

Bound Together

Modern British Bookbinding

Large Print Labels

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

Mark Twain

Published by Bernhard Tauchnitz, Leipzig, 1885

On Loan from Ann Donnelly and the Powell Family Archive

Roger Powell bound this copy of Huckleberry Finn while a student at Bedales. Inside, he wrote, "Seasons Greetings, An old friend with a new dress on."

Bookbinding and the Care of Books

A Text-Book for Bookbinders and Librarians

Douglas Cockerell with Drawings by Noel Rooke

Published by Pitman, 1945

On Loan from the Crafts Study Centre, University for the
Creative Arts

A technical handbook written by Douglas Cockerell in 1901 as part of “The Artistic Crafts Series” edited by W. R. Lethaby, then principal of the Central School of Arts and Crafts, where Cockerell was a tutor. Cockerell also acknowledged his own training at Doves Bindery, writing in the introduction, ‘I should also like to express my indebtedness to my master, Mr. T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, for it was in his workshop that I learned my craft, and anything that may be of value in this book is due to his influence.’

Bookbinding and the Care of Books

A Text-Book for Bookbinders and Librarians

Douglas Cockerell with Drawings by Noel Rooke

Published by John Hogg, London 1915

Collection of Edward Bayntun-Coward

This book was given to Roger Powell as a birthday present while he was a pupil at Bedales. He later bound it while a student of Douglas Cockerell at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. When Powell was working with Cockerell, he invited Powell to work on a revised edition of the book. Powell made several notes in this book's margins, revealing his thoughts on the text and areas for improvement.

Memories and Reflections

J. H. Badley

Published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London

Petersfield Museum and Art Gallery

J. H. Badley and Oswald Powell founded Bedales School in 1893. This autobiography, written in 1955 reflects on Badley's time as headmaster.

Powell placed the school badge at the centre of the design; the rose stands for England and the bee is for hard work. The surrounding inscription reads, "Except The Lord Keep The City The Watchman Waketh But in Vain" and "O Prosper Thou Our Handiwork". The outer lettering reads, "Work of Each for Weal of All", which is the school motto.

Notebook bound for Ann Powell, undated

Address book bound for Jill Powell, 1946

On Loan from Ann Donnelly and the Powell Family Archive

Roger Powell bound many everyday books for his family. One of the books he created was an address book, which he gifted to his daughter for her birthday. Powell designed a simple pattern along the spine that incorporates their initials and the date: “J P / F R O M / R P 1946.”

The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1934

On Loan from Ann Donnelly and the Powell Family Archive

Powell and his family used this dictionary for many years. He carefully bound it with gilded edges and a simple yet elegant design. Combining a repeat pattern and lettering is a distinctive feature of his design work.

Joseph Vance

William De Morgan

Published by William Heinemann, London 1923

Collection of Edward Bayntun-Coward

This is an early example of a half leather binding by Powell from the 1930s.

J. S. Bach

Albert Schweitzer

English Translation in Two Volumes by Ernest Newman

Published by A & C Black, London 1923

Collection of Edward Bayntun-Coward

Powell bound these two volumes in 1934 when he was just starting as a professional binder. At the time, Powell found the tools expensive and would create elegant designs using as few tools as possible.

The Bible Designed to be Read as Literature

Vol. 1 and Vol. II

William Heinemann Ltd, London, 1937

Collection of Edward Bayntun-Coward

Powell bound this family bible in two volumes in 1938.

Inside is stamped, "28 December 1938" with the initials of his parents, "MP" and "OBP". The design shows Powell's effective use of simple formal elements of straight lines, blind-stamped geometric shape motifs and lettering.

La Figlia di Iorio

Gabriele D'Annunzio

Publisher, Fratelli Treves, 1904

Collection of Edward Bayntun-Coward

In this design Powell uses the formality of straight lines to achieve a dynamic rhythm within its symmetry. This book was bound in the early 1930s and is similar in design to that of Hugh the Drover, in the British Library. At this time, Powell often signed his bindings with "BM/POWELL W.C.1".

Selected Poems of Edward Thomas

The Gregynog Press, 1927

On Loan from the Tim Wilton-Steer Collection
and Edward Thomas Fellowship

The Gregynog Press, established in 1922 by sisters and art patrons Margaret and Gwendoline Davies, became renowned for its printing of limited-edition books. In 1925, George Fisher joined the Press. He was a leading bookbinder of his time who had refined his skills as a finisher at the Rivière Bindery in London.

At the Press, he introduced full leather bindings for the first 20 copies of each edition. His bindings are exquisitely crafted and particularly noted for the exceptional quality of their tooling.

The Jungle Book

Rudyard Kipling

Published by Macmillan, London 1899

Collection of Edward Bayntun-Coward

Powell bound this copy of The Jungle Book while training at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, where he learnt gold tooling and lettering under William Matthews. Powell tooled one board and his teacher tooled the other. Powell, when later asked, could not remember which was which.

The Book of Psalms

Printed by Enschede in Haarlem, Netherlands

Collection of Edward Bayntun-Coward

This book was bound by William Matthews in 1962 while he was teaching at Guildford School of Art. Matthews was one of the most outstanding craftsmen of the 20th century, exceptionally skilled in gold tooling and lettering. The book is stamped "W. Matthews" on the inside of the back cover.

Bindings in Cambridge Libraries

G. D. Hobson

1929

On Loan from the Wormsley Library

Douglas Cockerell bound this book in 1942 for the book historian Geoffrey Dudley Hobson. A feature of Cockerell's designs is his use of linear patterns that connect with the raised bands on the spine. In this way, the book's physical structure informs the binding design.

Powell believed that Cockerell was the first to use the raised bands in this way and this approach later informed Powell's designs, especially for large or ceremonial books.

The Bible Designed to be Read as Literature

Printed by The Windmill Press

Collection of Edward Bayntun-Coward

This binding is stamped "D.C & SON R.P 1943". When Powell worked for Cockerell & Son, books were signed with the firm's name. However, during the Second World War, when Powell was working alone at the bindery, books were stamped with the addition of "R. P." and the date.

John Evelyn A Study in Bibliophily and A Bibliography of his Writings

Geoffrey Keynes

Cambridge University Press, 1937

Collection of Edward Bayntun-Coward

This binding was designed by Douglas Cockerell, forwarded by Powell and tooled by Sandy Cockerell. It is stamped with “DC and Son, 1939”.

The pattern features a repeated design of fir trees crafted from small leaves, along with the initials “J R A”. These initials refer to John Roland Abbey, a prominent book collector. Inside, an intricate design continues on the doublures (the inside of the covers), along with marbled endpapers.

Drawer:

Four Books published by St Dominic's Press,

Ditchling, 1929–1930

Collection of Edward Bayntun-Coward

H.M.S. Pinafore

On Loan from Ann Donnelly and the Powell Family Archive

Roger Powell used Cockerell marbled paper to cover numerous books, some for commercial sale, while many others were for himself and his family.

While living in Letchworth, Powell and Rita became active members of The Settlement Players. Later, after moving to Hampshire, they continued their involvement in local theatre groups. In 1949, Powell played the role of Captain Corcoran in a production of "H.M.S. Pinafore." He bound a copy of the script that had belonged to his father, Oswald, who had played Captain Corcoran in 1912.

English Blind Stamped Bindings

The Sandars Lectures 1949

J. Basil Oldham

Cambridge University Press, 1952.

Collection of Edward Bayntun-Coward

Major J. R. Abbey, a prominent book collector, commissioned the binding of this book in 1963. It was bound by Powell and Peter Waters, who often collaborated on bindings.

The blind-stamped panels of coloured onlays were crafted using blocks based on drawings by Sheila Waters. These designs represented some of the blind panels illustrated in the second half of the book, with the originals being part of Abbey's collection.

Poems in English
with Illustrations by William Blake

John Milton

The Nonesuch Press, 1926

On Loan from The Wormsley Library

Bound in 1974 by Powell, this elaborate binding demonstrates his development in intricate and expressive design work.

The front cover features gold tooling of a weeping willow set against a starry background. It is also adorned with blind-stamped Tudor roses and includes 14 lines from Milton's poetry. The back cover mirrors this design, embellished with gold lettering and a bow and arrow, surrounded by a swirling pattern of birds in flight, echoing the leaves of the weeping willow.

Miniature Chained Library

On Loan from The Wormsley Library

Powell and Waters made 25 of these miniature libraries in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which were bought mainly by a New York bookseller for £30 each.

The library contains seven tiny manuscript volumes created and hand-decorated by Pamela Fowler. Each volume is bound in a different coloured leather binding by Waters and chained to a horizontal rod on a miniature wooden lectern by Powell. The divided pull-off drum is covered with white goatskin, tooled with a gilt “V” linear design, green top with gilt “V” tooling and lined in brown goatskin.

Drawer:

Hymns Ancient and Modern

William Clowes and Sons, Ltd, London 1950

Collection of Edward Bayntun-Coward

Hymns Ancient and Modern is a collection of hymns from various religious traditions. It features Greek, Latin, and German translations and original compositions.

During quieter times in the workshop, Powell bound these smaller books. This particular copy is enclosed in a two-tone pull-off case.

Leather Napkin Rings

Collection of Edward Bayntun-Coward

Powell and Waters made these decorated napkin rings to earn extra income, especially when busy was slow. A set of four napkin rings were housed in a bespoke box covered in marbled paper by Sandy Cockerell and sold through Liberty, the London department store.

Sample piece for the Cranach Hamlet, 1960s

Collection of Edward Bayntun-Coward

Powell and Waters would often work up design ideas and techniques for important commissions. This sample piece relates to the Cranach Hamlet commissioned by Major J. R. Abbey and now in the Newberry Library, Chicago.

Legenda Sanctorum

Jacobus de Voragine, early 14th century

On Loan from Winchester College

The Legenda Sanctorum (The Golden Legend) is a collection of the lives of the saints compiled by the Italian chronicler Jacobus de Voragine. The text is structured by the medieval calendar year, telling the stories of the saints in the order of their feast days.

The manuscript is bound in alum-tawed leather, which Powell used to bind many of the manuscripts held at Winchester College in the 1940s and 1950s. The leather is tanned using alum, salt and sometimes egg yolk. It is known for its softness, light colour and durability, which makes it suitable for bookbinding.

Under Milk Wood A Play for Voices

Dylan Thomas

Written and illustrated by Sheila Waters, 1961 – 1978

On Loan from the Wormsley Library

This important English calligraphic manuscript was commissioned by Edward Hornby for Sheila Waters to create a manuscript of her own choice and in her own time. The project started in 1961 while Sheila and her husband Peter lived in Froxfield, Hampshire. Over the next seventeen years, Sheila Waters worked on it intermittently alongside work and family life. It was completed in August 1978, when they were living in the United States.

Waters wrote the book in a modernised Carolingian hand and decorated it throughout with 21 illustrations and decorated headings; character names, stage directions and musical notations are recorded in different colours.

The elaborate title page took Waters a month to complete and she adapted the design for the front cover. It was bound by her husband, Peter Waters.

The Odyssey

Homer

Victor Bérard, translator, Paris 1930–33

Illustrated by Francois-Louis Schmied

On Loan from the Wormsley Library

This four-volume set was bound by Powell in 1979. Each volume features a unique design and lettering inspired by the text. The set is housed in a walnut cabinet designed by Edward Barnsley.

Cover Designs of The Odyssey

- Volume 1: Front cover has a circular inlay blocked in blind with the head of Ulysses. On the back is the figure of Athena with a circular shield.
- Volume 2: Front cover has a gold tooled design of Penelope's loom. On the back is the depiction of Ulysses' ship combatting the whirlpool.
- Volume 3: Front cover has a design of an arrow on an inlaid purple panel and onlaid in brown, green, black and blue leather. On the back is a design of a bow and arrow.
- Volume 4: Front cover has a design of a helmet and on the back cover a lyre.

King Lear

William Shakespeare

with Lithographs by Oskar Kokoschka, London, 1963

On Loan from the Wormsley Library

This significant commission from J. R. Abbey was bound in 1965 by Powell and Waters to a design by Sheila Waters. The striking use of vertical strips of blue, purple and green goatskin is reminiscent of the design used in the earlier Cranach Hamlet binding.

Additionally, lettering plays a crucial role in the overall design. The back cover reads "Lithographs Kokoschka" and the front cover displays "King Lear Shakespeare". This is overlaid with lettering in the distinctive compressed style characteristic of The Slade bindery. The front includes the quote, "The oldest hath borne most; we that are young shall never see so much nor live so long. Act V. Sc. III". On the spine, the Powell and Waters logo appears at the bottom with an "S" for Sheila Waters. Rendered in the same compressed style lettering above the logo is "Abbey 1965".