

The Single Fold

Autumn/Winter 2025

Newsletter of the East Anglia Region



Diary dates

Events at Linton Village Hall, Coles Lane, Linton, Cambridge, CB21 4JS

January 24th 2026 AGM and Social. Speaker to be advised.

Harmatan will be there with leather. Paul will be manning the Hewit tables. This year we will have 12mm Pliester tape and brass weights in addition to the regular bookbinding supplies. Please let Paul know by 15th December 2025

(doctorpaulgarcia@gmail.com) if there is anything special from Hewit that you would like.

The 'Zero to Book' series of workshops.

Led by Mylyn McColl and Alan Fitch, this a six session set of workshops that show you how to construct a book from scratch. It is hoped that participants will sign up for all six sessions, for which there will be a 10% discount. To book these you will need to contact Maureen Tovey directly: <maureen.tovey@btinternet.com>

The dates are 21st February, 14th March, 18th April, 9th May, 13th June and 11th July 2026

National events

The annual conference will be held at the University of York from 13th August to 16th August 2026. Details will be on the website and in an e-bulletin in due course.

Financial help to attend events.

The National Management Committee has recently approved a policy for providing grants to help bookbinders, details of which will be circulated later. In the meantime, if you would like to attend a workshop, course (e.g. at Flatford Mill), or the national conference but would appreciate financial support, we have some regional funds available to assist. Please get in touch with Paul or Allison.

SoB East Anglia Thriving at 30

We had intended to print this article in a summer issue of Single Fold, but for a variety of reasons that didn't happen. It was published in the recent on-line national newsletter, but I felt it would be good to have a printed version as well.

1995: SoB East Anglia Region set up.

Then **1998:** On-line booksellers Amazon launched in the UK, with 1.2 million book titles in its fulfilment centre in Milton Keynes, signalling the end of bookshops on our high streets?

Then **2007:** Kindle e-reader introduced, signalling the end of the printed book?

Despite on-line and digital technologies having impacted on just about every aspect of our lives over the past 30 years, the physical book is still very much with us. And bookshops. And people wanting to bind books by hand. Whether to repair or conserve old books, or create new books, or use the book structure in new ways. Indeed, it was thanks to the wonders of technology that I'm writing this short celebration of SoB East Anglia! During Barry Clark's Webinar talk back in March, on the history of the SoB since its creation in 1974, I heard that we are 30 this year!! A quick email to the Committee confirmed that, they too, thought the anniversary should be marked. You'll have seen the subsequent email circulated with the various ideas put forward, including members creating something on the theme of 30, and bringing it along to the Social at Linton in January next year. Hope you will all take part.

So, how did it all begin? Here are a few things I've found out from Jenny Codrington, Pamela Birch, George Davidson and Bridget Dickinson. Thank you to them. Until 1995, most of the SoB members in the counties now making up our Region were members of London & South, and probably many other bookbinders in East Anglia weren't SoB members because London, where the meetings took place, was so far away. It was Maureen Duke no less, and John Mitchell, that suggested to Bedford resident member Jenny Codrington that she might like to set up a new Region. Jenny at the time was attending one of Maureen's bookbinding courses in London. After a meeting at the home of James Cassels, with the support of the National Council and a grant to start things off, SoB East Anglia was born.

Existing members who wanted to join were transferred, and new members joined. Quite soon Pamela Birch joined and found herself the Secretary! And, as with all these things, George Davidson became Treasurer, after only agreeing to join the Society if he didn't have to do anything!! There were probably 30 members initially, rising to about

40 in the coming years. A newsletter was begun, and Mel Jefferson cleverly named it The SINGLE FOLD, so it was cost effective to produce and easy to fill. Great thinking!!

Cambridge was identified as the centre of the Region, and has remained so for meetings and workshops since then, moving to the upstairs committee room in Linton Village Hall when central Cambridge got too expensive. Until the main hall became available, activities were limited to talks and demonstrations. It is here that I must mention Tina Knight!* I have often heard her fondly remembering with Bridget Dickinson those early days up in that little room!!

So, here we are in 2025. Still thriving, with over 80 members. We weathered the storm of the Covid lock-downs and the slow period of recovery until people felt confident enough to attend gatherings again. There is always a great buzz at the Linton workshops. Yes, there are now YouTube tutorials, but there's nothing like getting together with others and sharing the learning experience. Great friendships are made and help given when you are in the same room.

The SoB is so needed now. Gone are most of the college bookbinding courses, the apprenticeships, the in-house binding and conservation teams at libraries and collections. Our out-reach programme has proved popular, raising awareness of the craft of hand bookbinding, as well as attracting new members wanting to learn the skills. Here's to another 30 years!

This is the first of two anniversary articles. The second will appear in the next edition. We're hoping it will include thoughts and input from some of our newer and our younger members. We'd love to hear from you. For example: What does SoB East Anglia mean to you? How do you see it developing in the years to come? How can we continue to make it relevant?

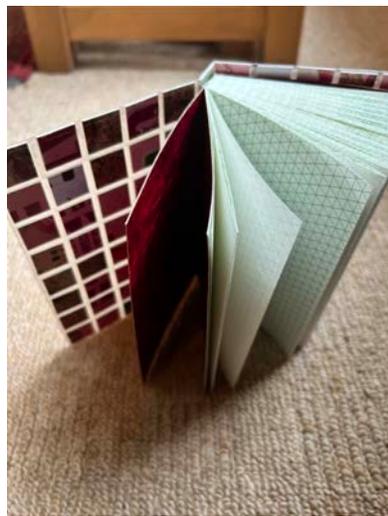
Linda Missing



*As you are probably aware, Tina died unexpectedly at the end of July this year. We miss her greatly. This photo was taken in May when Tina was enjoying a lunch break at Peter Whiteley's workshop.

The conservationist's nightmare - a binding that probably won't last.

We are constantly encouraged to use archival materials in bookbinding. If we are repairing ancient and important books, then that makes perfect sense. But I am making blank notebooks and sketchbooks for no discernible reason (other than that I enjoy the process!). I am not assuming that they will still be around in several hundred years time, so I don't feel the need to go full archival and acid-free all the time. Indeed, just recently I deliberately went into full contrarian mode and made the book in the picture. The structure is based on Ben Elbel's pixel binding, but instead of using beautiful and expensive materials, I used cereal packet for the boards, sandwiched between sticky-backed transparent plastic, and some ancient paper I had saved from my days as a mathematics teacher. I doubt it will last a hundred weeks if used, much less a hundred years - although it might prove an interesting challenge for a future conservationist...



Paul Garcia

Important Note: If your address label says 'Not Renewed', it means that the new membership system thinks you haven't renewed for 2025, so this may be the last communication you get from us. If you think that's wrong, then please visit the SoB website to renew your membership.

Contacts:

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