

Bookbinding Masterclass

Dates	Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 March 2025
Times	10.30 – 17.00
Location	Harry M Weinrebe Learning Centre
Level	Beginners and those with some previous experience
Class size	Maximum 16 participants

Course description

Join us over a weekend to explore the codex book form, making three different versions to take home. Beginning with the simple single-section, soft-cover sewn pamphlet book, we will progress to a dos-à-dos, and then to a hard-back, multi-section case binding, suitable for notes, sketches and creative writing. Each form builds on techniques from the last.

By the end of the two days, you leave with your own set of unique books and an understanding of the different stages and technical processes involved in making a book by hand from scratch. You will be equipped with the skills and your own beginner's bookbinding kit to make more at home.

This course is suitable for beginners. All tools and materials will be supplied, but if you have your own decorative papers you'd like to use, or your own artwork, creative writing or photographs you'd like to include in your finished book, please bring them with you on the first day.

Programme

Saturday: Single-section books

We begin with a discussion about the history of the codex form, and start learning the simple and elegant pamphlet stitch. You will make two variations of single-section books, getting a feel for working with paper, understanding grain direction and sewing. Throughout the day we explore the tools and materials required to create books, considering the design and purpose of the book, and how to incorporate your own artwork. Additionally, you'll prepare pages, cut cover boards and select your book cloth and decorative endpapers for the multi-section book you'll make on Sunday.

Tea, coffee and biscuits are served on arrival. A vegetarian sandwich lunch is served around 12.30.

Sunday: Multi-section case binding

In our second session we use the skills gained on the first day to create a multi-section case binding that you can use as a sketchbook or journal. You'll learn how to fold, stitch and bind multiple sections, prepare and line book spines, incorporate decorative endpapers and assemble the components in a cloth binding. We

will finish our masterclass by discussing the work you have produced, and looking at your bookbinding kit to plan your next make at home.

Tea, coffee and biscuits are served on arrival. A vegetarian sandwich lunch is served around 12.30.

Tutor

This course is led by artist **Shelagh McCarthy**. Shelagh is a bookbinder and printmaker with a wealth of experience teaching adults with a broad range of abilities. As well as regularly contributing to the Library's learning programmes, she has designed and led creative workshops and courses for various London institutions including Central Saint Martins, the British Museum, Battersea Arts Centre and *The Guardian* Education Centre.

Previous skills, knowledge or experience

None required. This course is suitable for beginners or those with some knowledge of bookbinding who would like to refresh their skills.

Equipment and materials

All materials will be provided. The bookbinding kit to take away includes: a bone folder, an awl, a sewing needle, linen thread, and a pencil. If you have your own decorative papers you'd like to use, or your own artwork, creative writing or photographs you'd like to include in your finished book, please bring them with you on the first day. During the course we will cover health and safety instructions for using our press, and other specialist equipment and materials.

Facilities

On Saturday, please gather outside the Harry M Weinrebe Learning Centre on the lower ground floor from 10.15. The course will begin promptly at 10.30.

On Sunday, participants will gain entry to the Library via **Gate 5** on Midland Road. **Please meet at Gate 5 from 10.15 on the day** and you will be escorted into the building at 10.25. Further instructions will be emailed to you in advance of the course.

Refreshments

Tea and coffee is provided in the morning each day. A vegetarian sandwich lunch is provided. Please let us know if you have any dietary requirements.

Accessibility

Please email adultlearning@bl.uk to discuss your access requirements.