



**Queensland  
Bookbinders'  
Guild**

# NEWSLETTER

*Promote, foster, and practise the art of bookbinding in its traditional form and  
embrace the related graphic and kindred arts.*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the restrictions of the past several months begin to ease it is good to see our Guild return to the business of bookbinding and prepare for a busy year in 2021. Looking to the future needs of the Guild, an additional two committee positions were approved, and members appointed to those positions, at our October General Meeting. I am pleased to welcome Lorelle Toms, Events Coordinator and Jenny New, Equipment Officer, to the Committee.

You will have noticed that we have commenced offering courses again. Our priority was to complete the new introduction course commenced early this year by offering the matching slip case course. This was conducted in October and we will follow up with the intermediate course in December. As the health issue abates it is the Guild's intention to offer the full three stage curriculum course as well as other specialty bookbinding courses in 2021. Members interested in book repair and conservation will be pleased to know that those courses will be included in the course calendar when it is posted on our website in December.

From time to time we take part in public events relevant to the book arts. Earlier this month, we reserved a table at the Arts Libraries Society Australia and New Zealand Conference, held at the State Library, to promote the Guild and sell stock. These events offer us an opportunity to get to know something of other like-minded groups and their members. The Conference was well attended and successful on many levels. Thanks to Sarah Davies, Josiane Tissot, Ken McKeon and Darryn Schneider who managed the QBG table over two days.

Finally, keep the evening of Wednesday, 9 December 2020 available to celebrate the festive season with your fellow members at the QBG Christmas Party. Further details will be advised via our weekly email *Announce* soon.

Marilyn George

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## FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday, 9/12/20, 6-9pm, Christmas Party

Wednesday, 10/2/21, 7-9pm, General Meeting

## UPCOMING COURSES

Weekend, 5, 6/12/20, Intermediate Course, 9-4pm

## GENERAL MEETING DETAILS

Meetings are held at BVAC (Wellers Hill Arts Hub), 140 Weller Road, Tarragindi.

Meetings commence promptly at 7 pm.

Material sales are available from 6:15 pm.

## McNICOL-DEAN COMPETITION

I hope that you are gathering ideas and inspiration for your McNicol-Dean competition book: *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* by Agatha Christie. For guidance on preparing your competition entry refer to the QBG website for a description of a well-made book. The Guild is printing a further 10 text blocks for sale so everyone will have access to a text block. The submission date is our Open Day on Sunday, 14 March 2021.

Marilyn George

## MEMBER NEWS

We are pleased to welcome the following new members: Steven Wagner, Desmond Holcombe, Michelle Alcock, Malindi Morris, Alistair Elliot, Ian Francis, Helen Stapleton, Alex Scodellaro, Avon Chang, Danielle Torrisi, Gemma Regan, Alan Beswick and Ken Freney. We hope you enjoy all the Guild offers.

Bernard Milford

## PAPER REPAIR COURSE

We were delighted to be able to offer a couple of different Repair and Restoration courses, run by Robin Tait, one of Australia's most prominent and experienced paper and book conservators. Robin lives in Queensland, not far from Toowoomba, where she runs her business The Tait Bindery. She restores and conserves historic and valuable books, maps and paper artefacts.

We began with a one-day course looking at paper and spine repairs, using different materials; reinforcing bumped corners and removal of self-adhesive tapes of various types.

Darryn Schneider assisted and ran a short workshop as part of the day, looking at staining and toning paper to provide suitably matching endpapers and for other repairs.

Jenny New has written an article about our second repair course, so please read on below.

Sarah Davies

## CASE BINDING REPAIR COURSE

This two day course was a fantastic opportunity provided by the Guild to see a master book conservator, Robin Tait, at work and learn some of the basic skills.

It gave us the impetus to keep practising these skills at home and to look forward to more courses which we can participate in to consolidate our knowledge and skills in this area.

Robin initially gave us a bit of an insight into her career and work which was fascinating and made some of us very jealous of a life spent amongst books.

She then went on to give us a short history of the case bound structure which is copied below, and discussed different repair and conservation opportunities and how to approach them.

We were each provided with a book to work on. Each one had damage to the spine, endpapers, and some of the text block.

The first step was to complete an *Examination and Documentation Report* for our books.

This was a great introduction and a good reminder of all parts of the book and terminology used in the repair and conservation process.

Our reports began with a list of basic details, including the person doing the work and details of the books such as the title, author, year published, as well as measurements of the book.

Next was a description of the book which included the types and colours of materials used and the style of binding. This included details of the text block such as the type of paper, illustrations, maps, inserts and inscriptions.

It is also very important to take photos of the book in its current state and to document via photos, all the damage recorded in the report. This is critical when working with clients as it helps them understand the extent of the work done. But is a great discipline to undertake for any repair work.

This report process makes you pay more attention to the book, both overall and to the minute details you may miss until after you have started your work, at which time it could be too late to document as initial damage.

Photos should also be taken during the repair process to document your work and to record aspects of the book such as the original spine stitching and materials used. It's like an archaeological dig where you work your way into the history of the book, find out its origins and quality, then repair and present it back to the world.

Lastly, we provided details of the condition of the book. This included things such as damage from insects, sun fading, foxing, detached leaves and wear and tear to papers and covers brought about by general handling.

Then it was time for tools in hand!

We first released the front and rear endpapers or flyleaves depending on the damage. If we had leaves requiring repair we used Japanese paper to do this.

## HISTORY OF CASE BOUND BOOK

Some of us had just completed a paper repair course with Robin the week prior, which gave us some confidence in this.

We released the case from the text block and cleaned off the linings and pages with a brush. We then had to prepare the case to receive the new lining and cover materials. Some of the cloth covers we tried to lift were more stubborn than others, but thankfully Robin was there with her deft touch and cool tools to help us.

(should also mention that Darryn Schneider and Lorelle Toms helped throughout the two days. This allowed Robin to spend time with each of us when needed and gave us all the added skills and expertise to rely on. With all this help, we achieved a great outcome.

After lifting the old cloth, we then prepared a re-back cloth that matched the existing cloth. Darryn gave us a lively demonstration of paint mixing to help us match the colours required. Mixing our own paint was an event itself. With a few laughs along the way, we all managed to get quite close to our original book cloth colours.

This was the end of the first day. We went home feeling like we had achieved something and were very much looking forward to the day two.

The overall process for the second day was similar to putting a normal case together for a book block except that we also had to put down lifted outer cloth and boards and attach what we had of our existing spines to the new spine.

So, we got to work on our cases using the existing boards and cloth, front and back, but with our new spines, which was just a little bit thrilling to see come together.

Once we attached our original spine to the new spine cloth and trimmed the overhang it was time to put it back together.

We made sure that we aligned the text on the new case, the right way up of course! We glued out the linen overhang and inserted it under the lifted endpaper, rubbed this into position and then closed the endpaper joints to the spine fold of the text onto the linen front and rear. With a bit of a nip our books were done!

We then whipped up a slipcase in about 10-15 minutes – the record was 8 minutes – guess who this was!

What an amazing course this was. Being able to take a damaged book and bring it back to life felt like we were preserving a bit of history and gave us a great sense of achievement.

Jenny New

The case binding structure was introduced in various forms from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The structure arose due to the need for publishing houses to give their clients a bound volume as opposed to what had been previously offered up till then of a roughly stab sewn set of sheets with at most a paper wrapper or cover.

The first offerings were laced on boards bindings covered with a paper spine and paper sidings, or a full paper covering with the boards flush to the untrimmed text. The paper spine was usually a flexible spine as opposed to the “hollow”. The fiddly covering which required the endpaper attachment of the boards to be slit at the head and tail to allow the turn-ins of the covering paper soon gave way to the separate case and sewn text block. The advantage of being able to make the case and embellish it before casing in was quickly recognised and in 1814 the first gold titled blocking was introduced. Along with gold and blind blocking the production of fine coloured and textured book cloths added to the array of design features available for publications.

Victorian Publishers bindings are of particular note in terms of their amazingly clever design using the cloth and blind and gold blocking alone. The late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a further development of printed cloth case bound books such as The Boys Own Annual and various hardback novels.

Over the last 200 years the case binding has been further streamlined for book production. The basic structure however remains the same – that of being a case made off the text and then attached to the text by gluing the overhang of the spine linings and the endpapers to the case.

The damage to case bindings usually occurs due to handling – the major weak points being the outer joints and the corners – resulting in detached spines and boards. Texts can have torn or detached pages but the more likely damage is broken or loose sewing and cords.

Additionally, beloved children’s books can have a large amount of added pencil marks, drawings or plain scribbles on the texts.

Undertaking conservation or repair of any binding requires two outcomes – first, the binding continues to function as a book and, secondly, the repairs are sympathetic to the book. Instances can occur when this is not possible – fragile and brittle text paper being one such instance requiring an alternative treatment to preserve the information of the book, such as slipcases, wallets and boxes.

Courtesy of Robin Tait’s restoration workshop



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the Intermediate Course) to book for this, if there is space.

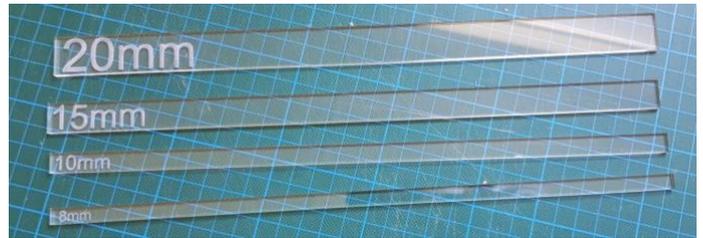
Sarah Davies

## MODERN TECHNOLOGY IN BOOKBINDING

Modern technology has somewhat left the method of hobby bookbinding alone. With the biggest exception of the home printer we generally use the same tools and methods that were used 100 years ago.

There are two pieces of new equipment, however, that are now becoming more common in households that may serve a purpose in bookbinding: the laser cutter and the 3D printer.

The laser cutter is a large cabinet with a high-power laser that is directed at a material to either cut through the material, or burn a design into it. It is computer controlled with the pattern or design to be etched or cut input using special software that is easy to learn.



*Laser cut and etched perspex templates*

The laser as a cutter can accurately cut or etch to an accuracy of about 0.05mm on home units on many types of materials. Examples include perspex that can be cut to provide gauges and spacers of varying widths and then etched with the relevant width on the top as in the photo above.

Designs can be etched into leather or wood for use on covers. My competition entry for last year (Curlew Coast) included a birch laser cut and etched centre panel on a Cambridge panel binding. To etch or cut is usually very quick, only a matter of seconds once all the necessary data is input into the laser cutter.



*Laser etched title on leather*

## REFRESHER COURSE

As a result of a request from a number of members, we decided to offer a refresher course for anyone interested in having another chance to make a case-bound, sewn and rounded and backed journal under the guidance of our lecturers and tutors. Four students joined us for the course. (We hope that means that the skills you learned, plus the DVD instruction, have been enough to set you on the path to successful bookbinding.)

Darryn Schneider was the tutor for the one-day course and students were asked to bring a sewn text block on which to work and to practice. The day started with applying endpapers and continued with rounding and backing, using a bone folder and hammer, and then the making of the case. Students went home ready to complete casing in at home.

It was an instructive day. Initially we shared the room with another (quieter) group which also believed that they had a booking for the upstairs hall. We hope that our hammering was not too noisy for them. Darryn is an excellent tutor and shared some additional skills and tips not usually part of the course.

In future, we will be happy for members seeking a repetition of the Introductory Course (now called

The downside of the laser cutter is in the etching of leather. The laser etches at exactly 90 degrees so leaves a very marked edge to the design that can be seen close-up.

The 3D printer is an additive printing process. That is, it takes a three-dimensional design, then prints that design one layer at a time using, usually, melted plastic building up the design over time. Each layer can be as small as 0.06mm depending on the printer.



3D printer printing some A Keys

Because the output is plastic it is less able to be used as a covering material itself but is more useful as a method of producing tools or useful items. Corner cutting templates, box corner holders and sewing frame keys are just some of the items that can be produced. The plastic to produce these tools costs very little, usually about \$30 for 5kg of plastic which will last a very long time. Software to use 3D printers is also easy to use once learned, though depending on how complex the design is, the learning curve can be steep.

However, 3D printers take a long time to produce the tool. Because it prints one layer at a time, and a design can be made up of hundreds or even thousands of layers, the print will usually take in the hours to complete.

These printers and laser cutters are a lot more accessible today than they were a few years ago. The printers sell for as little as \$150 for a basic model. Laser cutters are more expensive, usually upwards of \$1,000 for a quality home model. The Edge at the State Library of Queensland has both 3D printers and laser cutters for use for free. Once you have completed the induction (which has a small cost) you can book a machine and all you need to pay for is the materials. There are also local companies you can use to get things printed, cut or etched, usually for a low price.

Jason Cooper



## OCTOBER MEETING

After handling the usual business of the meeting, which included passing a resolution to add two new committee members and electing Jenny New and Lorelle Toms, we enjoyed an extended show and tell from members.

Bernard Milford explained how a COVID19 lockdown clean-up led to the rediscovery of a favourite old poster and then the purchase of a 1970's limited edition unbound book on Australian marsupials for just \$250 from a Melbourne book dealer. He now has it bound in a size too big for any shelf but says it is one of his favourite possessions.

Bernard also spoke of finding out the benefits of a water-based turps that he now uses for cleaning paint and glue brushes.

Lorelle Toms showed us a very small volume entitled *Typographia* that she had repaired and rebaked. She showed how she had used a copy of the title page to help create a title for the spine. She also talked about a slip case she had made for a first edition of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*.

Ken McKeon showed us a volume of *Priscilla* magazines his grandmother had bound many years ago, following instructions from the magazine itself.

It included his grandmother's own index of articles. He also spoke about his restoration of Delamotte's *A Primer of the Art of Illumination for the Use of Beginners*. He told of his use of the cloning function in Photoshop to reproduce some plates from the book for use as endpapers as the originals were damaged by acidic covers and cloth joints.

Ken also gave us a slide show presentation on the restoration of a 1610 *Bible* that Fred Pohlmann had allowed him to watch and photograph. Fred showed how it had already been repaired twice and Ken's slides were a great insight into the work of another master in the craft of restoration.

Sarah Davies showed the presentation box she has completed for her church parish's book she showed at an earlier meeting.

Finally, Graham Chen told us about his search for a blocking press that would be suitable for the brass Chinese characters he has had made for his 10 volumes of Chinese history texts. His COVID19 searches had taken him from China to Melbourne to source a hotfoil blocking press that does not require a chase.

Editor

## OPEN DAYS

Our September and November Open Days have been well attended. November saw a number of visitors curious about what we do and resulted in several people joining the Guild.

Both Open Days also proved busy for sales.

Both Jason Cooper and I would like to thank all the members who have taken the opportunity to buy equipment, tools and materials from the workshop of Colin Jorgensen. We are so pleased to know that the joy Colin had in making things will continue with everything that has now passed into the hands of others.

Editor

## ARTISTS BOOK GROUP 2020

Like everyone else we have experienced a very different year. We started by being very organised, then took a dive!! From March we have been very careful not to endanger our members or others and have been isolating, and creating at home. A few weeks ago, we decided it was time to review our position and agreed to meet again.

On Tuesday, 10 November, we gathered to exchange stories and show and tell our COVID19 creative endeavours. I was so glad to see so many come along to share and discuss bookmaking and life in isolation. We have a varied experience indeed, some moving forward, getting married,

enduring illness and teaching in a smaller environment. All as motivated as ever!!

"We keep moving forward, opening new doors and doing new things because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths": Walt Disney.

We discussed where to from here? We agreed we are very motivated to move forward to 2021 and agreed on our path. We plan to look at, amongst other things, boxes, rust papers, pop up books and cloth. Anyone is more than welcome to join us in 2021, we meet once a month at BVAC on the second Tuesday of each month, from 1- 3 pm.

I will leave you with this quote which I think is especially relevant to bookbinding: 'It started out as a hobby and I am not sure how it came to this!!'



## PAT LAING

It was with great sadness that I learned of the death of one of our foundation members, Pat Laing, on 2 October 2020. Many of our older members will remember her, as she, together with Fay Dean, me and members of the committee helped launch the Guild as an entity.

She worked in a high school library and realising there must be better ways of repairing books than using sticky tape and glue, was the second person to enrol in Frank Lynam's first Introductory Course and became a very keen student.

After we had formed the Guild, we realised we needed much publicity in order to get more members, but it was very hard in the 70s, long before computers. However, there were lots of school fetes, the annual George Street Colonial Festival and the annual Brisbane City Council Warana Festival in the City Botanic Gardens which all provided stalls at which we could advertise our wares – rather like the Expertise Events of today.

Pat was a very keen participant in explaining to the crowds what bookbinding was – a novelty in those days, and demonstrating making a book. We usually got enough enrolments for classes through the year. Pat's infectious enthusiasm and boundless energy contributed in no small way to the success of these stalls.

Bookbinding was a family affair for Pat as her husband David is a professional photographer and teenage daughter Susie was interested in bookbinding too, so David took photographs of our

activities, now in the Guild's photo album, while Susie helped. I think Pat's outstanding idea at Warana was to make individual packs of very simple books that children could make up on the spot, with a little bit of tactful guidance from Susie. They were extremely popular and the expressions of wonder and delight on the littlies' faces when they held their own book with their name in gold letters on it were worth all Pat and Susie's efforts.

David also made a silk screen suitable for printing the Guild's logo on T-shirts and aprons which Pat subsequently sewed up. They sold very well and are still available today.

Pat was a committee member for many years and could be relied on to come up with useful suggestions, particularly when it came to finding speakers – always a tough assignment.



Pat Laing - third from left – at a Warana display

After a few years, Pat learned papermaking. Many members have dabbled in it, but she became firmly hooked and in 1995 resigned from the Guild so that she could devote more time to her new interest. Over the years, we have always kept in touch, reminiscing about the 'good old days', and I find it very sad that a chapter of the QBG's history has now closed.

June McNicol

## NEW IN THE LIBRARY

The following items have been added to our collection:

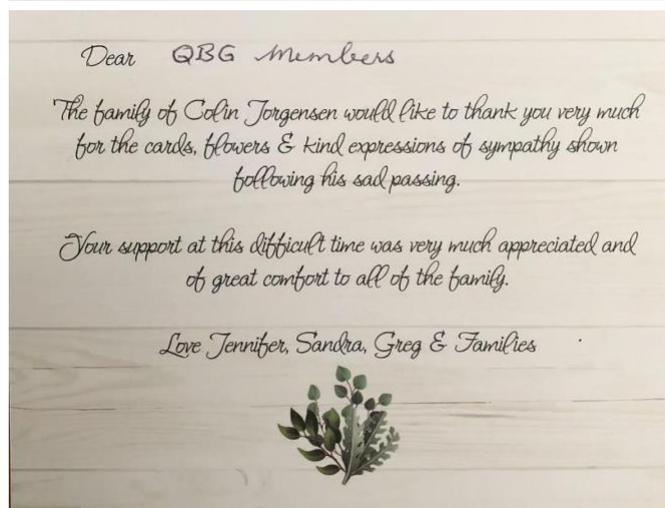
*The New Bookbinder – Journal of Designer Bookbinders* Vol 40, 2020 – includes articles on modest manuscripts in fine fabrics, binding with fish skins, binding a Kelmscott Chaucer, printing and image transfer on leather and the Booker Prize shortlist bindings from 2019.

*The Society of Bookbinders Newsletters* for April and August 2020 – each includes a short article by Hollie Drinkwater about her conservation internship in Barcelona as a recipient of the Maureen Duke Award.

*Designer Bookbinders newsletters* #189 of spring 2020 and #191 of autumn 2020.

Joanna Fear, Librarian

## THANKS



Thank you to all of the Queensland Bookbinders' Guild for their companionship, love and thoughts. I hope any of you who have acquired some of Colin's equipment or materials enjoy using them.

Colin is missed and will always be in our hearts.

Jenny Jorgensen

# QUEENSLAND BOOKBINDERS' GUILD INC.

*The Guild aims to promote, foster and practise the art of bookbinding in its traditional form, and to embrace the related graphic arts and kindred arts.*

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## Subscription:

1 year City \$40 / Country \$35  
2 year City \$80 / Country \$70  
Financial year ends 28 February 2021

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### Materials

Available from 6:15 – 7:00 pm during regular meetings & throughout all open days.

### Library

Books can be borrowed for use at home, at no charge.

### Equipment

Some tools and equipment can be borrowed for use at home, at no charge. Contact Jenny New before meetings to arrange pick up and return.

### Meetings

BVAC Wellers Hill Arts Hub  
140 Weller Road, Tarragindi  
Evening general meetings  
commence at 7:00 pm  
Members' Open Days commence  
at 9:00 am