

APPG *for* CRAFT

All-Party Parliamentary Group for Craft

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 20th February 2024 at 11:30am–12.45pm

Attending in person:

Daniel Carpenter	Heritage Crafts
Judith Cobham-Lowe OBE	WC Goldsmiths
Earl of Clancarty	House of Lords
August Crocker	DCMS
Dr Brian Crossley MBE	WC Basketmakers/BA
Dr Harriet Deacon	University of Hull
Phil Foxwood	DCMS
Lord Freyberg	House of Lords
Sir John Hayes MP CBE	Chair
Patricia Lovett MBE	APPG Secretariat
Michael Osbaldeston	City and Guilds
Lord Parkinson	House of Lords
Reema Selhi	Design & Copyright Society
Melissa Strauss	NLHFund
Margaret Walker	Consultant
Baroness Warwick	House of Lords

and on Zoom:

Juliet Baillie	Historic England
Edward Cheese	Bookbinder/Conservator
Dr Kelly Cordes	Independent Researcher
Gil Dye	Lace Maker
Dr Chrissie Freeth	Tapestry Weaver
Lewis Heath	Watch Dial Enameller
Ekta Kaul	Inner Thread
Kate Mason	Soc Designer/Craftsmen
Carole Milner MBE	HCFN
Dr Mairéad Nic Craith	Uni of Highlands and Islands
Jeremy Nichols	Art Workers' Guild
Paul Playford	Benefact Trust
Rose Sinclair MBE	Uni of Goldsmiths
Dr Rebecca Struthers	Watchmaker
Ann Whittall	National Wool Museum

1. *Welcome:* Sir John Hayes was delayed and the Earl of Clancarty took the Chair, welcomed the group, and introduced Lord Parkinson.
2. *Apologies for absence:* Apologies for absence had been received from: Lord Cormack, Baroness Garden, James Grierson, Lisa Hammond MBE, Natalie Melton, David Mortlock, Wendy Shorter-Blake.
3. **Lord Parkinson:** *Ratification of the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage*
Lord Parkinson began by thanking everyone, individuals, groups and organisations, who had advocated for ratification for ICH for so long; he also noted PL's effective advocacy, campaigning and raising of the profile of this, suggesting that others perhaps could use calligraphy to good effect in pursuing their cause! Lord Parkinson continued by pointing out that Intangible Cultural Heritage was a difficult phrase and perhaps Living Heritage was easier to understand. He went on to explain that it was important to ensure that implementing the Convention was done properly, and that it also included the Devolved Governments, as well Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories. In April he will be going to Paris to sign and deposit the signed Treaty papers with UNESCO, and then the first step will be to create inventories for each of the devolved governments which will be combined into one. The idea is to 'lift' rather than focus on 'list'-ing on the representatives list. The heart of the Convention is community and bottom up rather than top down, so collecting and collating data will be on this basis, thus what people cherish and

what they want safeguarded can be recorded. After that it's on to safeguarding, and Lord Parkinson used the model of the APPG as one that could be considered, bringing people together who are cross-party, non-party, practitioners and from communities.

Points raised:

- How to get the word out there in the national and local press? DCMS could initiate a press campaign with local and national interviews. A reception at 10 Downing Street should also be considered.
- What happens next? Is there funding? There is no specific funding but raising the profile of ICH may help to get funding from NLHF and the Arts Council for example.
- Training DVDs such as those produced by Heritage Crafts are very useful for passing on skills.
- PL's website blogpost explains ICH in layperson's terms: (<https://www.patrialovett.com/unesco-convention-on-intangible-cultural-heritage/>)
- Recruitment, training and apprenticeships will be very important and they should be made financially available.
- The benefits of being on the inventory are that there is a presence and visibility, there are also then benefits of networking and collaboration.
- How can minority communities feel that their craft is valued if it is not collected and exhibited in museums, etc? It needs to be seen. How can they be encouraged to engage?
- Exhibitions tied to ratification will give a focus.
- Individual tutors in prisons and college courses need to be contacted rather than those in charge for more effective transmission.
- Heritage is about 'inheritance' and is not backward looking but focusing on the next generation and passing on skills. It is not preservation.
- A system similar to telephone trees in schools could be used to obtain grassroots information of ICH.
- ICH was mentioned by the Earl of Clancarty and Baroness Garden in Lord Bragg's debate on the arts earlier in the month.
- What effect will UK ratification have on the remaining 10 countries who have not yet signed up? The UK will be a role model for them and probably encourage some of them to follow.
- It would be good to see an increase in courses on ICH in universities and a diversion of funding from tangible. Tangible cultural heritage is already there but there's not enough ICH.
- A big celebration/conference/colloquium with all aspects of ICH and practical demonstrations/examples would be a wonderful way of celebrating ratification and spreading the word about this amazing first step. An adjournment debate where MPs could identify the ICH in their own constituencies could also be considered.
- Thanks to all the Officers of the APPG who have asked questions and kept this issue front of mind, and particularly to Sir John Hayes who has had meetings with every SoS to encourage each one to ratify. Special thanks to Lord Parkinson for making it happen.

4. Professor Mairéad Nic Craith: *Professor of Public Folklore, Institute for Northern Studies, University of the Highlands and Islands*

Mairéad began by congratulating all those involved in ensuring that ratification was going to happen. She outlined a number of important points:

- This is a movement for ordinary citizens and grassroots and will lead to networking and collaboration between different practices and different sectors including tourism, education etc. It also gives the UK an opportunity not only to participate but also to lead, especially with diversity and heritage of minorities.
- Some don't realise that they're part of ICH, how can they be persuaded to participate.
- Reaching out is important especially to care homes, prisons, minority groups, etc.
- There are potential problems when communities and practices don't agree. Some also won't want to get involved, how are they persuaded, and should they be?
- This is a process for everyone, not just experts, and the language used needs to be carefully selected to ensure inclusivity.
- Ethical issues need also to be taken into account.
- Delaying listing is a good idea, but there are three lists, and they include one for practices in need of urgent safeguarding and also one for good practice.

5. **Daniel Carpenter:** *Heritage Crafts*

Daniel congratulated all concerned in ICH ratification and explained that Heritage Crafts had been advocating for this for 14 years. Heritage Crafts started as a tiny organisation with one part-time administrator, it now has five part-time staff funded solely through membership and philanthropy. In the last few weeks the organisation has received a significant grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund which will help it grow further. Heritage Crafts was the first UNESCO-recognised UK-wide Accredited NGO for traditional craftsmanship, and has from its formation been supporting vernacular skills and knowledge throughout the UK. The organisation has already created an inventory of traditional craft skills (one of the five ICH domains) – The Red List of Endangered Crafts. The fourth edition was published in May 2023, listing 259 crafts, of which 62 are critically endangered, 84 endangered and 112 currently viable (but not necessarily secure). Equity and inclusion are at the top of the organisational values, with a lack of diversity seen as a strategic risk; it does, though, provide Heritage Crafts with a key opportunity to reach more people and generate longer term sustainability. Reaching out to Gypsy, Roma and traveller communities has enabled their crafts to be included. Since 2019, 66 endangered crafts have been supported through the Endangered Crafts Fund, from sail making, to making bagpipes, to flint walling. Tin smithing and wooden boat building have received special focus and as a result there are now more practitioners. People are much more interested and concerned when there is endangerment and the craft is on the verge of being lost. Other countries have used Heritage Craft's methodology to create their own lists. The amount of publicity engendered by the Red List reflects elements of nostalgia but also a strong interest crafts and a more general concern for ICH.

6. **AOB**

DC announced that Heritage Crafts were working on introducing the craft skills of cricket back making back to the UK. It's early days but there is hope!