

# The Single Fold

Spring 2026

Newsletter of the East Anglia Region

the Society  
of Bookbinders 

## Diary dates

Events at Linton Village Hall, Coles Lane, Linton, Cambridge, CB21 4JS  
and other local events

### **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: < [ea.meetings@societyofbookbinders.com](mailto:ea.meetings@societyofbookbinders.com) >  
The remaining dates are, 14th March, 18th April, 9th May, 13th June and 11th July 2026

Further workshops for September, October and November are being planned.

**Peter Whiteley's Open Workshop weekend, 4th and 5th July 2026.** Peter is once again throwing open the doors of his very well appointed workshop for a weekend of bookbinding. You can come on one or two days; there will be an evening meal on the Saturday, provided by Peter (but please contact him in advance, [peterwhiteley133@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:peterwhiteley133@hotmail.co.uk), if you want to stay for the meal). Each day starts at 10:00, and Sunday finishes at about 16:00. You'll need to bring your own lunches. This time, Peter will reprise his Linton workshop from last November to make a mediæval binding (see the description below), so if you want to have another go, or missed it the first time, now's the time to do it.

**Flatford Mill.** There are three further opportunities to bookbind for a whole week at the Field Studies Council centre at Flatford Mill: 31st August to 4th September, 26th October to 30th October, and 7th December to 11th December. Book online by searching for 'FSC Flatford Mill Bookbinding'.

## National events

The annual conference will be held at the University of York from 14th August to 16th August 2026. Details will be on the website and in an e-bulletin in due course. If there is sufficient interest we are hoping to arrange for a minibus to transport East Anglia binders to and from York. If you think you might like to take advantage of this - no driving, plenty of room for conference purchases - please contact Paul.

## Spreading the Word

Dave Turner has written about some outreach work he is doing in Norwich. He says, first, I wanted to let you know about the Independent Book and Zine Fair on Saturday 16th May at the Forum in Norwich. I applied for a table on behalf of the Iceni Book Art Collective and have been told we were successful. It will be an opportunity for members to showcase their artist books and discuss them, although we only have a six foot table. *[This reminds me of Turn the Page, which was held annually from 2012 to 2022 in The Forum in Norwich, which I remember with great fondness - Paul]*

Dave continues: second, a friend, Dave Balcommbe and I applied to Breckland Council for their Start Up grant to spend on bookbinding equipment. We were awarded £300, enough for eight sets of equipment enabling us to teach basic bookbinding skills. We have already run our first session with a youth group teaching basic concertina books which went down really well. The books made were made from watercolour paper and the students planned to use them for their art. Other sessions we are planning are Japanese stab bound books and drum leaf books. Photographers that we know are looking forward to learning the drum leaf books as they are great with photographs. Also, a poetry group has shown an interest in making books for their poetry.

These courses we are running, are only basic but it enables people to try before taking it further.

*This is all excellent news; if you are in Norwich on 16th May, please visit Dave in the Forum.*

### **Introduction to Medieval Bookbinding by Peter Whiteley**

*Peter ran this workshop in November 2025 at Linton. This report was published in the on-line only national newsletter, so I thought it worth reprinting here for those of you who prefer a real piece of paper.*

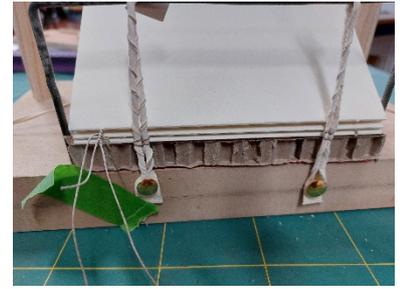
The workshop provided participants with a uniquely crafted session that delved into the history of medieval books. Attendees were not only introduced to the fascinating background of medieval bookbinding but were also given the chance to produce their own book during the event. This approach ensured that everyone engaged with the practical aspects of the craft, experiencing first-hand the techniques and skills used by bookbinders in the past.



The session was both practical and enlightening, offering an in-depth exploration of traditional bookbinding methods. By working through each stage of the process, participants developed a greater appreciation for the artistry and expertise involved, strengthening their connection to the rich heritage of bookmaking.

## Traditional Bookbinding Methods

Peter began the workshop by guiding participants through the traditional process of medieval bookbinding. He started by explaining how to select the appropriate wood, highlighting the importance of choosing the right type. Peter demonstrated precise wood slicing for correct cover size and grain, a crucial part of making authentic medieval-style books.



## Tools and Equipment

Throughout the session Peter provided all the necessary equipment for the bookbinding process. This included tools for sewing the book sections together using twisted leather cords, which support the spine. Devices were also supplied to hold the book steady while carving grooves, allowing the leather cords to fit flush with the surface.



Additionally, a block was used to secure the wooden covers so they could be gently shaved, creating the required spacing for the spine leather. Each participant received their own set of tooling blocks, all expertly crafted by Peter, and we were pleased to be able to keep all the tools, enabling us to make more books at home.



Finished cover boards, showing grooves for the leather cords.

The meeting concluded with all participants near to completing a medieval style book and Peter provided us all with more components to enable us to produce more books in the comfort of our own homes.

*Allison Kingsbury*

## **Bookbinding is good for your health.**

An article in the *New Scientist* dated 31st January 2026 entitled 'Want to stay healthy? Get creative' says, 'Getting involved in the arts isn't just a pleasurable pastime. It also appears to keep us healthier - and now we may know why. In the largest study of its kind, scientists have shown engaging in creative activities is linked to beneficial changes in proteins involved in reducing inflammation and keeping the brain healthy.' The study 'found that the more a person engaged with the arts - such as ...crafting...- the more likely they would have specific increases or decreases in 18 proteins'. These led to 'a lower future risk of several conditions[.]' Clearly, the more books you make, the better you'll feel.

## No more Hewit's table at Linton

After (probably) ten years of supervising the retail opportunities provided by Hewit's, I will no longer be able to provide this service. Hewit has introduced a new accounting system that can't cope with off-site stock, so on January 27th David Lanning collected the remaining unsold items to return to their warehouse in Edinburgh. The firm will be introducing a new system to coincide with the next AGM, where you will be able to order stuff on-line from their website, to be delivered to you at the AGM, carriage free.

## Reading recommendation

For the avid book collector, I can recommend two books by Nicholas Royle: *White Spines* and *Shadow Lines*.

## Bindings from the AGM

Noreen Grant has sent some photos of the beautiful bindings she brought to the AGM.



Important Note: If your address label says 'Not Renewed', it means that the new membership system thinks you haven't renewed since January 2026, so although you will still get communications from the region, you may not get national messages. If you think that's wrong, then please visit the SoB website to renew your membership.

## Contacts:

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