



## RECORDING A BOOK & BINDINGS

The Books section in *Inside Churches and the Library Glossary* on the website includes a list of terms and aids for description.

See also ***Safety and Handling of Books*** on the website when dealing with old books.

The exterior of a book should be described first followed by the interior in this order:

- the binding (e.g. black leather-covered boards), details of spine and cover, (bands, label, words, decoration, any blind/gold tooling)
- any other external features: edges, headbands, ribbon markers etc
- the internal features : turn-ins, doublures, endpapers etc
- describe any inscriptions, notes etc, and transcribe the text of any memorial or dedicatory inscription at 9
- any heraldry (eg on a bookplate) is blazoned here
- illustrations or maps should be noted and the names of artists (pinxit) or engravers (sculpsit) put at 5-6. Do not put at 5 the names of an Old Master (eg .Rembrandt) whose work the engraver has copied.

### IDENTIFICATION – EXTERIOR OF BOOK

#### Identifying binding/covering materials

It is best to look at the worn or damaged areas of the covering material, eg board edges or top and bottom of the spine, when trying to identify the binding; in good condition a cheaper material, made to look like a more expensive one, may fool you. As a general rule, when a book has two covering materials the more expensive one will be on the spine (and often corners too)

#### Leather

Tanned skins, derived mostly from sheep, goats and calves, and with a polished surface. Book leathers usually appear as a shade of brown but other colours, especially red, black, blue or green will also be found. Damaged leather will scuff, usually a paler shade of the surface colour and then brown (any shade from buff to dark chestnut). As the scuff deepens, the polished surface will become matt and then crack and flake off, in some instances, peeling off like wood shavings, leaving a rougher surface.

#### Reversed leather

Reversed leather, which appears like suede, has a rough, fibrous surface, ie the gut side of the skin, rather than the hair (polished) side.

#### Vellum/Parchment

Skins dipped into lime and dried under tension. They are NOT leather. They are usually white or cream but sometimes coloured, usually black or green. They have



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a hard surface, somewhat like plastic, and can have sharp edges where the material is split or damaged. Damaged areas will also be a creamy white. Occasionally dyed unripe-Granny-Smith green.

### Bookcloth

A cloth prepared especially for bookbinders and filled with a starch filler, intended to prevent the glue from penetrating through the surface and spoiling its appearance. It will usually have a reflective surface. Many 19thC bookcloths are grained in imitation of leather and care must be taken to avoid confusing one with the other. Damaged bookcloth will have evidence of weaving, ie threads. These will either be broken and hanging away from the cover, or worn and showing the criss-cross pattern of the warp and weft threads in the weave. If, in the damaged areas, the apparent weave of a cloth is less obvious than where it is in good condition, it is more likely that you are looking at a paper rather than a woven material

### Textile

Any textile such as velvet, silk, brocade etc, not especially designed for bookwork, or a binder's cloth, which has a nap on the surface. A good test to identify a textile binding is to hold the book up to the light and to look along the surface of the cover; if the surface has hairy fibres (like looking along the surface of a fabric) it is a textile. Textiles, where damaged, will show evidence of weaving in the same way that book cloths do.

### Paper

Books either with or without stiff boards that are covered in plain or decorated papers. Such books, despite their often rather shabby appearance, can sometimes be of great historical and, occasionally, financial value. They should always be treated with the greatest care and with clean fingers - the papers are often very absorbent and greasy marks may be impossible to remove. They are much, much rarer than leather bindings, though you may sometimes find paper grained to look like leather (especially on early 19thC French bindings). Paper is often very thin, sometimes brittle and tends to be fibrous when abraded. It often peels away from the edges of the boards in small flaps. Some books have paper dust jackets.

### Other

Any material not covered by the above classifications, e.g. wood, ivory, lacquer, including **alum-tawed skins**, i.e. those treated with aluminium and potassium salts, which turn the skin white. These are usually mis-identified as vellum but generally, if creamy coloured, and with blind tooling covering the whole of both boards it is likely to be an alum-tawed binding, as such decoration is not something associated with parchment/vellum. Care must be taken because they are sometimes coloured (usually a pinkish-red in the C18th) and can be mistaken for leather. If a skin has the appearance of leather but shows white where it is cracking or abraded it is likely to be alum-tawed.



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### BINDINGS

Bindings may be stapled not sewn (watch out for rust marks)

**Tight-backed** bindings where the spine covering is attached directly to the back are usually pre 1800.

**Hollow-backed** bindings where the cover stands away from the spine are usually post 1800. **Perfect bindings** where adhesive, not sewing, is the binding medium (eg paperbacks) originated in 1836.

### Decoration

Bindings may be sprinkled (dots) or stained, stamped or tooled (blind or gilt) A tooled line is called a **fillet**, a wide decorated line is a **roll**.

Edges may be coloured, sprinkled, marbled, gaufered (stamped), gilt, or have fore-edge painting (scene painted which shows when spread out).

Rough, natural edges of handmade paper are **deckled**.

**INTERIOR OF BOOKS** in addition to the glossary in *Inside Churches*

**Turn-ins** the portion of the covering material folded into the inside of the cover

**Doubleure** silk or leather inside lining of a board

**Leaf** sheet of paper

**Page** single side of a leaf

**Pastedown** paper sheet pasted to inside of board

**Flyleaf** free blank leaf at beginning and end of book (if more than one: 2nd, 3<sup>rd</sup> etc

**Preliminaries (prelims)** printed pages preceding text, may include:

Half title page with just the title

Frontispiece with a picture or map

Engraved title page with details of printer and publishing

On the title page the term **impression** means all copies were printed at one time from set-up type. The term **edition** means new type was re-set. Printing and publication details at the end of a book (called a **colophon**) may indicate a pre 1600 date.

### CONDITION and DAMAGE

**Everybody should wear an approved mask (ffp2 or 3) when handling mouldy books. Make sure you fit them correctly. Tight fitting surgical gloves should also be worn. Sensitivity to moulds can cause headaches, nausea and lethargy; over-exposure to them leads to increased sensitivity and can permanently damage one's immune system**

### Mould

Interior mould, often highly-coloured (pink, green-black, grey, yellow and white are all commonly found) is found growing on pages which have evidence of water-



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staining. The brown spots known as **foxing** should be mentioned but do not usually constitute serious damage. Do not confuse dirt on cockled pages with mould. Exterior mould, usually mildew or a white fluffy growth, is found on covering materials or the edges of text-blocks and feels clammy or damp to the touch.

### **Pests**

If holes are drilled into the bindings, or the surface of the covering material is grazed rather than scuffed, it is likely that **insects** have been at work. Insect damage always has a sharply defined edge and a curve of some kind and often has a coastline-like shape. Insect pests include moths, woodworm, deathwatch, spider and carpet beetles, silverfish.

'Contour line' damage on pages and covers is caused by **rodents**

Any chomped up residue left among the pages from pest activity is called **frass**.

### **Useful Books**

Glaister G A, *Glaister's Glossary of the Book* 1960 and 1979

George Allen & Unwin Glaister GA, *The Encyclopedia of the Book*

2001 - this is the latest edition of the above Pinniger D, *Insect*

*Pests in Museums*

*Collins Field Guide to Wildlife in the House and Home*

Leaflets on insect pests are available from English Heritage

### **Other Equipment**

Clarkson Foam Book Supports from Conservation by Design Tel: 01234 853 555

Mask from safety clothing suppliers. They must have the mark FFP 2 or 3 on them to be satisfactory.

3M cup masks, code no: 8822 (if you wear glasses) or 8810.



## RECORDING A BOOK & BINDINGS

### DIAGRAM OF PARTS OF A BOOK

- 1 Fore Edge
- 2 Title Page
- 3 Half title
- 4 White fly (blank sheet)
- 5 Flyleaf (sometimes colour)
- 6 Corner
- 7 End paper
- 8 Front board or front cover
- 9 Coloured cover paper
- 10 Spine covering
- 11 Tail
- 12 Field between bands
- 13 Raised bands
- 14 Cerf (edge of spine next to joint)
- 15 Spine
- 16 Title label
- 17 Tooling
- 18 Head
- 19 Headband
- 20 Joint
- 21 Turn-in
- 22 Back board or back cover
- 23 Edge

