



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 activities 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 continue 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 seven occasions during the year. Whilst our main continuing focus has been overseeing the members' Kelsall programme, there always seem to be additional issues that need attention from time to time. New initiatives and significant decisions are detailed in this report.

Regional membership is strong, in excess of a hundred members. Throughout the year we gain new members and others choose not to renew. During the year we have had 127 members, of which 47 have attended at least one event with us; many members of course are regular attenders. New members are vital: they bring additional skills and fresh perspectives, and many are frequent attenders at workshops. All new members continue to receive a welcoming e-mail with attachments from our secretary who - while stocks last - is also sending them one of our 50th anniversary badges or key rings. Early in 2025 we also started asking non-renewing members why that was so. We have had a variety of responses including: two mentioned the increased cost of national membership, one the lack of certainty re:Conference and paucity of online workshops, another had no time to come to Kelsall workshops and had missed the deadline for booking on the online workshop, another is now a full-time carer. It is inevitable that not all members will renew, and there is no obvious pattern that we need to address.

In 2025 we lost longstanding member Graham Moss, bookbinder and proprietor of the Incline Press. Just a year before his passing, at conference in 2024, the national society had awarded Graham our Cobden-Sanderson Award for his outstanding contributions to printing and bookbinding. We paid tribute to Graham in our newsletter during the year. His partner Helen has donated thirty unbound copies of a lovely Incline Press book to the region which we will use in honour of Graham as our regional binding project in 2027.

In July our secretary launched our Local Clusters initiative creating an opportunity for members living close to each other to come together as they wish. We now have twenty geographical clusters, and new members are linked to their local cluster through their welcome e-mail. It may be that some in local clusters will share transport to Kelsall, or maybe meet up informally in their locality, or whatever they choose. We are aware that some local clusters have had meetings, exchanging equipment and materials, and generally taking an interest in each other's bookbinding work. It is an informal addition to, not a replacement of, all-region activity. Similarly our Facebook page and Whats App group continue for those who choose to use them.

The 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 £8742.96, more than the 2024 year-end surplus of £7643.83. The increased surplus is mainly due to increased member donations (often equipment /materials, with the sales income coming to the region), the AGM raffle income, and an unexpected surplus at the September Autumn Gathering (silent auction and raffle income again being significant). Whilst the regional shop had fewer outings this year, and the stock is dwindling, members can still pick up bargains - all resulting in the regional accounts gaining another £75 or so; many thanks to Paul Broadbent as our shop manager.

In 2025 we held the Kelsall one-day workshop charge at £30, and we continued not to charge observers attending our Kelsall workshops. The waiving of the £10 charge resulted in 'lost income' of £500. However very high Kelsall bookings, and a repeat of the on-line workshop (no room hire costs, no travel costs for tutors, so always a healthy surplus for the region), resulted in the 2025 Kelsall programme costing just £802.47; the 2025 figure was remarkably similar, at £804.72.

The society exists to promote the craft of hand bookbinding, not simply to accrue income! The committee is always keen to hear of suggestions for ways of using the surplus in pursuit of our charitable objectives. Meanwhile for 2026 the committee have decided to:

- * hold the one-day workshop fee at £30
- * reduce the two-day workshop fee to £50
- * continue not to charge observers attending workshops
- * offer all members one free one-day workshop in 2026 (pay only for materials)
- * increase the payment we make to our tutors to £350 for a one-day workshop
- * purchase good quality raffle prizes as necessary
- * and offer at least one 50% bursary for the national residential event in August 2026.

The committee has also discussed the possibility of assisting members with the cost of travel to Kelsall workshops. However it was felt the practical difficulties of managing a fair and sensitive policy outweighed the advantages. Hopefully the recently-launched Local Clusters should make it easier for members to share travel costs.

Our Activities 1: the Kelsall programme

Our formula of a January on-line workshop followed by the AGM *plus*, incorporating a library visit later in the year again worked well in 2025. Kathy Abbott's on-line workshop was so popular that we repeated it November (*our thanks to Aunya Davison for handling all the technical matters so well for us*). We again hosted one two-day workshop where members could tackle a more substantial making project.

A new feature in 2025 was our Autumn Gathering, with talks/demos/trade stands/displays/raffle/silent auction. It was very popular, a huge success, and although priced at just £10 it also made a profit. There will be another in 2026!

Our Kelsall workshops achieved an average participant attendance of 14, plus observers. Workshops are invariably fully booked. Even so they do make a loss, on average about £125 per workshop in 2025.

The August trip to Hawarden to visit the North East Wales Archives and the Gladstone Library was very popular, with 20 members booking in. A relaxed summer social! followed by the ever-popular Christmas Social (30 members this year) with small makes, a quiz and outside caterers.

25/01: Kathy Abbott: ***Stub Binding*** (on-line)

08/02: ***AGM plus*** an illustrated review and displays of our anniversary year activities; and the launch of our 2025 NW2 ***Regional Binding Project***

08/03: Tanja Bolenz: ***The Three-Piece Slot Book***

12/04: Dominic Riley: ***Tudor style leather covering***

10 & 11/05: Glenn Malkin: ***An Off-Boards Binding***

14/06: Lori Sauer: ***The Magic Box***

12/07: Mar Thomas: ***Cyanotypes***

Wed 06/08: ***Visit to the North East Wales Archives and the Gladstone Library***

13/09: ***Our Autumn Gathering*** (*demos and talks*) and a display of members' responses to our 2025 Binding Project

11/10: Barry Clark: ***Creating Multiples***

08/11: Ruth Brown: ***Creating your own book cloth***

29/11: Kathy Abbott: ***Stub Binding*** (on-line)

06/12: ***Christmas lunch / social***

Our Activities 2: the regional newsletter

Our monthly regional newsletter continues. E-mail distribution means that there are no financial costs (no printing, no paper, no postage) to the region. However 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 the *My Bookbinding Beginnings* column in 2026. And unsolicited pieces from members are always needed, and much appreciated! Many thanks to the twenty five and more who contributed in 2025.

Our Activities 3: the regional binding project

The AGM / Spring Gathering saw the launch of our **2025 NW2 Binding Project**. The set book was available in sheets: comprising of 14 sections, printed on a coated matt 130gsm paper, folded, collated, cut to size and ready for sewing. To encourage many members to participate there would be no competition, no judging, each binding as they wished. Thirty five regional members purchased the unbound sets, and we had a display of over fifteen members' bindings at our Autumn Gathering on 13 September. As our Newsletter reviewer commented: *the entries were uniformly excellent. All so different and yet all reflective of the set book, and the skills which the society exists to foster. The learning and inspiration from Kelsall workshops were evident in the bindings of members.* At the forthcoming AGM, when we look back at our activities in 2025, we will have another display. And we already have our set book, kindly donated by Helen Moss, for our next regional binding project scheduled for 2027.

Our Activities 4: outreach work

The year started with an unexpected continuation, until April, of our 50th anniversary **Fine Bindings Exhibition** at Manchester Central Reference Library.

Following our regional visit to the Gladstone Library we returned with our outreach stand and activities to join their **Gladfest Literary Festival** in September. We had a steady stream of visitors and over 50 pamphlets were made with much delight and pride. It was a joyful day, celebrating the craft of hand bookbinding and spreading the word about the society and our region. Also in September we had a return visit to the **Poynton Heritage Craft Fair**. A big thank you to all those who have given their time, knowledge and enthusiasm to our outreach activities: Maurus, Jeanne, Julie, Jill, Helen, Dominic, Donna and Shirley.

We continued to distribute our regional bookmark.

Portico Library 2025 Workshops

We have been running one-day beginners' workshops at the Portico since before Covid-19. The library handles all advertising, bookings, refreshments etc and pay the tutor our standard Kelsall tutor fee. Materials *and tools* are provided. Workshops are limited to 12 participants, and all were fully booked.

12 February: **An Introduction to Bookbinding**

9 April: **Creating an Eco Sketchbook**

11 June: **An A5 Travel Journal**

17 September: **A Crossed Structure Notebook**

12 November: **A Single Section Printed Book**

The Committee for 2025

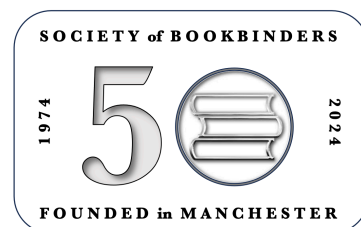
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NW2 Annual Accounts for 2025, for discussion and approval at the AGM:

Opening Balances at 1/1/2025	£	£ TOTALS
Bank Current Account	7588.26	
Cash in Hand	17.26	
Shop Float	38.31	
Balance Brought Forward A	7643.83	7643.83
Receipts		
National Funding	1500.00	
Workshop Fees	3840.00	
Advance Fees for 2026 Workshops	480.00	
Materials	1417.00	
Advance payment for 2026 materials	330.00	
Sales of Anniversary Items from 2024	75.00	
Income from Shop	74.10	
Donations	624.07	
AGM Raffle	155.00	
Autumn Gathering	934.00	
Miscellaneous	90.00	
Christmas Get-together	900.00	
Total Receipts B	10419.17	10419.17
Payments		
Tutor/Speaker fees	3854.14	
Tutor Materials (Includes £195 pre-payment from 2024)	1612.00	
Room Hire	1694.00	
Miscellaneous	249.57	
Hospitality	129.89	
Outreach and education	258.30	
Autumn Gathering	579.46	
Christmas Get-together 2025	912.43	
Christmas 2024 late payment	30.25	
Total Payments C	9320.04	9320.04
Closing Balances at 31/12/2025		
Bank Current Account	8663.42	
Cash in Hand	57.13	
Shop Float	22.41	
Total Balances	8742.96	
BALANCE TO CARRY FORWARD (A + B – C)		8742.96