

# APPG *for* CRAFT

## Minutes of the Unofficial Meeting held on Thursday, 4th April, 4–6pm Jubilee Room, Westminster Hall, Westminster

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

All participants were welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves.

### 2. Apologies for absence

The following sent their apologies for absence:

Julia Brettell	V&A	Gail McGarva BEM	Boat builder
Deirdre Brock	MP	Ann Packard	RSA
Lesley Butterworth	Craft specialist	Dunja Roberts	Hand Spinner
Lord Cormack	Vice-Chair APPG	Greg Rowlands	Wheelwright
Sir Michael Fallon	Vice-Chair APPG	Florian Schweizer	The Arts Society
Baroness Garden	Vice-Chair APPG	Rory Shearer	Crafts NI
Bob Howard	NHTG	John Slater	Comino Foundation
Dr Alex Langlands	Swansea University		

### 3. Attending

The following were in attendance:

Terri Adams	British Society of Scientific Glassblowers	Lisa Hammond	Clay College/ AAP
Greta Bertram	Crafts Study Centre, UCA	Patricia Lovett MBE	Heritage Crafts Assn
Katy Bevan	Craft Specialist	Steven Lowe	Lastmaker
Sandra Booth	CHEAD	Carole Milner	Radcliffe Trust/TAS/TCF
Patrick Burns	WC of Saddlers	Peter Mojsa	All Churches Trust
Daniel Carpenter	Red List Manager	David Mortlock	WC Wheelwrights
Judith Cobham-Lowe	WC Goldsmiths	Michael Osbaldeston	City and Guilds
Dr Kelly Cordes	Independent Researcher	David Poole	GDETAC
Prue Cooper	Potter	Simon Sadinsky	The Prince's Foundation
Jane Cox	Potter and AWG	Dave Sargeant	Sir John Hayes' Office
Julie Crawshaw	Director, HCA	Wendy Shorter	AMUSF and WC Upholders
Nick Crean	QEST	Derek Stimpson	WC Gunmakers
Brian Crossley	Chair Caner	Dr Rebecca Struthers	Struthers Watchmakers
Harriet Deacon	Coventry University	John Taylor	LCSC
Dr Oliver Douglas	MERL	Dr Nicola Thomas	University of Exeter
Gil Dye	Lace Maker	Nicholas Trench	Earl of Clancarty, Vice-Chair
Martin Frost MBE	Fore-edge Painter	Bill Twigg	City and Guilds
Michele Gregson	NSEAD	Ann Whittall	National Museum Wales

### 4. An overview of entry routes for craft – *Michael Osbaldeston, City and Guilds*

Michael Osbaldeston, Special Adviser at City and Guilds, highlighted a recent event at the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths where Professional

Recognition Awards were being presented. As part of this event apprentice pieces, which often took over 300 hours to make, had been assessed, and training in business skills were included with craft skills. Those who achieved this award were able to have letters after their names in exactly the same way as those who graduate from university. This scheme is funded by the Goldsmiths, but there are not many other organisations who can afford such awards. So should crafts be only for the rich and wealthy? The UK is very good at maintaining its physical heritage, but these buildings can only be maintained if the craft skills to produce and conserve them and the objects in them are also supported. The UK is one of only 15 countries out of 193 that have not signed up to the UNESCO ICH Convention, underlining the lack of UK support for such skills; this Convention recognises craft skills as part of our Intangible Cultural Heritage. Universities are able to maintain and support academic information, but our craft skills are not supported and recognised in a similar way. The amounts involved are relatively small, but emphasise that the unintended consequences of dealing with vast numbers in terms of apprenticeships are that we are losing craft skills, and these will only be fully appreciated when they're gone.

- 5. The Watchmaker Apprenticeship – the experience** – *David Poole, clockmaker*
- During the development of the apprenticeship for watchmaking, one Relationship Manager at the Institute for Apprenticeships described the situation as 'tortuous' but, in David's view, it was an understatement. Initially, the Creative and Cultural Skills' Craftsperson Trailblazer included twenty crafts with a generic Standard and Assessment Plan; its failure meant each craft would have to develop its own pathway. Only five of the crafts are continuing with Trailblazer. For watchmaking, the process started in June 2015 and now, four long years later, they hope the first group of apprentices will commence in September. The Standard was approved in June 2016, but with a funding band of only £9,000; an appeal was launched. There were challenges with the Assessment Plan; there are normally three grade boundaries – Fail, Pass and Distinction. However, anything less than competence is of no value to a watchmaker and it is often just not possible to achieve better than the manufacturer's specification – it is either right or it isn't. This, and a change of Relationship Manager, wasted seven months. The funding appeal required a Training Provider quotation for delivery but the watchmakers were unable to identify a provider. Eventually, this was resolved just before funding reverted to £9,000. The outcome was £27,000 to deliver the two year apprenticeship. After approaching 11 Training Providers, Uxbridge College is working closely with the watchmakers to ensure delivery begins in September. Crafts need apprentices more than big businesses; for the latter, there is often a training structure in place. Small numbers make it almost impossible for niche crafts to find a

Training Provider; one said 'if you have 1,000 apprentices we'd be interested'. Relationship Managers struggle to advise and, without a quotation for delivery, it is impossible to proceed. What would help? A very supportive Relationship Manager, sympathetic Training Providers and a flexible approach to delivery. The Chairman of the Institute of Apprenticeships has stated that he is 'aware of the importance of developing apprenticeships in the heritage sector and niche markets' but there is little evidence of this.

**6. Passing on the craft skills at The Prince's Foundation** – *Simon Sadinsky, Deputy Director*

Four of The Prince of Wales' charities, all operating for over 25 years each, came together to form The Prince's Foundation and this now covered academic qualifications, traditional arts and vocational work and is delivered across the UK with hubs in London and Dumfries House in Scotland. Included are training programmes in traditional heritage crafts; with 6 million heritage buildings in the UK there is a workforce potentially ill-equipped to deal with necessary maintenance. The Foundation also covers textiles in industry (manufacturing skills) with many of these being lost due to off-shoring, and the School for Traditional Arts, which includes ceramics, mosaics, gilding, book binding etc. As an example, Simon gave more details on traditional building crafts which started with a 3-week summer school covering many disciplines, where students learned from each other as well as being taught by experts. The free course, with £1,000 per month paid to each participant and accommodation costs covered too, extend for 8–12 months and culminated in an NVQ3 in Heritage Skills. During this time students worked on a live project brief from the initial design to execution covering all the inter-disciplinary skills to do this. Ten years on 75% are still working in the heritage sector with 70% passing on their skills. Simon outlined the two main challenges including entry routes – many came as a second career – and qualifications – not enough of the right sort. For the future there were risks that there would not be the practitioners to teach. Simon ended with the future at Dumfries House with a Centre for Applied and Decorative Arts in construction which includes specialist teaching studios, residential accommodation and gallery space.

**7. Passing on the craft skills of making shoe lasts** – *Steven Lowe, Lastmaker*

Steven passed around examples of shoe lasts in various stages, and his craftsmanship was much admired. He explained about his lastmaking business Crispinians, and the courses run at Lastmaker House in Eastbourne, a building that was derelict when he took it over and originally part of an old brewery. He and his fellow lastmaker Dominic Casey run four-day courses which sell out each time. These cover measuring the foot, translating the measurements into a 3-D object, shaping a wooden last, and finishing the last such

that a shoe can be made from it. Steven went on to point out that 5 out of 6 of the participants for these specialist courses came from overseas including from Nigeria, Singapore, Slovakia, the USA and Germany, and of those from the UK, in the main they were hobbyists. The problem, he pointed out, was that there was no funding or support for such courses, and apprenticeships were few and far between, with funding going to the apprentices, not the person taking time out from their work to pass on the skills. These craft skills were valued by other countries but not the UK. Steven has also been invited to run courses in New York. The UK Independent Shoemakers are doing what they can to focus on and pass on skills, but lastmaking is not now taught in the trade.

**8. Passing on the craft skills of disappearing fore-edge painting** – *Martin Frost MBE, Disappearing fore-edge painter*

A film was shown which illustrated the delight, and the detail, of Martin's work as a disappearing fore-edge painter whereby an image is painted on to the edges of a bound book, which only appears when the edges are fanned in a certain way. Martin had also brought examples of his work with him which were studied by those in the room after the meeting. He explained that this was an artform that developed around 1660 and was very popular in the 18th century. It takes him from an afternoon to a week to paint the fore-edge, depending on the size of the book. It is an ultra-niche craft, such that Martin is the only full-time professional doing this – he being himself an example of a 'disappearing fore-edge painter!'. He teaches as much as he can, including a recent course he ran at the Royal Library at Windsor Castle for the book binding trainees there, in Europe and in Boston, USA, but taking on an apprentice was impossible because of the costs of taking time out from working, where there is barely a living to be made for one person, let alone two.

**9. The Heritage Crafts Association's Red List of Endangered Crafts II** – *Daniel Carpenter, Red List Manager*

The Red List of Endangered Crafts is the first of its kind in the UK to look at individual crafts to see whether they will survive to the next generation, with crafts themselves being considered not the objects nor their value. This time 216 crafts were assessed, and 36 were now deemed to be critically endangered (17 in 2017) and 70 endangered (45 in 2017). The good news is that as a result of the first list, two people are now producing hand-made sieves and riddles and are about to go into commercial production, this was extinct in 2017. However, mould and deckle making for hand-made paper is now extinct with Ron McDonald's death in 2017. He did pass on his skills but these are now carried on in Europe and not the UK. The lack of mould and deckle making has a knock on effect with Two Rivers Paper in Devon being the last hand-

made commercial paper producers. The research emphasised that practitioners don't want ongoing subsidy but prefer to be self-sufficient and sell through the market. To support these crafts the Heritage Crafts Association has appointed a part-time Endangered Crafts Officer and set up an Endangered Crafts Fund.

#### **10. Comments on Entry Routes for Craft**

*Judy Cobham-Lowe:* The Goldsmiths were 3 years into developing their apprenticeship but they were still in the funding band of £9,000 which hardly covered tuition let alone precious metals.

*Nick Crean:* Apprenticeships depend on personal chemistry between the trainer and trainee and there needs to be a focus on mentoring.

*Julie Crawshaw:* Asked Simon whether The Prince's Foundation included living crafts and was told that it did.

*John Taylor:* Training providers seemed to be a stumbling block for apprenticeships and there needs to be a register of these.

*Bill Twigg:* There were good principles in the new apprenticeship policies but these were stifled by bureaucracy in needing to deliver to the masses. There needs to be flexibility in delivery to niche markets

*Harriet Deacon:* It has been shown that internationally crafts need specific marketing skills for success.

*Carole Milner:* The APPG needs also to consider not only entry routes but T-levels, the creative industry route for 16–18 year-olds coming in in 2022.

#### **11. Any other business**

There was no other business.

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

The next meeting of the APPG for Craft will be held on Wednesday, 19th June, 4–6pm, in The Jubilee Room, Westminster Hall, Westminster.

Copies of the Heritage Crafts Association's Red List of Endangered Crafts publication were circulated, and hard copies of the APPG for Crafts first newsletter were available.