

# APPG for CRAFT

## Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 16th October, 4–6pm Room A, 1PS

### 1. Welcome

The Rt Hon John Hayes CBE, RSA opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

### 2. Apologies for absence

The following sent their apologies for absence:

Greta Bertram	Endangered Craft Specialist	Irene Kernan	Crafts Scotland
Lesley Butterworth	Art and Craft Specialist	Sophie Leach	NSEAD
Susan Coles	Artist and teacher	Ann Packard	RSA
Rosy Greenlees	Crafts Council	Florian Schweizer	The Arts Society
Richard Hobbs	Heritage Crafts Researcher	John Slater	Comino Foundation
		Matthew Slocumbe	SPAB

### 3. Attending

The following were in attendance:

Rt Hon John Hayes CBE	Chair	Alex Langlands	Swansea University
Terri Adams	Scientific Glass Instrument Blower	Patricia Lovett MBE	Secretariat, Scribe & Illuminator
Kate Arnold-Foster	MERL	Joanna Martin	The Arts Society
Julia Bennett	Crafts Council	Jack Mayorcas	Sharon Hodgson MP's Office
Katy Bevan	Craft specialist and teacher	Carole Milner	Radcliffe Trust
Sandra Booth	CHEAD	Peter Mojsa	All Churches Trust
Julia Brettell	V&A	David Mortlock	Wheelwrights' Company
Patrick Burns	Saddlers' Company	Fleur Oakes	Needlelace & Embroidery
Daniel Carpenter	Red List Research Manager	Simon Olding	Crafts Study Centre
Earl of Clancarty	Vice-Chair	Michael Osbaldeston	City & Guilds
Judith Cobham-Lowe	Goldsmiths' Company	Alison Richmond	ICON
Prue Cooper	Art Workers' Guild	Dunja Roberts	All in a Spin
Kelly Cordes	Researcher	Greg Rowland	Wheelwright
Nick Crean	QUEST	Simon Sadinsky	The Prince's Foundation
Brian Crossley	Chair Caner	Ambrita Shahani	Royal College of Art
Harriet Deacon	ICH Specialist	Wendy Shorter	Upholsterer, AMUSE
Gil Dye	Lace Maker & Researcher	Pip Soodeen	SPAB
Baroness Garden	Vice-Chair	Derek Stimpson	Gunmakers' Company
Lisa Hammond	Potter, Clay College	Rebecca Struthers	Watchmaker
Alison Henry	Historic England	David Viner	Wheelwrights' Company
Grace Horne	Knife, Scissor & Corset Maker	Ann Whittall	National Museum Wales
Bob Howard	NHTG	Robin Wood MBE	Wood turner, tool maker
Prof Roger Kneebone	Surgeon		

### **3. How Craft Skills are Important Even When not Making**

Professor Roger Kneebone explained how he realised after making contact with the Art Workers' Guild that skills used in surgery were very similar to those in many crafts, and that there would be benefit by applying the solutions of makers to surgery. Fleur Oakes talked about her role as a needlelace maker and embroiderer, and her role as Artist in Residence at Imperial College, also now at the V&A. She explained that, having watched over 90 operations over 18 months she viewed the body as a series of textures and colours. Roger and Fleur then demonstrated the 'Textile Body' and various members of the APPG assisted in the 'surgery'. The application of craft skills in many other professions and occupations, not just for makers, was noted and Roger stated that 'Craft skills are not just desirable but essential' because of their wide and relevant application not just for craft.

Discussion then followed and it was noted that:

- there are now gold / silver smithing courses in schools funded by the Goldsmiths' Company with universities now saying that this experience is essential for those who want to do medicine.
- many other fields benefit from those with craft skills.
- there is a link between orthopædic surgeons and stone masons / wood carvers. Stone masons experience both tools and materials from day one, whereas surgeons don't deal with bone until much later in their training.
- in surgery, text books don't show real life, and looking is very important. With the demise of art and still life classes in schools, pupils are now not taught how to look, and this has an impact on future doctors.
- there needs to be parity of esteem, parity of respect and parity of recognition for crafts.
- hand skills don't happen in a vacuum and there is much more to craft expertise than just making.
- for children, haptic learning is very important.

### **4. Why Craft Matters**

Robin Wood MBE explained that he was first a forester for the National Trust and then became fascinated by wood turning having seen the work of George Layley. His experience was similar to many other 'last of the line' crafts. He noted that our tangible heritage was well supported and that many buildings were preserved even after their original use was abandoned. However, in the UK intangible cultural heritage was almost completely ignored in comparison, with the UK being one of only 17 countries out of 195 that has not ratified the 2003 UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage. Robin went on to explain the HCA's Red List of Endangered Crafts whereby over 800 organisations and individuals were contacted and over 170 crafts were placed in 4 categories of extinct (4 crafts), critically endangered (17

crafts), endangered (45 crafts); the rest were currently viable, but that situation could change very easily. (For more information please see: <https://heritagecrafts.org.uk/redlist/>) Robin also raised the point about 'Made in Britain', where in the case of cricket balls they are made in India and Pakistan, but waxing and gold stamping them 'Made in Britain' counts as a 'substantial' process in legislation and so it is allowed for them to be noted as British-made. Terri Adams, scientific glass instrument blower explained that glass defines scientific research, and its importance can be traced through the cathode ray tube to fibre optics. She pointed out that scientists and cutting edge research require bespoke, complex pieces of glass equipment. Terri produces intricate, precisely-sized and researched glass, where a knowledge of the chemical elements of glass are also involved. She went on to explain that it takes more than 10 years to learn and has to be done with someone who is already very experienced; because of the cost, though, there is now very little training, and in many universities there is now only one glass blower. However there are now no educational establishments offering courses and also, importantly, no qualifications, as awarding bodies don't offer qualifications for fewer than 100 entrants a year. Although glass blowing operates on the margins of science, it is crucial to our future. There are now fewer than 50 experienced glass blowers in the whole of the UK.

Grace Horne regards herself as a 'craft engineer' and explained how she progressed from a craft, design and technology course in South Wales, where she was working on a series of folding knives, to learning the craft from 71 year-old Trevor Ablett, and eventually scissor making at Ernest Wright. She continued her studies with an MA at Sheffield Hallam part-time and was able to use the workshops there. This was followed by a PhD in the artisan making of steel, pursuing her own work at the same time. 98% of her knife and scissor production goes overseas and she sells at major craft fairs in the US. The engineering also comes to play in corset-making and the UK is regarded as the centre for this. A course at De Montfort university on 'Contour' included pattern making for mass market as well as individual bespoke items.

Discussion then followed and it was noted that:

- craft apprenticeships are not properly supported as almost 80% of heritage craftspeople are self-employed, so 100% of the costs have to be found.
- if we want to save something we must use it.
- in other countries National Living Craft Treasures get tax breaks.
- we need to campaign around early years education in craft.
- in Japan, craft is viewed as equal to academic subjects.
- crafts have to be integral in education and craft skills need to be back in schools.
- Agored Cymru in Wales offer qualifications in niche subjects (subsidised by the government), but they do have to be assessed in Wales.

John Hayes summed up the meeting and it was resolved:

- to write a letter to the Secretary of State for Education at the DfE, with a copy to Downing Street, to emphasise the importance of craft skills in schools, particularly early years teaching, not just for making itself, but for transferable life skills. All members of the APPG for Craft would be asked to sign this, and it would also be sent to the media.
- to raise with the Treasury the introduction of tax breaks for those in endangered crafts and for those in craft who wished to pass on their craft skills, thus the country would be investing in the future of craft.
- in all this, it was important not to compromise on the APPG's commitment to craft of itself.

## **5. Any other business**

There was no other business.

## **6. Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the APPG for Craft will be held on Thursday, 4th April, 4–6pm, in Room M, Portcullis House, 7 Bridge Street, London, SW1A 2JR.

### **Please note:**

1. We want to put the APPG membership on the APPG website. This will include only your name and organisation or craft, no contact details. Please kindly let me know by **November 10th 2018** if you object.
2. @APPGCrafts is now up and running on twitter. Please follow and encourage your organisations to follow.
3. The APPG website is where reports from the meetings, the agendas, minutes, associated papers, and photographs will be found. There are two interesting articles there already. Please see: <https://heritagecrafts.org.uk/appg/>