

## Ingenious Trade

*Ingenious Trade* recovers the intricate stories of the young women who came to London in the late seventeenth century to earn their own living, most often with the needle, and the mistresses who set up shops and supervised their apprenticeships. Tracking women through city archives, it reveals the extent and complexity of their contracts, training and skills, from adolescence to old age. In contrast to the informal, unstructured and marginalised aspects of women's work, this book uses legal records and guild archives to reconstruct women's negotiations with city regulations and bureaucracy. It shows single women, wives and widows establishing themselves in guilds both alongside and separate to men, in a network that extended from elites to paupers and around the country. Through an intensive and creative archival reconstruction, Laura Gowing recovers the significance of apprenticeship in the lives of girls and women, and puts women's work at the heart of the revolution in worldly goods.

Laura Gowing is Professor of Early Modern History at King's College London, specialising in the history of early modern women, gender, and the body. She is the author of *Domestic Dangers* (1996) and *Common Bodies* (2003) which won prizes from the Society for the Study of Early Modern Women and the American Historical Association (Joan Kelly prize) respectively. She is an editor of *History Workshop Journal*.

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*Women and Work in Seventeenth-Century  
London*

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Laura Gowing  
King's College London



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Contents

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| <i>List of Figures</i>                               | <i>page</i> vi |
| <i>List of Tables</i>                                | vii            |
| <i>Acknowledgements</i>                              | viii           |
| Introduction   | 1              |
| 1 Bred in the Exchange: Seamstresses and Shopkeepers | 11             |
| 2 Girls as Apprentices                               | 55             |
| 3 Managing the Trade: Women as Mistresses            | 99             |
| 4 What Girls Learned                                 | 137            |
| 5 Making Havoc: Discipline, Demeanour and Resistance | 178            |
| 6 Freedoms and Customs                               | 209            |
| Conclusion   | 243            |
| <i>Appendix: Who's Who</i>                           | 251            |
| <i>Bibliography</i>                                  | 254            |
| <i>Index</i>   | 269            |

Figures

---

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| 1.1 Wenceslaus Hollar, <i>Winter</i> (1643–4)   | page 15 |
| 1.2 Sites of the shopping galleries   | 17      |
| 1.3 Robert White, <i>The Royal Exchange</i> (1671)  | 19      |
| 1.4 Abraham Bosse, <i>La Galerie du Palais</i> (1637–38)  | 20      |
| 1.5 Detail of Ogilby and Morgan’s 1676 map of London,<br>showing the Royal Exchange and Gresham College | 24      |
| 1.6 Schematic plan of the layout of the first floor of the Royal<br>Exchange after the Fire             | 27      |
| 1.7 Women’s connections in the Exchange   | 43      |
| 2.1 Ann Evans’s indenture   | 56      |
| 2.2 Lucy Maes’s indenture   | 70      |
| 2.3 Numbers of female apprenticeships   | 79      |
| 2.4 Characteristics of female apprentices, 1660–1700  | 85      |
| 2.5 Goldsmiths’ Company Apprenticeship  | 86      |
| 3.1 Indenture of Mary Toft to Elizabeth Fazakerley  | 106     |
| 3.2 Richard Court’s indenture   | 107     |
| 3.3 Mary and William Hull’s apprentices   | 113     |
| 3.4 Elizabeth and Thomas Bromhall’s apprentices   | 113     |
| 3.5 Frances and John Spillett’s apprentices and children  | 116     |
| 3.6 Alice Guidot’s apprentices  | 119     |
| 3.7 Rachel Erskine’s apprentices  | 124     |
| 3.8 Elizabeth Kingsman’s apprentices  | 125     |
| 4.1 Named occupations in girls’ apprenticeships   | 144     |
| 5.1 F. Shepherd, <i>Sir Paul Pindar’s House</i> (1812)  | 196     |
| 6.1 Patrimony form for Anne Allison   | 227     |
| 6.2 Mary Spark’s petition   | 228     |

Tables

---

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 2.1 Proportions of female apprentices                                  | <i>page</i> 88 |
| 3.1 Mistresses of female apprentices, 1640–1700                        | 111            |
| 3.2 Numbers of apprentices to married couples taking boys<br>and girls | 111            |
| 3.3 Girls apprenticed to single women                                  | 123            |
| 3.4 Apprenticeships and their outcomes, 1640–1700                      | 123            |
| 3.5 Mistresses and their female apprentices, 1640–1700                 | 124            |
| 4.1 Gendered occupations   | 147            |
| 4.2 Valuing seamstresses   | 167            |
| 4.3 Costs of shop goods  | 167            |

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