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by Iris Nevins

**"Linking the Past,  
Forging the Future"**  
Summary  
by Katarina Stiller

**What Makes Us  
Different**  
by Susie Cobbledick

**And More...**



# Guild Board of Directors

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The Guild of Book Workers is a national organization representing the hand book crafts. There are regional chapters in New England, New York, the Delaware Valley, Washington DC, the Midwest, California, the Rocky Mountains, Texas, the Northwest and the Southeast.

Membership is open to all interested persons and includes a print copy of this Newsletter, among many other benefits. To become a member, please visit the Guild of Book Workers website:

[guildofbookworkers.org](http://guildofbookworkers.org)

The Guild of Book Workers Newsletter is published six times a year by the Guild of Book Workers, Inc., 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10175.



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# STANDARDS of EXCELLENCE 2023

Registration



Hotel



Donations



**San Francisco**  
September 28-30, 2023  
[guildofbookworkers.org/standards-san-francisco](http://guildofbookworkers.org/standards-san-francisco)

Photo by Ameer Bashir on Unsplash



## Letter from the President

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DEAR MEMBERS,

Thank you to everyone who voted in the election! We are thrilled to welcome some new members to the board and welcome back those continuing in their roles. I'm looking forward to a productive year ahead!

On September 1, we will be sending out a call for volunteers for various GBW committees, including all standing committees, the nominating committee, and the awards committee. By the beginning of Standards, we will have a new page on the GBW website with more information about all the different volunteer opportunities across the organization, estimated time commitments, and

a form to sign up! This will allow for all our members to have better and easier access to sign up to help keep the Guild running. We hope that this page will allow for greater transparency and clearer volunteer opportunities for all our members no matter when they join.

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you in San Francisco in September! As always, please continue to send any feedback and ideas my way.

Cheers,

Kate Levy

President, Guild of Book Workers

[president@guildofbookworkers.org](mailto:president@guildofbookworkers.org)

## Letter from the Editors

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DEAR READERS,

Welcome to the conservation issue of the *Newsletter*. Appropriately, one-third of our co-editing triumvirate enjoyed conservation in action in June, by both attending Jeff Peachey's "Historic Book Structures Practicum," which included a compelling lecture about John Bradford, and concluded with each of us reading aloud a stanza of "The Binders Curse;" as well as visiting *the Book of Kells* at Trinity College, Dublin.

With Trinity's Old Library in the midst of a massive project to conserve the building that has housed about 750,000 vulnerable books, your intrepid co-editor witnessed book conservation in action. With most of the shelves emptied of their precious cargo, the Long Room currently displays larger-than-life video loops of book workers vacuuming, measuring, and RFID-tagging the volumes. The stunning juxtaposition of these colorful moving images with austere marble busts of historic literary and scientific giants such as Shakespeare, Plato, and Lady Ada Lovelace will—we hope—encourage people to learn more about book preservation and conservation.

To help you explore the extensive world of book conservation from the comfort of your home, this issue is full of conservation and preservation themed articles. Barbara Hebard wrote a glowing review of Abigail Bainbridge's *Conservation of Books*; Katarina Stiller provides us with an excellent summary of "Linking the Past, Forging the Future;" a panel discussion with Kathleen Smith, Karen Hanmer, and Aude Gabory. Susie Cobbledick treats us her thoughts about the differences between the conservation of books versus other historical artifacts, and Devin Berkowitz presents an interview with Andrew Huot that touches on the nature of book conservation and its importance. Iris Nevins

offers us some great insight on how to conserve our time, and preserve the quality of our marbling, and Jeff Peachey helps us to conserve a bit of our bookbinding heritage in his "Binding Humor" cartoon. In the October issue, we will print one last cartoon in the series and invite you, dear readers, to caption it. We hope this issue helps you to appreciate the complex art of conservation, and those who are dedicated to preserving our past. Enjoy!



BY APPOINTMENT  
TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN  
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*Looking forward to seeing you at this year's Standards in San Francisco*



# Register for Standards Today!

Registration closes August 31<sup>st</sup>



San Francisco  
September 28-30, 2023

[guildofbookworkers.org/standards-san-francisco](https://guildofbookworkers.org/standards-san-francisco)

Photo by Michael Pedharido on Unsplash



# Letter from the Standards Chair

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IT IS SURREAL, BUT delightful to write that, if you have registered for Standards, I will see you NEXT MONTH in San Francisco. I am so indebted to Juliayn Coleman, The Hand Bookbinders of California, Arion Press, The San Francisco Center for the Book, and too many other Bay Area helpers who have been working so enthusiastically to welcome all of us to one of the world's truly great book towns. If you have not registered for Standards, we will keep registration open, space permitting, until August 31, and we'd love for you to join us!

Looking ahead, our 2024 seminar will take place November 7–9 in Providence, Rhode Island, at the beautiful Graduate Hotel. Formerly the Biltmore, the Graduate hosted GBW for Standards in 2004, and looks forward to welcoming us back.

After receiving the June *Newsletter*, a number of members reached out to me regarding auction donations. These items are so appreciated, and not just because they help us to raise critical funding for scholarships. The silent and live auctions at Standards provide a marketplace that really doesn't exist anywhere else. I have purchased some really cherished items through the auction, and donating items others can use is a great feeling, second only to the glee that comes from getting things out of my living space. To tap into this same joy, please use the Auction Donation QR code (facing page), or bring a pre-loved tool, book, or ephemera to San Francisco. Feel free to contact me at [standards@guildofbookworkers.org](mailto:standards@guildofbookworkers.org) with questions.

I'd like to sign off with a big thank you to our 2022 auction donors, a few short weeks before we get to do it all again.

With gratitude,  
Jennifer Pellecchia

## 2022 AUCTION DONORS

- |                                   |                             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • American Academy of Bookbinding | • Anonymous                 |
| • Ann Frellsen                    | • Atelier-Galerie A. Piroir |
|                                   | • Béatrice Coron            |

- |                       |                                  |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Bexx Caswell-Olson  | • Mary Baughman                  |
| • Bill Minter         | • Mary Uthuppuru                 |
| • Bridget McGraw      | • Minnesota Center for Book Arts |
| • Carrie Snyder       | • Monique Lallier                |
| • Chip Schilling      | • MP Bogan                       |
| • Claire Mazairczyk   | • NEDCC                          |
| • Coleen Curry        | • North Bennet Street School     |
| • David Lanning       | • Pergamena                      |
| • Deena Schnitman     | • Peter Geraty                   |
| • Don Glaister        | • Piper Head                     |
| • Eliza Lenz          | • Sam Feinstein                  |
| • Erin Fletcher       | • Siegel Leather                 |
| • Herramientas Grosso | • Susan Martin                   |
| • J. Franklin Mowery  | • Suzanne Moore                  |
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| • Karen Hanmer        | • Tatyana Bessmertnaya           |
| • Kim Norman          | • The Legacy Press               |
| • Kristen Wehner      | • Timothy Moore                  |
| • Larry Houston       | • Todd Pattison                  |
| • Linda Marshall      | • Yan Krasnopolsky               |
| • Linda Rollins       |                                  |
| • Marc Lamb           |                                  |

## STANDARDS 2023 SCHEDULE HIGHLIGHTS

### PRESENTATIONS

- **BRIEN BEIDLER** • Finishing Tool Making: An Economical Approach
- **STEPH RUE** • Paper, Books, Art, Community: My Journey with Hanji
- **GABBY COOKSEY** • Tattooing on Leather, a Journey into a New Decorative Technique
- **JEFF PEACHEY** • Fifty ways to reattach your boards

### VENDOR ROOM HOURS

- Thursday, September 28  
12:00 pm–5:00 pm
- Friday, September 29  
8:00 am–6:00 pm
- Saturday, September 30  
8:00 am–4:00 pm

### SPECIAL EVENTS

- **Thursday, September 28, 5:30–8:00 PM**  
OPENING RECEPTION at Arion Press  
1802 Hayes Street, The Presidio, San Francisco  
Buses will leave the hotel beginning at 5:00 pm and circle between Arion and the Hilton at regular intervals.
- **Friday, September 29, 7:00–9:00 PM**  
30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reception hosted by The American Academy of Bookbinding



## Letter from the Standards Chair Continued

American Bookbinders Museum

355 Clementina Street, San Francisco

The American Bookbinders Museum is a 15-minute walk from the Hilton.

### SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Guild of Book Workers offers sponsorship and donation opportunities in an effort to keep registration and banquet fees fixed and the seminar affordable. The following individuals and groups have pledged their support as of July 1<sup>st</sup>:

- Anonymous
- Arion Press
- J Hewit & Sons Ltd
- Mark Valentine, MD
- San Francisco Center for the Book

Please visit the GBW website or email Jennifer Pellecchia ([standards@guildofbookworkers.org](mailto:standards@guildofbookworkers.org)) for more information on becoming a 2023 Standards sponsor.

Midwest Chapter Chair, Lisa Muccigrosso, displays the panel that Erin Fletcher embroidered during her 2022 presentation, "Stitching through History: Embroidered Binding from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century to Today." In the background, Jeff Altepeter listens to Pat Olsen auction a basket of bread from the banquet while Jeanne Goodman entices the bidders with said breadbasket.



# Your Donations make a Difference



Register your 2023 Standards Auction Donation at  
[gbw.formstack.com/forms/auctiondonation2023](http://gbw.formstack.com/forms/auctiondonation2023)

**San Francisco**  
September 28-30, 2023

Photo by Chang Duong on Unsplash



# Chapter Reports

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## DELAWARE VALLEY

CO-CHAIRS: Valeria Kremser & Kristin Balmer

The Delaware Valley Chapter of the Guild of Book Workers invites members and nonmembers to participate in our 2023 collaborative project: “Whisper to Me: a conversation through time.” In 1773, Phillis Wheatley became the first African American to publish a book of poetry, making this year the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the publication. In celebration of the anniversary, the Chapter has commissioned the 2022–23 Philadelphia Youth Poet Laureate, Telicia Darius, to write a poem in response.

Participants are invited to create new work to celebrate these two poets. These works will be exhibited at The Historical Society of Pennsylvania in November 2023, in conjunction with programming celebrating Phillis Wheatley.

Participants must be a member of Delaware Valley Chapter, or, if non GBW member, pay an entrance fee of \$20 in to receive the poem and participate in the exhibition.

For more information: [dvc-gbw.org/whisper-to-me](http://dvc-gbw.org/whisper-to-me)  
*Blue* exhibition hosted by a The City of Philadelphia Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy was exhibited from May 1 to July 15<sup>th</sup> 2023. There was an artist walk and talk on June 9<sup>th</sup>. Images can be seen of the exhibit and event at [dvc-gbw.org/blue](http://dvc-gbw.org/blue)

On June 27<sup>th</sup> we had a zoom *Pop-up Shadow Boxes Workshop* with Kit Davey.

## MIDWEST

CHAIR: Lisa Muccigrosso

Our Annual Meeting will take place on August 12<sup>th</sup>, at The Bindery in Milwaukee, WI. During the day, Zach Lifton and Daniel Ehn of The Bindery lead a workshop on Vintage Mechanized Processes in Bookbinding, and GERALYN LANCE leads a workshop on paper marbling for all levels of experience. At the Annual Meeting that evening, we'll cover the year in review for our chapter and what's on the horizon. If you can't make it, look for a recap on the chapter website after the event!

Our virtual exhibition *Modern Renaissance* opened this summer; you can find it under the Exhibits tab at [midwestgbw.wordpress.com](http://midwestgbw.wordpress.com). Come see new and recent works by Kristin Ziegler, Kathleen Harrison, Perry Cadwallader, Jennifer Pellecchia, Robert Hanmer, Suzanne Glemot, Judy Lynn, Karen Hanmer, Joanne Kluba, and Charles Wisserman.

We will elect a Programming/Events Chair or Co-chairs and Chapter Co-chair in August via electronic ballot. Please be on the lookout for voting information in your email inbox.

## POTOMAC

CHAIR: Shannon Kerner

For the second time we participated in the Creative Crafts Council Biennial Show. Two of our members were juried into the Book Arts category of the exhibition at Strathmore, Rockville MD. Matt Leedham and Paige Billin-Frye, whose works were selected, hosted a table at the Meet the Maker day, representing themselves and the Guild of Book Workers. Their works, including a long view of Matt's piece, *Long Days/Long Nights*, which was selected for the Excellence in Book Arts award, can be spotted in the center's Instagram reel of June 2. [bit.ly/gbw-art013](http://bit.ly/gbw-art013)

The chapter looks forward to sharing the results of our Spring Swap, with the theme *Wildflowers*. With our Chair, Shannon Kerner, moving out of the region, we look forward to holding an election in the Fall.

Beth Curren attended *Paper and Book Intensive*, which met at Oxbow for the first time in three years. Look for her report in our next *Newsletter*.

## SOUTHEAST CHAPTER

CHAIR: Kim Norman

The Southeast Chapter is still accepting nominations and self-nominations for the following Board positions. These volunteer opportunities are great ways to become involved in the Chapter. Please submit nominations to [southeast@guildofbookworkers.org](mailto:southeast@guildofbookworkers.org).

Nominations will remain open until enough candidates are identified for the offices.

CHAIR (OR CO-CHAIRS)

- Responsible for the smooth and effective success of the SE Chapter
- Coordinates Chapter activities with other board officers
- Communicates with Chapter membership
- Represents the Chapter at meetings of the GBW Board of Directors
- Schedules and moderates quarterly conference calls or meetings
- Attends GBW Board of Directors annual meeting at Standards Conference
- Attends Chapter chair annual meeting at Standards Conference

SECRETARY

- Receives and manages all types of Chapter mail
- Takes minutes during Chapter meetings
- Writes (or assigns) reports of Chapter events
- Maintains organization of Chapter membership list
- Collects permanent records and materials for the GBW Archives

# Chapter Reports Continued

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EVENTS/WORKSHOP COORDINATOR: COORDINATES AND WORKS  
WITH A POSSIBLE SUBCOMMITTEE

- Plans annual Chapter programs and events with other Board officers
- Organizes, convenes, and implements workshops as possible
- Organizes and implements physical and online Chapter exhibitions as possible
- Provides Chapter event refreshments whenever needed

If you would like to sign-up for our GBW-SE Chapter listserv, please email your request to [southeast@guildofbookworkers.org](mailto:southeast@guildofbookworkers.org).

Thank you!



## GBW Annual Report July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023: Delaware Valley Chapter

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### DELAWARE VALLEY

#### OFFICERS

CO-CHAIRS: Valeria Kremser & Kristin Balmer

VICE CHAIR AND WORKSHOP COORDINATOR:  
Tara O'Brien

TREASURER: Lisa Scarpello

EXHIBITION CO-CHAIRS: Ruth Scott Blackson and  
Jennifer Rosner

SECRETARY: Rosae Reeder

NEWSLETTER: Sophia Dahab and Karen Lightner

Webmaster: Val Kremser

#### MEMBERSHIP

We currently have 83 members

#### FINANCIAL

Our balance as of June 31, 2024: \$3,142

#### WORKSHOPS

Still hosting workshops online.

June 2023: *Pop-up Shadow Boxes* with Kit Davey, zoom meeting (Fast, Friendly, Free Workshop)

#### NEWSLETTER

We sent out two digital newsletters this year, Winter 2022 and Spring 2023.

#### EXHIBITIONS/PROJECTS

*Whisper to Me: A Conversation Through Time* project announcement for 2023 exhibition.

*Blue* project March 2022 online exhibit at [dvc-gbw.org/blue](http://dvc-gbw.org/blue)

*Blue* exhibition opened at The City of Philadelphia Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy. We had 32 participants and the exhibit was from May 1 to July 15<sup>th</sup> 2023. The Exhibit included an exemplifying section about the guild and artist books, and a section on past projects. There was an artist walk and talk on June 9<sup>th</sup>.

We had a valentine mail art exchange in February 2023. Seventeen members participated and it was a lot of fun!

#### WEB

We launched the *Blue* online exhibit. Created a virtual version of the in person exhibit and archived the newsletters. [dvc-gbw.org](http://dvc-gbw.org)

#### FUN

In January, 2022, we hosted our annual bowling party in South Philadelphia.

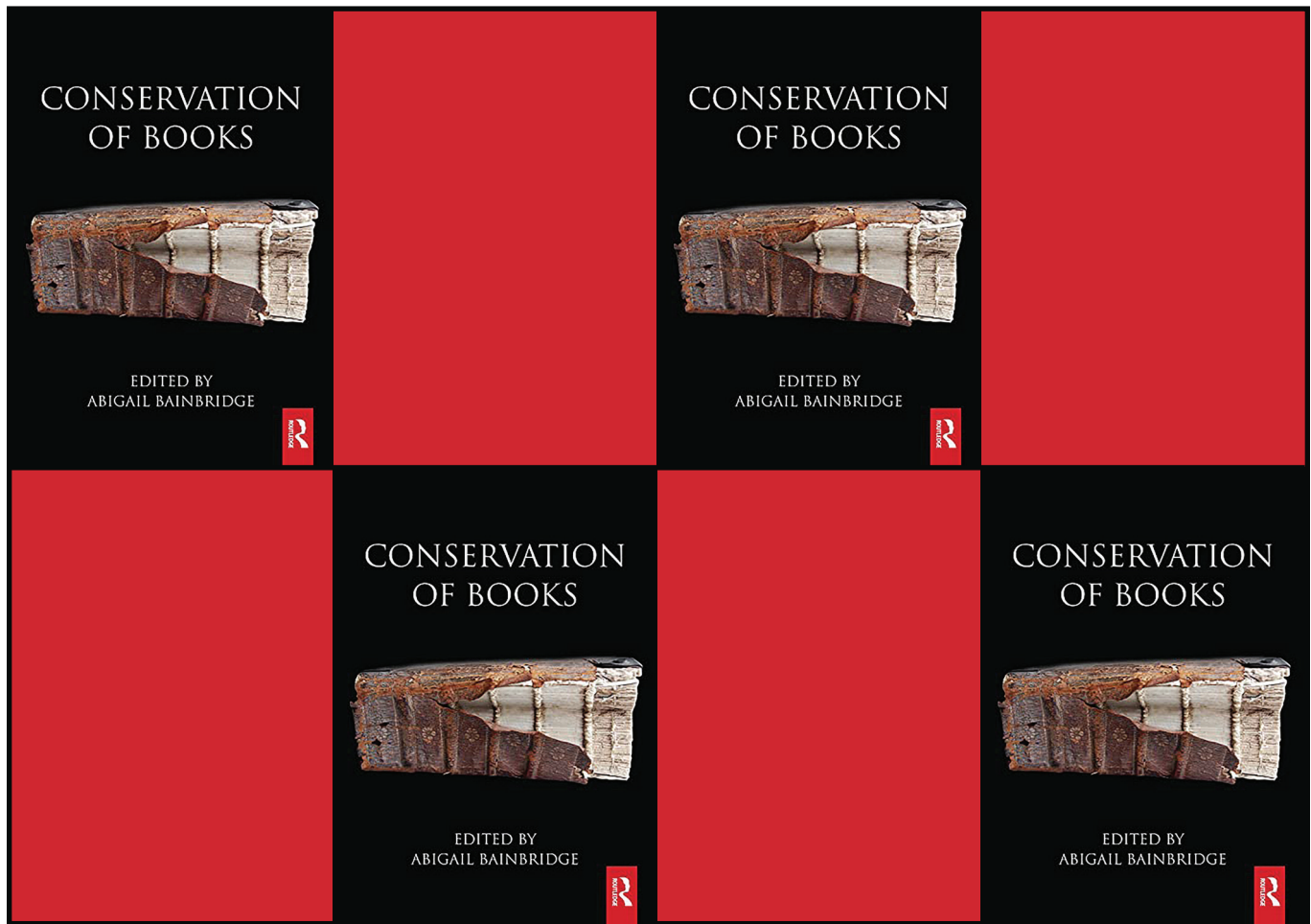
In March, 2023, three members took a trip to New York City to see Mindy Dubansky's exhibition "Pattern and Flow: A Golden Age of American Decorated Paper, 1960s to 2000s" at the Grolier Club.

#### STANDARDS

Val and Kristin attended Standards in Atlanta, October 2022.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed their time and energy to our chapter.





*Conservation of Books*, edited by Abigail Bainbridge, London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2023.

## BOOK REVIEW

# *Conservation of Books*

Reviewed by Barbara Adams Hebard

**T**HIS OUTSTANDING VOLUME CAN be regarded as the most comprehensive single source on the topic of book conservation in the English language. The depth and breadth of the topic, as covered here, surpasses the many other resources available on book conservation. In her introduction, Bainbridge notes that although some of the authors in this volume have composed prior publications, “the argument for squeezing everything into one volume is to have an overview of all the material in one place, up-to-date to the same point, written with the same goals.” Indeed, GBW members would have to gather multiple reference books and articles—in what would most likely be a vain effort—to match the compilation here. The cost of that effort, both in time and money, would far exceed the price of this superior book.

Although crafted in English, *Conservation of Books* is international in its scope. The chapters are written by conservation specialists and conservation scientists from 19 countries. While many English-language sources on bookbinding focus mainly on European and North American styles, here you will find valuable information on traditional book structures from around the world. Well-executed technical drawings and black and white photographs illustrate the structures. The history of each binding style is carefully described, and will aid conservators in dating books and making repair decisions.

Knowledge of the materials from which books are made and how those materials degrade is vital in making sound repair plans. *Conservation of Books*, written by a team of conservation specialists with years of experience

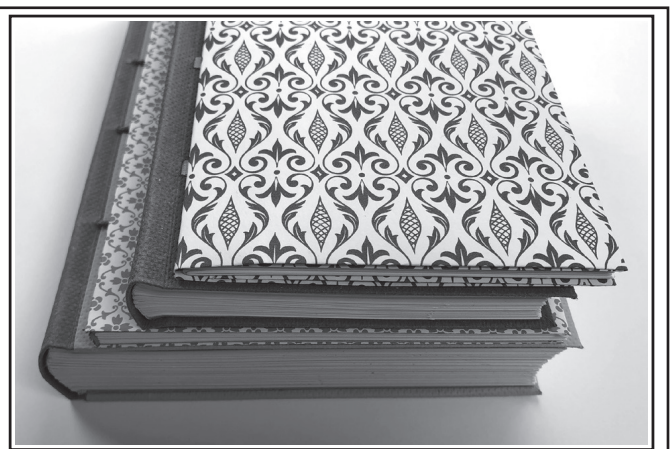
in the field, whose skills were honed at internationally renowned institutions housing world-class collections, provides a plethora of data. Readers will find sections headed “Bookbinding Materials and Their Degradation,” “Approaches to Conservation,” “Preventive Conservation,” and “Techniques of Conservation,” all of which can serve in framing a repair or preservation strategy. Of special note, this volume takes on the theoretical foundations of conservation as well: exploring what and how to treat, and considering the ethical, cultural, and economic entailments of treatment. These explorations and considerations should prove helpful to conservators working with colleagues such as librarians or curators as their organizations engage in Collection Surveys and develop or modify Preservation Plans.

Since preventive conservation must be a part of any Preservation Plan, the topic is thoroughly addressed here. The chapter “Introduction to Preventive Conservation” gives guidelines on disaster planning, training and outreach, and documentation, in addition to sustainability and other topics. Chapters on preservation enclosures, storage and transportation of books, as well as exhibition and digitization, provide useful action steps for preventive measures.

*Conservation of Books* also boasts impressive bibliographies in support of the chapters, allowing those who wish to pursue further details to do so with ease. As mentioned above, having this resource will save GBW members time and money as they accumulate a library of reference material necessary to stay abreast with current conservation practices.

To accompany the book, a year-long series of events will celebrate its publication. Those events will be listed at [bainbridgeconservation.com/cob-events](http://bainbridgeconservation.com/cob-events).

BARBARA ADAMS HEBARD was trained in bookbinding by Mark Esser at the North Bennet Street School. She is the Conservator at Boston College for both the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies and the Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History. She is a Fellow of The International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, a Professional Associate of The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works and a long-time member of GBW.



## KAREN HANMER BOOK ARTS

*offers workshops and private instruction focusing on a solid foundation in traditional binding skills.*

### 2023 WORKSHOPS

#### SEPT 8-13 **Leather Binding IV: Advanced topics**

In person in the Chicago-area studio,  
Six all-day sessions

#### OCT 15-NOV 5 **Paper Bindings: Small, Medium, Large**

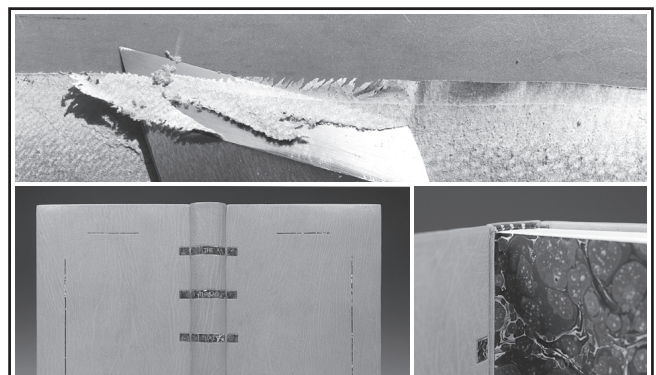
Online, Sundays, 4 sessions

#### OCT 10-DEC 19 **Leather Binding IV: Advanced topics**

Online, Tuesdays, 11 sessions

#### ONGOING Private instruction online and in person

The online format is a series of live tutorials via Zoom. The tutorials are recorded for registered students to rewatch as needed, or to view in lieu of the live sessions. The recordings are available for 90 days. Workshop fees include all supplies + postage.



FULL DESCRIPTIONS & REGISTRATION INFORMATION AT  
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# HURRY UP AND

# MARBLE

BY IRIS NEVINS

**M**ARBLING IS SOMETHING YOU do not have much time to dawdle about with, once you lay down your paints. A lot of terrible things can happen to ruin your paper, if you wait too long to lay it down. This applies to both acrylics and watercolors.

Many times when I have taught, beginners especially, the inclination is to take some time, looking, thinking, “what color goes down next,” or “wait—maybe purple doesn't go well with green...wait a minute while I think about what colors to use.” Then the marbling gremlins decide they are going to act up. What could possibly happen?

One awful thing that happens with acrylic paints, or at least all the ones I have used, is that a sort of skin can start to develop as the acrylic base is exposed to air. It can also start to “crackle” as it dries out. Or little jagged shapes can form, which do not comb out. Better to plan ahead what colors to use, and work swiftly.

With watercolors, tiny dust particles, which are always in the air, or on your clothing or skin, can fall into the tray. This leaves those dreaded white spots (assuming one is using white or light colored paper). Somehow we don't see them before printing the paper, and we cringe afterwards. For some reason acrylic is not as prone to this spottiness. The longer you take, and especially if you walk around and stir up more invisible dust, the worse the effect. The quicker you lay down your paints, make your pattern and print the paper, the less of a problem this is.

Another problem is that certain colors may start to sink, especially those with a high specific gravity, like cadmiums. In plain-talk this means that they weigh a lot, more than the other pigments, and often are heavier than the size bath they are floating on. They will stay on the surface a short while, and they still may appear a deep color, like a red... but if you delay printing your paper, some of the pigment may have started to sink. You will only see this when you print your paper and what you thought was deep red is a pinkish liver color! So act more quickly if this happens.

Timing is very important in marbling, to catch all the paint and print the paper at the very right moment to get the best results. I have told students, work FASTER... and at first they must have thought I was mean. But how quickly they find out it is the best way.

IRIS NEVINS is a self-taught marbler, and began marbling in 1978 as a hobby. Much to her surprise, bookbinders started buying her papers, and it became her full time career. She has written four books, plus reprinted a facsimile edition of *Nicholson's Manual Of The Art Of Bookbinding*, with 18 marbled samples tipped into the marbling section.

Iris also is a Celtic Harpist, and Guitarist. She plays professionally, teaches both instruments and builds harps. She also makes Ancient Style and Celtic Jewelry.

# “LINKING THE PAST, FORGING THE FUTURE” SUMMARY

By Katarina Stiller

IN POPULAR CULTURE, SUCH as *Harry Potter* or *Game of Thrones*, books holding forbidden or dangerous knowledge are often depicted chained to their shelves as a (usually futile) attempt to keep them out of reach from a determined protagonist. The reality behind historic chained books is a bit more complicated.



Chained bindings in library. Jenny Weston, “Last of the Great Chained Libraries,” 2013, [medievalfragments.wordpress.com/2013/05/10/the-last-of-the-great-chained-libraries](http://medievalfragments.wordpress.com/2013/05/10/the-last-of-the-great-chained-libraries).

In February 2023 the American Bookbinders Museum hosted a panel discussion with Kathleen Smith, Karen Hanmer, and Aude Gabory to discuss their collaboration on exploring the history and motivation of chained medieval bindings, their conservation, and the replication of historic techniques to produce a teaching model. The inspiration for this project was an original chained 15<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript of the biblical commentaries of Nicholas of Lyra (Stanford Libraries Manuscript Collection MSS codex Mo413 FF BB). The talk showcased a fascinating collaboration between specialties that furthered an exploration and discussion of chained bindings.

Kathleen Smith, a curator of Germanic collections and medieval studies at Stanford Libraries, began the webinar on the broader historical context of chained bindings. She detailed how chains were used to fasten books to lecterns and shelves in late medieval and early modern European libraries. It is difficult to say how widespread this practice was, since chains have often since been removed and the books rebound, but enough examples survive to indicate that they were in common use in medieval monastic libraries.

Kathleen went on to discuss how modern perceptions of chained bindings often invoke ideas of the containment or restriction of forbidden or dangerous knowledge, but the contents of the Nicholas of Lyra manuscript were never perceived as such. This text was Nicholas’ commentaries on the Bible’s psalms and was a fairly popular medieval text.



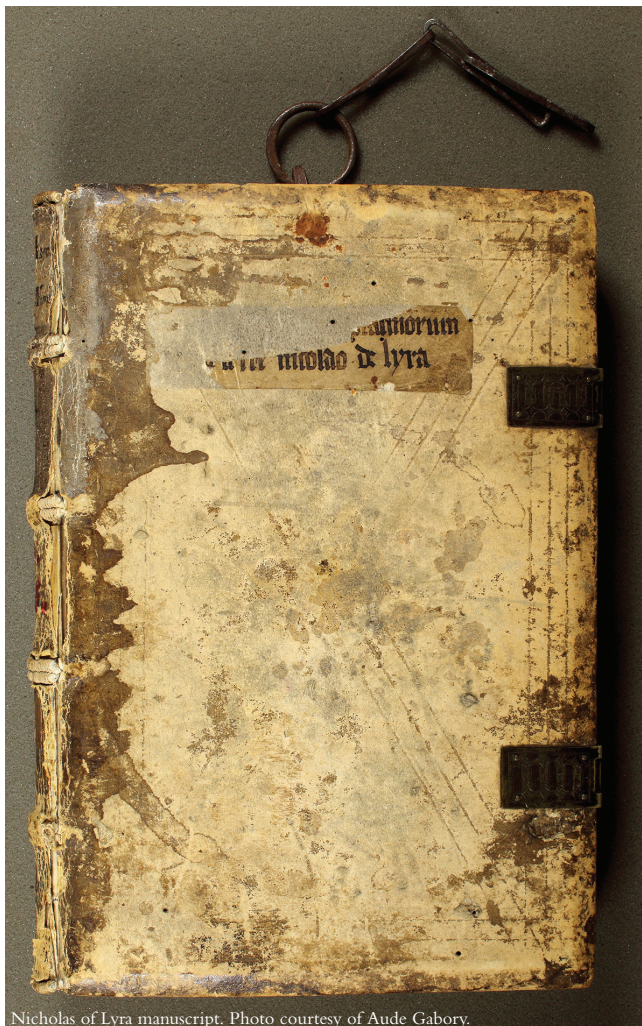
Chaining books might have served as a method of preventing theft and restricting access, though it may also have been a form of enabling access by indicating specific locations for individual books in communal areas. Rather like a yellow pages book kept chained for easy access in a telephone booth, medieval libraries were striving to balance security with access for a community of users. Although the approach of riveting chains to covers has long since fallen out of fashion, modern libraries continue to grapple with this balance. Kathleen noted how examining the Lyra manuscript and its model helped with the understanding of chained bindings having this dual function of security and access.

Karen Hanmer, a book artist and educator, was contacted by Kathleen Smith to make a model of Stanford's 15<sup>th</sup>-century chain binding. The model would enable handling by users while reducing wear on the original manuscript. The intention of the model was to enable exploration of a chained binding in general rather than be an exact reproduction of the Lyra book. Karen based the model specifications on high resolution images and detailed notes supplied by Kathleen regarding the historic book. The most noticeable change between the model and original was

scale, with the model being much smaller—about the size of a “hardback Stephen King novel”—and the original being a foot tall. This reduction in size would be easier for users to handle.

Karen walked through the making process with each slide, and it was apparent how having this step-by-step process detailing the making of a chained medieval binding could add to the understanding of bookbinding history for scholars. Karen often drew comparisons to how historic steps might be different today for a modern fine binding. For example, the original book's endbands only have a couple of tie-downs securing them in place, but Karen opted to tie down at each gathering for a more secure hold. She noted how the additional bulk of the chain connection, concentrated at the head of the book, could cause uneven stress to the binding over time. This was the perfect moment in the presentation to return to looking at the original manuscript with Aude Gabory, to examine how it has held up over the centuries.

Aude Gabory, a book conservator at Stanford Libraries, discussed the examination of the Nicholas of Lyra manuscript, its conservation concerns, and how it was treated. She emphasized how knowing the mechanics and



Nicholas of Lyra manuscript. Photo courtesy of Aude Gabory.



Nicholas of Lyra model. Photo courtesy of Karen Hanmer.





Lifting of Lyra manuscript pastedown fragment to reveal manuscript waste below. Photo courtesy of Aude Gabory.

reasoning behind an object's making helps in its conservation, as this gives clues on what its intended function was and how it deteriorates over time. The structural components of the Lyra book were carefully broken down with each slide, using visuals to clearly define the book terminology being discussed. The manuscript is frequently used in instruction and teaching, which has naturally contributed to wear over time, including broken sewing supports and small tears to pages. The broken supports, along with the book's other failed attachment points, meant that the front board was at great risk of becoming completely detached. Aude pointed out previous conservation repairs made in 2010, which continue to hold up even though new areas of damage have since appeared. Her own thought process and motivations behind the book's most recent treatment campaign in 2019 built upon this 2010 campaign and involved careful consultation with other Stanford conservators and curators.

Aude described the various treatment steps, including the insertion of Japanese paper hinges, which enabled the front board to remain securely attached to the textblock while still providing visibility to the original book structure. The front pastedown was released to both assist in repairs as well as to make more data available to researchers by making the manuscript waste underneath the pastedown visible. Repairs that were durable, reversible, and aesthetically appropriate were the aim with this treatment. Each treatment decision

involved a careful consideration of the likely impact on the object in the future.

Finding balance and building upon deliberate, collaborative thinking was emphasized throughout the talk. Throughout the history of libraries, security has been balanced with providing access for a community of users. The preservation of historic bookbinding techniques and original materials must be weighed with the needs and goals of present users for the use and access of a research library object.

Scholarship, craft, and conservation converge in order to conserve the original manuscript as well as to inspire further research and educational opportunities. Having a chained book model enables a new perspective of interaction for scholars and serves as a teaching tool to help provide further insight into library and book history. It also helps support the conservation of the Nicholas of Lyra manuscript by reducing direct handling and wear. Aude pointed out that



“there is a long chain of responsibility for the care of this book,” and this is certainly evident in both this collaboration as well as in thinking about future interactions with the manuscript and its model.

KATARINA STILLER is an Andrew W. Mellon graduate fellow, specializing in library and archives conservation with a minor in paper conservation. She has most recently worked with the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts and the University of Michigan Library as a graduate intern. She will be continuing her training with the University of Iowa Libraries as a third-year intern.

#### LINKING THE PAST, FORGING THE FUTURE PANELISTS

##### AUDE GABORY, BOOK CONSERVATOR, STANFORD LIBRARIES

Aude graduated from the Bookbinding program at North Bennet Street School in Boston and trained in conservation at the Boston Athenaeum, the Newberry Library and the Art Institute of Chicago. She was a Conservation specialist at the University of Chicago libraries before joining Stanford in January 2016.

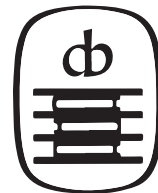
##### KAREN HANMER, BOOK ARTIST AND EDUCATOR

Karen Hanmer's artist-made books are physical manifestations of personal essays intertwining history, culture and politics. She utilizes both traditional and contemporary book structures, and the work is often playful in content or format. Hanmer exhibits widely, and her work is included in collections ranging from The British Library and the Library of Congress to Stanford University and Graceland. She has served on the editorial board of *The Bonefolder*, as Exhibitions Chair for the Guild of Book Workers, and as frequent exhibition curator and juror. She offers workshops and private instruction focusing on a solid foundation in traditional binding skills. [karenhanmer.com](http://karenhanmer.com)

##### KATHLEEN SMITH, CURATOR, GERMANIC COLLECTIONS & MEDIEVAL STUDIES, STANFORD LIBRARIES

Kathleen received her MLIS from the University of Texas at Austin and her PhD in Germanic Languages & Literatures from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Before coming to Stanford, she worked in the Research and Development Department of the State and University Library in Göttingen, Germany.

##### KATARINA STILLER, GRADUATE FELLOW, WINTERTHUR/ UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE PROGRAM IN ART CONSERVATION



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# What Makes Us Different

By Susie Cobbledick

**I**S BOOK CONSERVATION ESSENTIALLY different from other conservation subdisciplines? I think it is. Conservators of paintings, photographs, prints, and sculptures generally work on materials that are viewed, not touched, and seldom have moving parts. Book conservators expect the objects they treat to be not only viewed, but also touched, handled, and operated, especially in a library context. The moving parts of a book are central to its character. Conservators of costume address some similar issues, since they work with materials that had once been handled and worn, but they view that functionality as belonging to the past and no longer a part of the costume's current purpose. In contrast, you might say that the book equivalent of Kim-Kardashian-wearing-Marilyn-Monroe's dress is the norm for us; a scholar can come to my library and use our rare books in much the same way that their original owners used them (assuming they weren't using them as doorstops and writing desks).

And what about restoration? It certainly has a place in other conservation subdisciplines, but I would argue that it is almost impossible to avoid in book conservation precisely because of the machine character of the book, its moving parts, and the expectation that these parts will operate smoothly under the hands of a user. Walk through an art museum, and you will see sculptures lacking arms and noses: no problem. The works still function visually. A book missing its covers, on the other hand, *is* a problem. Its textblock is liable to damage, and a reader will find it

difficult to use. Some books, of interest for their sewings or bindings, are seldom opened and can be left with broken backs, detached boards, missing spines, or ripped paper, but the average volume in a library context will work better and survive longer if all of its parts are in place and functional. I do not believe that we will ever cease using books to access texts—they are simply too good at helping us store and retrieve information. It is wonderful that scholars now acknowledge the importance of the book's materiality as an object, but it is still also a holder of text to be read and should work as such.

If we accept that we sometimes need to act as restorers, how do we go about it? Should the new spine, board, endband, sewing, etc be obvious additions to the original binding? Or should the focus be on making them as visually sympathetic as possible with the original components? How do you decide what a restored component should look like? In the case of a publisher's binding, the appearance of missing components can easily be ascertained by looking at another copy of that edition, but should you then try to execute a facsimile replacement?

I do not believe there are definitive answers to these questions, but I do hope that we think about these issues as we make treatment decisions. I certainly thought about them when I executed the book treatment that I am going to describe below.

The book in question was donated to the Peter H Raven Library of the Missouri Botanical Garden, where I work



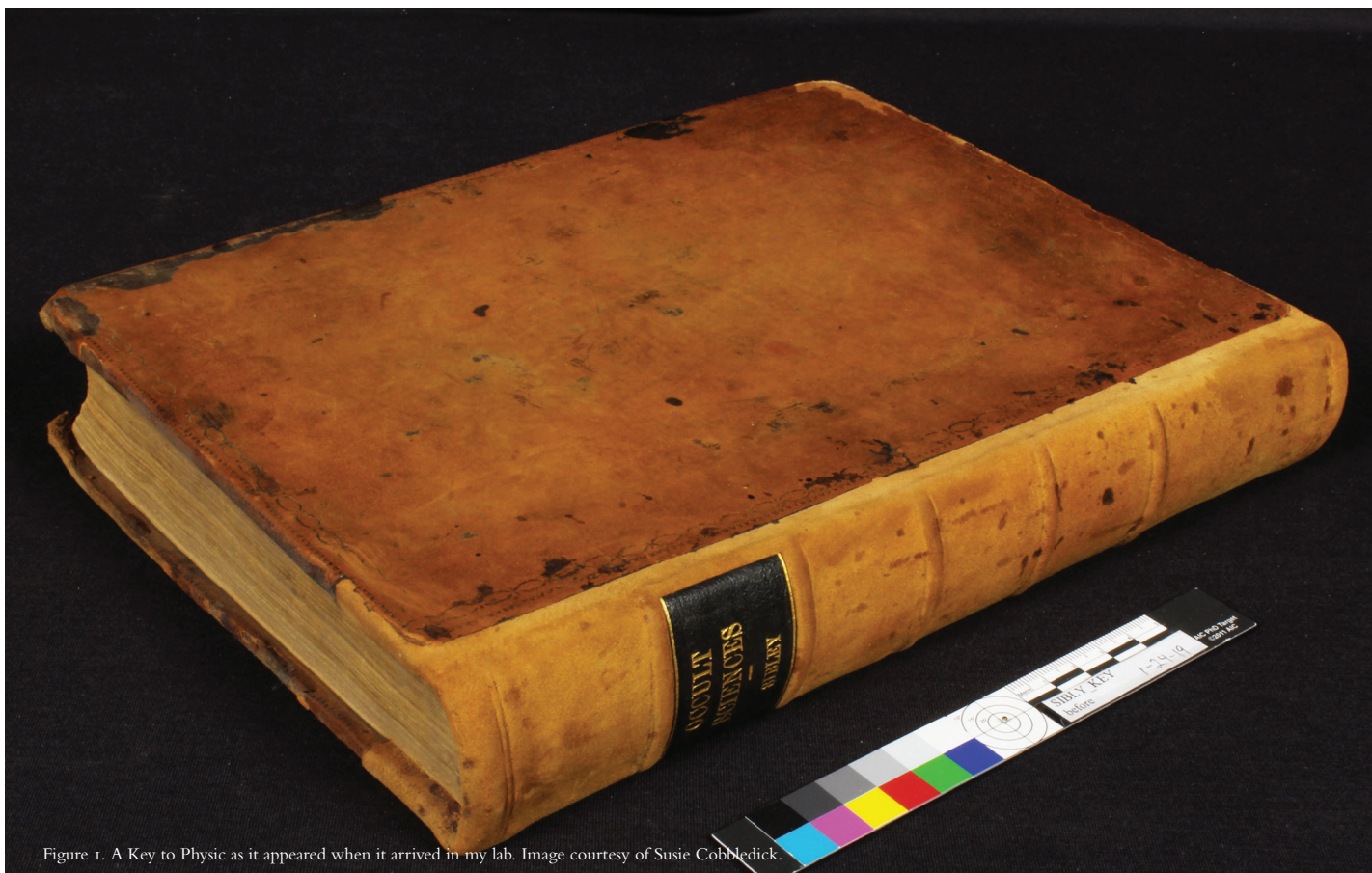


Figure 1. *A Key to Physic* as it appeared when it arrived in my lab. Image courtesy of Susie Cobbledick.

as a book conservator. It is a late-eighteenth century work of pseudo-science by Ebenezer Sibly called *A Key to Physic, and the Occult Sciences*. When the book arrived in my lab for assessment and treatment, it clearly had a spine that post-dated its other binding elements, apparently a replacement for an original spine that had gone missing (Figure 1). The book functioned well enough, because even though the cords were broken, the replacement spine held the boards in place. I could have mended some paper, made a box, and sent the book on its way, but that replacement spine bothered me. It was made of bulky suede and was visually distracting. It simply looked wrong on this book. I made the decision to include a new, more sympathetic reback in this volume's treatment. I told myself that a new reback would also allow me to reline the back and reattach the boards in a more robust manner, but my decision (if I am honest with myself) was largely driven by aesthetics. Was this a valid motivation? I thought so. I still think so.

When I add new elements to a book, I want them to merge visually with the original components. I would argue that the book's user should be able to have a unified aesthetic impression of the book that is close to the book's intended appearance, which is why it is so important to keep as many original binding elements as possible.

The boards of *A Key to Physic* were bound in reverse calf, so I also used a reversed leather for my new spine. I chose a

label color (red) that was appropriate for the time period and arranged the information on the label in a late-eighteenth-century way, with the author's name first. Since the decoration on the covers was in blind, I decided to execute much of the spine decoration in blind as well, with gold on the label (Figure 2).

There are a few important matters to consider when evaluating the treatment decisions I made. First, I had no idea what the original spine may have looked like. It was not easy finding other examples of reverse calf binding to use as guides. What information I was able to find indicated that this material was typically used on utilitarian, stationary bindings, so leaving the spine largely blank was an option, but I decided it was more likely that this printed monograph would have been a long-term resident of a library shelf and needed a labeled, decorated spine to fit in. Second, when it came to finishing tools, I used what I had (as do most of us), and I chose tools that looked more right than not. What I came up with is at best a pastiche of a late eighteenth-century spine. No bibliographer will be able to trace these tools to a London binder's shop circa 1798. Third, it is thankfully impossible for a future book historian to mistake my spine for the original. My treatment records should prevent any confusion if the visual clues aren't strong enough.

I have described my thought process in the hopes of generating conversations among my colleagues. The more



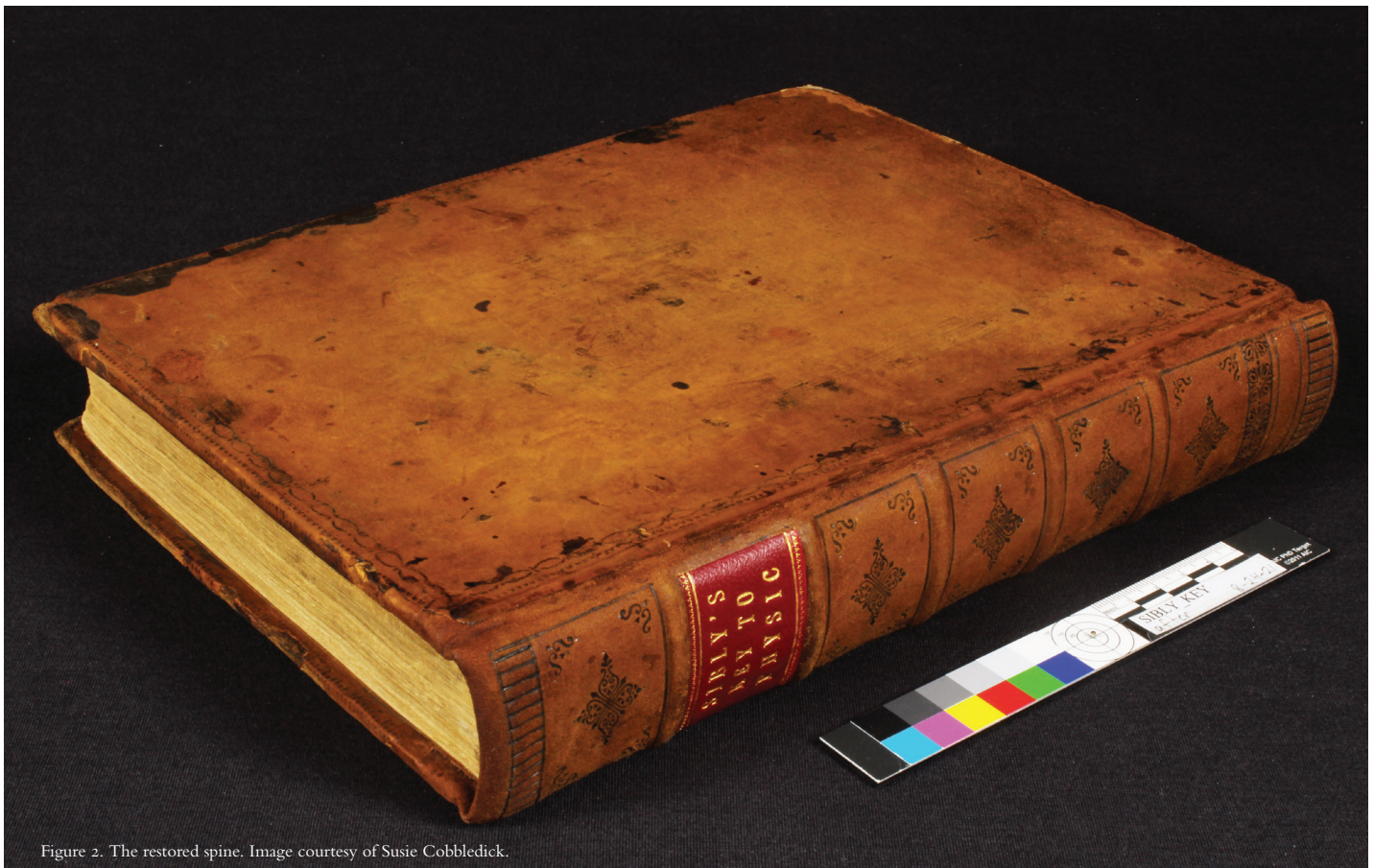


Figure 2. The restored spine. Image courtesy of Susie Cobbledick.

we talk about and reflect upon our treatment decisions and approaches, the more effective they will be—effective for users of texts, students of bindings, and historians of books.

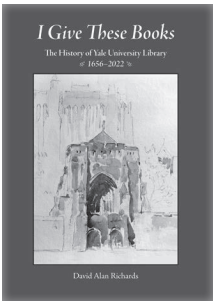
SUSIE COBBLEDICK is a bench-trained book conservator with a background in librarianship and the arts. She is currently the Ellerman Book and Paper Conservator at the Peter H. Raven Library of the Missouri Botanical Garden in Saint Louis. She is active in both the Midwest Regional Conservation Guild and the Guild of Book Workers.

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A CONVERSATION WITH

# ANDREW HUOT

*by Devin Berkowitz*

**I**N THE FASCINATING REALM of book arts, where restoration and creativity intertwine, Andrew Huot stands out as a particularly renowned creator. His path into book conservation reveals the complexities of preservation and repair, and it exemplifies the profound allure of book arts. But what exactly is book conservation, and why is it so vital? Mr. Huot presented a few ideas in a recent interview.

Andrew Huot is a longtime conservator, bookbinder, and book artist. He works in private practice restoring and preserving books for individuals as well as institutions, including the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and the Wagner Free Institute of Science. The world of book arts is not one that many are familiar with, so the path to such a profession is bound to be unique. Mr. Huot stated that he didn't really "get into" book arts but rather "fell into it." Evidently, you don't choose book arts, they choose you. He started out as an art major but later followed a friend's recommendation to participate in a workshop on book arts, where he learned skills like printing, illustrating, and typing. He explains, "I fell in love with the process, and the technical aspects really appealed to me. I never really turned back, so I started making my own artwork, learning the craft and working with others." Spurred on by his newfound passion, he began to work for a small business in Portland, Oregon. Soon after, he started working at libraries doing book repair and conservation, before heading back to The University of the Arts in

Philadelphia to get his Masters in book arts. Around this time, Mr. Huot encountered The Guild of Book Workers for the first time. He began to attend its conferences, building a relationship he would continue to develop throughout the rest of his career.

Nevertheless, the underlying question remains: What is book conservation, and why is it important? Andrew Huot explained, "Generally, when I come across a book, the main problems are the boards have become detached, or the spine has come off, there may be tears on the inside, and the way the pages are all held together may have failed. Depending on what the book needs, we try to address the issues we need to without changing too much." According to Andrew Huot, conservation is a lengthy process consisting of lifting, scraping, delaminating, and repairing. A simple repair can take fifteen or twenty minutes, but the majority take two to three hours. The conservation of a book in particularly troubling shape can even take six hours or more. However, contrary to what one might think, book repair is not tearing apart old materials to create a more modern product. In fact, Mr. Huot said that book conservators are "really aware of the history of the item and try to maintain that as much as possible."

This historical element distinguishes book restoration from other forms of book arts. Indeed, Mr. Huot argues that a book is intrinsically tied to its history, a feature that renders it incredibly culturally significant. According to Mr. Huot, "The great thing about working with historical



items is that you can sort of lengthen its lifetime or give it a new life." He believes that books are very personal items, and there is always a reason they are put together the way they are. He stated, "Most book conservators I know spend a lot of time making historical models or figuring out how the book was put together and why. Was it the materials available? Was it the economics, the speed, or the time you had to do it? What pressures were put on you as you were trying to build this thing?" The answers to these questions can be determined in an endless number of ways. There is no singular "right" way to repair a book, because every conservator will approach a problem with their own style and interpretation. Ultimately, Mr. Huot says, the most important aspect of book conservation is keeping the end goal in mind while maintaining flexibility. He also describes the conservation process as a "small conversation" in which you can create a sense of intimacy with the object you are working with.

Technicalities aside, it is essential to understand that book arts are not just a physical practice, but also a tight-knit community of like-minded people. As Mr. Huot said, "There's not many of us, so if you want to talk about this stuff, you have to find the people who will listen to you." For example, a Guild of Book Workers conference is typically attended by about 100 or 150 people, so

recognizing familiar faces and building relationships comes easily. Mr. Huot emphasized that he has formed countless friendships with people he has encountered throughout his career, to whom he goes for advice, feedback, or even just admiring each other's work. He continued, "One of the biggest things for me was getting involved with the Guild of Book Workers. When I started out, it really gave me a community. It gave me people to connect with and talk to. The conferences, the *Journal*, and the *Newsletter* have held so much good information to help me build on that."

Although Mr. Huot works primarily as a book conservator, he also takes the time to teach others about his craft. He leads workshops in a variety of book arts, including binding and conservation. His workshops can run anywhere from a day to an entire week. He has taught at schools, libraries, archives, and museums. Andrew Huot encourages all those who want to get more involved in book arts to engage in such workshops and reach out to local and national organizations like the Guild of Book Workers.

DEVIN BERKOWITZ is a junior at the Spence School in New York City. She is interested in journalism, literature, and writing. She is interning with the Guild this summer to pursue her love of books and learn from other bookbinders.



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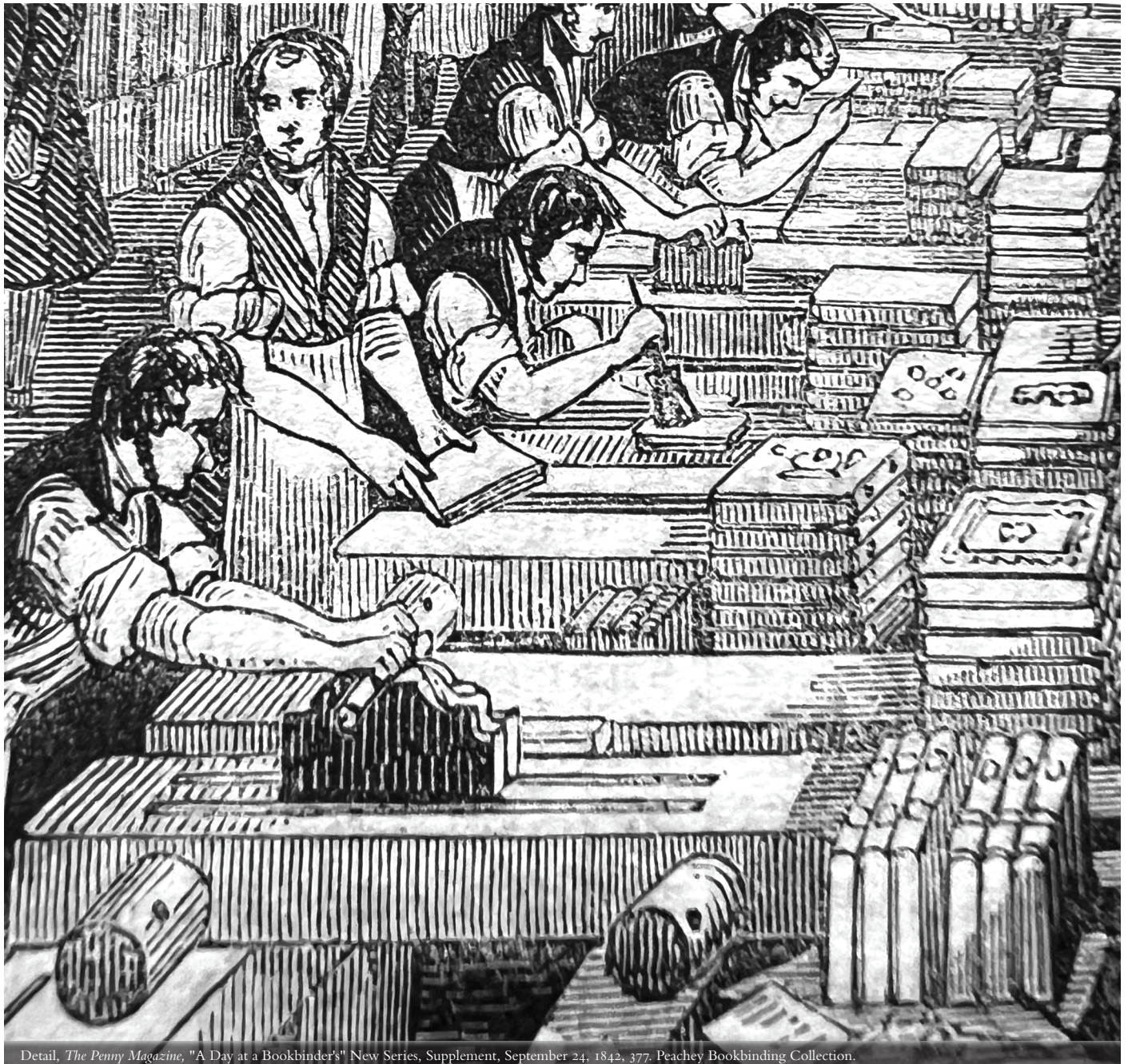
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# Binding Humor

Caption by Jeff Peachey



Detail, *The Penny Magazine*, "A Day at a Bookbinder's" New Series, Supplement, September 24, 1842, 377. Peachey Bookbinding Collection.

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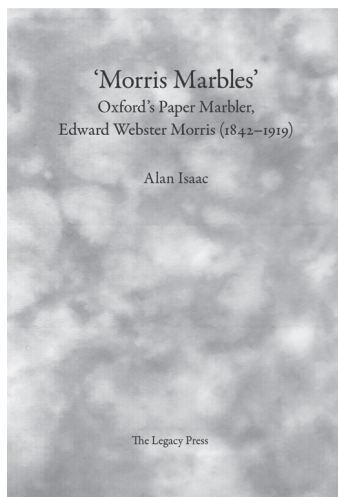
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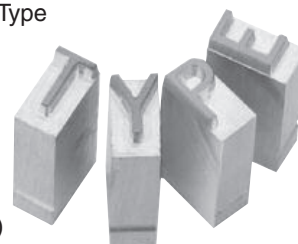
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