



The Newsletter of the North Wales & North West Region

We continue with the recent arrangement of the committee submitting its annual report for the year in writing, and in advance of the AGM, and circulated to all regional members by e-mail. It saves time for more interesting stuff at the AGM, and allows us to give a report on the year to all regional members, not just those attending the AGM in person.

The essentials first

We have been fortunate in 2024 to have an experienced committee with individuals familiar with their roles, able to work independently but also ensuring important matters are 'signed off' by the committee as a whole. Your committee have met, via Zoom, on six occasions during the year. Our main focus has been overseeing the members' Kelsall programme and the more public anniversary programme of events in central Manchester. A lot of the detailed work required for managing our special events during the year was coordinated more informally, via phone and e-mail.

Regional membership is strong. We began the year with 103 members, and by year end this had grown to 122. New members are vital: they bring additional skills and fresh perspectives, and sometimes help us to see ourselves differently. Our regional banner, our bookmark, our whats app group, and the handling the tech for our on-line workshop are some of the visible results of having newer members. And newer members have already booked onto 2025 workshops, and one is running a Kelsall workshop for us.

We lost two longstanding regional members this year: Paul Delrue (*left*) in January and David Lynch (*right*) in August. Both have been major figures in the Society - in very different ways - in the region and nationally. We paid tribute to both in our newsletter during the year, and the society was represented at their funerals.



Regional finances are healthy. The annual accounts are attached as an appendix to this report/newsletter. Please take a look at them - they need to be received and formally accepted at the AGM. The bottom line shows that we ended the year with a surplus of £7643.83, more than the 2023 year-end surplus of £7468.64, despite a year of considerable activity. In fact our Anniversary Day made an unintended surplus of £483.23, our Anniversary merchandise sold well and is showing a surplus, and our extensive public anniversary programme has been almost self-financing (costing us barely £500 in the year).

Our Spring Gathering incorporating the AGM is on Saturday 8 February

Regional finances . . . continued

We agreed that in our anniversary year we would offer all members the opportunity to take one free one-day Kelsall workshop. Twenty five members took up this offer; the resulting 'lost income' was £750. The waiving of the £10 charge to attend as an observer resulted in 'lost income' of £390. It was an appropriate way to give something back to members during our 50th anniversary. The committee have agreed it is important to encourage members to meet and socialise, and therefore we will continue in 2025 not to charge for observers to attend Kelsall meetings.

The region again offered sponsorships in 2024. Two members benefitted from a 50% sponsorship to attend the York Conference. However there were no applicants for the two £100 bursaries towards a place on one of the 2024/25 joint SoB/DB masterclass workshops.

The regional shop has had fewer outings this year. However the stock is still selling, members pick up bargains, all resulting in the regional accounts gaining a further £251.50. Many thanks to Paul Broadbent as our shop manager.

Our monthly regional newsletter continued, and in 2024 it included a regular feature on the society's history. These articles formed the basis of an article published in the current edition, volume 38, of our *Bookbinder* journal: *GOLD! Celebrating our 50th Anniversary*. A monthly newsletter eats up content, and member contributions are vital if it is to continue to offer a variety of voices and stories. We will continue with the regular Kelsall workshop reviews and revive the *My Bookbinding Beginnings* column in 2025. However unsolicited pieces from members are always needed and much appreciated!

Most of our outreach work in 2024 related to our anniversary programme, and is discussed below. However we were very pleased to be invited to take a stand (*opposite*) at the *Poynton Heritage Craft Fair* in September. We were kept busy all day: chatting to visitors about how books are made and repaired, sharing what we do in our region, and helping countless children and adults make their own sewn A5 pamphlet with a decorative wrapper. Another outreach activity arose following a request from the headteacher of *Kelsall Primary School*, and was picked up by Joan Duncan. After some discussion and delays Joan's project became the making of ten A3 books in which to mount the children's class projects. A lot of work, but all completed and delivered in time for the start of the school's autumn term.



Anniversary logo and merchandise



All of our anniversary year activities have been badged up with our logo. It has featured in all of our publicity, it was taken up by our partner bodies, and it features in our anniversary merchandise. It has given us a distinctive presence. We invested in 100 enamel badges and 100 key rings (the minimum order), 72 mugs and 50 aprons. The Portico Library purchased key rings and mugs, the Central Library took key rings and badges, for sale in their retail outlets. We sold at cost price to our regional members. Unsold aprons were sold at the Portico workshops, unsold mugs were sold at the York Conference (as well as some badges and key rings). At year-end, merchandise was showing a small profit of £7.98 (and a further £75 has since been received). We have a number of badges and key rings still available.

Our Anniversary Day at Kelsall

Our flagship event of the year was the Anniversary Day at Kelsall on 6 July when we also celebrated **Paul Delrue's Life in Bookbinding**. It revolved around three illustrated talks, but the day was much enlivened by the fringe activities - trade stands, a silent auction, a raffle with ridiculously generous prizes, and much mingling and chatting amongst the full house of 50 attendees. For a full review see our August Newsletter.

The Anniversary Day in numbers

- * The Society 50 years old, and the maximum of 50 members booked in
- * 3 illustrated talks
- * 4 trade stands
- * 5 raffle prizes
- * £247 income from the raffle
- * £175 income from the silent auction
- * £483.23 unintended surplus on the day (we just hoped to break even)
- * and enough cake for everyone!



The Kelsall members' programme (full programme below right)

Our successful formula of a January on-line workshop followed by the AGM, and incorporating a library visit later in the year has again worked well in 2024.

All of our one-day workshops were tutored by regional members, and tutors' willingness to take more participants enabled us to achieve an average workshop attendance of 14, plus observers. Workshops are invariably fully booked. Even so they do make a loss, on average £100 per workshop in 2024 - we pay tutors a modest £300 fee, plus travel, and overnight accommodation if required. We hosted a two-day nationally-sponsored workshop in September with Mylyn McColl; the 2025 programme also features a two-day workshop, as requested at the last AGM.

The visit to Manchester Central Library (to view our displays and their private press collection) attracted 19 members, and the new look Christmas Social at Kelsall would have had 24 but for Storm Darragh. The 21 members who braved the elements enjoyed the day and the intention is to continue with this format in 2025.

13/01: Lynne Connolly: ***The Spider Book and Crown Book***
(an on-line workshop)

17/02: ***AGM plus*** a talk from Barry Clark *Making books for Craft Fairs* and a *practical knife sharpening* session with Simeon Jones

16/03: Michael Burke: ***Edge Decoration***

06/04: Michael Burke: ***An Italian Paper Case***

11/05: Louisa Boyd: ***Artist's book with paper cut details***

15/06: Glenn Malkin: ***The Alternative Bradel Binding***

06/07: ***Anniversary Day***: A celebration of 50 years of the Society and Paul Delrue's Life in Bookbinding

10/08: Helen Golding-Miller: ***The Step or Stacker Box***

14&15/09: Mylyn McColl: ***Exposed butterfly stitch binding***

12/10: Ruth Brown: ***Traditional Japanese pouch book***

09/11: ***Visit to Manchester Central Library*** for our Anniversary Exhibitions and their special collections

07/12: ***Christmas social***

At times it can be easy to forget that we are not a private members' club existing only to meet the needs of members. In fact our whole raison d'être is to promote the craft of hand bookbinding, both traditional and contemporary. Without that wider remit we as a Society would not be entitled to charitable status. So in our anniversary year we returned to our Manchester roots with a programme of talks, workshops, displays and demonstrations. Unfortunately the Rylands library was/is undergoing a refurbishment and was unable to host events. However the Portico Library and the Central Reference Library became our key partners during the year.

Our anniversary public programme: evening talks

We staged five early evening talks throughout the year, four at the Portico and the last at the Central Reference Library. For the Portico talks the library handled all the admin: advertising, taking bookings (at £6 a ticket), tech and refreshments on the night, and paying our speakers. The talk at the Central Reference Library was free with no bookings and we paid the speaker. The talks covered a broad range of bookbinding topics. Our speakers had all delivered a version of their talk on a previous occasion, so it was an easy 'ask' and didn't create too much preparation for them. We achieved good turn-outs ranging from 35-55 attendees, despite some shocking Manchester weather on one of the evenings.

- 15 February: *Two Manchester bookbinders: William Mellor and Will Mellor*
Speaker: Barry Clark
- 25 April: *Buried Alive! Books Unearthed in Our Time*
Speaker: Michael Burke
- 12 September: *Conservation of a Medieval Psalter*
Speaker: Richard Nichols
- 21 November: *Bookbinding and Beyond*
Speaker: Louisa Boyd
- 28 November: *Creating a Fine Binding: the Kelmscott Chaucer*
Speaker: Dominic Riley

Our anniversary public programme: beginners' workshops

We have been running one-day beginners' workshops at the Portico since before Covid-19. The 2024 workshops were 're-badged' as part of our anniversary year. The library handles all advertising, bookings, refreshments etc and pay the tutor our standard Kelsall tutor fee. Workshops run from 10.00-4.00; materials *and tools* are provided. The £80 fee includes the cost of materials, tea/coffee on arrival and a light lunch. Workshops are limited to 12 participants, and all were fully booked.

7 February: ***An Introduction to Bookbinding:*** paper folding, and three different styles of book all using pamphlet stitch.

17 April: ***Making a multi-section hardback:*** a flat-back sewn book block, marker ribbon, headbands, with a decorative case.

18 September: ***Creating a hand-sewn leather journal:*** soft leather cover, sewn using decorative long and link stitch (*opposite*).

13 November: ***A Bookbinding Workshop with a difference!:*** or *Paper Magic* as one participant re-named it, making a number of pop-ups and pop-outs.



Our anniversary public programme: library displays



We staged four displays in the year. Two showcased bindings, and two shared the process of binding encouraging viewers to perhaps *get started*. The first ***Bindings from the MMU collections*** in May / June at MMU Library was curated by Flora Jackson as part of her assessed work for her part-time MA in Contemporary Curating. It comprised two tall glass cabinets showing about thirty bindings. Flora's introductory panel explained: *the display exhibits a fine selection of popular 19th century bookbinding techniques, including: gold-blocked binding, gilt fore-edges, decorated doublures, deckle edges, leather relieve binding, as well as a selection of goffered edged bindings and marbled endpapers & edges.*

Over a thousand copies of our regional bookmark have now been given out at events across the region

Our anniversary public programme: library displays . . . continued

Next up in July/August was **Getting Started**, curated by Barry Clark at the Portico Library. It not only celebrated the Society getting started in 1974, but also was an encouragement to others to *get started* in bookbinding. The display, in five sections to suit the space available, aimed to give the beginner a good overview of the essentials involved in bookbinding. Similarly Catherine Garratt's display **The Journey of a book**, at Central Reference Library from October through to the end of December, showed the processes, and tools used, this time to make a small hardback book by hand. The display, on the ground floor, also featured four of Glenn Malkin's how-to-do-it videos. Meanwhile upstairs in the central reading room Dominic Riley's display of **Fine Bindings** showcased nearly twenty beautiful bindings created by leading SoB design binders since our formation in 1974. Our thanks also to Pamela Birch, Mel Jefferson, Graham Moss, Marc Lamb and John Waters who all contributed to these displays.



Our anniversary public programme: informal demos / workshops

Running alongside our displays at the Central Library we hosted three informal drop-by demos / workshops. Saturdays 5 October and 16 November were extremely busy, less so Thursday 5 December. A number of regional members spent happy days sharing the delights of hand bookbinding & encouraging visitors to have-a-go.



And at national level . . .

Last but certainly not least we should acknowledge the involvement of regional members in national SoB business during 2024. In particular, Jill Sellars has been critical as acting chair, membership secretary and in successfully steering the society through to its new Charitable Incorporated Organisation status. Jane Sheppard assisted enormously with the complex banking issues involved. As Jill stepped back (still membership secretary) and Jane stepped down Chris McNall has stepped up as a national trustee and treasurer.

2024 was Conference year which saw a number of regional members playing a part: Helen Golding-Miller, Lester Bath, Dominic Riley, Glenn Malkin. In the competition Ruth Brown walked away with the Best Case Binding Prize for her binding of *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett (Folio Society, 1986). And craft bookbinder and hand printer Graham Moss was awarded the Cobden-Sanderson Lifetime Achievement Award for his *expertise in hand printing and publishing* and his *invaluable contribution to the Private Press movement, helping ensure the future of the craft through his teaching and mentoring of successive generations of new printers.*

The Committee for 2024

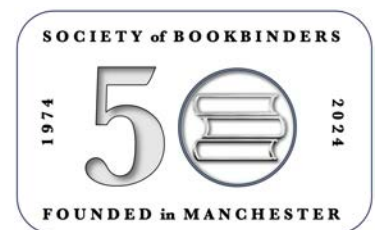
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the Society
of Bookbinders



NW2 Annual Accounts for 2024, for discussion and approval at the AGM:

Opening Balances at 1/1/2024	£	£ TOTALS
Bank Current Account	7405.37	
Cash in Hand	26.46	
Shop Float	36.81	
Balance Brought Forward A		7468.64
Receipts		
National Funding	1500.00	
Workshop Fees	2350.00	
Advance Fees for 2024 Workshops	450.00	
Materials	1095.00	
Advance payment for 2024 materials	195.00	
Income from Shop	251.50	
Donations	117.50	
Sales of Anniversary Merchandise	1099.25	
Anniversary Day	1592.00	
Christmas Get-together	575.00	
Total Receipts B		9225.25
Payments		
Tutor/Speaker fees	2639.59	
Tutor Materials (Includes £270 pre-payment from 2023)	1365.00	
Sponsorships for 2024 Seminar	400.00	
Room Hire	1032.00	
Administration	124.15	
Hospitality	145.70	
Outreach and education (includes Anniversary Costs)	519.20	
Anniversary Merchandise	1091.27	
Anniversary Day	1108.77	
Christmas Get-together	624.38	
Total Payments C		9050.06
Closing Balances at 31/12/2023		
Bank Current Account	7588.26	
Cash in Hand	17.26	
Shop Float	38.31	
<u>Total Balances</u>	<u>7643.83</u>	
BALANCE TO CARRY FORWARD (A + B - C)		7643.83