



BOOK REVIEW - This issue we're going to take a break from the GBW Seminar and turn to an extensive book review. We'll return and conclude GBW material in the next newsletter.

THE CRAFT OF BOOKBINDING (A Practical Handbook) by Eric Burdett, David Charles Ltd., London 1975 - Third Impression 1983. Beige cloth spine, half bound with dark brown cloth boards; "fake" brown labels with gold embossing (very attractive); signature sewn; 400 pages including a Glossary, Index, Supplier's list, Bibliography, and Materials discussion.

You may remember the history of this book. We were discussing pamphlet binding and Marilyn Skinner sent four pages from the Burdett book covering the "Harrison method" (see BGN-XVI-7-1/3). I had never heard of the text and could not find one (a situation probably exacerbated by the book being published in London, by an English author). Meanwhile Bob Lyon graciously lent me his copy and here is its review. (The good news is that Oak Knoll Books has had copies available once or twice recently.)

In general, I liked this book a lot; enough to think the title for overall "desk reference" is up for grabs. As you can tell from our ratings chart (BGN-XVI-8-15) I slightly favor Johnson's *THAMES & HUDSON MANUAL ON BOOKBINDING* over Laura Young's *BOOKBINDING AND CONSERVATION BY HAND*. Now the former has a challenger! Both texts cover just about everything although each has its strong and weak points. As examples: Johnson is clearly better on headbands and endpapers, while Burdett shines in adhesive binding, a subject getting more attention these days because so much information is on single sheets. You may recall one reviewer whose initial rating of a text is based on its clarity of endband winding instructions. Burdett loses points here, pictures are used, and to not very good effect. It's not terrible, I could tie one following the directions; but I know how.

Drawings and pictures are used. The pictures are "middling"; mostly clean but "gray" with not exceptional contrast. Drawings are mostly quite good; still, endsheets and sewing figures are too small to show needed detail.

A beginner would find this text pretty heavy going but that's bound to be true of a book complete enough for a more experienced binder to use as a handbook. Still, it could be a lot worse. This is probably an excellent text for Burdett's students who also see the procedures demonstrated.

In summary; if you only had one bookbinding reference, this might be a good choice. So if there are some negative comments made in this review, remember, nothing can be perfect!