Title
Bell's edition of Shakespeare's plays as they are now performed at the Theatres Royal in London

Author
Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616

DESCRIPTION:

General Remarks
This is Volume 4. This edition contains 77 (etched?) plates that date from 1773-76.

Binding
This is a full tree calf leather binding. The spine contains gold decorative tooling within the panels and along the raised bands. The boards are tooled in gold with a decorative border and around the turn-ins with hatching.

Textblock
The textblock consists of gatherings sewn onto cords. The edges are decorated yellow. The endsheets are a decorative marbled laid paper. There are yellow, red, and green silk endbands sewn around two leather cores with a front bead.

Primary Support
Medium weight antique laid paper.

Medium
Printed in black ink throughout.

Attachments|Inserts
There is a book plate on the upper pastedown that reads, “The Carson Shakespearian Collection|Donated by WM.A. Procter.”

Housing
No prior housing.

CONDITION:

Summary
The book is in poor condition. It is broken in half and cannot be read in its current state.
Binding
The leather binding suffers from red rot. The tightback binding has broken in half and the endcaps are lost. A gathering is detached from the two halves. The detached gathering contains Act IV, Scene II plate located on the last page of the last leaf. The sewing is broken where the binding has broken in half. The endband cores and sewing supports are brittle. The silk endband thread is unraveling where the binding has broken in half.

Textblock
The yellow edges are faded overall. The top edge is heavily soiled with accumulated dirt and dust.

Primary Support
The Act IV, Scene II plate and adjacent page has darkened overall to light brown in comparison with the rest of the textblock. It's possible that at some point in the binding's history, the binding had been exhibited for an extended period of time to this plate, which may have caused a preferential opening which lead to a weakened spine that eventually broke in half with use.

Medium
Stable

Housing Narrative
The fragile binding would benefit from being stored in an enclosure on the shelf to protect it from environmental changes and to protect the leather from abrasion.

Attachments/Inserts
Good condition

Previous Treatment
The leather may have been previously consolidated overall. Despite suffering from red rot, the leather is mostly intact and is only powdering along the edges and areas where it is exposed due to physical damage such as torn or scratched areas.

Materials Analysis
The leather is extremely brittle and cannot be safely lifted from the spine intact.

TREATMENT:

Proposal
1. Consolidate the red-rotted leather prior to reinforcing the boards.
2. Re-sew the textblock to rejoin the broken and detached parts.
3. Repair the broken endbands to prevent the threads from unraveling.
4. Fill losses in the leather spine and repair the endcaps.

Housing Need
Corrugated clamshell

Factors Influencing Treatment
The tightback leather binding spine cannot be safely lifted intact, therefore, the textblock spine will not be relined at this time, and treatment will need to accommodate this condition issue. Also, this binding is needed for class use in the fall of 2015.

Performed Treatment
1. Sewn with 18/3 linen thread, the lower textblock portion was reunited to the detached gathering with a splice stitch, followed by a chain stitch sewn to reconnect the upper portion of the textblock to the lower.

2. The leather edges and spine were consolidated with 2-3% Klucel G in ethanol.

3. The loose board attachment was strengthened along the upper and lower joints with solvent set Lascaux 498 HV Uso Mino kozo tissue that was toned with Golden Acrylics. The repair tissue texture was given a similar sheen to the leather with a coating of Red Rot Cocktail composed of SC600 in Klucel G.

4. The exposed portion of the textblock spine, located along the leather gap, was lined with Sekishu kozo tissue and Zen Shofu wheat starch paste.

5. Losses in the leather spine were filled with layers of acrylic toned kozo tissue and a 1:1 mix of Jade 403 PVA and wheat starch paste.

6. Uso Mino kozo hinges were adhered along each side of the sewn-in gathering with wheat starch paste. The hinge along the discolored plate was toned with Golden Acrylics.

7. The leather spine endcaps were rebuilt with kozo tissue and a 1:1 mixture of PVA and wheat starch paste.

8. The filled leather spine losses and the rebuilt endcaps were in-painted with Golden Acrylics.

9. The loose silk endband threads were stabilized with a dry PVA rather than wheat starch paste or methyl cellulose to reduce introducing moisture to the aged silk.

**Housing Provided**

**Corrugated clamshell**

**Housing Narrative**

The corrugated clamshell was altered to include a custom corrugated collapsible cradle with a Volara insert along the spine. The cradle can be removed from the enclosure for display.

**Storage Recommendations and Handling notes**

It is recommended to use the binding with the aid of a cradle.

**TOTAL Treatment Time**

14 hours
Visual Compensation of Filled Leather Loss, During Treatment

In-painting, During Treatment

Replaced Headcap, During Treatment

Top Edge of Headcap, During Treatment

Replaced Tailcap, During Treatment

Bottom Edge of Tailcap, During Treatment