



# NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday 27 November 2024

## **Edinburgh kilt maker wins inaugural Heritage Crafts Scotland and UK Maker of the Year Awards**

**Kilt maker Nicola Laird has won both the inaugural *Scotland Maker of the Year Award*, supported by the William Grant Foundation, and *UK Maker of the Year Award*, supported by the Marsh Charitable Trust. Each was accompanied by 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 awards, supported by the **William Grant Foundation** and the **Marsh Charitable Trust**, celebrate a heritage craftsperson in Scotland and the UK who has made an outstanding contribution to their craft within the previous year. It recognises a contribution that is far beyond the ordinary, either in pushing their craft to new levels, contributing to its promotion or continuation in an exceptional way.

**Nicola Laird** has been in the kilt industry for 32 years and has been teaching for eight years, during which time she has taught one hundred students. In the past year she has taken on another young apprentice, and her kilt making courses have been so successful that she has had to employ an extra person to help. She is currently finishing a book on kilt making, which will include a history of kilts and tartan, a study of kilt makers through the years, and a workbook.

The three other finalists for the award were typefounder and printer **Nick Gill** (*England Maker of the Year*), silversmith **Cara Murphy** (*Northern Ireland Maker of the Year*) and maille maker **Phil Parkes** (*Wales Maker of the Year*).

The **William Grant Foundation** is a funder of good causes connected to one of Scotland's leading family-owned businesses, with a vision of a Scotland where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. The **Marsh Charitable Trust** runs a portfolio of awards with a number of nationally and internationally recognised

partners to celebrate the outstanding contributions of people who are committed to social, cultural and environmental causes.



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#### **Contacts:**

- For press information and photographs, contact **Tess Osman**, Grants and Awards Officer – [tess@heritagecrafts.org.uk](mailto:tess@heritagecrafts.org.uk).

#### **Photo captions:**

- **Nicola Laird**, winner of the 2024 *Scotland Maker of the Year Award* and *UK Maker of the Year Award*.
- **Nicola Laird**, winner of the 2024 *Scotland Maker of the Year Award* and *UK Maker of the Year Award*, with **Mary Lewis** and **David Clarke**, Head of Craft Sustainability and Chair of Heritage Crafts. Photo by Robert Wade.

#### **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](http://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>