

the Society of Bookbinders



# Newsletter

Spring 2024



SOCIETY WEBSITE - [WWW.SOCIETYOFBOOKBINDERS.COM](http://WWW.SOCIETYOFBOOKBINDERS.COM)

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# Bookbindesigns

Creative engraving



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Bookbindesigns online catalogue features a full range of traditional and contemporary designs.

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Here at Bookbindesigns we offer exceptional quality whilst maintaining very competitive prices and a prompt service.

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## National Organisation

### Patron

Michelle Brown

### President

Marc Lamb

### Trustees

Michael Kelly  
Mary Asiedu  
Trish Burge  
George Davidson  
Jill Sellars

### Management Committee

Both the Chair and Secretary roles are being filled in on an interim basis.

Contact via [nat.secretary@societyofbookbinders.com](mailto:nat.secretary@societyofbookbinders.com)

### Regional Representatives

Each UK Regional Chair will serve annually on the Management Committee for the following year. The current representatives may be contacted through the regional secretaries.

Fuller details can be found online :

<https://www.societyofbookbinders.com/regions/>

#### East Anglia:

Liz Budek

#### London & South:

Meagen Smith ([Is.secretary@societyofbookbinders.com](mailto:Is.secretary@societyofbookbinders.com))

#### Midlands:



**Ian Nilo Walton**

**North East:**

**Helen Kendall**

**North Wales and North West**

**Jacqueline Payne**

**Scotland**

**Peter Cunningham**

**Western**

**Margaret Castle**

## **Organisers**

The Society's activities could not be sustained without a dedicated group of members who take responsibility for various numbers of activities. These include: Conference and Seminar organisers; Education and Training; Editors of Bookbinder and National Newsletter; Competition organisers; Membership; Advertising; Website.

### **Membership Secretary:**

**[membership@societyofbookbinders.com](mailto:membership@societyofbookbinders.com)**

### **Newsletter Editor:**

**[nl.editor@societyofbookbinders.com](mailto:nl.editor@societyofbookbinders.com)**

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### **Education & Training Secretary:**

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### **Overseas Group:**

**[soboverseas@btinternet.com](mailto:soboverseas@btinternet.com)**

### **Website:**

**[webmaster@societyofbookbinders.com](mailto:webmaster@societyofbookbinders.com)**

# Newsletter

The National newsletter is published three times a year in April (February by exception in 2024), August, and December. In the new PDF format it will be emailed to all members, and the latest issue only made available online to all.

Contributions and items for inclusion in the next newsletter (August) should be sent to the editor no later than July 16th. Email [nl.editor@societyofbookbinders.com](mailto:nl.editor@societyofbookbinders.com)

To advertise in the newsletter please contact the advertising editor email [advertising@societyofbookbinders.com](mailto:advertising@societyofbookbinders.com)

Rates are as follows (One year - three issues):

Quarter page (portrait) - £41

Half page (landscape) - £57

Full page (portrait) - £90

Inside cover (portrait) - £132

Outside cover (portrait) - £170

Please be aware that opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily represent those of the Society.

The mention of a product or a process in an article does not necessarily imply recommendation by the Society.

Authors of articles and other contributions retain copyright of their work but unless they specify otherwise, it will be assumed that they allow their work to be reproduced on the Society's website or in the newsletters or other publication of the Society.

Cover photo - Mel Jefferson's binding of *The Indomitable Servant*, multiple category winner at the 2017 International Competition

## Editorial

Welcome to the February 2024 edition of the Society's Newsletter.

New Year, new format, new editor. While a lot has changed, and the Society continues to adjust to changing times, interests and behaviours, there are a number of familiar themes in this issue.

First and foremost, as an educational charity we rightly pride ourselves on our learning programmes, so we include reminders of a selection of both national and regional events coming up, and brief reviews of things you may have missed.

Inside you'll also find some preliminary information about this year's Conference to be held in York, together with a plea for members to share your views on our national events.

The annual search for recipients of the Maureen Duke Educational continues, and we're pleased to publish the report from our 2022 awardee, Bridget Warrington.

We're pleased to showcase our newest prize sponsor for our International Bookbinding Competition, and champion of all things miniature, Neale Albert. And for those of you who may need a further nudge, we include details on how to enter and the prize categories.

For our feature piece, Mylyn McColl shares some of her experience as an experienced tutor as to how to get the most out of online workshops.

We once again highlight the ongoing challenge of find the volunteers we need, nationally and regionally, to keep these standards of education going, and the Society more generally. We are a community, after all....



I hope you find something to enjoy inside or better yet, a prompt to action.

*Ivan Salcedo*



## Message from the Trustees

Update on the evolution of Society of Bookbinders into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered with the Charities Commission on 25 July 2023

We are being advised on a pro-bono basis by Claire Dakin, retired Company Secretary who immediately advised that a Treasurer for the Society should be recruited and a helpful resource for reaching out to volunteers is <https://reachvolunteering.org.uk/> and that this person should also be a Trustee of the CIO.

For me to understand how the CIO affects the running of our activities I had to interpret parts of the new constitution into everyday language, then understand how to set in motion the formal processes which have to be implemented:

First the CIO creates a three-tier management structure:

1. The **Board of Trustees**
2. The **National Management Committee** (previously National Council)
3. **Seven Regional Committees** and other committees dedicated to particular activities.

The Trustees legally have overall responsibility and 'resolve to delegate' the responsibility for day-to-day operations of the CIO to the various committees. Those responsibilities will be defined via 'Terms of Reference' for the Board of Trustees and each committee.

Rather than any change in the way the Regional and other committees actually operate, the fundamental change is the formal requirement to feed information about their activities back to the Board of Trustees and we need to plan a new routine to achieve that.

Brabners Solicitors who give us legal advice have confirmed that the Regions do not need to amend their bank details as these are separate to the bank accounts of Society itself. They also have confirmed that the proposed 'Terms of Reference' are legally required to ensure the formal governance arrangements relating to the Regions and their relationship to the Society moving forwards.

The Trustees Terms of Reference are being drafted with Claire Dakin's guidance and will include the 'declaration to delegate'. The document needs to include a description of the Trustees' responsibilities and how they will be put into practice.

Then we need to agree Terms of Reference which will formally outline the requirements for the running of each of the different committees.

One change is that the title of 'Chair of the Society of Bookbinders' is now held by the Chair of the Board of Trustees, though that person may chair the National Management Committee.

So, there will be the Board of Trustees, the National Management Committee, the Regional Committees and a number of other committees.

At future Society AGMs voting will be required to elect Trustees only. All the roles which make up the National Management Committee are voluntary, though can be held by a Trustee.

## **Society of Bookbinders 50th Anniversary Conference**

York University Conference centre 15th to 18th August 2024

The time has come around again for the Bi-annual Society of Bookbinders conference, dates are 15th to 18th of August 2024 at the conference centre within York University. This is a dedicated centre for conferences so is self-contained all on the same level and allows more interaction with the Trade stands which will be better for both Delegates and Trade attendee's which we need more interaction. The accommodation and meals are all within a 300m radius for ease of access including the parking.

An exciting program of lectures has been put together for you as follows:

**ARTHUR GREEN - English bookbinding manuals: or books about bookbding.**

An illustrated lecture on the history of bookbinding manuals.

**SUE DOGGETT - Seeing is believing: The construction and visuality of the handmade book.**

Using examples from her creative practice, Sue asks the question, what impact does learning and maintaining a craft skill have on your creative visual language?

**SUSANA DOMINGUEZ MARTIN - The Bambalina - Susana's sliding spine binding.**

Demonstrating the structure and showing how the spine slides into the boards on opening the book.

**EMMA FRASER - An elegant method of board reattachment.**

Demonstrating her technique for re-attaching boards.



## **LIZZIE NEVILLE - An introduction to paper washing and resizing.**

A talk and demonstration of paper washing.

## **GLENN MALKIN – Variations on the Origata binding.**

Explorations of the book structure from Julie Auzillon and demonstrated by Glenn.

## **RICHARD BEADSMOORE - A meander through my bindings.**

Illustrated talk: The journey from evening class to DB Fellow with tips for the amateur binder on the way.

## **PIOTR JAROSZ - A Drop Back Box with triple layer structure.**

Demonstration with lots of extra useful information.

## **SERENA KIRKMAN - Pre-booked sessions for delegates to seek advice on book restoration.**

Advice and help from an experienced binder/book restorer.

We have a new hands on sessions with Serena Kirkman who has exceptional insight into book restoration and delegates will be able to book half hour one to one evaluation of individuals book and obtain advice on where and how to progress their individual book which they can bring along.

On the Thursday evening Mylyn McColl will be presenting the results and prizes for the international book competition from approx.. 6 till 7.30 pm with also the new category of miniature books. All the entry books will be on display for all to view throughout the conference.

The AGM will take place on the Friday evening from 6.30pm allowing time for discussion on way forward.

The main booking details will be out as a e-bulletin shortly with download of booking form and also the application for booking

a slot with Serena for evaluation of your individual restoration project. We have at this conference had to slightly increase the charges to reflect charges coming to us from all University events, but without detrimental effect to the quality of the event.

Once again the conference team look forward to meeting you all at York following the success and comments we received from the 2022 Bath Conference, and for those that requested there is a full English breakfast available.

*Alan Hall*

Conference Organizer



Conference 2022 welcoming committee

**Have your say about the future of our Conference and Seminar!**

Have you ever attended the alternating Conference and Seminar? If not, we would like to know what might encourage you to attend. And if you have, we would welcome your ideas on how they can be improved.

Lots of organisations have struggled to attract the same numbers to their events since the pandemic closed us all down back in 2020. It's partly that some of us have changed our habits and are going out less, and of course in the last year raging inflation has required many to cut back. Inevitably our Society of Bookbinders events have also been adversely affected by these trends. Our first Conference since covid-19, in 2022, made a small loss, and last year's Seminar at Harper Adams only just broke even. Both were great events, and this year's Conference at York University will also prove to be so.

However the Trustees feel it's timely to step back a little and reflect on the situation. Is the current way of doing things - alternating between a three-night Conference and a two-night Seminar - still fit for purpose? What do you think? The Trustees have asked Barry Clark, Chair of our North Wales and North West Region, to take soundings and report back to the Trustees with suggestions and recommendations.

So, have your say in this review! If you have not attended Conference or Seminar since we re-started why is that? Is it too expensive, in the wrong location, maybe the content doesn't attract you, or some other reason? What changes might entice you to book? If you have attended, what for you are the best aspects? And what might be changed to make it a better event for you? Do you understand the difference between Conference and Seminar, and is that still valid? Would one event incorporating the best of both, held every year be the way forward? Or maybe our national residential event should only be held once every two years?

Lots of questions, and sometime soon the Trustees will need to decide on the way forward. Make sure your voice is heard in this process. Share your views by e-mailing Barry Clark at [barry@chorlton21.co.uk](mailto:barry@chorlton21.co.uk). He would like to hear from you in the next few weeks.



## The Maureen Duke Educational Award 2024

**Applications are invited for the 2024 Award.**

**The Norie Trust** is a small charitable trust based in the South West of England, which funds various projects, many of which are associated with literature and the arts, and also assists community-based projects which aim to improve the quality of people's lives.

It created the **Maureen Duke Education Award** to recognise the late Maureen Duke's inspirational teaching and dedication to education and The Society of Bookbinders administers the award on behalf of the Trust.

The award is to assist professionals in the book field. As the Award was not made last year due to the entries not fulfilling all the criteria, the Trust has very generously offered the Society funds of £4,000.00 to be given in one Award this year.

The **recipient** of the award each year should be **a bookbinder, book conservator, book restorer or book artist who is working professionally in the U.K.** They should continue **to work professionally**, preferably in the U.K. and **to teach and pass on their skills, both to individuals and groups.**

The applicant will be required to email the following to [claireredfern@sky.com](mailto:claireredfern@sky.com)

- CV
- A brief outline of the nature of study wishing to be undertaken, indicating how this will enhance their work and teaching, together with their plans for the future.
- Full Breakdown of costs – fees, travel and subsistence
- Images of work completed in the two years prior to application
- Names, addresses and email of two referees.

The recipient will be required to write an account of their study

and experience gained for others in the field.

The **closing date** for applications will be **Friday 4th July 2024** with an announcement at the AGM on the **15th August 2024**.

The announcement will be posted on the Website, in the E Bulletin, and by notification to Regional Secretaries of SOB and the secretaries to Designer Bookbinders, The Society of Archivists, The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, and the Society of Scribes and Illuminators.

## 2022 Award Winner's Report - Bridget Warrington

I was delighted to receive the 2022 Maureen Duke Education Award, as announced by Philippa Radar, Vice Chair, at the AGM of the Society of Bookbinders conference in Bath on 26th August 2022.

I am an independent Library and Archives Conservator, based in the Yorkshire Dales, with my studio appropriately based within a converted stone cow byre. After an initial career in publishing as a book editor and proof-reader, I re-trained as a bookbinder at the London College of Printing, and shortly afterward I began conservation training at the Churchill Archives Centre. After five years, I began a part-time, distance-learning MA Preventive Conservation with Northumbria University. Then in 2013 I moved to the Cambridge Colleges Conservation Consortium working on books, manuscripts and archives for the college libraries and archives centres within the centre of the university city, and two years later headed up the Consortium studio.

Knowing that, ultimately, I wanted to have my own conservation business, I worked towards accreditation in 2017 and in April 2018 left the Consortium and set up a small studio in Girton on the outskirts of Cambridge. As for so many people, the Covid pandemic gave time for both reflection and future planning, and in January 2021 we moved to the Dales where both my husband and I had spent formative years and where we had agreed to move back to when opportunity allowed ... and 2021 seemed as good a time as any. Moving the contents of

house and studio is difficult, especially when you must watch items like your prized board chopper lifted onto a removal van and then unloaded into the first of the winter's snow, but three months on and the house and studio were in good working order and I was back at the bench working on client projects.

An online conference covering Continuous Professional Development and vocational doctorates in the summer of 2021 got me thinking about my own research interests. After several months talking to academics and book specialists and having submitted a detailed application, I was fortunate to be offered a place at the University of Lincoln to study part-time for a PhD in Conservation of Cultural Heritage. I enrolled in February 2022 and by the summer of that year had scoped out my research to focus on the evolution of book repairs 1950-99. The aim is to plot the changes in book repairs from trade and hand bookbinders, through the period of restorers and then the emergence of conservation, to assist emerging bookbinders and conservators to understand both the initial 'Why ...?' and then the subsequent 'How ...?' questions they have when viewing books with post-war repairs.

My research was formulated around two forms of original material or data: several library surveys focusing on book repairs, with supporting oral-history interviews. When scoping out a research project of any kind, it is important to reflect on one's own skills and gaps in knowledge. For the library surveys, additional binding knowledge would certainly facilitate my survey research. I identified Nicholas Pickwoad's European Bookbinding course, applied for the one-week course for July 2023, and was offered a place through the Rare Book School and the Institute of English Studies, University of London. At this stage I applied to the SoB's Maureen Duke Educational Award, and with a successful outcome, was able to accept the IES place.

I also identified writing and delivering a research-based paper at a major academic conference as a gap in my skill set. A 15thC manuscript project for Norwich Castle Museum, on which I was appointed manuscript conservator, and which involved multiple analysis phases including a micro-CT scanning and carbon dating on an historical board repair offered a great



opportunity to share knowledge, academic analysis teams and interpretation of results. In August 2022, I submitted a paper proposal with colleague James Sargan, Assistant Professor (Research) in the Scientific Study of Manuscripts and Inscription at Durham University, for the 19th International Seminar on the Care and Conservation of Manuscripts at the University of Copenhagen, to be held in April 2023. We were fortunate to have our proposed joint paper accepted and to assist in the financing of the trip, the SoB agreed that the residual Maureen Duke Award after fees and expenses for the European Bookbinding course, could be directed towards expenses for the Copenhagen trip.

The Copenhagen conference was amazing. It was the first in-person C&C event for three years and everybody was delighted to be back chatting face-to-face, discussing recent trends in the conservation of books and manuscripts, not to mention laughing ... there was a lot of laughing! James and I were scheduled to give our paper on the last morning of the three-day event. The paper went well and the feedback we received from colleagues was good (see photo below.)



In July 2023, I headed to London for the IES course on European Bookbinding. As colleagues had recommended, this was a powerhouse course delivered by Nicholas Pickwoad who has a truly encyclopaedic knowledge of bindings. My notes from the week's course run to book-length themselves and have provided me with an excellent resource for my PhD pilot survey on Lincoln Cathedral Library, currently in progress.

My sincere thanks go to the awarding committee of the SoB for their support in giving me this educational award. It has been essential in allowing me to attend and present at an important academic conference and to enrol on an advanced binding course. As my doctoral research takes shape, I hope there will be an opportunity to present my findings to the SoB membership and provide a progress update.

*Bridget Warrington*

# International Bookbinding Competition 2024

## About the International Bookbinding Competition

The International Bookbinding Competition was started in 1999 and has developed into one of the most successful exhibitions of the art and craft of bookbinding. The Competition runs in conjunction with the Society's biennial Conference and attracts entries from countries all around the world. Its success has been in the variety of work presented, with fine binding displayed alongside restoration and book arts. This year there are eighteen prizes to be awarded over five categories including prizes for forwarding, finishing and design. We are grateful to have a substantial prize fund made up from many long standing generous sponsors and delighted to have gained support from some new sponsors.

Every entrant will receive a copy of the exhibition catalogue containing colour photographs of each book submitted to the Competition. The catalogue and high-quality images will showcase the wide-ranging breadth and creativity in contemporary bookbinding. Additional copies will be available to purchase at all Competition exhibitions as well as online from J Hewit and Sons Ltd.

Winners will be announced in August 2024, winning entrants will be notified prior to the event. The intention is that all books entered into the Competition will be exhibited at the Conference. Non-winning bindings may either be collected from the exhibition or posted back to the entrants. Prize-winning bindings will travel to a number of venues across the UK on a touring exhibition. Further information and dates will be published on the website, via the mailing list, and on the Competition's social media accounts.

Entrants submitting work to the Competition do so in the knowledge that if their work is selected for an award it will be retained by the Society for the touring exhibition and will only be returned following the final venue. Photographs of winning books and all entries will be taken for use on Competition promotional material and social media. Full entry details and

instructions for delivering your books will be released nearer the time. Please subscribe to the Competition mailing list or check the Society's website and social media for the latest news and updates.

### Competition Categories

#### A - Fine Binding



Entries in this category should be a binding of a contemporary nature in a codex form displaying an excellent standard of craftsmanship, along with an outstanding overall concept and design. Entries will be judged on the quality of the concept and design, the forwarding, finishing, craft skills, and use of materials.

#### B - Book Arts



Both the content and the binding should be designed and executed by the entrant. Entries need not be in codex format and will be judged on the quality of the concept and design, the content of the book, the binding, craft skills, and use of materials.

#### C- Case Binding



Entries in this category must be of a case-bound structure, i.e. the cover made separately from the text block and joined by attaching the endpapers to the cover boards. Entries will be judged on the quality of the concept and design, the forwarding, finishing, craft skills, and use of materials.



## D - Restoration



Any binding repaired in a way that returns the book to a former or original condition. Entries will be judged on the suitability of the repairs, the aesthetic of the restored book, craft skills, documentation, and materials used. Entries must be submitted with photographic documentation prior to restoration, along with a full written record of all work undertaken

## E - Historic Binding



Binding Entries should be a high quality binding of a traditional nature. Bindings can display an element of creativity but must show excellent re-creation of a period of binding or historical structure, as well as a high standard of craftsmanship. Entries will be judged on the faithfulness of reproduction, the forwarding, finishing, craft skills, and suitability of materials.

## F - Miniature Binding



Books to be no bigger than 3"/ 75mm in any dimension (*new for 2024 - read the profile of the category sponsor on page 25, or for inspiration visit the Queen Mary's Doll House Library -<https://www.rct.uk/collection/themes/trails/queen-marys-dolls-house/library>*)

## Awards

**Estimated Prize Fund of over £7000**

### Fine Binding

First Prize – Shepherds Bookbinders Ltd (The John Coleman Trophy) value: £900

Second Prize value: £450

Third Prize value: £350

## Book Arts

First Prize – John Purcell Paper (The Portnall Award)  
value: £900

Second Prize value: £450 Third Prize value: £350

## Case Binding

Total Prize value: £500

## Restoration

First Prize – George Bayntun Total prize value: £600

## Historic Binding

First Prize – The ABA Educational Trust Total prize value: £600

The Green's Books Award for Best Young Newcomer Total prize value: £560

Incline Press Dave Godin Memorial Award for Animal-Free Binding

Total prize value: £250

Harmatan Leather Award for Forwarding Total prize value: £175

J Hewit & Sons Award for Excellence In Design Total prize value: £175

J Hewit & Sons Award for Excellence in Craftsmanship Total prize value: £175  
The Sophie Schneideman Judges Award for an Entry Which the Judges Feel  
Deserves Recognition

Total prize value: £175

Fine Cut International Award for Finishing Total prize value: £150

The Ratchford Award for Cloth Case Binding

*entries in this category must be of a traditional case-bound structure where at least  
75% of the cases, including the spine, must be covered in traditional book cloth.*

Total prize value: £150 Voucher

People's Choice Award

Prize value: in excess of £175

Neale Albert Award for Best Miniature Books to be no bigger than 3"/ 75mm  
in any dimension

Total Prize value: £500

## How to enter

Please register your interest in entering the International Bookbinding Competition 2024 by subscribing to the mailing list. This is the main way we will update you with the latest Competition news and information. You can subscribe to the

mailing list, and find more information, at <https://www.societyofbookbinders.com/international-binding-competition/>

All subscribers to the mailing list will be sent an entry form on **22nd April 2024**, and the form will also be available to complete on the Society's website.

Deadline for entries is **Friday 24th May**. Please make sure your book(s) arrive with us between **Monday 20th – Friday 24th May 2024**. Details of where to send books will be sent out with entry forms, please do not send books without completing the form.

For any enquiries please contact the competition organising team: [competition@societyofbookbinders.com](mailto:competition@societyofbookbinders.com)

## Competition Rules

- The Competition is open to anyone except the judges and organisers.
- The winning books will be decided at the discretion of the three judges only.
- Entries must not have been submitted in, or have any known association with, any other bookbinding competition.
- The final day for submission of entries will be Friday 24th May 2024.
- More than one entry is permissible. Fees for entry are £65 for the first book and £30 for subsequent entries. The entry fee includes one catalogue per person.
- All work submitted must have been completed within the two years prior to submission.
- Work done by other hands is acceptable but must be declared.
- A completed entry form must accompany each entry.
- Your name must not appear on any part of your work.
- A newcomer is defined as a person who has, within the last

three years, started learning bookbinding/restoration/ book-arts from scratch, and has not yet entered another competition.

- All costs for delivery and return of entries must be borne by the entrant.
- Work must be submitted in a protective box or case, which will be used for its return.
- Prizes take the form of cash, goods and vouchers; and are subject to variation at the discretion of the organisers.
- The Society will take care to keep entries safe; however, all work is submitted at the entrant's own risk. Entrants are advised to insure their bindings as the Society does not accept responsibility for loss or damage incurred during the competition or subsequent exhibitions.

## Sponsors

The Society of Bookbinders is very grateful to the following companies, organisations, and individuals for their sponsorship and without whom this competition would not have been possible.

ABA Educational Trust Bernard Quaritch Ltd Boekenmarkt-Boektotaal Bookbinding Supplies Cambridge Imprint Dominic Winter Auctioneers Fine Cut Group Ltd The Folio Society George Bayntun Booksellers G F Smith Ltd Green's Books Flora Ginn Harmatan & Oakridge Leathers 2008 Ltd Royston Haward J Hewit & Sons Ltd Incline Press Jemma Lewis Marbling The Porthall Family in memory of Aidan Porthall John Purcell Paper Graham Lampard The Leather Conservation Centre London Centre for Book Arts Louise Brockman Marbled Paper Neenah Red Bridge Maureen Nye, in memory of David Nye The Old School Press Payhembury Marbled Papers Peter Harrington Rare Books F.J. Ratchford Ltd Russells Fine Leathers Shepherds Bookbinders Ltd Sophie Schneideman Rare Books

The Stationers' Foundation  
 William Cowley Parchment and Vellum  
 Winter & Co UK Ltd  
 And other anonymous sponsors, including individual members of the Society of Bookbinders.

## Profile of our newest sponsor - Neale Albert

Neale Albert is our newest International Competition sponsor and is a well-known collector of miniature books. Neale began collecting and commissioning books as an off-shoot of an interest in miniature dollhouses - he needed miniature books to go in their miniature shelves. From these beginnings, he has subsequently gained recognition in the field of miniature book collecting for his extensive and diverse collection. The collection is notable not only for its size - estimated at over 4,000 - but also for the quality and rarity of the books it contains.

What is a miniature book?

A miniature book is typically defined as a book that is no more than three inches in any dimension, although they can be much smaller. They are known for their craftsmanship and the skill required to produce them. Even at this small scale, a miniature book should be fully readable, and often include all the features of a full-size binding, including endbands, tooling, and of course, enclosures.

One of the intriguing aspects of Neale's collection is the focus on the artistic and aesthetic elements of the books. This includes not only the text and illustrations within the books, but also the artistry involved in their binding and overall design. A significant feature of his collection is this emphasis on design and in 2020 Neale published a miniature book, *Winter's Tale*, which many well-known binders, including various Society members, bound for him - he is known for the freedom he gives binders to interpret his commission in their own distinct styles. A selection of these bindings can be viewed online - <https://www.nealealbert.com/designer-bookbinders>.

Neale's passion for miniature books has also involved him in the community of collectors and creators. He is known to



participate in and contribute to gatherings, exhibitions, and societies dedicated to miniature books. His collection has been featured in exhibitions and has gained attention for its contribution to preserving and promoting the art and craft of miniature bookmaking. We are extremely grateful to him for this welcome addition to our list of prize categories and championing of all things ‘miniature’.

### More on Neale Albert

A book, “The Poet of Them All”, William Shakespeare and Miniature Designer Bindings from the Collection of Neale and Margaret Albert was published by the Yale University Press, Yale 2016 (*Ed. I bought a copy through Books about Art here in the UK*) which was the basis of an exhibition and online lecture: <https://britishart.yale.edu/exhibitions-programs/poet-them-all-william-shakespeare-and-miniature-designer-bindings-collection>

Vadukul, *Redefining a Little Library*, New York Times, 4/22/2013, retrieved : <https://archive.nytimes.com/cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/04/22/redefining-a-little-library/>

## SOB / DESIGNER BOOKBINDERS JOINT WORKSHOPS SERIES

Dominic Riley started off our 2023-24 series magnificently with a weekend of Millimetre Binding and as 2024 gets underway here's a reminder of the rest of the programme...



Dominic Riley finessing a Millimetre binding

First up on 10-11th February is Everybody Loves a Box, led by Lori Sauer in her own bindery near Pewsey. This is an excellent opportunity to learn about, and make, sound, simple and pretty quick conservation enclosures as an alternative to the standard box and slipcases using a range of boards and processes.

Arthur Green follows on 16-17th March with the seldom taught Paper covered In-boards paper binding. Taking place at Green's Books in Worcestershire here's a chance to hone your forwarding skills under Arthur's eagle eye, learn about this robust historical binding and much more along the way.

Struggling with sharpening? Confused about sharpening systems? Uncertain how to smooth and plane gilding and backing boards? Peter Jones will guide you through calmly during Sharpen Up! on 13-14th April at Kelsall Community Hall.

Kate Holland has a weekend of decorative work, teaching skills to help you lift your binding above the ordinary in *Over the Edge and Across the Boards* on 18-19th May, at her bindery in Wiltshire.

Kathy Abbot finishes up the 23-24 series working through three types of endpapers - a learning masterclass on how to make, with what and when to use. *Endpapers for Fine Bindings* is in West Kilbride on 8-9 June.

Further details of all these workshops, and the level of experience required (if any) are on both Societies' websites.

Booking is swift, easy and online <https://designerbookbinders.org.uk/education/designer-bookbinders-society-of-bookbinders-joint-workshops/>. Here you will be able to check the availability of your chosen workshop or join a waiting list.

Bursary help may also be available - DB and SoB are keen to help where they can, SoB members can send an email to [dbsobworkshops@societyofbookbinders.com](mailto:dbsobworkshops@societyofbookbinders.com) for details.

For any queries about the workshops, please get in touch with Josh James ([josh.jointworkshops@gmail.com](mailto:josh.jointworkshops@gmail.com)).



A finished millimetre binding

## The Joy of Online Workshops

At the beginning of Lockdown as I was worrying about all my teaching work being cancelled one of my friends wondered if it would be possible for me to deliver workshops online. I said no I didn't think it would work. But as the weeks lingered on I started to play around with cameras and Zoom and suggested a trial with one of my regular students Carol. It was so successful we ended up having weekly sessions working through various techniques and individual projects Carol had in mind. I went onto provide 1:1 and group sessions to students across the globe, all throughout Lockdown.

As restrictions lifted a little I was able to produce tool and material kits to send out for Bound by Veterans a charity who offers bookbinding workshops to veterans as a respite and help with transition into civilian life. This meant we were able to deliver complete beginners courses covering the City & Guilds Bookbinding curriculum online over five day courses.

As normal life resumed and in person workshops were once again a possibility it became apparent that there was still a place for online workshops as well. For one Carol and my other regulars still wanted to learn this way and we continue to have regular sessions. Also the City & Guilds courses opened up to non veterans and have online students from Inverness to Portsmouth to the States teaching Level 1 and 2 content from single section, photo albums, slipcases, Coptic binding and leather case binding.

The SoB has also been making good use of this learning platform delivering interactive workshops, demonstrations and talks. Enabling our members to have the opportunity to access demonstrations from binders from around the world.

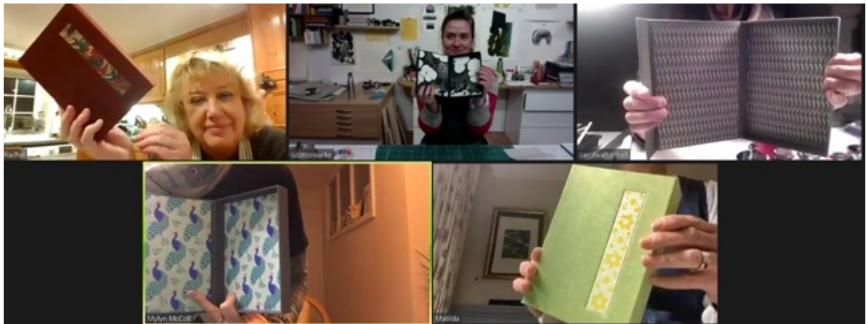




SoB Coptic Binding Workshop



City & Guilds Level 1



Magnetic Closure Box



## Some benefits of learning online

- Learning from the comfort of your own home, ideal for those who struggle to travel to a venue
- Interactive live tuition, you can ask questions as you go so more personal than pre-recorded videos
- Group sessions still have an element of the chatting and camaraderie you get from in person workshops
- Small groups, maximum of 8 participants for workshops
- 1:1 sessions give you the chance to focus on specific techniques and personal projects at your own pace
- Tool and material lists sent out in advance so you can prepare or kits available to purchase.

Additional bonus that I enjoy is you get to see participants pets as they pop up on screen now and again!



Material kits

## How to get the most out of online workshops

Most sessions are delivered through Zoom, you don't need to have an app or anything you just click the link to join

- Make sure you are prepared, have all the tools and materials needed to hand.
- Good internet connection, good lighting and your device charger handy
- A large screen like a lap top rather than a phone will give you much better viewing
- Be able to see the screen clearly and ideally your camera trained on your workspace – this isn't always possible to have both but its great if you can tilt your screen or camera occasionally so you can show your work
- Try and set up a good space where you are away from other distractions so you can focus on the session
- Chat with others on the group, interact and engage, learn from each other as well as the tutor and have fun, enjoy the course not only the making but the experience

But most importantly .....

- Communicate with your instructor, because you are not in the same room it is harder for them to see how you are doing so we are reliant on you letting us know. I am always asking if people are getting on ok with what I have just demonstrated and I often ask you to move your camera or lift your work so I can see. But if you are struggling with something let the tutor know – that is why we are there.

My thoughts are there is no such thing as a silly questions – if you want to know the answer then it is a valid question and probably someone else in the group was wondering too!



A students set up

## City & Guilds Level 1

Online workshops make bookbinding so accessible, you can attend even if you have mobility restrictions or live in a remote area, they are definitely the best thing to come out of Lockdown for me and brought me and my students some joy in those tough months. As well as still running online workshops I also host a regular creative online gathering where people can share what they have been working on, troubleshoot hurdles and inspire each other. The fact that we are connecting online means people can join from all over the country and indeed the world, it is a wonderful way of keeping our bookbinding community in contact and sharing our passion.

I am so pleased that the benefits of online learning is being recognised by our community and we are continuing to deliver workshops and demonstrations this way alongside our brilliant in person classes.

*Mylyn McColl*

For more information about Mylyn's Online and in person workshops you can email her on [mmccoll@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mmccoll@hotmail.co.uk) to join the mailing list or follow her on Instagram @leaping\_squirrel - Next online session Wednesday 27th March.

City&Guilds online Zoom workshops can be booked on [bookbinding.co.uk/Course/coursetimetable.html](http://bookbinding.co.uk/Course/coursetimetable.html)

And look out for the SoB Webinar Wednesday series! Next one Jen Lindsay February 21st.

## Regional Highlights

To keep informed of news and events in your region, make sure to inform the membership secretatry and regional secretaries if you move. Most of the public events are also listed on the website <https://www.societyofbookbinders.com/>

Below you will find some very brief snippets from some of the regions, together with an article

### London & South

Alongside the usual programme of workshops and talks (both online and in **Kentish Town Congregational Church**) the region also organises a thriving Book Arts group that meets online monthly. Membership extends well beyond London (not least as Mal is now based on a Scottish island) and all are welcome. The region will be organising a 'Book Arts Day' on Saturday 1 June in where a number of this group will exhibit.

Abigail Bainbridge is conducting a survey about finishing tools which she would appreciate if book conservators and bookbinders would complete, particularly in relation to asbestos handles. <https://forms.gle/9gJsmemyWWrwVkTn6>

### Midlands

Chris wrote the following piece for the national newsletter last year - and here we give it a wider audience.

#### City Livery Companies

Some of you in the beautiful outlying parts of the Midlands Region may think of London as The Smoke, and the City as the home of the Stock Exchange and all the financial razzmatazz that goes with it. The City is much more interesting than that, a very old place, not quite independent of the Crown, but privileged and self governing to a large degree. Most of the Livery Companies have their origins in the mediæval trade and craft guilds, some have been formed in recent years. There is an order of precedence, though in essence, the Fishmongers sit side by side with the Goldsmiths and all 110 of them are involved in

the governance of the City and the election of the Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs, and in the City ceremonial. More importantly, they are all active in charitable aims, and especially in supporting relevant education. Many directly support schools, the Haberdashers perhaps in the forefront of that.

The Company of main interest to us as Bookbinders is the Stationers and Newspaper Makers. Their name derives from the way scribes and Illuminators of manuscripts occupied “stations” around St. Paul’s church- yard. Bookbinders must have been of that company also. In mediæval times, more effort went into the illumination of manuscripts than into the decoration of their bindings. It’s interesting to speculate that the whole publishing industry sprang from those stations, the scribes spreading west down Ludgate Hill into Fleet Street. At all events, Bookbinders were to be found all over the City and there was a concentration around Warwick Lane, Ave Maria Lane, Amen Corner, close to where the Stationers Hall is now. Smithfield is interesting not just for St. Bartholomew the Great which has just celebrated 900 years, but also for industry, including at least two of the principal manufacturers of printing and bookbinding equipment. I have a magnificent standing press made by Hampson Bettridge giving an address in Cloth Fair, and one of their wooden rulers marked up in picas showing them to have been in Fann Street at some time.

One can quite easily imagine what the City was like in mediæval times and through the centuries prior to the industrial revolution and in some respects into very recent times. I got into bookbinding in order that I might have a Library in the style of Pepys. At any rate I now have the Bindery, which opens directly onto the garden, a reminder that City houses still had gardens in those days, and a Bookbinder might have worked next door to a Painter of Portraits.

I became a Freeman of the Painter- Stainers Company recently, partly because I know one of the Wardens. The relevance in bookbinding isn’t obvious at first sight but bear with me. They are the fifth oldest of the Com- panies, in that the earliest known ref- erence to the Paynters Guild is 1283. They joined up with the Steyners (painters and stainers of flags, ban- ners etc.) in



1502, and the united Company is now 28th in order of precedence. One wonders whether Illuminators ought to have belonged to the Peynters rather than the Stationers were it not that they must have worked closely with the scribes. Most major British artists were members of the Company in the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages. From its beginnings, the Paynters had included those who decorated, gilded and coloured solid objects such as wood, metal and stone, and painted everything from portraits to banners, barges and murals. Following the founding of the Royal Academy in 1768, the fine arts remain the primary interest of the Company, but from then it broadened its interest in all manner of painterly activities including the development of wallpaper and interior decoration.

In asking for the Freedom of the Company, I argued that, while the Stationers may be primarily interested in paper, board, and the forwarding of books, every aspect of finishing ought to be the concern of the Painters, that is, the colouring of cloth and leather, marbling, edge gilding, fore-edge painting, and decoration with gold leaf. Bookbinding may not be the first of their priorities, but they must be sensible that, as Anthony Powell said in the title of one them, books do furnish a room, and I hope that they may take an interest in all those aspects of finishing that command fewer and fewer expert practitioners.

*Chris Noel*

## North Wales and North West

Alongside their usual programme of events and workshops in Kelsall, the NW2 region are returning to Manchester roots in this anniversary year with a programme of workshops, talks, demonstrations, and exhibitions. These will take place at the Portico Library and Manchester Central Library.

If members from other regions are thinking of visiting the North West, then keep in mind that their **Anniversary Day** at **Kelsall** on **Saturday 6 July**: a celebration of 50 years of the Society of Bookbinders and an opportunity to honour national Patron Paul Delrue's nearly 65 years in bookbinding.

## Western

The Western region are also looking forward to a new venue, as they join other craft groups in establishing a new base in **Hestercombe House** in partnership with Heritage Crafts Association. It is hoped that this will be available for use by the region from September.

## Student's corner

For many years we have been observing and bemoaning the erosion of formal study programmes in bookbinding and associated crafts in the UK. In compiling this newsletter I am encouraged by the sheer number and variety of learning opportunities the Society and its members are contributing in the largely unseen 'informal' learning ecosystem. Whether it's workshops, lectures, exhibitions, or more social settings, the calendar can still be filled with learning opportunities, and these will only increase if we can successfully mobilise younger generations to participate more actively in the Society.

Inevitably though, the Society can't be everywhere or meet every need - although we do have an ever-increasing library of talks and demonstrations online - <https://members.societyofbookbinders.com/videos/>

As Mylyn's article shows, we can use the internet to fill some of the gaps, whether these are online groups, lectures, or surfing YouTube for that elusive video on onlays that you swear blind you saw but now can't find. While we may not always welcome rubbing shoulders with the 3D printers, laser cutters and AI-generated 'art', these are all part of an evolving set of skills, tools, materials and interests that are fuelling the next iterations of our craft. I have taken various workshops with US bookbinders and tool makers, and enrolled in various online schools. None are as good as an in-person workshop or tutorial in a bindery, but they do fill a gap, particularly for hobbyists like me.

The Society is a broad church, and what I enjoy most is that what unites us most is a love of learning. Long may that continue!

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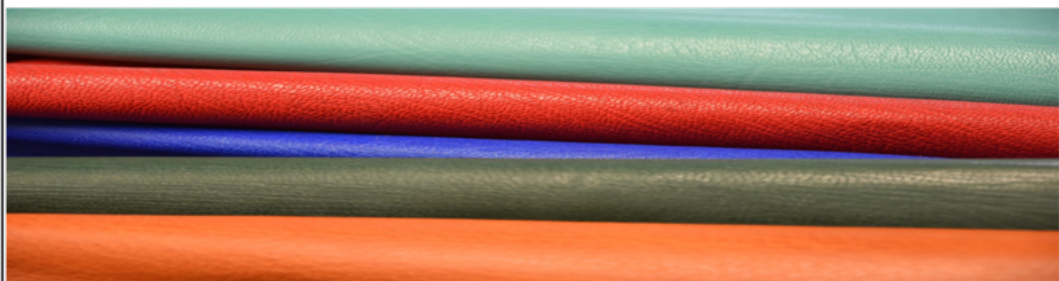
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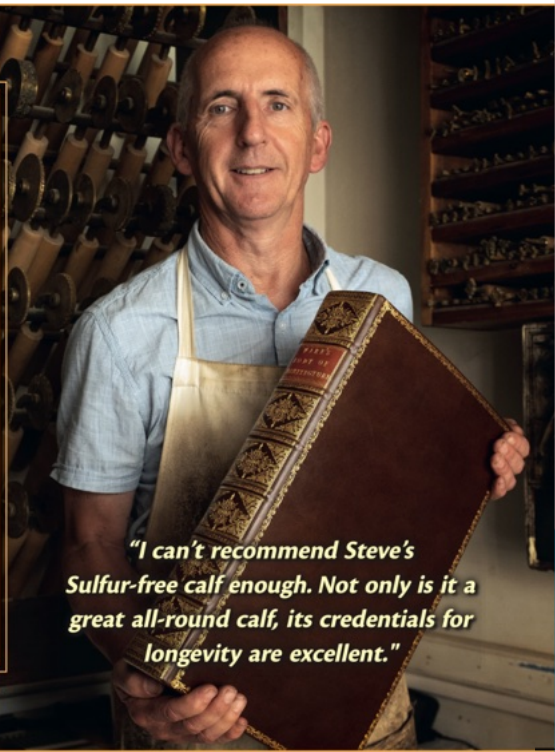
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