

# APPG *for* CRAFT

## All-Party Parliamentary Group for Craft

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10th September 2024, 4.00–5.30pm

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### Attending in person:

Earl of Clancarty	House of Lords
Judith Cobham-Lowe OBE	WC Goldsmiths
Lord Freyberg	House of Lords
Baroness Garden	House of Lords
Lisa Hammond MBE	Clay College & Adopt a Potter
Sir John Hayes CBE MP	Chair
Ekta Kaul	Inner Thread
Patricia Lovett MBE	APPG Secretariat
David Mortlock	WC Wheelwrights
Michael Osbaldeston	City and Guilds
Geraldine Poore	Basketmakers Association
Wendy Shorter-Blake	WC Upholders
Derek Stimpson	WC Gunmakers
Margaret Walker	Craft Consultant
Baroness Warwick	House of Lords

### and on Zoom:

Chris Blade	Cumbria Crystal
Daniel Carpenter	Heritage Crafts
Susan Coles	VP of InSEA +
Dr Kelly Cordes	Independent Researcher
Nicola Duncan-Finn	English Heritage
Gil Dye	Lace Maker
Dr Chrissie Freeth	Tapestry Weaver
Lewis Heath	Watch Dial Enameller
Paul Playford	Benefact Trust
Kerstin Rice	The Arch (Germany)
Kibby Schaefer	Architectural Wood&Stone-Carver
Rose Sinclair MBE	Uni of Goldsmiths
Jenny Starr	Soc Designer/Craftsmen
Melissa Strauss	NLHF
Dr Rebecca Struthers	Watchmaker
Ann Whittall	National Wool Museum
Nikkan Woodhouse	Soc Designer/Craftsmen

1. *Welcome:* Sir John Hayes welcomed everyone to the APPG for Craft. The regulations state that Officers for APPGs have to be nominated and elected at the inaugural meeting. The following Officers were elected:

Sir John Hayes – Chair

The Earl of Clancarty – Vice-Chair

Charlotte Cane – Secretary

Baroness Warwick – Treasurer

Sir John Hayes thanked PL for ensuring that the APPG for Craft reformed after the General Election and also for all her administrative work for the meetings and the APPG which was much appreciated.

2. *Apologies for absence:* Apologies for absence had been received from: Greta Bertram, Charlotte Cane MP, James Grierson, Natalie Melton and Jeremy Nichols.

3. **Lewis Heath, AnOrdain:** *The challenges and possible solutions for anOrdain post-Brexit*

Lewis noted that in his watchmaking company there was, post-Brexit, a drop in sales to the EU, that there was considerably greater complexity in imports and exports with the paperwork well beyond a lay person, and a problem with EU customers not knowing how much they would pay when their goods arrived. There were also problems with the movement of people to and from the EU which has resulted in labour shortages and subsequently increased costs not just within the company but also in the construction workers needed for restoring an old building into which AnOrdain was moving. Original costs of £300,000 were now £450,000 and the work still was incomplete. Imitation is the best form of flattery, but it was still frustrating that a Swiss watchmaking

company had copied AnOrdain's designs. The company was launched in 2018 and now has 30 people making watches, enamelling dials and making watch straps.

**Points raised:**

- Lord Freyberg congratulated LH on the company and said that he was a satisfied customer and handed his AnOrdain watch around the group to be admired.
- Baroness Warwick noted the copies being made in Switzerland and asked if this was worrying competition. LH explained that AnOrdain had a waiting list to 2030 but also there was a considerable difference in price – £2,500–3,000 in the UK, £25,000 in Switzerland.
- Earl of Clancarty asked whether there was an amicable agreement with the Swiss. LH – no, and the company's work can not be protected under International Property Laws.
- Sir John praised the company for using craftspeople which would be an encouragement to others.

*The Earl of Clancarty took over chairing the meeting as Sir John Hayes had to leave.*

4. **Kibby Schaefer:** *The challenges and possible solutions for Matthias Garn + Partners post-Brexit*  
Kibby explained that Matthias Garn + Partners were a stone masonry business, but they now cannot find suitable qualified masons post-Brexit. Heritage craft skills involved traditional knowledge passed down through making and sharing in person, learning was by watching and emulating bench-side. Travel for makers was essential because of the need for connectivity and collaboration, so 'journeying' is very important. In France and Germany journeying is embedded in to their education system; apprentices set out to further their knowledge of craft when initial training is completed. Craftspeople with knowledge come to work on our buildings benefiting the UK but also learning skills themselves; they are ambassadors of a skill-based and knowledge sharing community. Brexit has removed that conversation and connectivity. Apprentices keep the craft resilient and create a legacy, however, UK apprentices cannot now work in France and Germany. Sponsoring makers from abroad is possible but it is expensive – £50/month for 3 years and £300/month for 3 months, and sponsors have to make a case for each individual. About 40–50 stone masons are being trained a year but that is not enough, particularly as more heritage buildings will need conservation and restoration in the future. Exchange needs to be kept open not only for itself but because the UK needs the skills and people. The heritage sector was struggling before Brexit due to lack of UK funding for training, and now there are no EU funds either. AI is being used more and more but historical buildings should not become new-builds fashioned by machines. The UK needs to rejoin the broader craft conversation and facilitate easier and cheaper short term travel, perhaps there should be a database of workshops that can facilitate exchange? It takes a long time to learn a craft properly and if action is not taken the UK will lose a generation of skilled makers.

- Baroness Garden – do Livery Companies help with funding training? They do and also City and Guilds and QEST, but funding tends to be focused on those at a less experienced level.
- DC – the EU initiated a youth mobility scheme which actually benefitted the UK more than the EU, but it was ruled out before it was debated. Do the parliamentarians

know more? Sadly no, only from the news.

- MO – Neil from York Minster spoke at the C+G Heritage Crafts Round Table the previous day of the new facilities for apprentices which included residential accommodation, but skilled craftspeople are still needed.
- KS – skilled masons work more quickly and so are preferred.

#### 5. **Chris Blade:** *The challenges and possible solutions for Cumbria Crystal post-Brexit*

*(Apologies for the wrong company name in the agenda.)*

Chris told the group that Cumbria Crystal were the last luxury crystal manufacturer making stemware in the UK, producing crystal also for historical and contemporary films and TV programmes. The skills are 2,000 years old used by the Romans and the addition of lead for lead crystalware was invented in the UK in about 1680. The company has 21 staff, 5 are glass blowers (15 years training), 2 glass cutters, 1 engraver and 1 apprentice taking on a 5-year training. Cutting and blowing glass are now critically endangered crafts in the Red List. Materials for glass making are silica sand mixed with lead oxide and these have to be imported, so, too now are the pots used to melt these materials in the furnaces as the last UK pot maker stopped about 4 years ago. Sales now for Cumbria Crystal are all direct but sales to the EU have dropped by 25%, and the average order is £200–350 in value. Shipping and distribution are very challenging; a whisky tumbler previously cost £18 to ship and now £98 using couriers. Logistics are now used and they have added 8% to the overall cost of transport. There is a shortage of skilled staff and CC are looking outside the UK to recruit but the £38,700 salary requirement is prohibitive. Previous MPs were looking at getting heritage crafts on the shortage occupation list but that was pre-election. There is no help for small craft businesses particularly in developing markets internationally – it is all geared to large companies. Post-Brexit there is no selling at markets and exhibitions, not least because there is import duty on bringing own work back into the UK and this is often too expensive for makers.

- Lord Freyberg – would you share your notes (attached to this email).
- MO – the British Film Industry is the greatest user of heritage skills as everything on sets and costumes has to be made by craftspeople.
- KS – is it possible to collaborate with glass institutes for apprenticeship training?  
CB – would love to and was told to set up a Training Agency but simply not viable as current qualifications systems not suitable for heritage crafts.
- DC (online) Heritage Crafts have developed a Level 3 Craft Assistant core and options qualification, industrial ceramics has already been approved; it may be possible to add glass working.
- RS (online) – look at KTP funding for innovation perhaps.

*There was no AOB and the meeting closed at 5.30pm.*