Intermediate Book Repair: Rebacking

This procedure is for books that have torn or missing spines or torn endcaps.

Necessary materials: PVA mix, knitting needles, boards, weights, waste paper, bone folder, brush, book cloth, Bristol or other card stock, straight edge, scalpel, cutting mat with grid, scissors.

1. Remove the spine if it is still attached.
2. Trim the cloth on the boards 1/8” onto the boards to clean up the edge.

3. Lift the cloth on the boards approximately 1”. Cleanly cut the cloth head and tail so the lifted cloth moves freely.
4. Measure the width of the spine from should to shoulder and cut a piece of spine stiffener the exact width and the height of the boards.
5. Cut a piece of bookcloth 2” taller than the stiffener and 3” wider than the spine.

6. Glue up the stiffener and adhere in the center of the cloth making sure it is parallel with the long edges. Bone down well and place under weight to dry.
7. When the cloth and stiffener are dry, cut a narrow wedge out of the center of the head and tail turn-ins on the cloth stopping the point about 1/8” from the stiffener.

8. Glue up the head and tail and fold over onto the stiffener. Pull edges slightly in at the notch. Bone down well.
9. Shape the new spine piece on the edge of the table so the round matches the round of the book.

10. Check the fit and trim the long edges of the cloth if necessary. Fold the cloth along the long edges at the seam with the stiffener.
11. Glue up the new spine on the long sides of the cloth only. Do not glue up the spine stiffener.

12. Place new spine on book under old cloth and bone in joint first then bone the cloth onto the boards.

13. Glue up original cloth and bone down. Do not use too much glue at this stage or it will ooze out and make a mess.
14. Place the book between boards with knitting needles or bamboo skewers in the joints and press or weight until dry.

15. Trim the original spine so it fits within the borders of the new spine stiffener.

16. Clean the back of the original spine, glue up and adhere to the new spine, making sure it is oriented correctly.
17. Bone down the spine. You can bone under a piece of paper or Reemay to prevent wrinkles if the cloth is thin or you are putting on a new paper label.

18. If the spine was missing, print a new label on the laser printer and attach to the spine as above.