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Destroyer and preserver: the conservation of literary
manuscripts by Jane Austen and Percy Bysshe Shelley

Nicole Gilroy and Andrew Honey

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Nicole Gilroy and Andrew Honey

'Destroyer and preserver': the conservation of literary manuscripts by Jane Austen and Percy Bysshe Shelley

The phrase 'Destroyer and preserver' in our title is from stanza 1, line 14 of P.B. Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind.'

Abstract

Literary manuscripts bear witness to acts of composition, revision and subsequent use, and as such present particular challenges for conservators. By their nature they are provisional, revisable and subject to additions and subtractions rather than being finished works, and this is of great interest to scholars and researchers today. This paper will look at the recent conservation of two bound manuscripts at the Bodleian Library in Oxford written by major authors of the early nineteenth century—Jane Austen (1775–1817) and Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822)—and at our methods for conserving the range of different evidence within them. The treatment of both manuscripts relied on new research into the construction of Georgian blank stationers' notebooks, with techniques being developed to conserve their structures in situ. The later repairs and reordering, as well as the disbound state of the Shelley manuscript and the heavy early use of the Austen manuscript, led to difficult decisions about their treatment. This paper will compare the two treatments and reflect on the ways we reconciled the conservation needs of these fragile objects—which continue to be studied and displayed—with a desire to preserve evidence of the authors' working practices and the later lives of these everyday late Georgian notebooks.

Keywords

Literary manuscripts, stationery bookbinding, notebooks, Jane Austen, Percy Bysshe Shelley, book conservation

Introduction

This paper discusses the conservation of two literary manuscripts that are now treasures of the Bodleian Library, the main research library of the University of Oxford. The two literary manuscripts are both notebooks, used by two towering figures of English Literature from the early nineteenth century—Jane Austen and Percy Bysshe Shelley (Fig. 1).¹ These manuscripts have complicated histories and some damage caused not long after their making, including evidence of their original use by Austen and P.B. Shelley.² In both cases, family members valued and sought to preserve not only the texts but the objects as a whole, the texts representing literary work but also precious family mementoes. On arrival at the Library, the manuscripts were both in a condition where they were vulnerable to further damage by consultation and use, and yet their status meant that demand for consultation and display was high. The term

1 For Jane Austen (1775–1817) and Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) see Butler, Marilyn. 2010 "Austen, Jane (1775–1817), novelist." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 29 Jan. 2019. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-904>) and O'Neill, Michael. 2016 "Shelley, Percy Bysshe (1792–1822), poet." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 29 Jan. 2019. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-25312>.

2 The manuscripts are Jane Austen, *Volume the First*, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Don. e. 7 (204 x 161mm), and Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Homeric Hymns*, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, MS. Shelley adds. e. 12 (161 x 103mm).



Fig. 1 Jane Austen's *Volume the First* before treatment and Percy Bysshe Shelley's *The Homeric Hymns* after treatment, not to scale. (Left: Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Don. e. 7; right: Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Shelley adds. e. 12)

3 Roger Chartier and Peter Stallybrass, 'What is a book?', in N. Fraistat and J. Flanders (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Textual Scholarship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, pp. 188–204 at p. 189.

4 This section draws on an unpublished conference paper, Andrew Honey, 'The Vellum Trade: the binding of Jane Austen's fiction manuscripts', presented at the *New Bownde: New Scholarship in Early Modern Binding* conference, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC, 15–16 August 2013.

5 Both notebooks were bound before use with the outer leaves of the blank bookblock forming integrated endleaves. For definitions of 'integrated endleaves' and 'bookblock' see, Ligatus Research Centre, University of the Arts London, 'The Language of Bindings Thesaurus', <http://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/> [accessed 4 October 2019].

6 Bernard C. Middleton, *A history of English craft bookbinding technique*, London: British Library, 4th ed., 1996, p. 114.

7 Trade card of James Poyntell. *Stationer. At the Angel (1760s?)* (Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, John Johnson Booktrade Trade Cards 4); available at <https://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/johnson/online-exhibitions/a-nation-of-shopkeepers/development/trade-cards#gallery-item=161595>, last accessed 24 January 2019.

8 Ellic Howe and John Child, *The Society of London Bookbinders 1780–1951*, London: Sylvan Press, 1952, p. 74 and John Andrews Arnett, *Bibliopegia, or, The art of bookbinding in all its branches*, London: Richard Groombridge; Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh; W. F. Wakeman, Dublin; and W. Jackson, New York, 1835, p. 139.

9 Arnett, *Bibliopegia*, 1835, p. 139.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 145.

11 Henry Parry, *The art of bookbinding*, London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, 1818, pp. 36–7, at p. 36.

12 Parry, *Art of bookbinding*, 1818, pp. 36–7.

13 For the 1791 Dublin list see M. Pollard, 'Plain calf for plain people: Dublin bookbinders' price lists of the eighteenth century', in Agnes Bernelle (ed.), *Decantations*, Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1992, pp. 177–86. For the Edinburgh and Glasgow lists see *The Making Of The Modern World*, <https://www.gale.com/intl/primary-sources/the-making-of-the-modern-world> (Edinburgh Binders' Prices. Commencing 17th January 1814, Edinburgh: Printed for the Society, by J. Orphoot, 1814; *Glasgow and Paisley Book-Binders' trade prices, commencing January 1st, 1815*, Glasgow: Chapman, [1815]), last accessed 25 January 2019.

14 9d is the old-style notation for 9 old pence; the d stands for *denarius*, the Latin word for a penny. This applies to all cited prices further mentioned.

'manuscript' describes two kinds of evidence; scribal and physical—manuscripts are written texts as well as physical objects. Chartier and Stallybrass have written that 'the materiality of the text and the textuality of the material form cannot be separated' and decisions about the treatment of these two manuscripts needed to take into account both their physical form and their subsequent histories.³

Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century stationery binding⁴

The notebooks we discuss have similar structures. They are both quarter-bound with leather spines and paper sides; each has quires of sixteen leaves and was sewn on two parchment sewing supports. After sewing, the boards were stuck to the outer leaves of the bookblock, trapping the sewing supports and forming the board attachment before covering.⁵ After covering, a further leaf from each of the first and last quires was pasted down to the inner face of the board. Although they are different sizes they appear to be a standard form of notebook.

The development of the binding of blank books or stationery binding as opposed to the binding of printed books has not been much researched. The available literature has concentrated on the development of the spring back binding by John and Joseph Williams in 1799, but the trade is much older as evidenced by a trade card of James Poyntell dating from the 1760s.⁶ It lists 'Merchants account books, cyphering books and copy books' among the 'all sorts of stationery wares [...] serv'd [to] merchants and tradesmen.'⁷ A separate London trade organisation for the binders who bound stationery goods, the Vellum Binders Trade Society, is known to have existed before 1806 and in 1835 John Andrews Arnett noted that 'stationery, or vellum binding [...] in large towns, is a distinct business,' though presumably not elsewhere.⁸ Booksellers and stationers who undertook binding were not only binding printed books.

The Austen and P.B. Shelley notebooks are stationery bindings and as such were made using techniques and materials not commonly used for printed books in this period. Arnett notes that stationery binding 'presents some difference in the mode of proceeding in several of the manipulations required,' the most obvious being the choice of sewing supports, the method of sewing, and the technique of attaching the boards.⁹ Both notebooks were sewn on two wide parchment supports and Arnett notes in his *Bibliopegia* that 'the sewing of stationery differs much from that of printed books. To allow of the greatest possible strength, elasticity, and freedom, they are sewn on slips of vellum, without being marked with the saw, and the whole length of each sheet, with waxed thread.'¹⁰ That is, they are not recessed and are sewn all-along, they do not use abbreviated or bypass sewing. As well as Arnett's brief description of 'Stationery, or Vellum Binding' there is another earlier description of these techniques by Henry Parry in his 1818 manual, *The Art of Bookbinding*. In it he describes the techniques found in our notebooks under 'Stationery Binding. Quarto cyphering, and account books,' with them 'sewed upon two narrow slips of parchment, with strong thread, the slips to turn over on the sides about an inch and half.'¹¹

The method of attaching the boards to the bookblock for these notebooks is also different from the usual methods found in printed books, using the outer leaves of their first and last quires as pastedowns or board sheets within their bindings rather than relying on separate endleaves. The sewing supports are not laced into the boards and the binding is an adhesive inboard structure. Parry gives a clear description of the unusual adhesive board attachment method: 'paste down the slips on the sides and all over the first leaf, put the pasteboard thereon, within half an inch of the back.' He continues 'cover the book with a half cover of sheep [...] run the cover well and smooth with the folding-stick.' Finally 'cover the sides with marble paper, paste down a leaf on each side; that is because the outer leaf has been used to attach the board before covering at least one further leaf is put down as a pastedown.'¹²

These two manuals detail the techniques found in our notebooks and show that they were stable and standardized within the stationery binding trade in this period. Further information about these commercially produced notebooks is given by bookbinders' price lists. They detail the trade prices charged to stationers and booksellers by bookbinders, and although the survival rate for these lists is low, prices for these types of stationery binding are found in three lists: one from Dublin in 1791, an 1814 Edinburgh list, and the 1815 'Glasgow and Paisley' list which survives in two versions—a shorter retail list and a longer trade list.¹³ The Glasgow and Paisley list gives a trade price of 9d¹⁴ for binding a foolscap quarto quarter-bound book in plain sheep, the type of notebook used by Austen, while the 1791 Dublin price was 8d. The list also gives a price of 2d per quire for binding additional quires; for full bindings this is

for more than six quires or above four quires for half bindings. These may appear very small numbers of gatherings, but the quires found in both the Austen and P.B. Shelley notebooks shows that stationary binding routinely had gatherings of sixteen leaves, much thicker than the gatherings of printed books. The two notebooks were produced using standard techniques and would have been purchased as blank books from a stationer for Austen and P.B. Shelley. Although these are now treasures at the Bodleian, they began life as standard and relatively inexpensive Georgian stationery.

Austen

Jane Austen's famous six novels were published over a seven-year period, four at the end of her short life, and *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* published posthumously in 1818. Apart from a cancelled chapter of *Persuasion*, none of her surviving fiction manuscripts relate to her novels, and the surviving fiction manuscripts are now held in four libraries. *Volume the First* is one of two of Austen's fiction manuscripts now at the Bodleian.¹⁵

Volume the First is a compilation of sixteen of Jane Austen's early works, a variety of stories, playlets, verses, and moral fragments written between the ages of 12 and 17 (1787–93). Titled in ink on the front cover, it began as a fair copy notebook, 'crafted [...] for private circulation among family and friends' with thirteen of the pieces proudly signed 'the author.' Towards the close of the volume, the 'patterns of deletion indicate changes in the status of the notebook, from a fair copy repository of completed writings and revisited or edited pieces to, in its final pages, a surface for drafting new pieces, for experimental writing.'¹⁶

As a manuscript that was frequently used within the family, it thrived upon the opinions of a confidential circle; reading, laughing over, and commenting on the author's performance. The number of dedications demonstrates that it had a performative role, and the pattern of wear shows evidence of this type of early use (Fig. 2). On Austen's death in 1817 her manuscripts passed to her sister Cassandra, and they continued to be read, assuming the status of treasured family relics. On Cassandra's death in 1845, the manuscripts were passed on to other family members, with *Volume the First* going to their younger brother Charles. It remained in the family until the 1920s, and was purchased for the Library by the Friends of the Bodleian in 1933 when a box was made for it.¹⁷ From the condition of the manuscript it would seem that it was used enthusiastically by the family. Its condition and possible conservation was first discussed by the Bodleian in January 1984, minutes of a meeting note that 'pp. 117–8 detached. Back board nearly detached. Front joint weak. Very important volume.' Further use of the manuscript placed it at risk of total disintegration and a treatment plan was drafted which proposed to 'Pull, photograph. Boards must not to be interfered with [...] lift piece of paper on front cover and replace.'¹⁸ However, the draft treatment plan did not detail how the manuscript would be repaired and then rebound, and conservation did not proceed at this point. In 1989 the importance of the manuscript led the Library to categorise it as a 'select

¹⁵ Kathryn Sutherland (ed.), *Jane Austen's Fiction Manuscripts*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, 5 vols.

¹⁶ 'Evidence from manuscripts as objects: shop-bought notebooks and homemade booklets', in Sutherland, *Jane Austen's Fiction Manuscripts*, 2018, Vol. 1, pp. 34–50 at pp. 34 and 36.

¹⁷ For the provenance of the manuscript see 'Headnote to Volume the First' in Sutherland, *Jane Austen's Fiction Manuscripts*, 2018, Vol. 1, pp. 80–83 at pp. 80–81.

¹⁸ Meeting between the Western Manuscripts and Conservation sections of the Bodleian Library, 12 January 1984. Bodleian Libraries, Conservation section unpublished minutes.

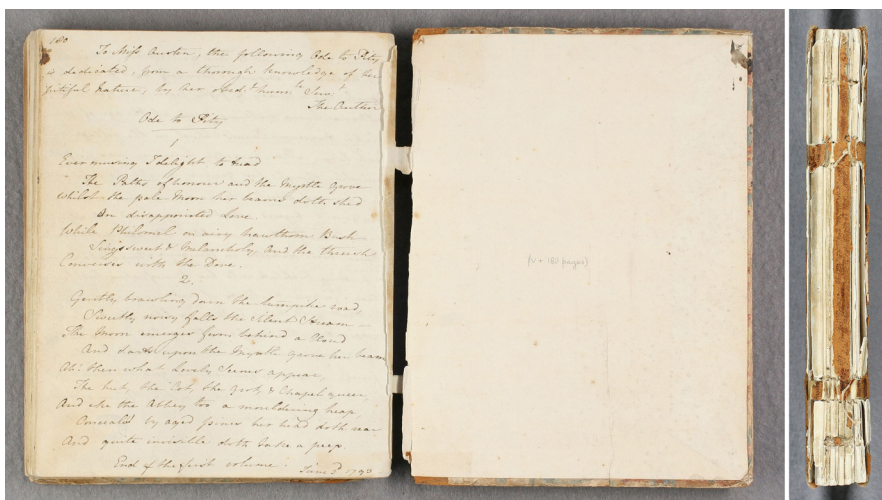


Fig. 2 Signs of wear to the Austen manuscript before treatment. (Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Don. e. 7, p. 180)

19 Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) resource enhancement scheme awarded to Professor Kathryn Sutherland entitled 'Jane Austen's holograph fiction manuscripts: a digital and print resource' (<https://ahrc.ukri.org/research/readwatchlisten/features/restoring-jane-austens-legacy/>), accessed 29 January 2019.

20 National Manuscripts Conservation Trust, *Annual Report & Accounts 2006*, Kew: The National Archives, 2007, p. 7.

manuscript'; it could still be consulted by readers but each request for consultation was now reviewed by a senior librarian. The manuscript has been exhibited several times and a number of small paper fragments have detached from the spine area since 2003 and been retained.

The Library received a request in 2006 to digitize *Volume the First* as part of an Arts and Humanities Research Council funded grant, part of a wider project to transcribe and digitize all of Austen's surviving fiction manuscripts.¹⁹ This prompted the Library to reconsider a conservation treatment taking into account both the select status and the proposed facsimile of the manuscript. This would allow a less interventive treatment, where instead of disbinding the manuscript the treatment would work around the existing structure and concentrate on *in situ* repair of the bookblock. The Library successfully applied for a National Manuscript Conservation Trust grant which would allow the digitization and conservation to be carried out in tandem.²⁰

Although the general condition of the leaves within the manuscript was good there was extensive damage at the spine folds. The almost complete breakdown of the covering leather at the spine and joints, coupled with movement in the broken sewing was leading to damage to the spine folds whenever the manuscript was handled. The parchment sewing supports were exposed and loose across the spine. The boards were firmly attached to the sewing supports but the wide joints of this type of stationery binding had broken down leaving the boards loose, and they no longer protruded at the fore-edge and were not protecting the bookblock. A treatment was proposed to repair the damaged and broken spine folds of the manuscript, as well as the breaking sewing and collapsed spine. All repairs were to be carried out *in situ* and the original structure would be disturbed as little as possible during treatment. Photography for the facsimile was planned prior to conservation to record the physical characteristics of the manuscript before any intervention. Nevertheless, the vulnerable state of the manuscript meant that some minor temporary repairs were necessary to prevent further losses; despite these precautions some further fragments were detached during the handling for photography.

The remains of the spine-covering leather were mechanically removed and the adhesive applied during the binding process between each quire was released using a Gore-Tex sandwich. This released five leaves which were completely broken down at the spine fold, in addition to the five already detached. The spine folds of ten pairs of leaves that were damaged, but remained *in situ*, were repaired with Japanese paper around the remains of the sewing thread. This was achieved by feeding repair paper around the back of quires and moulding them around the spine using silicon release paper as a carrier (Fig. 3). The completely detached leaves were repaired and guarded with Japanese paper and the guards were then notched

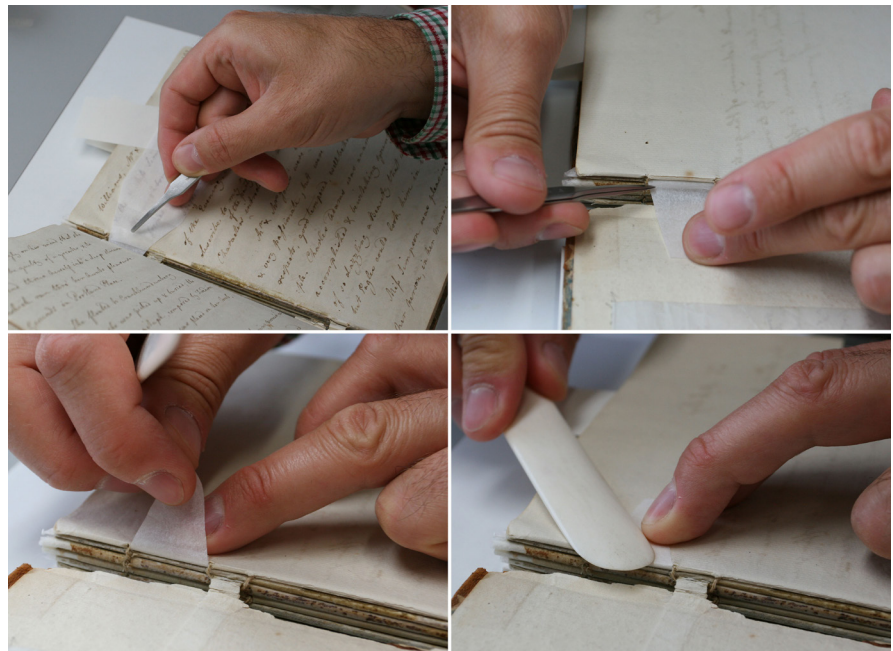


Fig. 3 Sequence of *in situ* spine-fold paper repair. (Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Don. e. 7)



Fig. 4 The manuscript with a supporting longstitch worked through an aerolinen spine wrapper; during and after treatment. (Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Don. e. 7)

at the sewing stations; they could then be fed around the remains of the sewing thread and adhered to their conjoint leaves, rebuilding their spine folds. The detached leaves, originally conjoint with the pastedowns or with the pastedowns under turn-ins, had their guards fed around the remaining sewing thread in a similar manner; the notches in the guards were then covered with a Japanese paper bridge to secure the leaf.

With the bookblock repaired, and the quires reformed around the remains of the sewing threads and sewing supports attention turned to the binding which required a supplementary structure to function. Although loose, the sewing supports were sound and still attached to the boards. The extended joint region of the pastedowns and covering leather had broken down and the boards were no longer held in place. An additional longstitch structure worked through a stiffened spine wrapper/former was devised to secure the bookblock, supplement the original board attachment structure in the joint area, and reposition the boards.

The spine wrapper was made from aerolinen lined on both sides Japanese paper, which was folded to create a spine, with an extension on each side just wider than the joint width. The six quires were then re sewn all-along with linen thread at their original sewing stations and through the new spine wrapper. The pastedowns were lifted along the inner face of the boards, and the spine former was pasted under the original sewing supports, positioning them carefully with a jig as they dried. The former provided support for the additional sewing and secured the boards in their original positions. The structure was then rebacked with two layers of toned Japanese paper, sealed with wax to give a surface similar to leather (Fig. 4). The treatment secured the fragile bookblock and returned functionality to the binding, whilst maintaining the structure and worn nature of the notebook. By understanding the stationary binding structure it was possible to carry out an *in situ* treatment that has stabilized the manuscript without unduly altering its appearance.

Shelley

Percy Bysshe Shelley was one of the major English Romantic poets and held radical political and social views. P.B. Shelley was a key member of a close circle of visionary poets and writers that included Lord Byron and his own second wife, Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*. The notebooks preserving most of P.B. Shelley's best known poetry were written in Switzerland, and later in Italy where he drowned in 1822 after his boat the *Don Juan*, named in honour of Byron, capsized. P.B. Shelley did not enjoy significant literary fame during his lifetime, but after his death his family strove to publish and promote his work, creating something of a cult status. The Bodleian Library now holds the family papers of P.B. Shelley, his wife Mary Shelley and her parents William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft. The papers came in several stages, first by bequests from Jane, Lady Shelley and Sir John Shelley-Rolls, then further papers belonging to James Richard Scarlett, 8th Baron Abinger were deposited between 1974 and 1993.²¹ The collection was finally purchased in 2004 with assistance from a number of charitable trusts and private donors.²² There are 25 surviving notebooks in the Bodleian's collections, plus a number of leaves that were originally parts of notebooks.

21 N. M. Goslee, ed., *The Homeric Hymns and Prometheus Drafts Notebook: Bodleian MS. Shelley adds. e. 12* (The Bodleian Shelley manuscripts, 18), New York and London: Garland, 1996, p. xvi.

22 <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/1500-1900/abinger/conspectus.html> accessed 29 January 2019.

MS. Shelley adds. e. 12 contains, among other notes and sketches, the bulk of his translations of *The Homeric Hymns*, parts of the drafts of *Prometheus Unbound*, and 'Ode to the West Wind.' He was using the notebook between 1813 and 1821, the year before his death. P.B. Shelley used notebooks for multiple purposes; importantly for us he wrote drafts of his poems in them, but he also used them for doodles of trees and boats, and general day-to-day notes and accounts. Though the notebooks look chaotic and messy, the Shelleys were very particular about the choice of book they purchased: a letter from Mary Shelley to Maria Gisborne from Pisa in 1820 requests many items including 'a dozen plain books like that *Prometheus* was written in.'²³

Unlike Austen's work, which was planned and laid out meticulously, P.B. Shelley's use of his notebooks was not at all systematic. He regularly used two or more notebooks concurrently, worked from both ends, turning the notebook upside down and tearing leaves out in many places, and he laid partially-filled books aside for months or years before returning to them again. His writing and sketching extended across the gutters and onto the inner and outer covers, presenting particular problems for conservation. Many leaves were torn out of the books by P.B. Shelley himself, and they travelled extensively. One of the notebooks has water stains that, as the story goes, were sustained in the sinking of the *Don Juan* on P.B. Shelley's final fateful voyage.²⁴ After P.B. Shelley's death in 1822, Mary Shelley took on the role of literary editor and spent the winter near Genoa reading, collating and copying the texts. She wrote to his publisher for the return of manuscripts, and gathered together all the papers she could get her hands on. Mary Shelley had an emotional attachment to manuscript drafts that other writers would have thrown away or left with the printers. Towards the end of her life she became so obsessed with possessing 'every scrap in Shelley's hand' that she was tricked by a forger into buying a number of supposed letters of P.B. Shelley.²⁵ This great devotion to, almost veneration of the material was shared by her daughter-in-law, Lady Shelley, who cared for Mary Shelley until her death and took over what became known as the Shelley Sanctum.

Lady Shelley created the Sanctum at Boscombe Manor, where she displayed portraits, manuscripts, jewellery, locks of hair, and an urn claimed to contain the remains of P.B. Shelley's heart, on satin covered tables lit by a red lamp under a ceiling painted with stars. In this shrine, Lady Shelley communed with the spirits of the family, producing automatic writing and hoping for visions of P.B. Shelley. Only the closest family and most favoured guests were allowed in.²⁶ In 1893, Lady Shelley opened the Shelley Memorial at University College Oxford (which P.B. Shelley had attended for two terms before being sent down, i.e. expelled), and divided the P.B. Shelley papers and relics between the Bodleian Library and a family member, who bequeathed the remainder to the Bodleian in 1946. Contemporary descriptions speak of the green leather boxes Lady Shelley had had made for the manuscripts in the sanctum, and these are preserved today in the Bodleian's collection.²⁷

The fragile state of the P.B. Shelley notebook can be seen in 35mm slides taken in the 1980s when conservation treatment was first proposed.²⁸ The removal of so many leaves had caused the structure of the notebook to collapse, and there were roughly torn stubs as well as completely loose quires. One quire had been repaired with gummed tape, and the true collation of those leaves was unclear. Much of the notebook was written in soft graphite pencil; the images and text are extremely friable and movement of the leaves against one another is a great risk to the media.

There is ongoing scholarly engagement with these manuscripts and they are in high demand both in the reading room and for exhibition. The burning questions about the P.B. Shelley texts: chronology, order of the drafts and the process of literary composition in such an iconic poet, created demand to examine the notebooks closely, a demand which culminated in the 1980s in the production of a facsimile.²⁹ The P.B. Shelley notebook was disbound in 1986 to permit imaging for the facsimile as a precursor to conservation and, as Bodleian curator Bruce Barker-Benfield notes in his introduction to charts in the facsimile, to allow 'clarification of some details of the collation.'³⁰ After photography the manuscript was boxed and possible treatments were considered. Access to the manuscript was, as before, severely restricted.

The P.B. Shelley notebook required structural reintegration, but has a further complication in its media. P.B. Shelley used pen and ink, and graphite pencil for both writing and sketches. The graphite he used had very little binder and was soft and friable, leading to much of the text and image being smudged and unclear. We don't know when the majority of the smudging occurred, and it may have been soon after writing, but it is clear that the pages sliding against one another continues to pose a risk to the media. Extensive notes of meetings

23 Stephen Hebron and Elizabeth C. Denlinger *Shelley's Ghost: Reshaping the image of a literary family*, Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2010, p. 65.

24 Hebron and Denlinger, *Shelley's Ghost*, 2010, p. 103, Fig. 46.

25 *Ibid*, 135.

26 *Ibid*, 138–142.

27 *Ibid*, 142.

28 Bodleian Libraries, Conservation section slide collection.

29 Goslee, *The Homeric Hymns*, 1996.

30 *Ibid*, p. lxi.

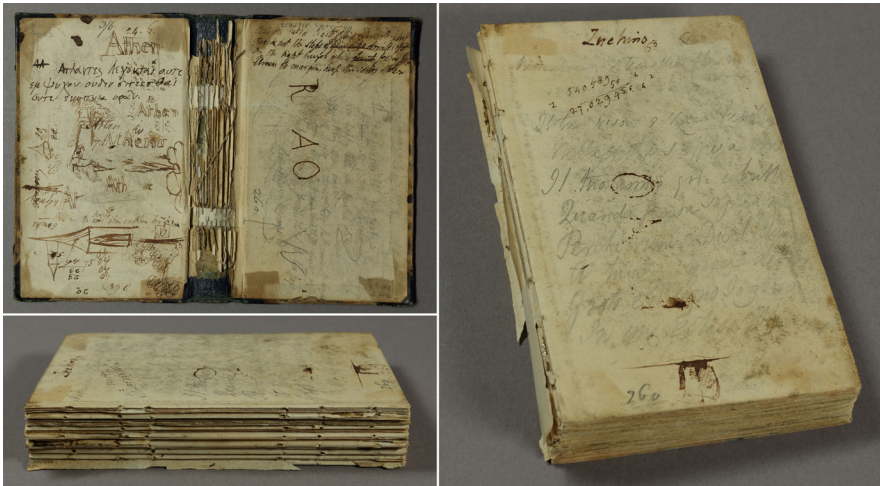


Fig. 5 The disbound P.B. Shelley manuscript. (Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Shelley adds. e. 12)

between curatorial and conservation staff in the 1980s tell us the tortuous decisions that were being thrashed out at the time.³¹ It was clear that a full and detailed facsimile would be better made in the disbound state, and the proposed rebinding or possible storage in a disbound state were mooted. The disbinding was carried out by the late Christopher Clarkson, and we are blessed with an extensive written, diagrammatic and photographic documentation of its condition before the facsimile project.³² Minutes of every meeting discussing the treatment are preserved in the departmental records: a salutary lesson in these days of email and a less formal style of meetings (Fig. 5).

The biggest question at the time however was the problem of the graphite. It was felt that consolidation was imperative before any further work, but there was no accepted process for this at the time. A research project was carried out between the Bodleian and the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST), led by Nancy Bell and Derek Priest who published their results in the 1991 *Paper Conservator*, concluding that the best option was a buffered starch consolidant applied by spray to minimize dimensional change.³³ The Bodleian curatorial team was reluctant to approve this new and untried treatment for the first time on such an important manuscript, and withheld permission. The conservation process was halted and the manuscript was kept in its disbound state until a generous donation in 2011 from a P.B. Shelley scholar brought the question of treatment back. Nearly thirty years later, the consensus among conservators of graphite drawings was that consolidation should be avoided at all costs, and protection be of a preventive and mechanical rather than interventive and chemical method, so rebinding was back on the table.³⁴

In contrast with the Austen manuscript, spine fold repair itself was technically straightforward. The problems arose in the interpretation of the notebook by future readers. Research enabled by the facsimile suggested an alternative collation of quire V, and indeed the offset of ink made it clear that the order of the leaves had become confused during earlier repair with gummed brown paper. The eventual repair replicated the original quire structure rather than the order in which the notebook had been foliated on arrival at the Bodleian, meaning that the current foliation no longer runs consecutively in that quire. In quire III, nine leaves are missing, preserved separately at the British Library, and not only are stubs conjoint with the remaining leaves needed to allow sewing, but the absence of the leaves needs to be clear to the reader. Quire V was re-ordered, and a note made in the accompanying report and box about the foliation anomaly. This ought not to be as confusing to the reader as it might seem, as any reader able to gain permission to access the original notebook will be familiar with the collation history and the suggested reconstruction of the quire in the facsimile edition. The position of missing leaves in quire III and elsewhere, and the position of their original conjoint leaves, needed to be made visible in the new binding. Many now single leaves had to be guarded onto stubs in order to be able to sew, and we decided to keep these stubs extended (though staggered to avoid pressure on the original) for clarity.

Reattachment of the bookblock to the binding was not straightforward. The repaired quires were sewn onto tapes using the original sewing holes and positions of the parchment supports of the original binding (Fig. 6). The biggest challenge was the pastedowns. As de-

31 Bodleian Libraries Conservation department, unpublished internal minutes and memos.

32 For more about Christopher Clarkson's role in developing Conservation at the Bodleian, see forthcoming article by Gilroy, Stiglitz and Minte in *IADA Journal of Paper Conservation* (tbc).

33 N. Bell and D. Priest, 'Fixing graphite; a preliminary investigation into the conservation of Shelley's notebooks', *The Paper Conservator* 15 (1991), pp. 53–8.

34 Responses to a query posted on the Conservation DistList, <http://cool.conservation-us.org/byform/mailling-lists/cdl/2012/0917.html>, accessed 28 January 2019.



Fig. 6 Sewing the bookblock on two linen tape supports. (Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Shelley adds. e. 12)

scribed earlier, this form of notebook is made with the outer leaf of the quire pasted to the board under the turn-in of the covering, and the next leaf pasted down over the turned-in cover. Thus two leaves of the quire structure were incorporated into the board attachment, and the boards and spine were completely detached. P.B. Shelley's habit of covering every available surface in drawings and notes meant that lifting the pastedowns was out of the question. Additionally, there were two stubs from the conjoint leaves belonging to the pastedowns at either end of the bookblock that needed to be used in the board attachment—leaving these

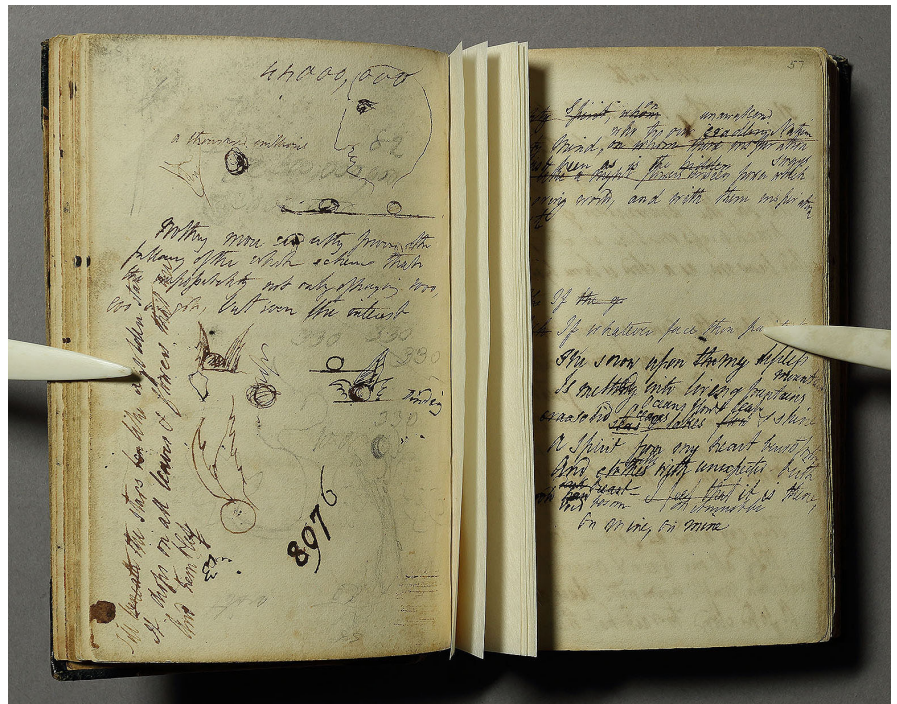


Fig. 7 Stubs used to reconstruct singletons into quires for sewing; left long as evidence of missing leaves. (Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Shelley adds. e. 12)



Fig. 8 Fore-edge after treatment with a gap showing the position of missing leaves/stubs. (Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Shelley adds. e. 12)

as stubs would be likely to mislead the reader regarding collation (Fig. 7). The solution was to attach the boards by lifting the leather on the outside of the board, and inserting the ends of the sewing tapes and the stubs of the two pastedowns between the leather and the outer board surface. This had to be done from the inside of the 'case' as the paper sides cover the leather on the outer faces of the board and were too fragile to be interfered with. The bookblock was now reunited with the remains of the binding and the manuscript has the feel of a notebook once more. The position of the missing leaves, visible as stubs, can be seen from the edges of the notebook, but the edge has regained its integrity and appearance (Fig. 8). The notebook remains fragile. The edges are chipped in many places, and the iron gall ink is in variable condition. The worst of the ink burn was supported with gelatine-coated remoistenable tissue to avoid loss of large areas of paper. Access to the notebook continues to be restricted but it is exhibited and displayed, and the current format both safeguards the media from abrasion and presents the notebook in a form as true to the original as possible.

Conclusion

Both of the treatments successfully stabilized these manuscripts, though both notebooks remain inherently fragile. Proposals in the 1980s, from the early days of a new Bodleian Conservation section, sought to provide interventive conservation solutions to their difficult problems. Fortunately, curatorial reticence and pressures from other work meant that the proposed treatments were not carried out beyond the pulling of the P.B. Shelley notebook. The passage of time has allowed us to freshly reassess these treatment options and propose different solutions, and the availability of photographic facsimiles and new editions has changed how the Library now thinks about their use. Literary manuscripts are both written texts and physical objects and our conservation has attempted to respect and preserve these two aspects.

Images of the Austen manuscript are now freely available on the Jane Austen's Fiction Manuscripts website as well as being published in a new edition.³⁵ In the foreword and introduction to the 1996 facsimile of the P.B. Shelley notebook, the authors note that the text requires further close and detailed study, the primary focus of which will now need to be the facsimile as the original is so inherently fragile.³⁶ Creating a facsimile does not permanently remove the need to consult the original, nor does it address the importance of the objects' physical integrity as a piece of literary history and a candidate for exhibition.

The work on these two notebooks reflects our ongoing approach to the problems presented by literary manuscripts. Further conservation work on our P.B. Shelley manuscripts has been made possible by a donation in 2011, the same year that the Bodleian was able to purchase *The Watsons*—the last remaining Austen manuscript in private hands—and our earlier work on *Volume the First* informed its treatment.³⁷ A detailed understanding of the underlying commercial structures of these notebooks has been required, as well as an understanding that literary manuscripts bear witness to the acts of composition, revision and subsequent use.

35 *Jane Austen's Fiction Manuscripts Digital Edition* (<https://janeausten.ac.uk>) accessed 30 January 2019, and Sutherland, *Jane Austen's Fiction Manuscripts*, 2018.

36 Goslee, *The Homeric Hymns*, 1996, p. viii.

37 Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, MS. Eng. e. 3764.

Biographies

Nicole Gilroy ACR is Head of Book Conservation at the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. After a first degree in English Literature and Biology Nicole studied for an MA in Conservation at Camberwell College of Arts. She started working at the Bodleian after a postgraduate internship in 2001 and took over leadership of the Book team in 2011. Nicole was accredited by Icon in 2007, and sits on the Church Building Council's Sculpture and Furnishings Committee.

Andrew Honey ACR is Book Conservator, Research and Teaching at the Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford. He graduated from Camberwell College of Arts in 1994 with a BA (Hons) in Paper Conservation and studied the conservation of rare books and manuscripts at West Dean College under Chris Clarkson from 1995 to 1997. His 'The Papers Used by Jane Austen' was recently published as part of the new edition of *Jane Austen's Fiction Manuscripts* (ed. Kathryn Sutherland, OUP, 2018).

Materials & suppliers

Minogami Japanese paper (1.6, 2.0, 2.7 & 3.0 monme)
Hasegawa Washi Kobo
1942-1 Warabi, Mino-city
Gifu-prefecture 501-3788
Japan

K1, K37 & K38 Japanese papers
Paper Nao, via Conservation By Design Ltd.
2 Wolsey Road, Kempston
Bedford
MK42 7AD
UK

Remoistenable tissue: Tengu Japanese paper coated with a solution of 3 parts (2.5% gelatine type B in water) to 1 part (5% Klucel G in IMS).

Tengu Japanese paper (3.5 gsm)
Preservation Equipment Ltd.
Vinces Road, Diss
Norfolk
IP22 4HQ
UK

Photogelatine (type B)
Geräte Material Werkzeuge
Wilhelm LEO's Nachfolger GmbH
Kasseler Str. 84b
34246 Vellmar
Germany

Klucel G
Conservation Resources
Building 345, Heyford Park
Upper Heyford, Bicester
Oxfordshire
OX25 5HA
UK

Aerolinen
Samuel Lamont & Sons Ltd
Ballymena, Northern Ireland
UK

12/2 unbleached linen thread, 12/2 seaming thread, 10 mm wide linen sewing tape
Barbour Campbell Threads Ltd
Hilden, Lisburn
Northern Ireland
BT27 4RR
UK

SC6000 acrylic polymer and wax emulsion
The Leather Conservation Centre
Grosvenor Chambers, Grosvenor Centre
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