



HERITAGE
CRAFTS



NEWS RELEASE

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Promising future beckons for tinsmithing, UK's most critically endangered craft

Tinsmithing skills passed on to a new generation of makers in unique masterclasses, organised with the generous support of The Worshipful Company of Tinplate Workers Alias Wireworkers and Heritage Crafts' Endangered Crafts Fund.

The future of tinsmithing, a critically endangered craft on Heritage Crafts' groundbreaking **Red List of Endangered Crafts**, has been given a boost following two successful masterclasses facilitated by **Heritage Crafts** and the **Museum of Making, Derby**. With generous support from **The Worshipful Company of Tinplate Workers Alias Wireworkers** and **Heritage Crafts' Endangered Crafts Fund**, Heritage Crafts brought historical tinsmith Karl Schmidt of Dakota Tinworks, USA, to the UK to lead the five-day masterclasses.

Using tools and techniques of nineteenth century tinsmiths, fourteen participants learned how to develop patterns, successfully use tinsmiths' tools and operate hand-crank machines,



as well as traditional construction techniques and other aspects of tinsmithing, applied to a range of creative tasks. The masterclasses gave participants a first-hand understanding of tinsmithing as a recognised heritage craft. The course participants are now part of a supportive online network where they can share their ongoing progress.

In addition to developing the skills of the participants, the tinsmithing masterclasses equipped the Museum of Making with the knowledge and materials to continue safeguarding and supporting tinsmithing. Three of the Museum's technicians are now trained in tinsmithing and its workshop is stocked with tools needed to continue the craft. The museum has already scheduled its first public tinsmithing workshop, '[Cookie Cutters: An Intro to Tinsmithing](#)', taking place this December.

Heritage Crafts Endangered Crafts Manager **Mary Lewis** said:

"Without this course it was very likely that the skills of tinsmithing would be lost in the next few years. With these wonderful learners and some fantastic partnership working between Heritage Crafts, The Museum of Making and master tinsmith Karl Schmidt, we now have a chance of preserving these skills for the next generation."

Museum of Making Workshop & Studios Manager **Steve Smith** said:

"Post Karl Schmidt's tinsmith masterclass, the Museum of Making workshop is now equipped with the tools and skills to evolve and develop as a UK centre committed to tinsmith work, preserving this red-listed endangered craft. Tinsmithing as a heritage making discipline, and its technical skills, are still relevant to contemporary making culture; the aesthetic and utilitarian tin products it creates are complimentary to everyday life. The workshop is already programming tinsmithing courses, and, in continued collaboration with Mary Lewis and Heritage Crafts, plan to bring back the new-collective of masterclass tinsmiths to the Museum of Making workshop in 2023."

Tinsmithing masterclass participant **John Wills** said:

'I enrolled on the masterclass because tinsmithing is complementary to my work as a brazier/coppersmith. I would never have picked up the specific tinplate techniques watching online tutorials. Karl's passion for the material is infectious and the time he gave to get my technique right has been invaluable both to my copper work and future tin work. Tinplate is certainly being added to my product range.'

Fellow masterclass participant **Marion Godwin** said:

‘During the course of the week, I learnt skills that will be invaluable in helping my museum bring back our historic tinsmithing exhibit after many years out of action. I look forward to sharing my newfound skills with other staff, hopefully helping to provide a small home for this valuable endangered craft to propagate. A huge thanks to Heritage Crafts, the Museum of Making, and to Karl for being so willing to share his skills’.

ENDS

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Photo captions:

- Imogen Peacock, tinsmithing masterclass participant at Museum of Making. Credit Heritage Crafts.

About Heritage Crafts

Founded in 2009, the Heritage Crafts is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered as the ‘Heritage Crafts Association’, the national charity 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

About the Red List of Endangered Crafts

The Red List of Endangered Crafts, created by Heritage Crafts, was the first to rank traditional crafts in the UK by the likelihood they would survive the next generation. The 2021 edition of the Red List, funded by the Pilgrim Trust, assessed 244 crafts to identify those which are at greatest risk of

disappearing, of which four have been classified as extinct, 56 as critically endangered, 74 as endangered and 110 as currently viable.

The Red List shows that the craft knowledge, skills and practices that form an important part of our shared cultural heritage are – for a number of reasons – at risk of being lost. Heritage Crafts believes that these cultural assets are as important as unique heritage buildings and ancient beautiful landscapes and could provide future generations with fantastic opportunities to enrich their lives and the lives of others.

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

About Derby Museums

Derby Museums is an independent charitable trust which is responsible for the rich cultural and creative history of Derby. It manages three sites across the city, the Museum and Art Gallery, Pickford's House and the Silk Mill, and holds and curates all the art and collections within them, including the world's largest collection of paintings by Joseph Wright of Derby.

www.derbymuseums.org

About the Museum of Making

The Museum of Making is a new visitor attraction in the heart of Derby, exploring 300 years of Derbyshire's manufacturing history. On what is widely regarded as the site of the world's first modern factory at Derby Silk Mill and part of the Derwent Valley Mills UNESCO World Heritage site.

Completely designed and put together with the people and industries of Derby, the museum has on display over 30,000 objects, the vast majority of which have not been seen by the public before. It tells the stories of our making past to inspire the modern maker in all of us. The Eagle Engine on display at the new Museum of Making is on long term loan to Derby Museums from the Science Museum.

The Museum of Making has been developed and is operated by Derby Museums, which secured major grant funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund (£10,695,000), Arts Council England (£2,739,000) and D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (£3,700,000). Significant support has also been received from Derby City Council, Rolls-Royce and a range of charitable trusts and foundations.

www.derbymuseums.org/museum-of-making