

# APPG *for* CRAFT

## Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> June, 4.30–6.30pm Room 6, Westminster

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Sir John Hayes, Chair, welcomed everyone to a delayed start to the meeting due to a room change and vote, and introduced the MPs attending the AGM.

### 2. Introductions

In Sir John Hayes' absence, those attending the APPG introduced themselves.

### 3. Apologies for absence

The following sent their apologies for absence:

Terri Adams	British Society of Scientific Glassblowers	Sir Michael Fallon MP	Vice-Chair
Greta Bertram	Crafts Study Centre	Michele Gregson	NSEAD
Katy Bevan	Craft Specialist	Gail McGarva	Boatbuilder
Lord Cormack	Vice-Chair	Carole Milner	Radcliffe Trust, HFN
Brian Crossley	Chair caner	Dunja Roberts	All in a Spin
Harriet Deacon	Coventry University	Dr Nicola Thomas	University of Exeter
Dr Oliver Douglas	MERL		

### 3. Attending

Baroness Garden	Vice-Chair	Heather Fisher	Struthers Watches
Earl of Clancarty	Vice-Chair	Lisa Hammond MBE	Adopt-a-Potter, Clay College
David Duguid MP	Banff and Buchan	Bob Howard MBE	NHTG
Sir John Hayes MP	Chair	Chris Hudson MBE	Chimo Holdings
Stephen Kerr MP	Stirling	Francis Lloyd-Jones	Lisa Hammond Pottery
Sir Edward Leigh MP	Gainsborough	Patricia Lovett MBE	Heritage Crafts Assn
Jack Mayorcas	Office of Sharon Hodgson, Vice-Chair	Steven Lowe	Crispinians
Ross Thomson MP	Aberdeen	Grace McCarthy	Clay College
		David Mortlock	WC Wheelwrights
		Michael Osbaldeston	City and Guilds
<i>Also:</i>		Jim Patterson	Two Rivers Paper
Julia Bennett	Crafts Council	George Richards	Wheelwright
Daniel Carpenter	Red List Manager	Greg Rowland	Wheelwright
Judith Cobham-Lowe	WC Goldsmiths	Wendy Shorter	WC Upholders and AMUSF
Zoe Collis	Two Rivers Paper	Derek Stimpson	WC Gunmakers
Prue Cooper	Potter	Tessa Stone	Devon Guild of Craftsmen
Dr Kelly Cordes	Researcher	Dr Rebecca Struthers	Struthers Watches
Katrina Cowling	Neon Workshops	David Viner	WC Wheelwrights
Jane Cox	Art Workers' Guild	Richard Wheeler	Neon Workshops
Julie Crawshaw	Heritage Crafts Assn	Ann Whittall	National Museum Wales
Gil Dye	Lacemaker		

### 4. Inspired by Craft – Dr Rebecca Struthers (Struthers Watches) and Heather Fisher

Rebecca Struthers of Struthers Watchmaking explained that the company is making watches in an old building in the Jewellery Quarter of Birmingham. Much of the work is done by hand including cutting all the teeth and wheels. Now they also make their own watch cases as this is now a rare craft, as well as reusing cases that are otherwise discarded. They are now moving from restoring watches to making them.

Heather Fisher was fascinated by horology as it's a mix of art and science. Her course at university was more clock-heavy and the skills she needs were not taught on her university course, so benchside learning in a watch making workshop is crucial. Heather pointed out that it's important to keep the skills alive otherwise they will die out. She is supported by QEST and the George Daniels Educational Trust otherwise her apprenticeship would be impossible.

Questions were asked to clarify Heather's funding, and also about routes to market – which are mainly by word of mouth. Struthers are now tapping into the classic car market and finding business there.

#### **5. Inspired by Craft – Jim Patterson (Two Rivers Paper) and Zoe Collis**

Jim Patterson came into the paper making business by accident, but learned the skills at a time when there were still funded apprenticeships and learning. He set up Two Rivers Paper from a small mill in Somerset. For the next 20 years making paper was a labour of love as there were problems of finance, difficulties in getting the products to market and so on. In the last 5 years the internet has changed all that and they sell off the website.

Zoe Collis was introduced to Two Rivers Paper the Heritage Crafts Association's 'Getting into Craft' project. Zoe became captured by the craft in all its messy, dark and clothes-ruining processes. She is in the first papermaking group in 20 years and the only one of about 20 who is making paper by hand. She has received bursaries from the Arts Society (through the Heritage Crafts Association) and QEST. She applies her interests in art, science and engineering in her apprenticeship.

#### **6. Inspired by Craft – Lisa Hammond MBE (Adopt-a-Potter and Clay College) and Francis Lloyd-Jones and Grace McCarthy**

Lisa learned pottery at school with an inspiring teacher, and gave up A levels to work in a pottery in Covent Garden. She then went to Medway College of Design before setting up her own studio. She trains apprentices for 2 years and they stay for a third year with a new apprentice. The training is in basic functional ware which requires a huge amount of practice with quite a few pots thrown away!

Francis Lloyd-Jones comes from a family of potters giving him an inbuilt appreciation of the craft. He took a fine art degree but wanted to learn one material thoroughly – it took a while to get to clay! An intensive 2-year course in Ireland was followed by an apprenticeship with Lisa.

Lisa also explained the Adopt-a-Potter scheme which funds apprentices as the quality of students coming out of colleges is now very poor. They are taught the concepts but not the skills. Lisa also set up Clay College at Middleport Pottery for small group training of 14 students over 2 years. This is funded by potters themselves.

Grace McCarthy did a 3 year degree at Camberwell but the course was closing so there was not much teaching. She knew that she needed skills and was delighted to have been accepted at Clay College.

#### **7. Inspired by Craft – Richard Wheater (Neon Workshops) and Katrina Cowling**

Richard Wheater gave a brief history of neon glass, explaining that it was a British invention at UCL in 1898. He himself was interested in glass and went to study in the US where it seemed as if everyone was interested in neon glass sculptures but there was nowhere in the UK to learn neon. However, he now has a workshop in Wakefield where he not only teaches but also has a mobile workshop. There are now fewer than a dozen companies working in neon in the UK and many will retire in the next few years. Neon is in fact the ‘greenest’ of lighting as LEDs, which are heavily promoted, are non-biodegradable and non-recyclable. The few neon makers don’t have a loud enough voice.

Katrina Cowling comes from an arts background and explained that she has been at Neon Workshops for 4 and a half years and it’s been the most difficult thing she’s ever done, but also the most rewarding. The craft is shrouded in mystery as the glass is bent over flames, attached to an electron bombarder, a vacuum created and noble gases inserted. Her apprenticeship is totally self-funded by Neon Workshops.

#### **8. Inspired by Craft – Greg Rowland (Mike Rowland and Son) and George Richards**

Greg Rowland is the current Royal Warrant Holder maintaining The Queen’s carriages. The company also focuses on big guns, carriages, wagons, wooden wheels and farm wagons using traditional craft skills and materials. The company was established in 1964 and together with his father and George Richards they have over 80 years of experience between them.

At age 15 George Richards approached the workshop for work experience and in his first week made a mallet. He arranged with Exeter College to do a bench joiner apprenticeship but there was no funding. Eventually £16,000 over 3 years was found by the Livery Companies Skills Council, but that scheme has now closed. During his training George went to Williamsburg for 4 weeks where he learned many new techniques.

George explained that he mainly works under his own steam but asks for advice when he needs it. His apprentice project was a half-size 6-pounder gun which put together all his experiences and skills in the making.

Greg explained that after the company lost money when training George it is now up to 3 times its turnover.

#### **9. Inspired by Craft – Chris Hudson MBE (Chimo Holdings)**

Chris Hudson of Chimo Holdings was not able to bring his potential apprentice because he was doing his GCSEs but he is a lad whose potential was obvious from day one. Chimo (an Inuit greeting meaning friendship and trust) is an amalgamation of Sheffield companies which were taken over when they weren't viable. The craft skills have been brought together and the various companies have prospered under the one umbrella. Approximately 2,500–3,000 bone-handled knives are produced each month and sent all over the world. They even have a 'cutlery hospital' for repairs. There is very little automation and most skills are still used in traditional ways. There are now only 4 companies in Sheffield making these goods and about 45% is exported all over the world. Chimo is about to move into a new factory with its 16 employees, but training is a challenge because it is unfunded. Colleges are able to run funded courses because they have the numbers that make it worthwhile, but there is a need for only one spinner or hand hammerer. The English and Maths requirements are also a problem as the 40% of those who don't get good GCSE results find it impossible to get an apprenticeship. Most of those employed at Chimo have no qualifications but are making cutlery for Saudi palaces, and hammering silver bowls that are presented by 10 Downing Street.

#### **9. AOB and Date of the Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 5th November; the timing and room number are yet to be confirmed but it is hoped that it will be 4–6pm and that the room won't change just before the meeting yet again!