

FROM WORN COPY TO SHELF-READY TREASURE

Restoring Biggles of the Camel Squadron — a customer restoration story from Willow House Antiques

A fragile vintage book was made complete again by replacing missing pages, rebuilding its spine and binding, fitting new endpapers, and finishing it with a facsimile dust jacket.

Every old book carries two stories: the one printed on its pages and the one written through years of use. One customer began a remarkable new chapter for this copy of Biggles of the Camel Squadron after buying it from Willow House Antiques. The photographs below document how a very tired volume was carefully taken apart, repaired and returned to the shelf.



The original frontispiece and title page, with visible age spotting.

THE STARTING POINT

The illustrated frontispiece and title page still showed why the book was worth saving, but its physical condition presented a serious challenge. The original front board was worn, the spine and rear board were missing, pages 15–16 were loose, and pages 253–254 were absent. Age-related spotting and discolouration were also visible throughout the paper.



The worn original front board before restoration began.



The damaged binding, with the spine and rear board missing.



Loose pages 15–16 showed that the text block also needed attention.

The gap left by missing pages 253–254.

REMOVING THE OLD ADHESIVE

The first structural job was to strip away the old glue from the exposed spine. Removing the brittle adhesive revealed the sewing and the backs of the gathered sections, creating a cleaner foundation for the repair work that followed.



Old adhesive removed from the spine during preparation.



A closer view of the cleaned spine and visible sewing structure.

RECREATING THE MISSING PAGES

The missing final leaves could not simply be ignored. Replacement pages 253 and 254 were produced to restore the continuity of the text. The new leaves were prepared to match the original page size and layout as closely as practical, then incorporated into the repaired book.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS BOOK.

arranged artificial or false frontiers in order to lead escaping officers to believe that they had entered another country, whereas in fact they had not.

FANNING (DOWN) : An R.F.C. expression for blowing up with bombs. Things were fanned down, not blown up.

FLAMING (DOWN) : Mistake used by the Germans against aeroplanes; the weapons that fired them remained a mystery until the end of the war. They appeared in a series of glowing balls of fire that rose vertically from the ground.

FLYING WIRE : Broadly speaking, the wings of an aeroplane are braced with two sets of wires, flying wires and landing wires. Flying wires hold the wings in position in the air, landing wires take the weight of the wings when the machine is standing on the ground.

HANNOVERIAN : An efficient type of German two-seater.

INCLINOMETER : An instrument very much like a spirit level, set across the instrument board, the position of the bubble showing if the machine is flying level, or banking.

M.O. : Medical Officer.

"NOIX" : De Havilland 9's.

PARACHUTE FLARES : Bright lights which had a parachute attachment, in order that they should sink slowly to the ground. They were used by aeroplanes to illuminate the ground below them when night flying.

253

"BIGGLES" OF THE CAMEL SQUADRON.

POUR VOUS : Words supposed to resemble the noise made by the German Mercedes aero engine.

ROCKING WINGS : The signal usually employed by the leader of a formation to indicate that enemy aircraft were in sight or that he was going to attack.

RUMBLER : A German two-seater aeroplane used in large quantities during the war.

"SALVAGE" : Kite balloons were sometimes called "salvages." German balloons were sometimes referred to as *Drachens*.

"SHOOT" (ARTILLERY) : A machine spotting for the artillery was said to be doing a "shoot."

SIGSET (SIC) : A thick, padded overall garment worn by pilots.

SPINNING FIRE : A small fire usually kept alight on aerodromes to show landing machines the direction of the wind.

SPANDAU : Many German machine-guns and bullets were made at Spandau, in Germany. For this reason German machine-guns were often referred to as Spandaus.

TARMAC : The paved area in front of the hangars.

TRIPLANE : An aeroplane having three wings in a triplane. During the war it usually meant the Fokker triplane, also called "Tripehound." Sopwith triplanes were used by the British.

VERY PISTOL : A short, large-bored pistol used for firing signal lights.

254

The newly made replacement page 253.

The newly made replacement page 254.

REBUILDING THE SPINE AND BINDING

With the text block prepared, the spine was re-glued and new mull was attached to strengthen the connection between the pages and the new case. A replacement cover and fresh endpapers were then made, followed by the careful process of bringing the text block and cover together.



The spine re-glued and reinforced with

The new cover and endpapers taking

The replacement cover ready for

THE FINISHED BOOK

The transformation is striking. The rebound volume now has a clean cloth case, new front and rear endpapers, and replacement pages 253–254 in place. A facsimile dust jacket completes the presentation while giving the restored book the familiar visual character associated with the title.



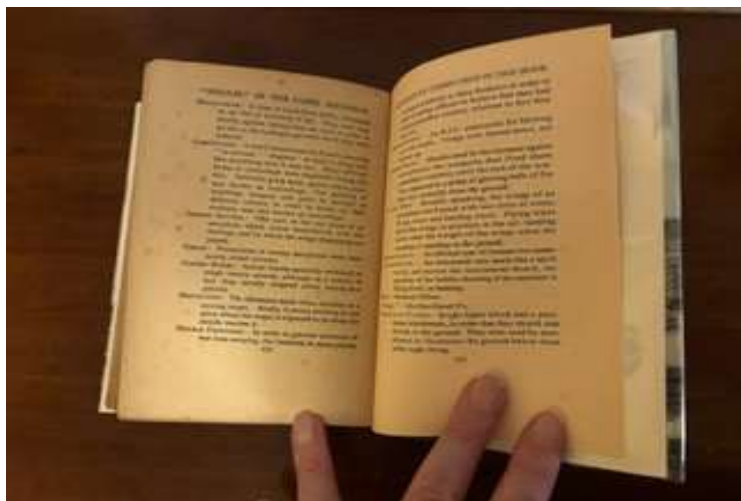
The book fully rebound in its new cloth



The completed restoration with a



The restored book opened to show its



Replacement page 253 in its final position.



Replacement page 254 beside the new rear endpaper.

A BOOK READY FOR ITS NEXT CHAPTER

This project shows what patience and determination can achieve. A copy that arrived with major binding damage, loose leaves and missing pages has been made complete and presentable again. We are delighted that a book found at Willow House Antiques inspired such a thoughtful restoration—and that the customer shared the full journey with us.

Have you restored a book discovered in our shop? We would love to see your before-and-after photographs.

WORDPRESS POST DETAILS

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