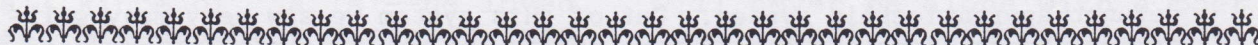
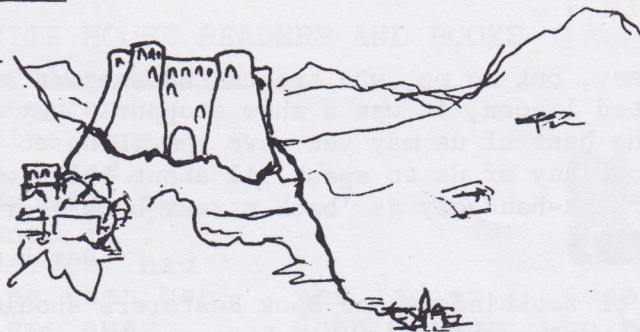


URGENT
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STANDARDS. Let's start with a "classic" subject from the first *SOCIETY OF BOOKBINDERS NATIONAL NEWSLETTER*. The exchange was started by Philip Smith:

Back Street Abortionists

"I feel it is important that all regions be kept mutually in touch by their representative officers at a national level. Anything which will retain the working unity of a widespread society is a good thing. It is important that the SOBER gains accredited status amongst all bookbinders by laying down a code of professional ethics. In this area it is important that the national heritage of public and private collections or individual holding of rare books and archives be protected from the 'back street book abortionists'. In the USA they have been setting up such a code of practice and possibly members in touch with the conservation field there, could get hold of the information necessary to set up something on similar lines.

At present there are a few respected arbiters of national standards of excellence, standards which have to be achieved by some form of examination or selection, for example: CNAAB Degrees and other accredited college courses, City & Guilds Examinations, Fellowship of Designer Bookbinders or selection to the Crafts Council Index of Designer-Craftsmen. Other organizations, such as the Guild of Master Craftsmen, lose their credibility when rejected by our representative to the Government, the Crafts Council.

It is for this reason, if for no other, that I feel a National Committee should rule the policy and standards of this Society as a whole, but allow the regions, under this aegis, to control their local affairs.

Philip Smith"

"(Mr. Smith's letter) at first glance would seem to be commendable stuff. However, before it gets into, the statute books, perhaps the idea should be held at arm's length in order to examine it in some detail. The reason for my attitude is this. Some weeks ago, a book came into my hands which had recently been rebound so I looked at it most critically and noted the following: bound with tight back, with five raised bands, title pieces with type far too large and the title seeming to overflow onto the spine. Turn-ins with 'pencil cases', inside turn-ins not trimmed out, and creases in the gutter margins, due to careless use of the backing hammer. However, when I looked at the colours of the materials used, I found there the most perfect balance. Spine and corner pieces, board covering and endpapers in the most harmonious blend of colour and all perfectly in tune. Elementary,