later this year.

I hope all of you have had a good summer and were able to spend time with friends and family.

Lori

## DB Autumn Meeting 2016

This year the Autumn Meeting will take place on Sunday 16th October at Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire.

Waddesdon Manor was built in the 1870s for Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild to house his superb collection of 18th-century art treasures and entertain the fashionable world. A French Renaissance-style château, it has one of the finest Victorian gardens in Britain, an aviary and wine cellars.

Designer Bookbinders is delighted to have arranged a special viewing of the Rothschild Collection of books to be shown by Rachel Jacobs of the Collection Team. This will be a rare opportunity to see some of the treasures of Waddesdon rarely seen.

Entrance to the house and gardens is included in the visit and pre-allocated timed tickets for the house have been booked. The itinerary is as follows:

Arrival at the main door 10.15am

Viewing of the Collection of books in the Panelled Room and Library 10.45am

Lunch in the Manor Restaurant 12.30pm

House entry 2.00pm

The cost of the visit is £14.00 and free to National Trust members. Please let the Secretary know on reserving a space if you have membership. A two-course group menu can be pre-ordered for lunch at an additional cost of £12.50 and the Secretary will give details of this once numbers attending are established.

If you would like to book a place on the visit please contact Wendy Hood, the Secretary, by email, [secretary@designerbookbinders.org.uk](mailto:secretary@designerbookbinders.org.uk) or by telephone on 01225 342793. Places are limited to 20. More information can be found at [www.waddesdon.org.uk](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk)

### 2016/2017 MEETING DATES

**Saturday 24 September 2016**  
DBPL / Executive Committee / Fellows and Licentiatees

**Saturday 14 January 2017**  
DBPL / Executive Committee

### NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

**Winter Issue**  
01.11.2016

**Spring Issue**  
01.02.2017

### ON THE FRONT COVER

Details from the research of the English Case Binding by Benjamin Elbel. See featured article in this newsletter.

# 4 obituary

Find out more at: [www.designerbookbinders.org.uk](http://www.designerbookbinders.org.uk)

NEWSLETTER OF DESIGNER BOOKBINDERS NO 175 AUTUMN 2016

## Kulgin Duval

It is with great sadness that we have to announce that Kulgin Duval passed away unexpectedly but peacefully at home on Friday 22nd July.

Kulgin was an Honorary Fellow of Designer Bookbinders. He and Colin Hamilton had a long partnership and shared interest and understanding of fine books and bindings. A prolific collector of books, Kulgin was always hospitable, welcoming to his homes in Perthshire and India those who appreciated well designed and beautifully made objects and bindings.

Our thoughts and sympathy are with Colin at this time.



*Kulgin Duval and Colin Hamilton*



*Kulgin Duval, Colin Hamilton with Flora Ginn*

I first met Colin Hamilton and Kulgin Duval in 1968 - Kulgin often reminded me of that and thereon I came to appreciate his gentle kindness and his quiet, informed, overview of my work for them. He and Colin had a long partnership and shared interest and understanding of fine books and bindings from which many of us have benefitted. Some of us have bound books to their commission; we as the society of Designer Bookbinders, have been supported through their generosity by exhibitions in the UK and USA with finely produced catalogues which gave our work a sense of the quality for which we binders try to aim.

Both Colin and Kulgin worked as an extraordinary team, whether at their lovely homes surrounded by beautiful gardens in Perthshire, or in India. They have been so hospitable too, in welcoming to their homes those who appreciate well designed and beautifully made contemporary furniture, objects and of course ... bindings. Kulgin always there enthusiastically talking about why he did or, sometimes, did not like, a binding - and that was important too.

Always aware of the 'sense' of materials, it was reflected in everything from fabrics to sculpture .... to bindings. This was so clear over the years when I made several bindings for them, and then the collection of ten of the beautiful limited edition of 125 copies that Colin and Kulgin published in 1987, of "STONE" with poems by George Mackay Brown, and images by photographer Gunnie Moberg. It was printed on the hand press at the Officina Bodoni, Verona, Italy, by Gabriella and Martino Mardersteig with the most careful selection of paper to show the beautiful photographic images to perfection - not an easy task, but because of their concern for quality Colin and Kulgin, together, made sure of the outcome.

Their shared, wide-ranging interest in things of beauty - the arts in all manifestations - meant that one got two balancing reactions to a piece of work, and memories of the contacts I have had with them will always remain with me. Thank you Kulgin for all your enthusiasm, kindness and, quiet perception.

**Faith Shannon**

## International Miniature Bookbinding Competition

### The Island

During the 1980s a motley crowd of city nomads settled in the deserted harbour district of Amsterdam. Geert Mak describes how a vibrant community came into being on KNSM island, made up of squatters, artists, hippies, colourful eccentrics, dealers, junkies, drifters, alcoholics and the maladjusted. Away from the establishment and civil society they created their own neighbourhood in and around the former customs halls, using waste material and found objects. In old caravans and buses, huts, tents and sometimes even in holes in the ground, they lived a life of resource, poverty, addiction, love and violence, until the city expanded and the inhabitants were evacuated and shunted to new wastelands on the fringes of town.

In 2016/2017 The Dutch Handbookbinding Foundation (Stichting Handboekbinden) is organising, in close co-operation with Museum Meermanno (the oldest bookmuseum in the world) in The Hague and De Buitenkant Publishers in Amsterdam, an International Miniature Bookbinding Competition. The competition will be closed in Autumn 2017 with an exhibition in Museum Meermanno.

You are invited to enter this competition. Registrations must be received by September 30th 2016. There will be awards: € 1000, € 700 and € 500.

Registration form and full competition rules can be downloaded from [www.stichting-handboekbinden.eu](http://www.stichting-handboekbinden.eu).

For more information write an email to: [miniatuur@stichtinghandboekbinden.eu](mailto:miniatuur@stichtinghandboekbinden.eu)

## Open Exhibition

All Associates are invited to submit their work for the first Associates' Day Open Exhibition.

It will be a non-selective show, open to the public and a prize will be given to the favourite binding chosen by public ballot.

The date is the 2017 AGM, held at the Art Workers' Guild in London on the 8th of April.

Please put this in your diary and take part in what will be a fantastic opportunity to see the work of other members and display your own.

More details will follow in the next newsletter.

Dogs were a different matter. Everyone had a dog, preferably two, and the bigger the better. During even the island's quietest hours, between six and nine in the morning, the air was filled with their barking, interspersed with whining and howling when yet another dogfight broke out.

Even Marloes, who lived in a borrowed minibus with her three children, had a bouvier bitch that soon gave birth to two pups, Basje and Thijsje. She adopted an energetic approach to the problem of having two additional mouths to feed. At four o'clock she would take



## English Case Binding revisited

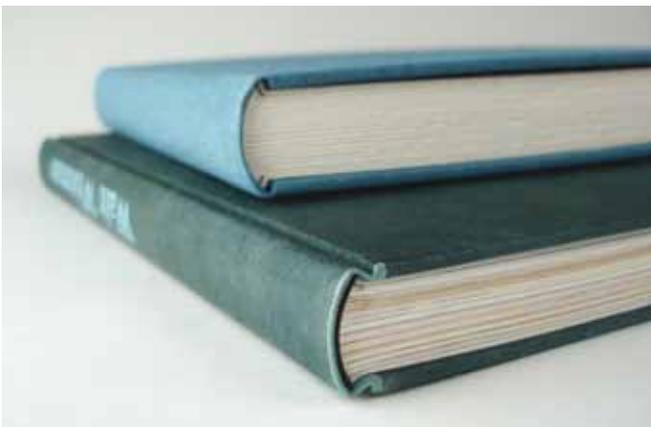
By Benjamin Elbel



*A style of hardback binding less ordinary*

The concept of case binding, meaning that the cover is made off the text-block and attached to it at a later stage, is known world wide, but the details of construction can vary from one country to another. In most European countries the cover consists of a spine stiffener and two boards placed at least 5 mm away from the spine, resulting in a so-called French groove.

In England a case binding is essentially the same thing as a traditional structure: the text-block is rounded and backed at a 90 degree angle and the cover consists of two boards and a spine stiffener, with small gaps in between as no French groove is required. Industrial bookbinding has accustomed us to French grooves, so much so that the absence of the latter makes a book look less ordinary.



*Continental and English style case bindings*

### A frequent drawback

Having spent 3 years at the bench of Shepherds Bookbinders in London, I have made a great deal of English style case bindings. I noticed that, if they usually open very well in the middle, the opening of the board alone often pulls the flyleaf and first leaves of the book with it, which is not only annoying but also makes it feel like something is not quite right and could break sooner or later. I also noticed different styles of backing practised among the team members, and always thought there might be a link between the latter and the opening qualities of the board, but never actually studied it in depth. I finally found the time to do this and here is what I discovered.

### Three styles of backing

As a starting point I identified three styles of backing, based on my observations at Shepherds - flush with the board, higher than the board, and backed to below 90 degrees - which I applied to 3 identical book blocks. Next to this I was also curious about the influence that the hollow may have on the mechanics of the bindings, so for each style of backing I made a version with hollow as well.

NB: for the non-initiated, a hollow is a kind of flat tube made out of paper and applied to the spine of a book to strengthen it. Upon opening one half adheres to the back of the text-block and the other half (usually thicker) sticks to the inside of the cover spine.

## BACKING STYLES



90 degrees, with shoulder height identical to board thickness

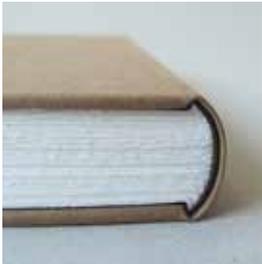


90 degrees, with shoulder approx. 1 mm higher than boards

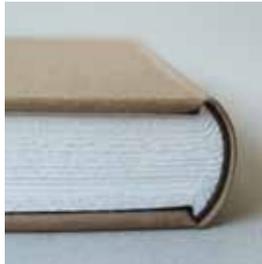


Backed to approximately 70 degrees only but level with board

## LOOK & FEEL



Smooth transition between the spine and board

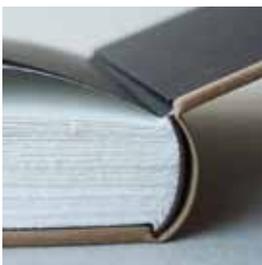


Shoulder protruding

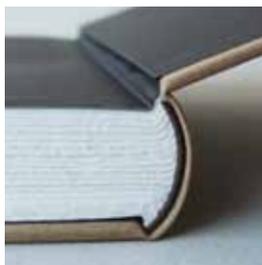


Shoulder and board level, with slight recess between

## BOARD OPENING



The board is pulling the flyleaf and first page of the book



Bookblock not moving, including flyleaf

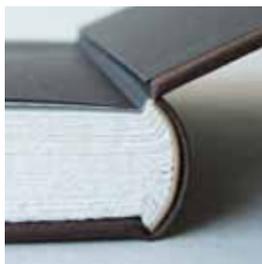


The board is pulling the flyleaf and first page of the book

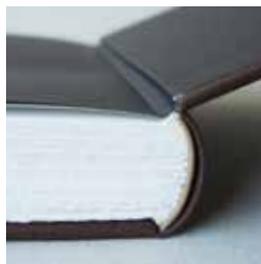
## INFLUENCE OF HOLLOW



Flyleaf going up higher than without hollow



Flyleaf goes up ever so slightly



Flyleaf doesn't go up as much as without a hollow

## First conclusions

1. In all styles there is a certain degree of pulling on the first leaves on opening, but it happens far less with the backing style no. 2 (shoulder higher than board): the board swings open without tensions and the book block doesn't move at all.

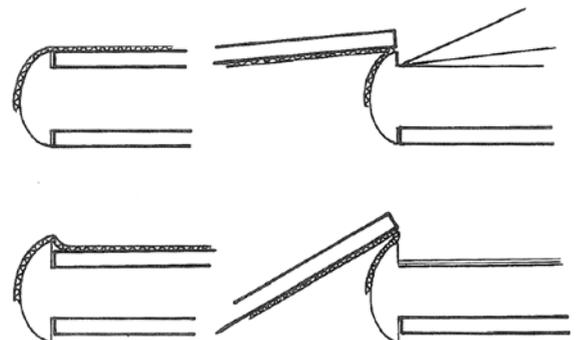
2. Backing at an angle less than 90 degrees doesn't present any advantage - I decide to leave this out of the research altogether.

3. A hollow doesn't seem to have a substantial influence on the board opening - in the above first two scenarios it makes the stress a little worse, whereas in the last it seems to improve it slightly. However in all cases the cover spines are much firmer which makes them more apt to take the weight of the book when opened, so I decide to include a hollow in all further trials.

4. Even though some degree of irregularity due to the gap between the hollow/spine stiffener and board edge is visible on all 3 styles, the first and last variations produce better results. With the second style where the shoulder is higher than the boards, a very pronounced 'mountain' can be seen and felt on either side of the spine, which I would not expect customers to find 'normal'. This is another typical drawback of this structure.

## How does it actually work?

Here is a diagram by Arthur Johnson (The Thames and Hudson Manual of Bookbinding, 1978) explaining the reason for higher shoulders:



# 8 feature

Find out more at: [www.designerbookbinders.org.uk](http://www.designerbookbinders.org.uk)

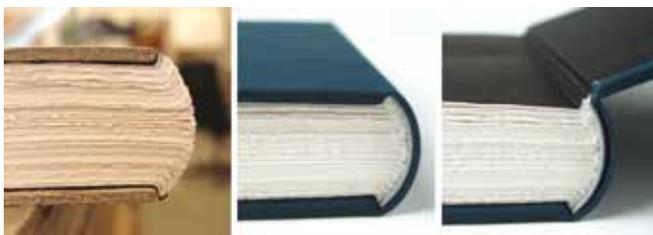
NEWSLETTER OF DESIGNER BOOKBINDERS NO 175 AUTUMN 2016

While this doesn't give much clue about why the pulling is happening, we can guess that the portion of the endleaves proud of the boards provides extra material for the rotation to take place, rather than being forced to happen on one line only as it is the case with a shoulder flush with the boards. To confirm this, I cut my books 20 mm from the bottom edge in order to take a closer look.

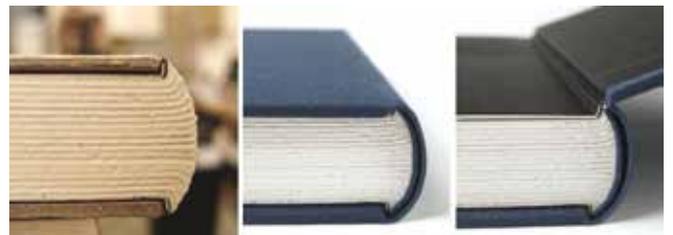
What I discovered wasn't as clear as in Johnson's diagrams, but one detail, seemingly unrelated, caught my attention: notice in the image below the slight difference in the endpapers shape:



A minuscule detail indeed! Sometimes that is where the devil lies...So I went back to work to make two new models. My next text blocks were identical to the previous ones, with 16 page signatures, unsupported link-stitched. On one volume I tipped the endpapers about 1 mm further than the signature folds, so that they would hook around the signature folds slightly. The book block was backed flush with the boards, Fraynot was applied over the whole thing but headbands and hollow were applied short of the shoulders so they wouldn't raise the shoulder level and also wouldn't be in the way of the hooked part of the endpapers.



On the second volume I tipped the board papers and flyleaves around a folio of white paper, and tipped this end in the conventional way.



## Results

In both scenarios the books have a smooth appearance and feel, shoulders level with the boards, and open exceptionally well, both text block and boards.

## Conclusion

After many years of letting chance control the final results, I feel that I finally have found a system that allows me to eliminate the two main drawbacks of this structure: the protruding shoulder, and the tension on the endpapers. Unlike my initial guess, the key lies not in the backing style but in the endpaper construction.

Whether this way of making English case bindings presents any drawback, time will tell. For the moment, they look and work beautifully and I can't wait to get back to the bench!

Thank you for your attention.

*This article was initially published on 22nd of March 2016 by Benjamin on [www.elbel-libro.com](http://www.elbel-libro.com)*

## DB / SoB Joint Weekend Workshops

As I sit and write this, the evenings are already starting to pull in and Autumn is just around the corner. With that in mind, have you thought about the DB / SoB Weekend Workshops? Places are filling up, with a couple already full, but spaces are still available on some of them.

So if a weekend learning how to sew 'Manhattan' or multi-coloured endbands, discovering the advantages or disadvantages of traditional paper repair techniques, or how to translate an idea – no matter how bizarre – into a binding, seems appealing – and there is much more, perhaps you should consider booking a place on one of the DB / SoB Joint Weekend Workshops.

Every workshop is led by an expert in the area they are teaching. So don't miss this wonderful opportunity, perhaps a 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity, to learn from masters.

Fill in the booking form (available on-line from the DB and SoB websites) and return to Nesta Davies, and I hope we will meet up over the coming months.

**Alan Fitch**

Full details are available on the DB & SoB websites along with Booking Forms.



## Bookbinders of Lewes

Bookbinders of Lewes are now offering the following classes at their workshop in Sussex;

Regular drop-in Saturdays  
Weekday evenings  
Short Taster courses

We can also offer one to one or small group tuition by arrangement covering specific topics, so come and learn something new or brush up your skills!

For further details please contact Rachel Ward-Sale or Jill Prole, 01273 486718 or [binding@bookbindersoflewes.co.uk](mailto:binding@bookbindersoflewes.co.uk)

## The Hand Bookbinders of California present

Stiffboard Vellum Binding  
September 30 - October 2, 2016 - 10 am - 6 pm daily

Vellum stiffboard bindings were common from the 16th to the 19th centuries, and often functioned as an alternative to more expensive leather bindings. This course will explore traditional binding structures, but with modern variations meant to create flexible joints with less stress on fragile historical text blocks. This binding is sturdy and elegant, takes gold tooling well, and is suitable for conservation re-bindings as well as for presentations or fine bindings.

**with James Reid-Cunningham**

James Reid-Cunningham studied bookbinding, graduated and received the distinguished Alumni award from North Bennett Street school in 2006. He spent thirty years as a conservator at Harvard University and at the Boston Athenaeum, and served as President of the Guild of Book Workers from 2006 to 2010. A design binder who exhibits internationally, he has a private practice conservation and bookbinding studio in Cambridge, Massachusetts. (more at: [www.reid-cunningham.com](http://www.reid-cunningham.com))

Held at bookbarnkat studios at 190 Oak Island Drive, Santa Rosa, CA, USA

for more information and to register go to [www.handbookbinders.org](http://www.handbookbinders.org) (see "Workshops")

# 10 courses

Find out more at: [www.designerbookbinders.org.uk](http://www.designerbookbinders.org.uk)

NEWSLETTER OF DESIGNER BOOKBINDERS NO 175 AUTUMN 2016

## City Lit Bookbinding Courses Sept – Dec 2016

City Lit, Keeley Street, Covent Garden, London, WC2B 4BA

This year we're very pleased to announce changes to our bookbinding progression routes and an extended range of shorter courses from our existing and expanded group of tutors. The new two-term intermediate course starts in October and our Advanced Fine Binding course now runs over three terms. As usual our Taster Days take place each term.

For further information, to see the course outlines and full bookbinding programme visit [www.citylit.ac.uk](http://www.citylit.ac.uk)  
For enquiries or to book an interview for VD190 contact [visualarts@citylit.ac.uk](mailto:visualarts@citylit.ac.uk)

### OUR COURSES AUTUMN TERM 2016:

#### The City Lit Bookbinding Course

A three-term foundation course in bookbinding. Learn essential techniques and develop skills in using tools and materials. A stimulating and challenging introduction for beginners. A pre-enrolment interview is required.  
Tutors: Sue Doggett, Royston Haward, Paolo Taddeo  
VD190 Tues 18.00 – 21.00  
20 Sept 2015 – 27 June 2016 (33 sessions)

#### Introduction to Bookbinding

For those with no experience in bookbinding. An enjoyable start making a range of simple but effective folded books through to a stitched, multi-section case binding.  
Tutor: Clare Bryan  
VD284 Mon 10.30 -16.30  
26 Sept – 28 Nov (10 sessions)

#### City Lit Bookbinding Intermediate - new course!

An Intermediate level course for students with some experience. Learn new skills and techniques. Develop and build on existing knowledge in traditional and contemporary bookbinding including leather paring, and fine binding.  
Tutor: Gavin Moorhead  
VD273 Mon 18.00 - 21.00  
03 Sept – 03 Apr (20 sessions)

#### Fine binding: Advanced level – extended!

A three term course for intermediate/advanced level students. Learn techniques necessary to make a full leather binding to a high standard including leather joints, edge-gilding, tool sharpening, leather paring, inlays/onlays and doublures.  
Tutor: Kathy Abbott  
VD194 Tues 10.00 – 16.30  
27 Sept 2015 – 27 Jun 2016 (30 weeks)

**Book Conservation & repair: paper and cloth-bound books**  
For students with some bookbinding experience. Look at cleaning, repair and conservation of paper both as flat documents and in book format and the conservation and repair of cloth bindings.

Tutor: Peter Spain  
VD202 Weds 10.30 – 16.30  
28 Sep – 07 Dec (11sessions)

#### Book Conservation and repair workshop

Three, term-long courses following one another for intermediate and advanced students with conservation experience. Ideal if you want to develop your skills further by working on your own projects with advice and guidance. Each term will include demonstrations that focus on a different aspect of book conservation.

Tutor: Gavin Moorhead  
VD245/246/247 Weds 18.00 – 21.00  
VD245 28 Sept – 07 Dec (11sessions)

#### Book conservation for beginners: 1

For students new to conservation. Practise paper cleaning and repair. Learn how to pull and re-sew a text-block, mend corners and re-hinge boards.  
VD324 Thurs 18.00 -21.00  
29 Sept – 08 Dec (11 sessions)

### SHORTER COURSES:

Papercutting, collage and design – new course!  
Learn how papercutting techniques can translate visual ideas into unique artwork. Explore scale, pattern, positive-negative and layers through collage and intercutting.  
Tutor: Lara Mantell  
VD317 Thurs 10.30 - 16.30  
22 Sep – 13 Oct (4 sessions)

Knife sharpening workshop – new course!  
Learn the basics of knife sharpening as well as exploring different types of sharpening stones, the importance of the bevel, edge paring, strops, spokeshaves, how to sharpen, and more!  
Tutor: Royston Haward  
VD323 10-30 -16.30  
Sun 9 Oct 1 (1 session)

## **Book arts: bindings in acrylic, acetate and plastic – new course!**

Try something new. Discover the potential of strong, translucent yet colourful plastics and transform them into a range of exciting books.

Tutor: Ina Baumeister  
VD311 Fri 10.30 – 16.30  
11 Nov – 09 Dec (5 sessions)

## **Introduction to gold and foil blocking – new course!**

Learn how to block simple labels and spines using foil and gold leaf and how to set up and space type correctly. You'll practise blocking on paper, cloth and leather.

Tutor: Peter Spain  
VD312 Sat- Sun 10.30 – 16.30  
12 & 13 Nov (2 sessions)

## **Cloth to bookcloth to binding – new course!**

Learn how to make your own bookbinding cloth. Work on a selection of printed or surface decorated fabrics and prepare them for use in covering a simple book that you will make on this course.

Tutor: Ina Baumeister  
VD319 Thurs 10.30 -16.30  
24 Nov & 1 Dec (2 sessions)

## Contact Details

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### Newsletter

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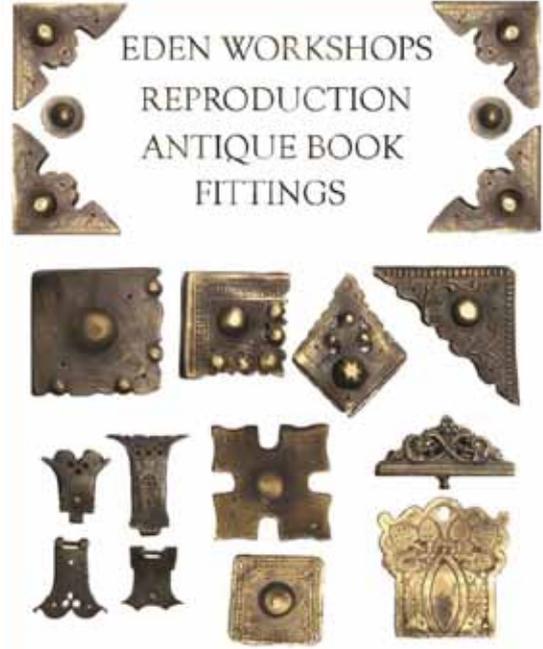


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