

## **Heritage Crafts Association Survey – December 2009 to March 2010** **Summary report**

This survey was posted online in December 2009 and ran until 28 February 2010. It was publicised specifically to craftspeople who had already shown support for the HCA, as well as more publicly on the HCA website and other websites. The survey had 206 respondents.

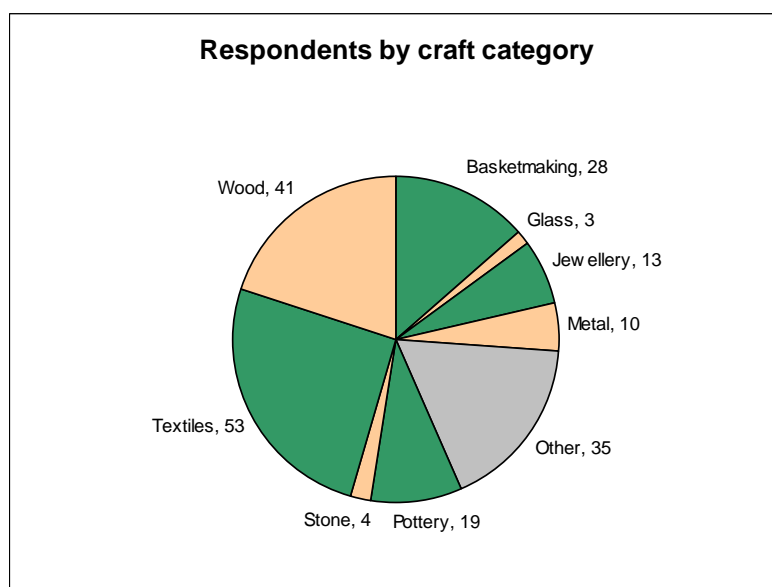
The responses are summarised as follows. For a full transcript of the responses, please email [info@heritagecrafts.org.uk](mailto:info@heritagecrafts.org.uk).

### **1. What is your craft?**

This was an open question, and responses were afterwards split into the following broad categories:

<b>Craft category</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Basketmaking	28
Glass crafts	3
Jewellery making	13
Metalwork	10
Other	35
Pottery and ceramics	19
Stonework	4
Textiles	53
Wood and greenwood	41

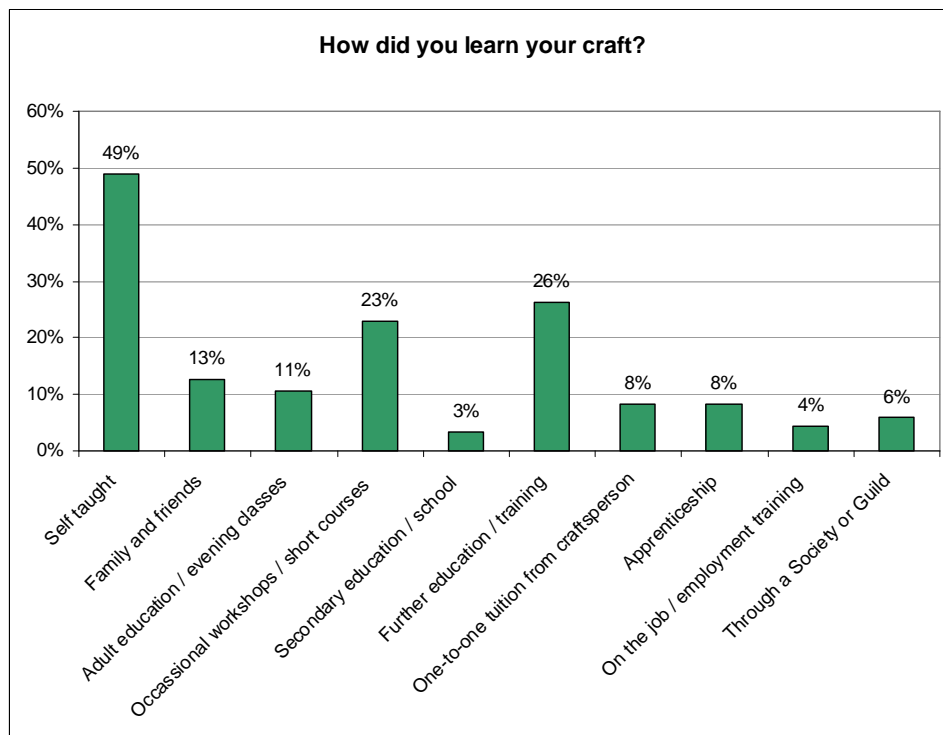
The category of 'Other' included crafts such as mosaic, printmaking, leather craft, traditional canal art, toy making, bookbinding, chandlery, soap making, boat building, bowery, ornamental plasterwork and clockmaking.



### **2. How did you learn your craft?**

This was an open question, and responses were afterwards split into the following broad categories:

	Overall	Basketmaking	Glass	Jewellery	Metal	Other	Pottery	Stone	Textiles	Wood
Self taught	101	9	1	10	4	18	7	2	25	25
Family and friends	26	3	0	0	0	9	1	1	8	4
Adult education / evening classes	22	2	1	2	1	6	3	0	6	1
Occasional workshops / short courses	47	14	0	2	0	8	1	0	10	12
Secondary education / school	7	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	2
Further education / training	54	4	2	2	7	3	11	2	17	6
One-to-one tuition from craftsperson	17	5	0	0	1	1	1	1	4	4
Apprenticeship	17	1	0	2	2	3	2	0	3	4
On the job / employment training	9	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	2	1
Through a Society or Guild	12	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	6	1



### 3. What kind of training provision is available in your craft?

The responses to this question are summarised as follows:

#### **Basketmaking**

The most common view amongst the basketmakers was that while there very lots of short courses and workshops run by individual basketmakers, there was little in the way of formal or structured training. The only two providers of accredited training mentioned were City Lit in Holborn and a

college in Northumberland, both of which offer City & Guilds training. The Basketmakers' Association and its members were cited as providers of short courses and workshops. A couple of respondents commented on the high cost of the courses and workshops on offer.

### **Glass crafts**

The three glass crafts respondents cited degrees in the craft and some adult education.

### **Jewellery making**

The jewellery makers were split in their views of level of the training on offer. Around half said none or very little or that they did not know. The rest cited a range of provision ranging from short courses and workshops, private tuition, HNDs, degrees and post graduate degrees.

### **Metalwork**

Most of the metalwork respondents cited further education courses and apprenticeships as the main forms of training, including particularly the blacksmithing courses at Hereford College. Short courses were also mentioned.

### **Other**

There was a mix of responses in this category, reflecting the range of craft forms included.

### **Pottery and ceramics**

The most common view expressed by the potters was that training provision was declining, with degree courses in Scotland now gone, and those in the rest of the UK heading in the same way direction. One respondent said that some of the courses that had survived had been redirected into 3D design. Adult education classes were also on the decline, one respondent saying that many potters were now opting to offer private classes to 'escape the tyranny' of paperwork imposed by Government.

### **Stonework**

The four stoneworkers cited college courses teaching stone carving and masonry to City & Guilds and NVQ level, although there was no consensus about the extent of the opportunities on offer. One respondent mentioned the Memorial Arts Charity, which funds short training courses and two year apprenticeship schemes.

### **Textiles**

This category had the greatest number of respondents who believed that there was very little training provision left or that it was in sharp decline, especially in terms of City & Guilds courses which have struggled as a result of restrictions in adult education. Some cited privately run short courses, though these were limited according to location. Further and higher education courses were listed, although these were said to focus more on fashion and design rather than skills. Societies such as the Association of Weavers, Spinners & Dyers and the Lace Guild were cited as training providers, the former offering a unaccredited Certificate of Achievement.

### **Wood and greenwood**

The main type of training cited by the woodworking respondents was short courses and one-to-one training provided by individual craftsmen. Levels of training varied depending on the discipline (e.g. college courses and City & Guilds were cited for cabinet making etc, but greenwood working was mainly restricted to short courses). The Association of Woodturners of Great Britain was cited as a prolific provider of short training courses.

## **4. What are the particular challenges to the future viability of your craft?**

There were a range of responses to this question, but three of the most common challenges to emerge were:

- **Education of the public** – there was a feeling that mass production and the import of goods from low-wage economies, and the resulting lowering of prices, had skewed the public's perception of the value and quality of handcrafted products. The public were also less aware

of the traditional crafts as viable career options, due in part to the lack of craft subjects taught at school and in adult education departments.

- **Financial factors** – in terms of the costs of materials, energy and general living costs, and also the effect of global economic recession on sales of handcrafted products.
- **Lack of training opportunities** – both in terms of continuous development for the craftspeople themselves and the lack of opportunities for new people coming into the craft.

For a transcript of the responses, please email [info@heritagecrafts.org.uk](mailto:info@heritagecrafts.org.uk).

## 5. Do you feel that the skills within your craft are in danger of dying out?

Fifty three per cent of the respondents to this question said yes, they did feel that the skills within their craft were in danger of dying out.

