

Guild of Book Workers Standards of Excellence 2017



Guild of Book Workers Standards Seminar 2017

The Floating Spine

Covered and Visible: Protected multi-section pamphlet stitch structure

“Simplicity does not precede complexity, but follows it.”

Alan Jay Perlis – the first recipient of the Turing Award

This basic structure creates a binding with a full leather, cloth or paper spine over inner exposed and visible sewing that creates a natural combination of tight back and hollow all in one structure.

Based on Project 8 in *The Essential Guide to Making Handmade Books*, this variation provides the strength and flexibility of a tight backed book with the action of a hollow tube. The full leather spine can be titled or decorated as in a traditional binding.

The delight of this structure is the ease with which it opens, closes and the possible variations that can be used for both design and conservation binding. The entire case or cover of the binding is completed before sewing in the text, which is the final procedure or step in the binding. This structure can be kept very simple or adapted to something as complex as a full leather traditional binding with a difference.

Thank you to Marc Lamb and David Lanning for providing the leather for the samples used and auctioned here in Tacoma at the 2017 Guild of Book Workers Standards of Excellence.



harmatan.co.uk



Many thanks to the Art4artists and Arnelle Dow, Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild in Toronto, the Cincinnati Book Arts Society, Jenni Grey, the Santa Fe Book Arts Group and Karen Hanmer for suggestions and feedback.

Basic Steps

Prepare text block

Prepare endpapers

Cut out leather oversized – outside, inner spine and inner board (or pastedowns)

Cut straight line across head of outside leather

Onlays and back paring if desired

Cut out watercolor paper for boards

Measure the spine width including text, endpapers, watercolor paper and inner and outer leather and joints allowing space for sewing thread

Transfer that measurement to a set of spring dividers

Attach the outer leather to your watercolor paper

Trim a straight line – again - across the head of the case

Measure the inner spine including text, endpapers and inner joints allowing space for sewing thread

Transfer this measurement (should be minimum 1/8th of an inch or 3.17 mm) to a pair of set spring dividers

Cut punch board to this inside measurement

Cut lighter weight card using the same inner width measurement as the punch board for sewing pattern

Attach inner leather

Trim inner leather at head of cover

Trim to exact finished height of case by trimming the tail of the case

Draw up and mark sewing pattern

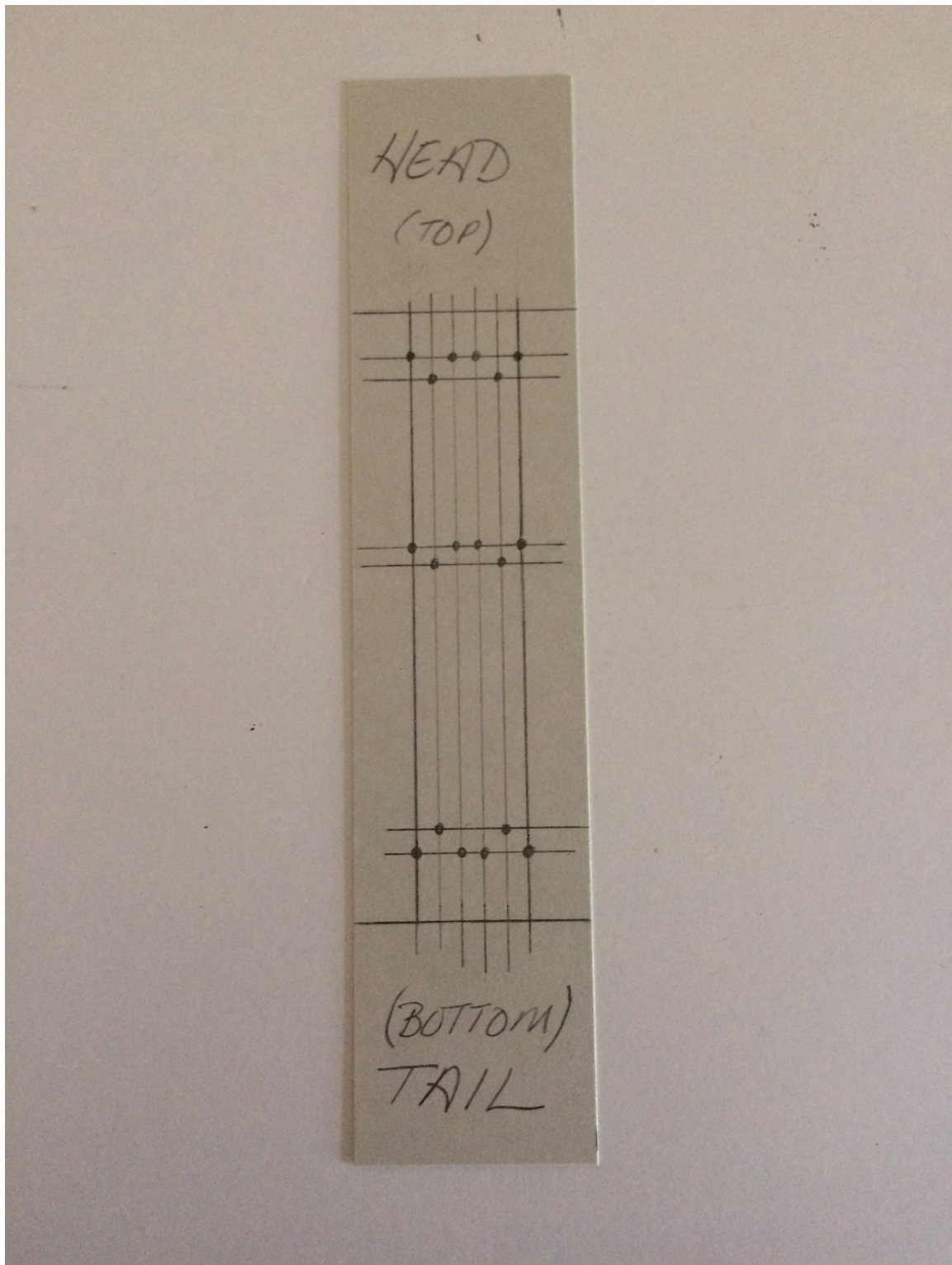
Insert punching board between boards through spine space

Line up sewing pattern and mark sewing holes

Sew in endpapers and text

Trim foreedges of cover

Sample of sewing pattern



Gabrielle Fox is a bookbinder based in Cincinnati, Ohio. In the 1980's she taught throughout England and worked from her studio in Sussex before returning to

Ohio in 1990. She travels often to care for collections and teach, most recently to The Daffodil Barn, Wiltshire, UK through Binding re:Defined and jointly with Designer Bookbinders and Society of Bookbinders. Each year now she teaches miniature fine binding at the American Academy of Bookbinding in Telluride, Colorado, USA.

Her work is represented in many public and private libraries and in 2016 was exhibited in “The Poet of Them All” at the Yale Center for British Art and will be exhibited this autumn with Designer Bookbinders’ “Heroic Works” at North Bennet Street School. Gabrielle has had two books published, *The Essential Guide to Making Handmade Books*, and more recently *LARKSPUR PRESS: Forty Years of Making Letterpress Books in a Rural Kentucky Community*.

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Further Reading:

These bindings are similar, but not exactly the same as the binding described above.

The New Bookbinder: Journal of Designer Bookbinders

Volume 24, 2004 *I Remember . . . The Journey from Book to Binding* by Jenni Grey

Volume 26, 2006 Progress Making by Jenni Grey
Simple Longstitch Binding by Jenni Grey

The Essential Guide to Making Handmade Books by Gabrielle Fox

Project 8: Multi-section Pamphlet describes this same structure with an exposed spine