



the Society
of Bookbinders



The Newsletter of the North Wales & North West Region



Last month I had the great pleasure of spending a day at *Val Corrigan's surface pattern design workshop*, and had the chance to be walked through her pattern-making techniques, and to think about how they might be applied to bookcloth. It was one I couldn't pass up, *writes Natalie Macintyre*.

What struck me most was how much could be achieved with the simplest of tools. Much of the day was about mark-making with everyday household objects such as sponges, offcuts and found textures rather than anything specialist. We worked with two main approaches. The first used acrylic paint, dabbed, dragged and stamped to build up a library of marks and textures. There's something wonderfully freeing about starting with a blank cloth and a sponge and simply seeing what happens!

The second approach brought in block-cutting, using soft vinyl carving blocks and printing with inks. We carved simple motifs and then printed them in repeat, including a lovely tile-design method where a single carved block is rotated ninety degrees and printed four times over.

It was fascinating to see how the very same motif takes on a completely different character depending on how it's set to repeat, a reminder that pattern is really about return, coming back to the same gesture again and again until it settles into something coherent.

It was such a joyful, hands-on day; playful and creative in a way that's easy to forget to make time for, and I came away with a headful of ideas and a stack of samples to draw on.

My thanks to Val for her generosity and expertise, and to the Society for organising such an inspiring day. If a pattern workshop ever comes your way, I'd totally recommend rolling up your sleeves and giving it a go.



North Cheshire local cluster go live at Northwich Library

Liz Kenny writes: at the end of June, Lynne Connolly (*above left*) and myself, ran a very well received Saturday morning taster session in Northwich Library. Six enthusiastic would-be binders took part.

We began with two simple structures made from single sheets of paper: an eight-page folded booklet and a Turkish map fold in a card cover. From there, it was on to an accordion book with a folded cover and belly-band, finishing with a pamphlet stitched single section book. Choosing covers from Lynne's lovely decorative papers proved especially popular, sparking lots of ideas for making more at home - as small gifts or with young family members.

One participant was so inspired by the possibilities of the accordion book, especially the pop-up elements Lynne demonstrated, that she skipped the pamphlet to create her own colourful pop-up using pages from a withdrawn children's library book.

Everyone left happy, and one attendee is even considering coming along to a Kelsall meeting to see whether she might like to join the Society.

Gladfest

THE UK'S FRIENDLIEST FESTIVAL



Catherine Garratt writes: the NW2 region has been invited back to the Gladstone Library's **Gladfest** Literary Festival, on Saturday 29 August. For more details of their event click [here](#). It's a whole day festival, and the footfall to see our small exhibition and demonstrations is expected to be strong, as last year. **NW2 volunteers are needed!** We will be made very welcome with refreshments and lunch provided by the library. We need volunteers to demonstrate any type of binding or element of the binding process. There will also be a *Have a Go* table where visitors can create their own single section notebook. If you are free on Saturday 29 August and would like to come along to the wonderful Gladstone Library please drop me an email. Ideally, we would like at least 6 people, this allows us all to have breaks and a wander around to see the other exhibitions. E-mail me at cgarratt2@googlemail.com

Remembering Dieter Räder

Jill Sellars writes: Dieter was well known throughout the bookbinding community as an outstanding teacher, generous with both his knowledge and his time. His technical skills were founded on the highest standards of German craft training, having achieved the prestigious Meister qualification, and throughout his career he inspired countless bookbinders with his expertise and encouragement.

He worked as a professional bookbinder for more than forty years, teaching and sharing his passion for the craft wherever he went, including Marseilles, Vienna, Somerset, London. In more recent years, after re-locating to Wales with his wife Phillipa, he co-founded and ran **Haf y Ddraig (Dragon Summer)**, a much-loved bookbinding retreat where participants enjoyed not only his exceptional teaching but also his warmth, wit and hospitality.

Dieter's skill as a craftsman was matched by his humour, kindness and thoughtful friendship. He touched the lives of many people in our bookbinding community, and his influence will continue through those he taught and inspired. He will be greatly missed by colleagues, students and friends alike.

Our sincere condolences and deepest sympathies go to Phillipa and all of Dieter's family at this sad time.



It's a while since Dieter was last with us at Kelsall - taking us through the [Edelpappband](#) binding back in 2013.

He was due to delight us with **The Buttonhole Stitch Binding** (below) in November.



Heavily over-subscribed, we hope to run the workshop with an alternative tutor. More info as soon as we can confirm*.

*** see page 5!**



More on surface pattern design . . . one of Val Corrigan's design heroes is [Enid Marx](#). And many will know of her wonderful pattern papers brought back into production by both Shepherds and Alan Powers' Judd Street Papers.

[Alan Powers](#) has also written the biography of Enid Marx, [click here](#) for that: a new paperback edition is out to coincide with the opening of a major exhibition of Enid Marx's life and work at the Compton Verney gallery in Warwickshire. Titled **The Pattern of Life: Enid Marx and Modern British Design**, the exhibition continues until 3 January. Their [website](#) tells us: *with major loans from the V&A and other national collections, this exhibition will chart Marx's life through fabric, tracing the geopolitics of British design and the lasting impact of her work.*

Stunning book exhibitions in our region . . .

SPECIAL EXHIBITION

**The Forgotten Library:
Enriqueta Rylands and her books**
Until Saturday 31 October

Enriqueta Rylands founded the John Rylands Library to remember her husband. She also filled her home with books.

Explore the personal book collection Rylands kept at Longford Hall. See books of all shapes and sizes: old and new, beautiful and plain, luxurious and useful. Discover another side of this book-lover's legacy through her forgotten library.



The Rylands latest temporary exhibition, *The Forgotten Library*, explores the personal book collection of library founder Enriqueta Rylands, *writes Barry Clark*. Originally kept at her home, Longford Hall (now demolished), this remarkable collection reveals her life as a passionate reader and collector. It overflowed from the house library into the breakfast room, the billiard room, the strong room, even the corridor. Beautifully curated and displayed, this exhibition alone is worth the visit. *Below:* three bindings from the Tregaskis Collection of 76 bindings of the same Kelmscott Press book; Enriqueta purchased the entire collection when they were on display at the 1895 Arts and Crafts Exhibition at Manchester City Art Gallery. Purchased for herself, but later donated to the Rylands Library.



The display from the permanent collection reveals even more delights: *see a richly decorated Qur'an manuscript, a beautifully illustrated love story from 16th century South Asia and a Buddhist meditation guide etched onto palm leaves. At the heart of the gallery is The Manchester Odyssey, the oldest known surviving copy of Homer's Odyssey in book form on parchment.* Plus lovely bindings, including some from the Anthony Dowd collection of modern design bindings.

And upstairs in the cathedral-like Reading Room another display reminds us that Enriqueta Rylands *refused to only give access to academics and specialists . . . all was available to the people in Manchester. In 1900, the library's opening year, there were 27,000 visitors.* We really are fortunate to have this stunning building and collections of international importance on our doorstep, and at no charge. They were queuing at the entrance as I departed after my early morning visit. For the Library website, [click here](#).

Or maybe a day out in Derbyshire to Chatsworth Hall?

2026 is the National Year of Reading and, in celebration, the **House of Stories: Tales from the Chatsworth Library** exhibition brings together the library's most exciting treasures, with first and early editions of works by Geoffrey Chaucer, Alexander Pope, Jane Austen, Caroline Lamb, Lord Byron, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Brontë, Oscar Wilde, and T.E. Lawrence. For more info [click here](#), or [here](#) for a short video preview.

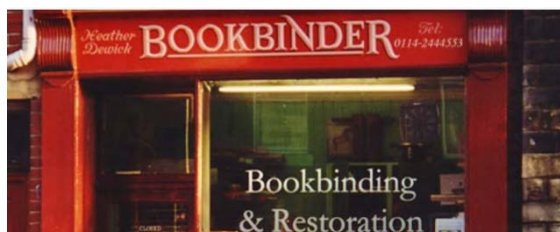
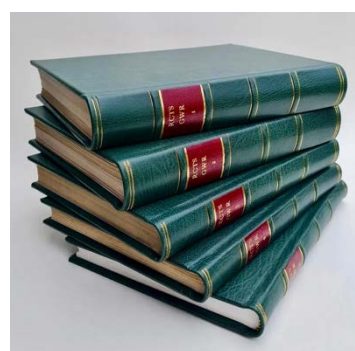
The exhibition continues until 4 October. Generously, free to some Derbyshire residents (booked via their public library card), and just £3 for those on benefits, for the rest of us it's £33 admission for house and garden. *Ouch!*

Heather Dewick shares her *Bookbinding Beginnings*



My first encounter with bookbinding, as a first year Conservation and Restoration student, involved a rapidly cooling, stinky, gummy glue brush. I was, as usual, last in the queue, and maybe at that point I should have realised this was going to be a bumpy ride. So bumpy that I quickly dumped my initial interest and enthusiasm for bookish things, and swerved towards ceramics and gilding. However, the interest returned when I got a post as library assistant in a private antiquarian library in Nottinghamshire. I worked here on and off over three years and got to spend time with some incredible books. The work was fairly basic: cataloguing, cleaning, basic repairs, condition reports and environmental monitoring.

When the post ended, I was a bit lost, and ended up doing various part time jobs, none of them sensible or lucrative. It was hard to find museum or private conservation work, even as a volunteer, so I had the daft idea of persuading a friend, who was working at the British Library, to leave her job, and join me in a business venture. We found a studio space, and must have had something going for us, as we got the last big Prince's Trust grant to buy equipment (the excitement of that marred by the supplier, who, as he pocketed our money, snarkily told us *women never make it in bookbinding*). It worked for over a year, until my friend left to get married. I kept the workshop on (a large, cheap, draughty space on the top floor of Sheffield's now defunct Leadmill) and attempted to fill in gaps in my bookbinding knowledge, with the help of books and the occasional short course when I could afford it. Being largely self-taught, there are still big gaps. I try not to beat myself up about that, and am hopelessly realistic in what I can and can't do.

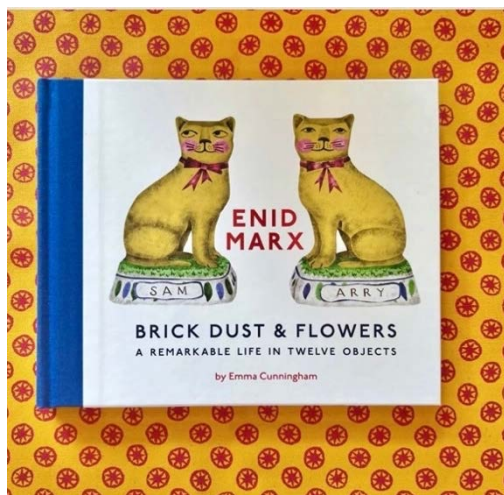


With the encouragement of a local bookshop, who had an empty shop next door, I moved. The shop was tiny, but being visible at street level, in a rather bohemian part of Sheffield, did wonders for business! Repairs, restoration, working with Fine Art and Photography students for their degree shows, making personal journals and albums, thesis binding, kept me busy and paid the bills.



I outgrew the shop, and moved to a larger shop on the same street. I started to sell paper, which was great fun to source, and work by local printmakers, as well as some off-the-shelf notebooks etc I made. It was hard work, but busy, and it felt really good to be part of the local community. And then . . . a new tenant moved into the flat above. He wasn't a nice person. He made my life an absolute misery with noise, harassment and threats from the day he moved in. It became so bad that I was scared to open my shop every day. He even threatened customers. With zero help from the landlord or police I endured this, unbelievably, for 18 months, but then moved to a quieter, rural workshop. I couldn't function, and was eventually diagnosed with complex PTSD. I now work from home, on the north west outskirts of Sheffield, in my garden cabin. A bit of a cliché these days, but I feel safe here, and have only a seven metre commute. Some weeks are great, and I can get lots done, others not so. PTSD is unpredictable, hard to 'fix', and has robbed me, along with many other things, of the ability to forward plan. And of being able to earn and learn consistently. It's hard, but luckily most of my clients are understanding. Currently my main focus is repair and restoration work for private customers. I'm also making a few products for shops and galleries locally. And, when I'm up to it, I show my work at art markets and some print fairs. The retail shops at Chatsworth are keeping me busy at the moment!





No doubt timed to coincide with the exhibition at [Compton Verney](#), [Design for Today](#) have recently announced: **Enid Marx, Brick Dust & Flowers. A Remarkable Life in Twelve Objects** by Emma Cunningham. Their blurb informs us: *This is a celebration of the life and achievements of Enid Marx, told through 12 objects. Enid Marx (1902–1998) was a leading artist and designer, collector and writer, who played an important role in British cultural life in the mid-20th century . . . Emma Cunningham is a new 2026 graduate of the B.A. (Hons) Illustration degree course at Hereford College of Arts and was also the recipient of the Elmley Foundation Prize for Outstanding Achievement and the Friends of Herefordshire Museums Printmaker Award. Her visual language and subjects represent a keen interest in social history, popular culture and folk art, particularly of the mid-20th century.* Limited to 100 signed and numbered hardback copies, quarter bound with blue Brillantia cloth, it is printed at Graphius on 170gsm Magno Volume paper, 28pp, 225x185mm. [Click here](#) to order.

Stop press . . . stop press . . . stop press

We can now confirm that Sylvia Waterling will be tutoring our November **Buttonhole Stitch Binding**. [Sylvia](#) is a senior lecturer (photography) at MMU's School of Art, and a book artist who is also the lead Book Arts and Printmaking tutor at Salford's [Hot Bed Press](#). Some members will know Sylvia from their involvement in Hot Bed's year-long *The Complete Book Arts* programme which she runs. We look forward to welcoming Sylvia in November - her first workshop for the Society of Bookbinders.

Tim Foster writes: Back in May I visited Poland and the wonderful Ethnographic Museum in Krakow ([click here](#) for more). On the stairs to the top floor of the museum it read in large letters: ADMISSIONS WARD FOR POORLY OBJECTS. It was obviously their conservation department. I couldn't resist having a similar sign made for my workshop door . . . and this inspired me to have a similar one made for my Bindery too . . .



The Committee for 2026

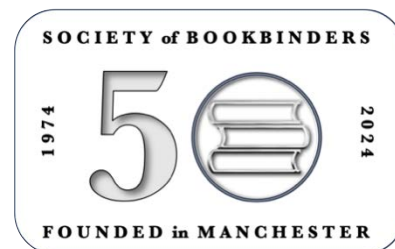
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