



NEWS RELEASE

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Sean Evelegh wins Heritage Crafts Young Woodworker of the Year Award supported by Axminster Tools

Kent-based furniture maker Sean Evelegh has won this year's Young Woodworker of the Year Award, supported by Axminster Tools, including a £1,000 prize awarded at a special presentation at Eltham Palace on Tuesday 26 November 2024.

Heritage Crafts was set up 14 years ago as a national charity to support and safeguard heritage crafts skills, and has become well known for its *Red List of Endangered Crafts*, the first research of its kind to rank traditional crafts in the UK by the likelihood they will survive the next generation.

The award, supported for the second year running by **Axminster Tools**, celebrates a young woodworker who has made an outstanding start to their craft career. The winner is highly skilled amongst their peers, whilst raising the perceived value of their craft through sharing and awareness raising. They have given themselves a fantastic chance of achieving long-term success, perhaps overcoming disadvantage or setbacks along the way.

Sean Evelegh set up his own furniture making business straight out of university, making pieces for clients all around the world. In 2020 he won a TV show called 'The Chop', to be crowned Britain's top woodworker, competing as a teenager against experienced professionals. He was recently recognised by the Furniture Makers' Company as one of 60 future leaders in the furniture industry.



The judging panel for this year's award was made up of **Alan Styles** (Managing Director of Axminster Tools), **Robin Wood** (pole-lathe bowl turner and former Heritage Crafts Chair), **Helen Welch** (Founder and Head Instructor at the London Furniture School), and last year's *Woodworker of the Year*, woodcarver **Tom Ball**.



The two other finalists for the award were **Jessie Hills**, who studied 3D Design and Craft at Brighton University, and went on to study fine furniture making at Robinson House Studio under the guidance of renowned makers Marc Fish and Theo Cook, and **Lizzie Jarvis**, who started working alongside a carpenter at age 13, and at age 14 started her own workshop to delve further into woodworking. At age 16 she set up her own business, Bramble Carpentry, and recently completed her Silver Arts Award.

Heritage Crafts also ran a **Woodworker of the Year Award** for practitioners of any age, also supported by **Axminster Tools**, which was won by luthier **Shem Mackey**. Shem has become synonymous with the highest quality stringed-instruments in the world over the past 30 years. He recently produced one of the most iconic of instruments, a highly-decorated three manual Baryton with a total of 41 strings.

Global suppliers of woodworking tools and machinery, **Axminster Tools** has spent 50 years building their family business into the renowned organisation it is today. Working together with makers and creators at all levels, from trade professionals through to craft enthusiasts, their commitment to supporting woodworking skills fits perfectly with the ethos of Heritage Crafts.

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Contacts:

- For press information and photographs, contact **Tess Osman**, Grants and Awards Officer – tess@heritagecrafts.org.uk.

Photo captions:

- **Sean Evelegh**, winner of the 2024 *Young Woodworker of the Year Award*, and **Alan Styles**, Managing Director of Axminster Tools. Photo by Robert Wade.
- **Sean Evelegh**, winner of the 2024 *Young Woodworker of the Year Award*. Photo by Josh Cameron.

About Heritage Crafts

Founded in 2009, the Heritage Crafts is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered as the 'Heritage Crafts Association', 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

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 2023 edition of the Red List, funded by the Pilgrim Trust, assessed 259 crafts to identify those which are at greatest risk of disappearing, of which 62 have been classified as critically endangered, 84 as endangered and 112 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>