



# NEWS RELEASE

Wednesday 27 November 2024

## **Devon wheelwright wins inaugural *Robin Wood Changemaker Award* supported by the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation**

**Wheelwright Sam Rowland has won the inaugural *Robin Wood Changemaker Award*, supported by the Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation, 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 new award, supported by the **Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation**, celebrates a maker whose unwavering dedication makes a lasting change to a heritage business, craft or sector in ways that will reverberate for years to come. It is dedicated to Heritage Craft's first Chair **Robin Wood MBE**, who, prior to co-founding the organisation in 2010, revived the craft of pole-lathe bowl turning after seeing the lathe of the last maker George Lailey at the Museum of English Rural Life in Reading. Today pole-lathe bowl turning is on an upturn and was recently taken off the *Red List*, and Robin has turned his attention to toolmaking.

In August 2023, wheelwright **Greg Rowland MBE** had a catastrophic and life-changing motorcycle accident. Overnight, 23-year-old apprentice **Sam Phillips** had to take control of the workshop, the customers, the bills and the cashflow, all the while completing his wheelwright apprenticeship

piece. He admirably rose to the challenge, finishing work that was underway, hiring extra hands to help and delivering work to London. He has shown incredible dedication, patience and maturity and continues to do so, as Greg's recovery goes on.

It is safe to say that without Sam taking the reins, a long-established heritage business would not have survived. Sam recently married Greg's daughter Lilac and changed his name to Rowland, ensuring the future of Rowland's Wheelwrights for many years to come, when it so easily could have been lost.



The **Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation** supports innovative people working in field-based science, art and craft, teaching and protection of the natural world.

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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:**

- **Sam Rowland**, wheelwright and winner of the 2024 *Robin Wood Changemaker Award*, and **Robin Wood MBE**, Heritage Crafts Co-Founder. Photo by Robert Wade.
- **Sam Rowland**, wheelwright and winner of the 2024 *Robin Wood Changemaker Award*.

#### **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>