

# Bookbinding in Pictures

## *A beginner's guide to bookbinding*

By ANGELA SUTTON  
Photography by PETER BRYENTON

*This is a working guide to the processes used in bookbinding.*

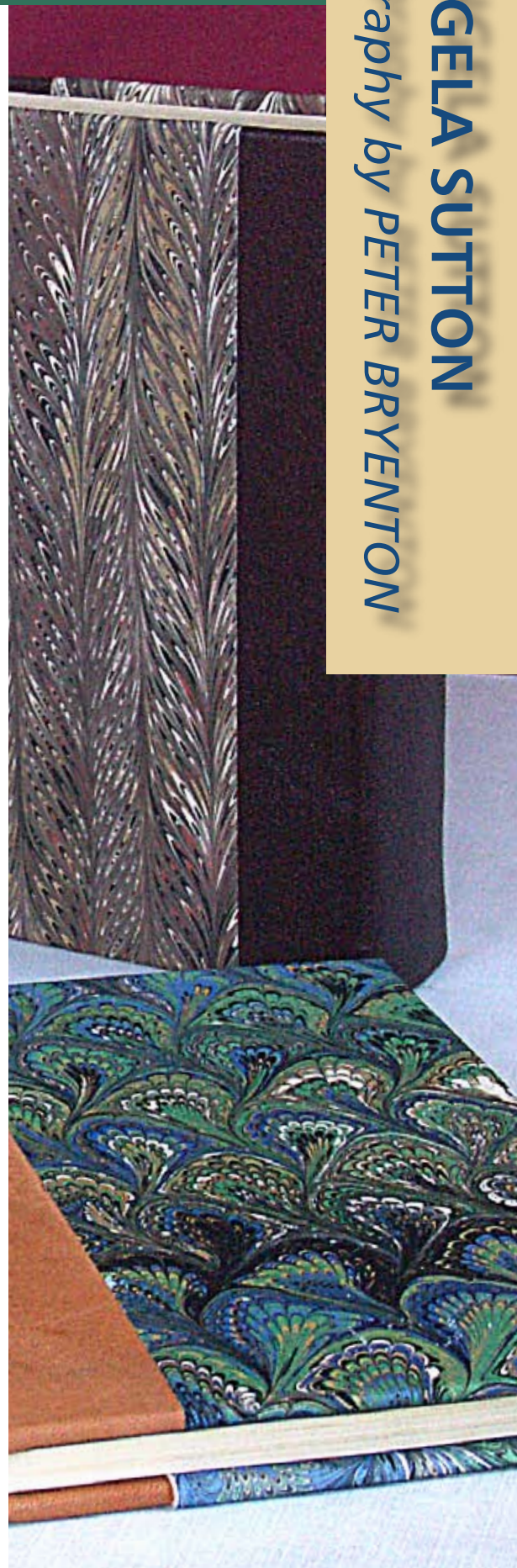
*It is illustrated with over 500 photographs showing step by step the methods, equipment and materials used in rebinding and repairing books.*

*Complete beginners will be able to acquire the basic knowledge needed to use more advanced manuals without having to attend a class.*

*Prospective book artists will see how a book should be constructed if it is to function satisfactorily as a basis for their future work.*

*The work is being published on disc and is designed to be read on screen, with the pages scrolling straight down and with the pictures at the side.*

*Readers who prefer a paper copy can print out whichever pages are relevant, using a home printer.*



# Bookbinding in Pictures

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By **ANGELA SUTTON**

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## *Welcome to bookbinding!*

This set of instructions in basic bookbinding is designed to be clearly accessible on screen but is laid out in chapters on numbered pages just like a book. Points in the text are illustrated by the pictures beside them. The Contents page at the beginning will tell you what subjects are covered and where to find them, and the Index at the end will give you more details. You can scroll straight down the pages to find the section you want.

There is a list of tools and equipment which you will need as well as a list of suppliers, and there is a Glossary at the back where you can look up unfamiliar terms.

If you are entirely new to bookbinding it will be best for you to work your way through the first five chapters which take you through the basic steps of learning the craft and help you to get to know the techniques, tools and materials.

When you have gained confidence you can go on to the more complex process of making of a leather binding.

Any pages can be printed out if you find it more convenient, preferably in colour.

A high-quality coated paper will give a better image than a standard copier paper.

## Part I Bookbinding Basics (non-leather)

- 1. Book Structure:** *traditional and modern binding methods, sewing, equipment, paper, adhesives and boards* Page 4
- 2. Preparation for sewing:** *collating, pulling a book, paper repair and guarding* Page 11
- 3. Sewing:** *materials, marking up, sewing equipment and technique, weaver's knot, knocking down, single-fold endpapers* Page 22
- 4. Rounding and backing:** *page trimming, back-glueing, rounding, backing* Page 33
- 5. Case binding:** *cutting boards and bookcloth, making the case, casing-in* Page 45

## Part II Binding with Leather

- 6. Sewing for leather bindings:** *sewing methods, marking up, pre-punching holes, sewing frames, sawn-in cords, false bands, raised cords, two-on sewing* Page 56
- 7. Endpapers:** *'made' endpapers, stitching the endpapers, rounding and backing* Page 65
- 8. Attaching boards and preparing for covering:** *lining boards, fraying out slips, making holes in boards, lacing on boards, attaching boards with tapes* Page 72
- 9. Headbanding and back lining:** *core and thread, stitching the headband, back lining* Page 79
- 10. Leather – preparation and application:** *types of leather, paring, knife sharpening, paring for quarter-, half- and full-leather bindings* Page 86
- 11. Covering the book:** *pasting leather, preparing the book, applying the leather, headcaps, setting the joint, pasting half and full leather* Page 97
- 12. Sidings:** *siding materials, applying sidings and fillers for quarter- and half-leather bindings* Page 112
- 13. Putting down endpapers:** *trimming out, filling in, putting down endpapers* Page 120

## Part III Further Processes

- 14. Finishing:** *equipment and materials, planning a title, practising with cold tools, using hot tools and gold foil, spine lettering, labels* Page 126
- 15. Slipcases:** *cutting boards, materials for covering and lining, assembling and covering* Page 136
- 16. Loose-leaf binding:** *Uses of loose-leaf binding, threads and sawcuts, oversewing* Page 143
- Glossary Page 148
- Equipment and supplies Page 156
- Index Page 159
- Acknowledgements Page 163

- Continue along the section, leaving loops at each space marked for a tape. At the end of the section insert the tapes through the loops. [92]
- Tighten the thread; pull parallel to the spine as the thread will cut the pages like a cheese wire if it is pulled outwards. [93]
- Take the second section in the same way, knock it up on the bench to make sure that all the pages are level at the head, and lay it on top of the first. [94]
- Push the needle through the kettle stitch hole and sew back along the second section, this time not leaving loops but tightening the thread round the tapes. [95]
- At the end lay the left hand flat on the page to hold it and with the right hand pull the thread taut, not so much as to distort the pages but enough to hold the pages together firmly. [95]
- Tie the thread to the first end of thread using a reef knot (left over right, right over left). [96]
- Take the third section, position it and sew along it in the same way.



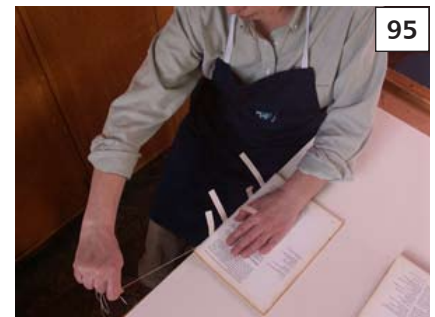
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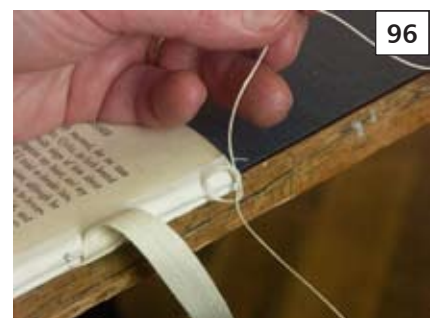
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At the end the third section is fastened to the first two using the 'kettle' stitch, which cannot be used before the end of the third section.

- The needle is pushed sideways between the first two sections, with the point away from the end of the book (this means it is less likely to tear the paper). [97]

- Put several sheets of clean waste paper – not newspaper as the print will come off on the cloth or paper – on top of each other to work on. The bookcloth is placed on this and just over half of it glued out. (When you are more experienced you can glue the whole piece, but to begin with half at a time is easier.)



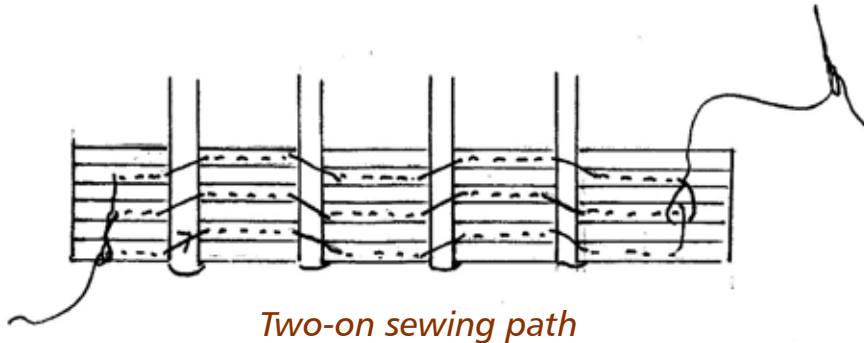
Stippling (dabbing with the brush) ensures more even glueing but brushing (more of a 'painting' movement) is quicker and this is a consideration when the glue dries quickly.

- Apply the glue with the brush, working outwards from the centre. [196] The important thing is to cover the cloth evenly. Do not use excessive glue as it may be pushed through the cloth and stain it and will find its way to where it is least wanted.
- Position the board on its corner pencil marks. [197]
- Place the text block on the board which should fit comfortably into the joint with the squares even at head and tail. [198]
- Place the upper board in position, also fitting into the joint and exactly above the lower one. [199]
- Glue out the remaining cloth, making sure that it is completely covered, but again do not use excessive glue. [200]
- The cloth may curl upwards but will stay flat if gently pushed down and in any case the board will hold it down. [201]



This can be reduced by sewing two sections at once, or even three or four. It weakens the spine to some extent and means that the sections are not all joined together with a stitch at the end as there is a kettle stitch only every four sections. With small thin sections this does not matter a great deal and the glueing will hold the book together adequately but the technique should not be used on books with thick or heavy sections.

- The first and last sections of the book should be sewn 'all-along', straight along the spine, in the normal way.



*Two-on sewing path*

- After the first section has been stitched, begin to sew the second in the same way: put the needle through the kettle stitch hole and bring it out beside the first cord or tape. Instead of pushing the needle back into the same section take the next section and put it on top of the first one. Push the needle into the centre of this upper one. [257]
- Leave a ruler or bonefolder inserted in the lower section to keep the place. [258] The inner pages of the two sections may be held together with a paper clip, which stops them slipping away from each other.
- Bring the needle out at the next tape or cord in the upper section and push it back into the lower one, transferring the ruler to the centre of the upper section. [259]

This can be slightly awkward, but like every other process it is a matter of getting used to it and practising!

- Proceed to the end of the first pair of sections and then pick up the third and fourth and sew them in exactly the same way.
- At the end of this pair of sections tie the thread to the beginning thread with a reef knot and continue alternating the thread between the sections, joining each pair with a kettle stitch across the unsewn ones. [260]
- The last section, like the first, is sewn all-along.



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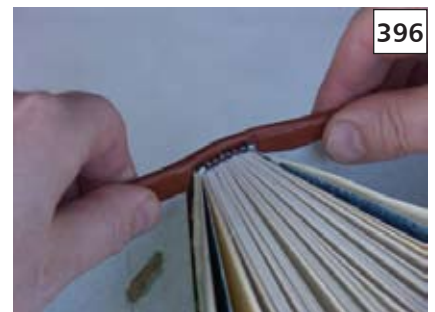
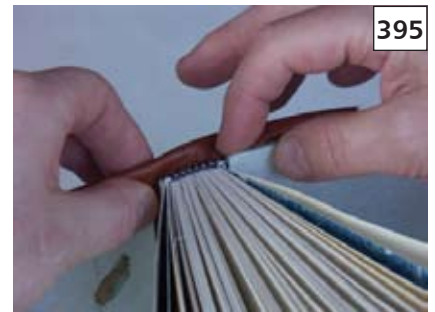


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- Open up the boards so that they make a straight line across the back of the book, using the sides of your hands to keep them there. [394]
- Take the leather which is projecting over the top of the spine between thumb and first finger and insert it down in front of the boards and behind the headband. [395]
- Do not be afraid to push the boards well back so that the leather can be put down behind the headband without the paste coming off on either the headband or the page edges. [396]
- Ease it down with the thumbs, still holding the boards with the sides of your hands, and with the fingers on the outside of the boards. You should be able to slide it down so that the fold makes a straight line joining the boards, though the leather across the back of the spine should be left a fraction higher as it will be turned in slightly over the headcap.
- Soon the leather will begin to sit comfortably in position; it needs a few minutes working down and encouragement so that it becomes used to its new shape.
- Turn the book the other way up and repeat the process for the other end.



## Headcaps

The headcaps are now formed over the headband. It is here that the advantages of good paring become apparent: the thinner the leather the easier it is to shape.

Make sure first of all that the leather has been worked firmly over the board edges and that there is no gap where the leather is lifting away from the board edge. [397]

If it does not seem to be holding to the board more paste can be applied or the outside of the leather can be wiped with the damp sponge to reactivate the paste.

- Hold the book in one hand and a pointed bonefolder in the other with the point down towards the book. Use the side of the bonefolder, keeping it vertical, to pull the corner of the headcap outwards away from the spine. [398]

This is called 'pulling out the ears.'



<b>acetate sheeting</b>	sheet of clear plastic used to prevent moisture penetration into the text block
<b>all-along sewing</b>	sewing along the whole length of a each section of a book
<b>archival</b>	of a quality that ensures as long a life as possible for the book: acid-free (pH neutral), reversible (of adhesives)
<b>awl</b>	narrow pointed tool with wooden handle for making holes in board or paper
<b>back lining</b>	layer of hand-made or thick paper glued to the back of the spine of a leather binding to level out any lumps or hollows
<b>back strip</b>	strip of cloth or paper used to strengthen the case along the spine
<b>backcorner</b>	to bevel off the inner edge of the board at the corners
<b>backing</b>	applying mull and kraft paper or other backing material to the spine of the book
<b>backing boards</b>	wedge-shaped boards which apply pressure to the book as they are lowered into the press
<b>backing hammer</b>	hammer with wide convex head and flat pein
<b>band-nippers</b>	an instrument like a pair of scissors but with flat parallel pieces of metal instead of blades; used for defining the leather covering raised cords
<b>bands</b>	another term for cords
<b>bandstick</b>	piece of wood used to emphasise the raised cords, used like a bonefolder
<b>bank paper</b>	thin, strong paper usually used for guarding and lining boards
<b>blind tooling</b>	tooling without gold, leaving an impression in the leather
<b>blocking press machine</b>	for applying titles and decoration to book covers
<b>board chopper</b>	piece of machinery with solid bed, clamp and large blade used to cut boards
<b>board paper</b>	the part of an endpaper fold that is glued to the board
<b>boards</b>	pieces of thick card or board used for the cover of the book
<b>bodkin</b>	sharp pointed implement for making holes, a large awl
<b>bonefolder</b>	flat, rounded piece of bone used for rubbing down, folding and various other processes. Can be pointed or rounded at the ends, thin and flat or thicker and heavier. A modern version is the Teflon non-stick folder.
<b>bookcloth</b>	strong fabric stiffened with starch and produced in various colours used on the outside of book covers