

Biography

I joined SoB in 2002 and have previously been a general Committee Member, Events Co-ordinator, Regional Trustee and Chair of the London & South Region. I am an Accredited Conservator-Restorer member of the Institute of Conservation (Icon) and a Professional Associate of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC).

After graduating in English from Cambridge University, I worked within publishing and the antiquarian book trade in London before training in book and paper conservation at the Getty Research Institute in California. As well as working privately throughout my career, I have held positions at the Huntington Library in California, The National Archives in Kew, and the Royal Collection Trust, where I was Head of the Royal Bindery in Windsor Castle until late 2019.

I am now in private practice at Dragon Press Bindery with Dieter Räder, recently relocated to West Wales. We provide services and tuition in hand bookbinding, book restoration, book and archives conservation, and letterpress printing. I teach and give presentations nationally and internationally; I am a judge for the Elizabeth Soutar Bookbinding Competition administered by the National Library of Scotland; a Liveryman of the Stationers' Company, serving on its Awards Advisory Committee and Postgraduate Bursary Programme that grant financial support for training in conservation, bookbinding, printing and allied fields; mentor students; am an assessor of mandatory continuing professional development review submissions from Icon members seeking to maintain accredited status.

Personal statement

With a background in both bookbinding and conservation, including experience of institutional and self-employment, also amateur as well as professional work (I started my first bindery at the kitchen table early in my training), I believe I have a good understanding of the great variety of interests encompassed by the Society. I am keen to bring members together, supporting and promoting all aspects of the world of working with the book form for everyone's benefit: I do not see strands such as fine binding, book arts, small press work, edition and trade binding, conservation and restoration as separate activities but as part of a broad, intertwined spectrum with each one informing and enhancing the others.

I have a strong interest in education and training, with a passion for maintaining and passing on traditional high-level craft skills. These are the backbone of our field and, to mix metaphors, provide the foundation for good practice in all areas, including innovative work. We must strive to keep them alive and relevant for the generations to come. It is also crucial to recognise that however great someone's knowledge and technical prowess might be, there is always much more to learn.

During my time at Windsor Castle, I was substantially involved in creating the now sadly discontinued Queen's Bindery Apprenticeship Scheme (QBAS) pilot and responsible for establishing its curriculum. In connection with this, I was part of the working group engaged in writing the syllabus of the City & Guilds Level Three Diploma in Bookbinding. After successfully directing the QBAS programme from its inception for three years, I left the Royal Collection Trust with apprentices achieving distinction in City & Guilds formal assessments. I very much hope that my practical experience of delivering a rigorous course of instruction can be put to good use within the Society.

I would be honoured to serve the Society in helping to shape its future as a key part of a vibrant, inclusive community. If allowed the opportunity, in the position of Vice-Chair I would support the leadership and work of the Chair while exploring the direction members desire to take and possible new ventures for approval, particularly with regard to training at every level. I am keen to ensure a framework that will provide encouragement and aid for each region to develop in their own way while still aligned with the core values and standards of the Society. I also see the role of Vice-Chair as one of shadowing the Chair with a view to stepping into their shoes in due course if elected, thereby ensuring continuity and smooth-running operation, and am prepared to commit to this. The current situation affords the chance to put the Society on an even keel through establishing a clear, simple constitution as well as goals and organisational structures agreed through democratic process, all underpinned by good governance and communication.