



# Heritage Crafts Association

President: HRH The Prince of Wales

Heritage Crafts Association

*PATRONS: Emma Bridgewater CBE, Professor May Cassar, Lord Cormack KBE, Kaffe Fassett, Sir Christopher Frayling, Mark Henderson, Dr Alex Langlands, Paul Martin*

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Flutemaking trainee sought to avert craft extinction

The **Heritage Crafts Association (HCA)** has set out to save British flutemaking by seeking potential trainees interested in learning this intricate and highly-skilled craft from a retiring master.

**Stephen Wessel** from Somerset is currently believed to be the last full-time craftsperson in the UK making fully handmade Boehm system flutes.



Stephen's impending retirement, after 35 years in the business, not only ends a long and illustrious career, but could mark an abrupt end to flutemaking in the UK – a proud tradition stretching back to the nineteenth century.

Even before news of Stephen's retirement, the scarcity of British flute makers had led to the craft being reclassified as critically endangered in this year's edition of the ***HCA Red List of Endangered Crafts***.

As the organisation set up to safeguard traditional craft skills in the UK, the HCA has teamed up with **Jonathan Myall** (a lifelong flute enthusiast and owner of Just Flutes in South Croydon) who has offered to host and support a trainee while they learn the craft from Stephen.

The successful applicant will be keen to learn, will have a proven ability to solve technical problems, and is likely to have existing engineering skills (such as those gained from precision silversmithing, jewellery or model engineering) which will serve them well when learning to make the key mechanisms that create the beautiful even tone for which these flutes have become famous.

*Supporting and promoting heritage crafts as a fundamental part of our living heritage*

[www.heritagecrafts.org.uk](http://www.heritagecrafts.org.uk)

The Heritage Crafts Association is registered with the Charity Commission as Charitable Incorporated Organisation number 1159208

For more details and to express an interest in this potential opportunity, applicants can contact Mary Lewis, HCA Endangered Crafts Officer, at [mary@heritagecrafts.org.uk](mailto:mary@heritagecrafts.org.uk). Applicants should note that the traineeship is dependent on the HCA and Jonathan Myall sourcing additional funds once a suitable candidate has been identified.

Stephen Wessell said: *"I started my working life as a research engineer. I didn't care for it and left aged 26 to do my own thing... a good decision which I have never regretted, for I love making things and you can't do much of that sitting in an office. Ours is still a great manufacturing nation and in my small way I feel proud to be part of it."*

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**Contact:**

Mary Lewis, HCA Endangered Crafts Officer – [mary@heritagecrafts.org.uk](mailto:mary@heritagecrafts.org.uk)

**Photo caption:**

Stephen Wessel – photo by South West News Service

**About the Heritage Crafts Association**

Founded in 2009, the Heritage Crafts Association (HCA) is the advocacy body for traditional heritage crafts. Working in partnership with government and key agencies, it provides a focus for craftspeople, groups, societies and guilds, as well as individuals who care about the loss of traditional crafts skills, and works towards a healthy and sustainable framework for the future. Its aim is to support and promote heritage crafts as a fundamental part of our living heritage.

[www.heritagecrafts.org.uk](http://www.heritagecrafts.org.uk)

**About the HCA Red List of Endangered Crafts**

The HCA Red List of Endangered Crafts, created by the Heritage Crafts Association, was the first to rank traditional crafts in the UK by the likelihood they would survive the next generation. The 2019 edition of the Red List assessed 212 crafts to identify those which are at greatest risk of disappearing, of which four have been classified as extinct, 36 as critically endangered, 70 as endangered and 102 as currently viable.

<http://redlist.heritagecrafts.org.uk>

### **About Stephen Wessel flutes:**

Stephen Wessel's flute business was established in 1983, in partnership with the silversmith and headjoint maker John Webb. They decided to make a modern flute with some of the characteristics of the best nineteenth-century instruments.

By combining the best of contemporary materials and innovative detail with traditional practice, Stephen Wessel flutes are first-rate instruments well known for their musical qualities, including:

- high responsiveness;
- evenness of sound throughout the compass;
- plenty of tonal colour;
- abundant carrying power or projection;
- outstanding intonation.

[www.wessel-flutes.co.uk](http://www.wessel-flutes.co.uk)

### **About Jonathan Myall Music / Just Flutes**

Since 1985 Jonathan Myall Music has supplied thousands of players the world over, from beginner students to famous soloists, orchestral musicians and session players. Its sixteenth century premises in Croydon, Just Flutes, forms the largest specialist flute centre in the United Kingdom, where it has an extensive selection of flutes, piccolos, alto flutes, bass flutes, music books and flute recordings.

[www.justflutes.com](http://www.justflutes.com)