

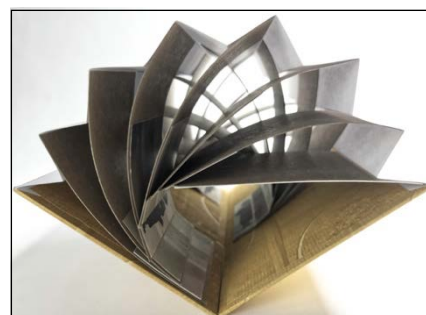


## The Newsletter of the North Wales & North West Region

### *Our Autumn Gathering: an update*

**Planning continues for our regional flagship event on 12 September: a day for all to come together for illustrated talks, plus trade stands from Hewit's and Harmatan, a bookbinding display of *Bookbinding books, hand bound*, a raffle and a silent auction.**

Richard Nichols will talk on his recent unusual binding: *Crafted in Stone*. Intended fellow presenter Helen Golding Miller has had to step down, however we are particularly fortunate that Lynne Connolly has stepped up. Lynne will be sharing her experiences of using *Bookbinding and book arts as an aid to community engagement and wellbeing*. Lynne is a book artist, educator, and facilitator, with a background in higher education teaching. More recently she has been working in a diverse range of settings: with a group in Belfast on social activism, a local community in Cheshire on wellbeing, and working with staff in a dementia day centre to explore simple structures for them to use with their users. As Lynne says on her website: *my practice is rooted in gentle making, mindful observation, and accessible approaches that can be used personally, professionally, or within wider community contexts. Through my work, I encourage others to explore book arts not only as a beautiful craft, but as a powerful tool for reflection, wellbeing, and connection*. Lynne's presentation will include a digital slide show as well as examples of small binding structures.



The flag book structure, often used by Lynne in her community-based workshops. Bookings for the day via Sue Wood as usual, a snip at just £10! ([swoosal@btinternet.com](mailto:swoosal@btinternet.com)).

### *2027 Members' Programme: dates, topics and tutors*

It may only be July but our Programme Organiser Sue Wood already has next year's programme mapped out. Dates for your imaginary 2027 diary opposite. We are sticking with an on-line workshop in January. We will have *two* two-day workshops. And two days of demos and talks: our Springback event (including the AGM) and our Autumn Gathering. Our summer visit will be to the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. In 2027 we again have a regional binding project: launched at our Springback in February, with members' bindings displayed at our Autumn Gathering in October. **No bookings yet please!** Dates will be announced: bookings for the on-line event will open in the autumn; for all other events not until 2027. *Diary dates only for now.*

- 30 January: *The Star Book* / Nesta Davies (on-line)
- 13 February: *Springback* to bookbinding: *AGM plus talks and demos*
- 13 March: *Drum Leaf Binding* / Mylyn McColl
- 10 April: *Rebinding a paperback* / Glenn Malkin
- 8 & 9 May: *How to Gold Tool on Leather* / Tracey Rowledge
- 12 June: *Artist book structures and content* / Isobel Lewis
- 10 July: *A Modern Yapp Edge Binding* / Rachel Lyner
- August (tbc): *Aberystwyth Visit*
- 11 September: *A hands-on marbling workshop* / Donna O'Reilly
- 9 October: *Our Autumn Gathering* (talks/demos/displays)
- 13 & 14 November: *The Indenture Binding* / Dominic Riley
- 11 December: *Christmas Lunch / Social*

## *Members spread the word around the region*

**Catherine Garratt writes:** It has been another busy month for NW2 outreach, both in events and planning. The *Have a Go* event at Lancaster Library, coordinated by the Morecambe Bay cluster, was a great success and you can read all about it in the piece below from Jeanne. It went so well that the cluster is already planning a similar event at Kendal Library later in the year. Watch this space for more detail. Meanwhile their next activity is a workshop delivered by Helen Golding Miller, re-visiting one of our members' Kelsall workshops: Tanja Bolenz's three-part binding with tyvek.

At the time of writing, Saturday 27 June, Lynne Connolly and other members of the North Cheshire cluster are running a workshop at Northwich Library at the Weaver Hall Museum. A report on that next month.

The West Chester and North East Wales cluster are busy planning more events, and have some great ideas. As a region we have been invited back to the Gladstone Library to be part of their Gladfest Literary Festival. Our involvement last year was a great success (reported in the October 2025 newsletter). I am in the process of firming up the details, but it looks to be a similar *Have a Go* type event alongside a display of the *Journey of the Book* exhibition as shown in 2024 at Manchester Central Library as part of our 50th anniversary programme. We will certainly need volunteers to demonstrate making different book structures; if you are free on Saturday 29 August and would like to take part, please do email me ([cgarratt2@googlemail.com](mailto:cgarratt2@googlemail.com)).

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**Jeanne Pennington writes:** Han Fleet organised this event on Saturday 6 June with Lancaster Library, and the Morecambe Bay Cluster members rose to the occasion. We had a planning meeting at Han's bindery in Halton Mill near Lancaster with strawberries and cream in the garden.



On the day, we arrived at the library and set up the tables and chairs with the library staff. We had a really good space near the check-in desk so we were sure to be easily accessible and visible. We thought we may not have many people interested especially as there were a number of other activities being held in the library on the same day, including Yoga and the 'Lego' club. How wrong we were! As soon as we were set up we had a line of people all wanting to have a go at bookbinding. Many of those early customers had been attracted by Han's posters advertising our event.

Our customers had the choice of making a 3-hole pamphlet stitch book with Jeanne; a small book sewn with a Japanese stab stitch with Han and a flag book with Sheila (who had to rush out during a lull in customers to buy some extra paper!).



Helen was demonstrating book repair and Jacqueline demonstrating sewn spine bindings in between telling people about the Society of Bookbinders and organising queues for the tables . . .

It was a very successful though exhausting day for our small group of demonstrators. We never stopped. People were delighted with what they saw and what they made, and many commented that they would love to see us there again. The library staff were very pleased and had had some good feedback from customers - many of them children who had by-passed the 'Lego' club to come and join us!

We all loved the opportunity to demonstrate our skills and promote the Society of Bookbinders in such a positive way.



## *Limp Vellum Binding may be tougher than it sounds . . .*

A pleasant mid-June weekend saw members gather at Kelsall for a two-day limp vellum extravaganza led by the inimitable Glenn Malkin. An assortment of used vellum sheets were spread across the worktables, and people were keen to select their favourites before we got going. Glenn, and Helen Golding Miller, had brought several examples of the binding to show us what could be achieved, and there was a useful discussion about suppliers of both used and new vellum, and how it doesn't behave like "normal" leather. With this in mind, we set to lining our damped vellum with pasted tissue (Glenn shows how, *right*). Wrangling soggy tissue over the vellum was made easy by the handy application of a dowel, and the smoothed (and bubble-free!) sheets were left to dry under their own tension overnight.



Next came the building of the book block. It started with the familiar routine of folding and trimming sections, before swiftly moving to battling with the alum tawed thongs. I love sewing on raised cords, but packing on a support that changes shape as you go was a new experience for me (*left*). The results were very pleasing to the eye . . . and ready to be covered up later.

We then lined the outside of the block with a heavier (260 gsm) paper - creating the limp boards the binding is known for - and lined the spine with tissue, carefully moulding it around the supports with our trusty bone folders.

At the end of a very intense first day, we moved onto sewing endbands (*left again*). As these are structural, and worked on the same alum tawed thongs as the supports, there were additional considerations to a modern style such as the self-rolling core, and the need to keep sufficient length either side for lacing in. I think most people managed the first one (some of us several times . . .) before our brains gave up the ghost and we went home for a well-earned rest!

Sunday morning started with the realisation that endbands are much easier after a good night's sleep! Book blocks complete, we turned our attention to the covering. Wisely, almost the entire process was mocked up on lightweight card - getting that perfect fit before transferring our lines to the vellum. There were a lot of discussions around the maths, which led to some giggling and a fair amount of frustration - templates were covered in pencil scratchings and rubbing out, but we all got there in the end!

Glenn demonstrated the nifty tab closure for the corners, using a perfectly-proportioned 5p coin as a cutting guide for this and the corners of the turn-ins (*below left*). A new tool to add to the ever-growing stash, I think! Then it was time . . . could we accurately transfer our work to the vellum, and cover our books (*below right*)? We could! It certainly felt much quicker than making the template, and lacing our supports and endbands into the covers was very satisfying (and just a little bit fiddly at the very end - long tweezers are essential here).



A very nice project, some new techniques to add to my (currently very small) list. Thank you very much to Glenn for his patience and good humour (and his excellent teaching, of course). As a beginner, I always appreciate these workshops - everyone is so supportive, and we all go away with beautiful objects as a guide to future binds.



*With thanks to Laura Roberts for this workshop review*

## Christine Frame shares her *Bookbinding Beginnings*



My bookbinding came about through an initial interest in marbling. I had come across a wonderful article in *Country Living*, over 13 years ago, about the marbler and bookbinder Christopher Rowlett. I still have the magazine. At the end of the article it gave contact details for Christopher for those wanting to try marbling. I contacted him and he explained he was going to be teaching at a place called the Grange in Shropshire. So I duly signed up and went for a two-day course. It was wonderful. The Grange was run by Rosie and Jon Ward Allen, publishers by trade (*The Medlar Press*), who held the residential courses in a beautiful old house in Shropshire, with out-houses which had been restored into a bindery and a print room, containing several restored letterpress printers and a myriad of type, book cloth, papers and all sorts of magical things.

That first weekend Rosie and Jon explained they were thinking of starting bookbinding courses, and would I like to try one. I did, and it was just amazing. I made a hardback, cloth-bound notebook; I loved it. A big part of the joy of the Grange was the camaraderie of like-minded people of differing experience and interest, different tutors and ideas, wonderful food, the odd glass of wine, and I came to make dear dear friends along the way (not wishing to embarrass Gill and Catherine). Rosie and Jon went on to offer several courses throughout the year, on different types of binding and printing. I was lucky enough to print text on letterpress printers, which I could then bind. It was hit and miss, my enjoyment of the work and the whole experience of being at the Grange far exceeded my capabilities as a binder, but I loved every mistake, disaster and book I made. I did another marbling course there, this time with Jill Sellars (*below left*). For over 10 years I went to the Grange at least once a year at some point.



In addition to the Grange I have been on a gold tooling course in Ludlow with Trevor Lloyd (*right*), whose bindery in Ludlow is like stepping back in time. Gold tooling is extremely difficult, and label-making remains a dark art to me. A trip to Higham Hall in the Lake District to try gold illumination proved that it is even harder than gold tooling, but it was wonderful to see experts doing something so intricate.



Then finally joining SoB last year. Well, I think I joined a few years ago briefly, but never made the effort to get to Kelsall. However, deciding I needed to start trying to bind on a more regular basis, and after chivvying from said dear friends, I started coming along in autumn last year. My first visit was the Autumn Gathering and I just loved it. Everyone was so welcoming, the talks so interesting, stuff to buy, people's beautiful work to look at. So much effort from the committee and volunteers means it is fabulous value for money, and you learn by just chatting to people as well. I continue to get a bit of tuition with Glenn - trying to get to a point where my enthusiasm and joy are partly met by a bit of skill! Bookbinding is mindful, and creative, and I love using my hands and not just staring at a screen, which has been my working life.

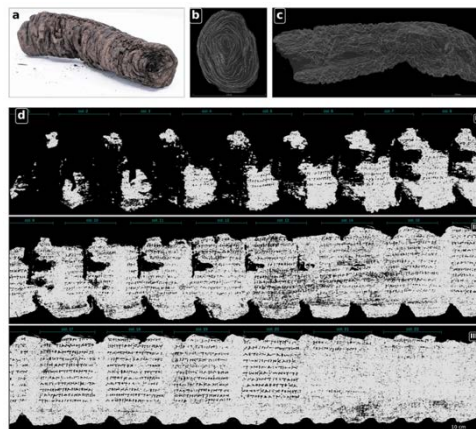
So here I am, still a bit vague on grain direction, but still loving it!



A book I have re-covered, in quarter leather, with a lot of help from Glenn Malkin.

**Last week the Guardian newspaper opened a story with: *The surviving part of an ancient scroll that was burnt to a crisp when Mount Vesuvius erupted nearly 2,000 years ago has been virtually unwrapped and read with help from artificial intelligence.*** It explained that three students had won a \$700,000 prize after using AI to read a 2,000-year-old scroll burnt during the Mount Vesuvius eruption in 79AD.

The ancient text was unreadable until now after being charred in the Roman town of Herculaneum during the same eruption that destroyed Pompeii. It is thought to have belonged to Julius Caesar's father-in-law and talks of music and food. In the 18th century, hundreds of papyrus scrolls were discovered in the library of a luxurious villa in the town - the only such library of texts from ancient Roman times to be discovered. But their contents remained a mystery to scholars - they were so badly burnt by volcanic debris that when they attempted to unroll them they fell apart in their hands. Burned so badly they were carbonized, the scrolls are extremely fragile. Over the years, scholars have tried to unroll them using a range of methods, including weights, chemicals, gases and pulverization, though this often led to the scrolls being damaged or destroyed. The [Vesuvius Challenge](#) was launched by Brent Seales, a computer science professor at the University of Kentucky, and entrepreneurs Nat Friedman and Daniel Gross in 2023 to encourage researchers from around the world to try to decipher the scrolls by virtually unwrapping and decoding them. Read the full story [here](#).



Your editor  
was out  
browsing  
and  
shopping  
recently at  
IKEA, and  
came across  
these words  
displayed on  
a wall. Say  
no more!

We know that when you do nothing,  
nothing happens.  
But when you do something,  
something happens.  
And little by little, day by day,  
something by something,  
we might just change everything.

**Do something.  
Change everything.**

A request for help: lapsed member Rebecca Bailey asks - *can anyone give me advice on the best adhesive for sticking Simile Japon onto Simile Japon 130gsm? And: I'm looking for some miniature dividers: I have the small ones from Shepherds but I'd like something even smaller if possible for calligraphy.* E-mail Rebecca direct if you can assist: [headbandquavers@proton.me](mailto:headbandquavers@proton.me)

## The Committee for 2026

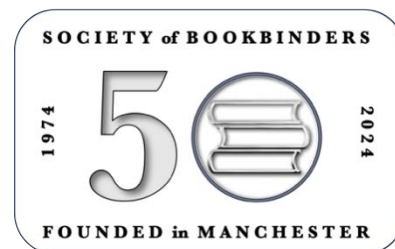
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