



The Art Workers' Guild

Proceedings and Notes – No. 37 – January 2023





On Sunday 30 October the Art Workers' Guild was full of 'the sound of busy' as the Halloween Jolly Jamboree got into full swing. Thanks to the generosity and professionalism of two of our members, Hannah Coulson and Rachel Warr, the assembled company (youngest not yet two, oldest rather more advanced in years!) was engaged in and with the process of making and doing. There were magic exchanges between two small boys as their shadow puppets came to life on the screen. There was the focused concentration and amazed delight of a girl who, when shown how to adjust her hold on a pair of scissors, found that cutting became easier and more fluid. Everyone made something and those 'somethings' produced the brightest of smiles. Faces were alight with concentration and joy. A potent and uplifting mixture for adults and children alike.

Unalloyed pleasure in using our hands and eyes just for fun with no expectation of an examination or certification is precious and rare these days. It should be cherished and encouraged whenever and wherever possible.

Cover Image: Nicholas Hughes

Above left: Rachael Matthews and Bing

Above right: The Halloween Jolly Jamboree

Deep contentment runs like a river through our hall when we are assembled. We are fortunate indeed to be a band of architects, makers, artists, craftsmen, curators and art historians. We have been blessed, filling our lives with art. To know how it feels to hammer, shape and chase metal, carve wood and stone, wield hot glass, weave and stitch fabrics, and draw a pencil, brush or pen across paper or canvas. To feel the joy of creativity. That is not to say that what we embarked upon – in many cases more years ago that we are prepared to admit – has been easy. Dedication, frustration, practise and thin bank accounts all feature too, but we are lucky. Lucky not only in our chosen careers but also in the fellowship we find here at the Guild.

To have the chance to share our skills and our home, to reach out to others, young and old who would like to taste the delight of it all is a huge privilege and one I believe the Guild should indulge in as often as possible. Making things brings us together, and in coming together we make a community. Sharing the pleasure manifestly magnifies it. Often, we get so much more back than we give out.

Master Tracey Sheppard



The Master at work in her first studio

13 January 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

Master's Night – Getting to the root of things
MASTER TRACEY SHEPPARD

The year's first talk is different from those through the rest of the year. Guild members are keen to know who will be at the helm, and what the flavour of the year will be. Tracey Sheppard, 2022's Master, delivered one of the best opening talks in recent years; not just for conveying, with such a light touch, the depth of her knowledge of her craft and what it is to be a maker, but for her quietly impassioned message of what the Guild means to her, and what makes it important, setting the scene for the year ahead.

She grew up in a jolly-looking family of keen do-ers and makers, all four children keen followers of Blue Peter (and all apparently puzzled by the quantity of old tights that Valerie Singleton's mother no longer needed), and constantly drawing, painting and making. Her much-loved grandmother nurtured in Tracey the art of close noticing, teaching her the names and habits of wildflowers and birds to be seen on the local common. Tracey's deployment of flowers and birds in her designs is never trivial. Throughout her talk images of current work were shown to illustrate how deeply rooted these early influences have been;

drawing and observation is at the root of all her work. The plants in her garden are carefully chosen for their drawability.

Every day at school Tracey encountered a huge mural depicting the school building, painted by teacher Rena Gardiner (who went on to set up her own private press, print lithographs and hand make, now highly collectible, books for the National Trust). Tracey felt this sowed the seed of her liking for playing with perspective (this point illustrated by a bowl with interlocking/shifting views of Coletton Fishacre). And later, at art school, a perceptive tutor steered her towards an evening class where PM Josephine Harris taught glass engraving. After working on a trail of ivy around her first glass goblet, Tracey asked whether Josephine thought she could make a go of it – to which Josephine, the great encourager, just said – 'Jump!'

Using many astonishing images of her work, Tracey talked us through the huge range of tools and techniques needed to conjure line, and texture, and subtle variations of light from a surface. Deciding which tool or technique will best produce which texture is, she said, an extension of the all-important drawing process that underpins all her work – 'drawing as thinking'. But she said, 'glass does things *for you*' – the shifting viewpoints seen through a glass bowl taking the mixed perspectives above and beyond the original drawings.



Screen by Master Tracey Sheppard, St Lawrence Church, Winchester. Image – Nick Carter

Much of her work is for commissions, and for this she taught herself lettering, developing her own fluid style, initially under the guidance of the formidable Madeleine Dinkel. 'Lettering involves shape, relationship, balance, and space; just like drawing'. As her reputation grew, she took on larger scale work, enjoying the discipline of designing for a space. Dealing with huge doors or screens or windows involves some hair-raising processes – images of floors eroded by acid, gruesome quantities of solidified chip fat (used to barricade against escaping acid), and heavy machinery, drew gasps from the audience.

The list of commissions is long and distinguished, including numerous churches and cathedrals, the Eden Project, Downing Street, Castle Howard, Chelsea Physic Garden, and (a favourite for this writer) a marvellous panel for Hyde Abbey, where skateboarding lads-turned-angels, sprouting not the weighty wings of Victorian angels but buzzing, jet-engine-y, whoosh-y wings, zip around the lettering from the skate-park's graffiti – 'Bless this Mess', 'Dear God', 'Alleluia'.

Earlier, members had shown their gratitude to Past Master Alan Powers for steering us through the past two years with such care and good humour. The new Master, with such wide sympathies and curiosity, has planned

a brilliant programme for 2022, so again they feel the Guild is in good hands.

PM Prue Cooper

27 January 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

The hows and the whys and the wows and the highs of modern illustration practice
HANNAH COULSON, ZEBEDEE HELM
AND RUTH MARTIN

Three illustrators revealed how they follow their creative threads from tiny beginnings to finished works.

Hannah began by telling us of the key elements of her practice: illustrating picture books for younger readers and shapes, colour and patterns, and the combinations thereof. How this came about was hard won, with some years of struggle and frustration ended by a breakthrough moment at the V&A Museum, drawing silhouettes of sculptures and cutting them out to become shapes and then utilising Photoshop to organise them. This use of collage and cutouts, which she initially thought she was doing just for herself, has become the cornerstone of how



Top: Flowers – Hannah Coulson

Middle left: Fortnum & Mason, *Time for Tea* book, written by Tom Parker Bowles – Zebedee Helm

Middle right: *This is completely unacceptable* – Zebedee Helm

Bottom left: *String* – Ruth Martin

Bottom right: *In the Artists' Aquarium* – Ruth Martin

she works. It is also flexible: it can be scaled up effectively for display purposes, incorporate 3D and texts, and has provided her with a wonderful resource of shapes and designs, which she uses for ideas, to submit roughs and to banish any anxiety of the tyranny of the blank white page.

Zebedee took us through his journey from the isolated life of a 'fine' artist to his work as an illustrator; the finesse often required when dealing with those who commission him, and his use of the versatility of Photoshop to ensure that the tweaking/rework requested by some clients doesn't involve him spending a ruinous length of time on changes. He then focused on a favourite commission – *Time for Tea*, an illustrated book published by Fortnum & Mason; taking us through the rough drawings submitted to 'win' the job, followed by him building up the illustrations using layers of watercolour, gouache, collage and ink line drawings. He also showed us how his illustrations were scaled up to decorate the windows and the store – a dream commission, indeed.

Ruth makes artists' books, paper games and cards, and spoke mainly about artists' books. Nearly all of these are made using hand carved rubber stamps. She demonstrated the technique of cutting and the satisfaction of repurposing the erasers for an alternative use. A key point of difference from both Hannah and Zebedee is that the books are not commissioned but arise from her own ideas and she prefers to retain control over the whole process, including the printing and the quirky and ingenious packaging – the history of packaging design being a great source of interest and inspiration. Her sketchbooks are as much notebooks as sketchbooks – ideas and phrases being as key as the images. Inspiration comes from everywhere and anywhere – from visiting a fish and chip shop on holiday to broken biscuits and puns on pins; everything done with a sense of fun.

The speakers gave us three fascinating insights into how and why they create, with plenty of wows and highs along the way. The images were especially excellent and the evening (recorded) would surely be instructive to anyone studying or working in illustration.

Neil Jennings

10 February 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

Touching the Landscape
KIM WILKIE

Kim Wilkie spent the first seven years of his life in Malaysia before being sent to school in England. From an early age he was fascinated by mud and the feel of earth

in his hands and how the Earth's landscapes have been shaped by water. He showed photos of Eggardon Hill in Dorset and particularly beautiful images of ancient ridge & furrow 'corduroy pattern' landscapes when the sun was low and the shadows strong.

He spoke of long barrows, which were burial mounds, citing West Kennet and Silbury Hill and a burial mound in Richmond Park known as King Henry's Mound as Henry VIII climbed it to see a signal that his latest wife had died so he was free to remarry. Sculpting the earth has been very much a British tradition since the Bronze Age.

He showed photos of Studley Royal and Claremont as illustrations of later man-made landscapes, and paintings by Samuel Palmer and Graham Sutherland. He regretted that we are becoming dislocated from the landscape. Formerly hay meadows, water meadows and coppicing all encouraged a diversity of flora and insects. He tries to encourage wildlife in his own kitchen garden in Hampshire, alongside a meadow full of Longhorn cattle.

In recent years he has been working on the Duke of Buccleuch's estate at Boughton in Northamptonshire and he showed plans from 1729 drawn up by Charles Bridgeman with canals and clumps of trees. There was an early 18th century mound, which Kim echoed by creating an inverted pyramid of the same dimensions, 7 metres deep, representing Olympus and Hades and the underworld. At the bottom of the inverted pyramid there are no sounds even of wind and it is possible to have concerts down there at water level.

Another recent project is Heveningham Hall in Suffolk, where the landscape was planned by 'Capability' Brown, who died before work could begin. Kim was able to create the landscape that Brown had planned to start with the major work of dredging the silted up lake. The fields had long been planted with oilseed rape, which was removed and animals now graze there, right up to beside the house. The removal of oilseed rape has encouraged the return of wildlife, including breeding owls. Above the house is a walled kitchen garden, which took light from the house, so Kim Wilkie changed the landscape by creating a series of terraces and mounds with radiating avenues. Oaks and lime trees have been planted.

He then showed examples of urban spaces where he has worked: the Vitsoe Furniture Factory at Leamington Spa, where he created mounds of wildflowers to break a monotonous flat space; the City of London Cemetery, which is still used so burial mounds needed to be created; Hyde Abbey Garden in Winchester, where Alfred the Great was buried, but it had become a car park and is now a friendly park enjoyed by people of all ages. He also



Kim Wilkie's redesign of the gardens at Boughton House



Wild flowers growing on the banks of the terrace

restored the water meadows of Shawford Park on the river Itchen. It is of prime importance that people are involved with the creation of these spaces and use and enjoy them.

In London, he redesigned the layout of the island at Hyde Park Corner to make it more user-friendly for the pedestrians and cyclists who are crossing it to go between Hyde Park and Green Park and The Mall.

He also created the courtyard at the Victoria and Albert Museum with a pond that can be drained to accommodate a stage for performances. The water is stored so that it can be pumped back.

Two other gardens where he has worked are Villa La Pietra, the former home of Sir Harold Acton on the edge of Florence, and Great Fosters Hotel at Egham, near Heathrow.

Following the talk, the first to ask a question was the Master (Tracey Sheppard), who wondered whether landscape gardening had 'turned the corner' and how optimistic Kim was about the future. He said that the integration of animals and wildlife was vital but felt that rewilding was not the answer. Nature needs a certain amount of man-management.

PM Sally Pollitzer asked why the voles had come back at Heveningham after the oilseed rape was removed. Wilkie said the voles returned when the oilseed rape was replaced by open pasture, and the owls feed on the voles.

Katharine Coleman expressed the view that with global warming we need to grow our own oil and wondered where oilseed rape could be grown. Kim said that linseed grows well and is visually attractive, unlike oilseed rape. But crops need to be rotated and grazing by cattle encouraged so that petrochemicals are not required.

Nicholas Cooper said that life in the countryside before the industrial revolution was very hard for most country

people, who lived in poverty. The countryside is being reinvented for a romantic urbanised public. Kim thought that life in the countryside in the past was probably better than life in industrial cities. Even subsistence levels of agriculture made a better quality of life and food than contemporary industrialised farming. Land is being acquired worldwide by the Chinese and others to grow flowers rather than local food. Subsistence farmers in earlier times did 'piecework', making things, as another way of earning an income.

Tom Ponsonby

24 February 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

A Sense of Place
HOWARD PHIPPS

Tracey Sheppard knew Howard Phipps' work, but was meeting him for the first time. He was tall at the microphone, and transmitted his love of man-made landscapes, trees, tools and rooms.

Early on in life he tried wood engravings and then concentrated on fine art at Gloucestershire College of Art, and post-graduate at Brighton, and he came back to engraving a bit later in life, when teaching at Plymouth.

His wood engravings are sometimes almost abstract, and work is small, on 4 inch x 3 inch boxwood blocks, on the end grain. Tools were arrayed: ginger coloured, mushroom-shaped wooden handles on chisels, used at a shallow angle, a leather 'cushion', chalk powder, a magnifier and a mirror. White carbon paper with dark lines drawn, and everything always in reverse.



Ox Drove – Howard Phipps

At college he loved buildings and these early inspirations re-appeared. Subjects, with the light and shade of chisel marks, and unengraved spaces, are of hands, timbers of a barn, views from room to room, timber doors, rooms filled with workshop tools and letter-press equipment – one of which was too tall for the cottage, drawn puncturing the ceiling.

An engraver depends on good equipment and after that on a good commercial press – the Whittington Press in Gloucestershire was one of these.

Howard Phipps was offered time to work with a poet and friend, Roland Gant, with time to walk in Wiltshire and Dorset, getting to love the shapes of the landscape, trees drawn over and over again, and in all seasons. From drawings and water colours he then engraved cliff edges, Chesil beach – every pebble given life, Hambledon Hill – the hill fort, drove roads, ploughed lines on hillsides, woodlands and trees. And he draws outdoors, probably for around three to four hours when it is not too cold, or in the shade of a tree on a hot day.

His linocuts had a different feel, with more white space and different lines. He has been asked why not use

photographs, and the answer is clear: by drawing you are observing and remembering and feeling.

About four printing layers give colour – a clear blue insect wing on white, with the next layers of yellow over blue to give greens of plants.

On the screen the 4 inch (10cm) wide blocks are about 3 metres. Tracey Sheppard said the small engravings at the Salisbury Museum in the spring of 2022 were a rewarding delight.

Your writer has compared and enjoyed the work of 25 and more engravers, including that of Past Master Joan Hassall; Howard Phipps' work transmits his love of places, with both bold and subtle lines.

At question-time he described the roundness of tree trunks with no line edge and was asked about the need to leave uncut spaces. Others shared the perils of working in reverse! Working outdoors, he might sense a fox drinking nearby or a rabbit.

His thoughtful talk leads us on to observe.

Juliet Johnson



The west front of Dyrham Park

10 March 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

The National Trust: places, people and passions
WENDY STOTT

Wendy Stott spent some 20 years working for the National Trust and therefore was able to offer personal inside views about this mega-institution, which is currently passing through a difficult period owing to conflicting opinions as to what it should do or be. Stott, however, was straightforwardly informative and wonderfully pragmatic about the management of historic buildings and gardens, while touching on such major issues as how to make money on the one hand, and respecting conservation needs on the other.

She immediately removed the psychological barrier between speaker and audience by admitting that, owing to Covid regulations and the long gap in time since she had addressed a live audience, she was feeling exceptionally nervous. But she managed to rid herself of all anxieties as she ran through her training at Somerset

and then Salisbury colleges of art, and then the disparate jobs she had undertaken before arriving at the National Trust. She seemed to have been ready and able to turn her hand to any task, took a break for a year in Australia, and returned to pick up further skills and finally ran a graphic design business for 12 years. She did pick up a master's degree in design management en route, but one got the impression that what gained her a job with the NT was probably her indomitable spirit.

She then talked about the foundation of the Trust in 1895 by Octavia Hill and others. The central belief behind its creation was that access to nature, open spaces and beauty is a basic human need, providing 'essential refreshment'. This central idea, she told us, is 'that beautiful natural and historic places matter for our spirit, our well-being and our relationships – [it] is the very reason the Trust exists – for everyone forever'. In addition, acts of parliament in the early 1900s gave the organisation 'inalienable' rights to their purchases of land and property, which means they can never be sold or taken away from, even by the government. It was also helpful to be reminded about the

sources of funding for the NT, which is one of the UK's 10 largest charities.

The main body of her talk was about her work as property manager for the operational side of the Trust. She began this work at Dyrham Park, outside Bath, then moved on to Horton Court, still in Gloucestershire, one of the oldest inhabited houses in the Trust's possession. It comes with several tenanted cottages and 100 acres of land. Here and elsewhere, as general manager of property she would hold regular meetings with the head gardener, the collections and house manager, the retail and catering manager and the head ranger, all of whom had teams of people under them as well as access to outside specialists. In addition, there might be some 200 volunteers on the books, and issues such as how much car parking do you allow for and where is the best place to site the café were always a major consideration.

Ensuring that a property looks clean and tidy is something we all do, Stott remarked. But few of us need to check that the deer are being looked after or that the dry-stone walls on the edge of our estates are holding up. Suddenly it became clear that all the various and sometimes basic tasks she had undertaken in her early career had left her very well prepared for the managerial NT job she fulfilled – with all its complexity, need for practical thinking as well as diplomacy, and willingness to take on wide-ranging responsibilities. The insights gifted us left the audience eager for more and questions came thick and fast, from Jane Dorner, Nicholas Cooper, Past Master David Birch and others.

Frances Spalding

24 March 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

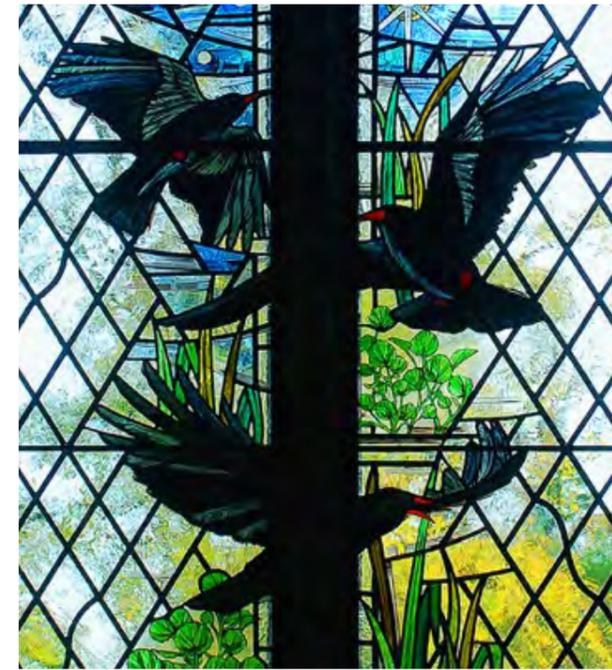
Old craft, new art: an artistic journey
HELEN WHITTAKER

Brother Helen Whittaker described her journey, her Yorkshire background and her interest in art in the widest sense of the word, and she revealed that she had been especially intrigued by the idea of stained glass as an 'architectural art'. As a student, she had fallen in love with Early Renaissance art, enjoying the strong story line used by painters in those days. Giotto was her special favourite! She also admired the American pop painter Roy Lichtenstein, who had such a fund of contemporary tales to tell the world. Helen's own art education had begun with a BA in glass and ceramics at the University of Sunderland and continued with a scholarship at the Prince's Foundation School of Traditional Arts in



Above: *Virgin and Child*, detail from the 'Jesse' window – St Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny

Opposite: *Heaven and Earth* - detail from the 'Thomas Becket' window for St Thomas' Church, Greatford



London. That she had chosen this path was due to the advice of her friend and mentor, the renowned author and philosopher Keith Critchlow.

Helen enhanced her studies with a travelling scholarship, spending holiday time visiting the great centres of stained-glass work in Europe and the UK, especially including Chartres Cathedral and its superb medieval glass. Inspired by these wonderful examples of early glass, she was determined to learn more about the practicalities of the subject, working with Patrick Reyntiens on his new commissions and doing 'work experience' with Keith Barley in York. At that time, Barley was engaged in working on the restoration of the magnificent medieval stained-glass series of windows in St Mary's Church in Fairford, Gloucestershire.

Helen described her own amazement at the liveliness of the painted work, created so long ago, adding that she had felt there a strong desire to 'bring back the narrative' to stained-glass making. This was an approach that was shared by Barley and she joined his studio in 1998. From this period onwards, she designed and worked on windows being made by the studio for different buildings, including Worksop Priory and Beverley Minster. She described her own approach, which inevitably varied according to the site and its uses, as well as the input of ideas from those using the buildings.

The Sheffield-born Yorkshire artist and sculptor Harold Gosney (b. 1937) was a considerable influence at that time and his approach enabled her to radically rethink a wider range of references for her work. She began experimenting with the inclusion of geometric and figurative elements, moving seamlessly through

shifts of scale. 'I went bold,' she said, while continuing to reference the patterns of lead-line, existing already in other parts of the building.

Helen went on to describe her passion for colour, revealing that she had used a 'fantastic array of varied glass' for her windows in St Brandon's Church in Brancepeth, Durham, and she mentioned several other windows in this context, including the lively scenes designed for a window in the RAF Club in London and her excitement at being able to create a 'processional way, with a 14th century feel' for Ely Cathedral. She observed that she had also learnt about new ways of painting from the lively American glass artist Narcissus Quagliata, whose experiments had enabled an entirely new approach to glass painting, freeing the craft from the restrictions of accepted practice. Helen used her new knowledge in her next series of windows, including the series for All Saints Church, Hovingham, besides working on a number of enjoyable smaller scale domestic pieces.

By this time, the team at Barley Studios had expanded, taking on international work, with a project in Manila (Lily Chapel). The team were also approached by Westminster Abbey to create stained glass for the two windows flanking Alan Younger's completed central window in the Henry VII Chapel. This time, Helen would be working to a design created by the Royal Academician Hughie O'Donoghue. The success of this window undoubtedly led to the amazing commission to work with David Hockney on *The Queen's Window*, new stained glass to celebrate her reign, designed to welcome visitors to the Abbey.

This had been an exciting journey for us all, especially those whose knowledge of stained glass in Yorkshire had been somewhat limited! Helen's response to questions revealed her enjoyment of the many ideas brought into the creative situation by the client and she was perceptive enough to add that church authorities themselves could also be very helpful. She spoke of her enjoyment in painting on glass, although she wasn't interested in 'painting' as a subject per se. She observed that Hockney's desire to use flat planes of colour in the Queen's window had been 'slightly problematic' and she also told us about the difficulties of obtaining glass needed for each commission ... mentioning her firm's own preference for English Antique, St Just and Lamberts.

Questions included a comment by the Master, 'Blimey, I knew she was good ...', with extra applause from those present and several comments and questions, including additional information about Keith Critchlow (1933-2020), whose early advice had been so helpful.

Caroline Swash

The Black Artisans
JO SEALY

Jo Sealy began this fascinating, much awaited talk by describing her very varied career in marketing and communications, including copywriting as well as a period working in radio and television, together with a secondary career as a business adviser with a particular focus on small creative businesses.

These activities had brought her in touch with the creative individuals. She explained that she herself was not an artist – although she has studied photography – but that she has inevitably worked with creative people. In the aftermath of the death of George Floyd she began to wonder about the invisibility of the black community and began to think specifically about black makers and artisans.

She explained that one of her big concerns was education and opportunity – with little making being taught in schools and few role models for young people to emulate. She was also concerned at the lack of business training in schools. She was given funding for the project *The Black Artisans* (which resulted in the exhibition of photographs that opened at the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow) in which she hoped to raise the profile of black makers and artists. She worked together with the Heritage Crafts Association, which already has the craft of steel pan making and tuning on its red list of endangered crafts.

Jo visited studios all over the UK for the project, photographing makers in their workshops and recording them talking about their lives. She felt that she had come across a huge amount of overlooked talent. So far, she has recorded 26 makers, choosing six to discuss this evening.

She made initial contact with Jay Blades MBE, the furniture maker, eco-designer and broadcaster, who has done so much in the community to teach skills and offer hope to young people. He gave the project his support from the start.

The first black artisan she spoke about was Chris Bramble, the respected ceramicist and sculptor. She was struck by his meditative approach to his work, bringing together European and African traditions. She described his background, his training at Glasgow School of Art and the way he shares his studio with his students. She felt he was somewhat under the radar, although his daughter Freya Bramble-Carter is well known on social media and *The Great Pottery Throw Down*. One of Jo's



Chris Bramble. Image – Jo Sealy

goals is to highlight the careers of rather older makers who are less connected via social media.

She then spoke about Doreen Gittens of Archipelago Textiles, whose workshop is based in the Oxo Tower, where she has worked for 25 years. Jo was awestruck by the size of Gittens' loom and by the timeless beauty of her weaving, photographing her drafting a weave. Jo made the point that Doreen had had an earlier career and that her story was inspirational, as was the location of her studio overlooking the Thames.

She then discussed the career of David 'Satch' Botwe, a French horn repairer who now runs his own business Satch Brass Consultants Ltd in Southwark after working for Paxman Musical Instruments Ltd for 17 years. She photographed him in his workshop, but also wanted to share his life story. As a schoolboy Satch joined the Compton Swing Collection as a trumpeter. This was an unusual school band that ended up working with stars like Stéphane Grappelli and Cilla Black. He subsequently took an instrument repair course at Morden when he realised he would not make it as a professional musician. He reaches out to young people, giving talks in schools and communicating a life of expertise.

Her fourth artisan was the jeweller Melanie Eddy, whose career embraces sculptural jewellery and various aspects of the jewellery trade from design and manufacture through to critical writing and facilitating

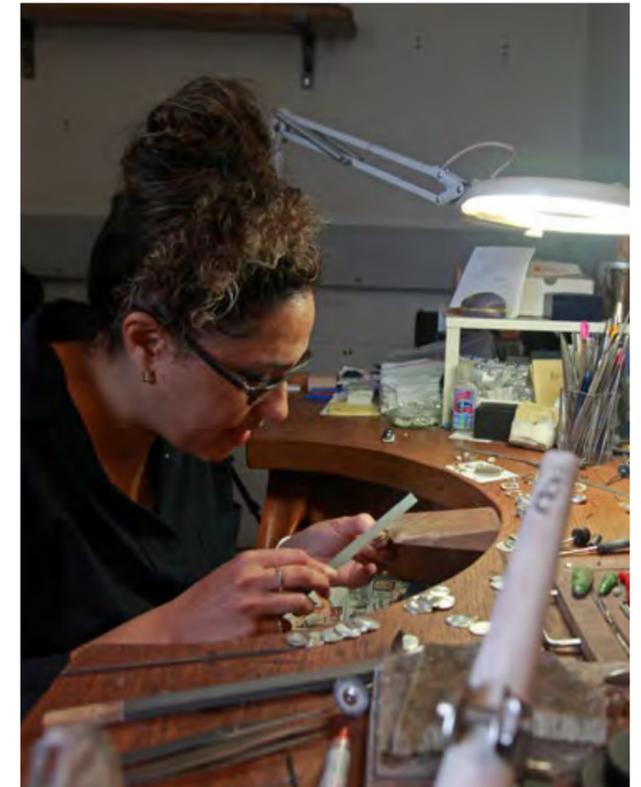


David Botwe. Image – Jo Sealy

creative and professional development. Melanie does research, writing, editorial work, teaching, exhibition installation and facilitating professional development. She has undertaken contracts with institutions and corporations as varied as Swarovski, Transitions Optical, the Victoria & Albert Museum, Central Saint Martins, The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths and the British Council, when she undertook a two-month applied arts creative residency in the autumn of 2010 at Turquoise Mountain's Institute for Afghan Arts and Architecture in Kabul, Afghanistan. Jo was struck by the beauty of her workshop and the inspirational objects with which Melanie chose to surround herself.

Jo then described a hot day photographing the famous West African musician Moussa Dembele, a *griot* (a traditional storyteller and oral historian) from Burkina Faso, on the top floor of a block of flats in South London. She showed him repairing a *balafon*, one of the many instruments he plays with his band, Koroleko. She spoke of his commitment to music and his belief that his instruments had agency and were in some sense alive.

Her final artisan was Ray Clarke, a former fashion designer who found his metier retraining in 2009 as an upholsterer at London Metropolitan University, moving into a large workshop in 2015 as Atelier Ray Clarke. Again, Jo was struck by the busy calm of his studio, the machines, the tools, the fabrics and huge variety of pieces



Melanie Eddy. Image – Jo Sealy

of furniture awaiting his skills, which encompass modern and traditional furniture.

Jo ended her talk by pointing out that there were many more individuals she was hoping to record and photograph. She tantalisingly mentioned some she had already recorded, such as the leather bag designer Dolores Swift of Neoma Design in Brighton, the steel pan tuner Dudley Dickson, inventor of collapsible stages and steelpan stands and founder of the UK Steelpan Tuners Guild, and the tuner Toussaint Clarke from Bath, a key member of the Rainbow Steel Orchestra. She also mentioned Paul Tucker, part of the collective Image 17, who contributed much to the *Black Artisans* project.

There were many questions, beginning with the Master asking if Jo herself found that she wanted to practise a craft as a result of the project. Jo spoke eloquently of her admiration for the individuals she had met and the importance of introducing craft into schools and the need for access, so that young people could realise all the skills out there and be able to find role models. She saw all the figures in the *Black Artisan* project as ambassadors and explained that the exhibition *The Black Artisans* was still touring. However, the project was not complete, and her goal was to record and photograph 100 artisans. Her fascinating talk was warmly applauded.

Tanya Harrod



Art Barn. Image – Jim Stephenson

28 April 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

Art Barn: an artistic collaboration in slow architecture
PETER RANDALL-PAGE RA
AND THOMAS RANDALL-PAGE

The evening's lecture was given jointly by Peter Randall-Page, a sculptor, and his son Thomas, an architect, about the barn that Thomas designed and built for his father. It was a fascinating account of an artist acting as client for his own building, of an architect engaged in a close artistic collaboration with his client, and in the benefits of a slow gestation.

Peter introduced his work by reference to his move to Devon, after studying at art school in London, living in rural seclusion close to nature. A commission from Common Ground led to a lifetime's fascination with working the surface of found stones in the landscape, bearing the memory of their natural form, and investing them with further layers of texture and significance. (I

can vouch for this from personal experience as cathedral architect at Southwark, where Peter carved a boulder from Massachusetts as a memorial to a Mohegan chief who died in the reign of George III). He showed some of his more architectural projects, a granite basin on the Royal Mile, a carved granite stone in the Oval, and a wonderful forthcoming project of an enormous carved granite egg to be installed as part of Grimshaw's continuing work at the Eden Project, illustrative of birth and renewal, and of the circle of life.

In 2011 Peter bought a nondescript modern cow barn deep in the Devon countryside and commissioned his architect son Thomas to convert it into an archive and store for his work. It is a place where he can display his work and meet potential clients, and a place where he can think about forthcoming projects away from the creative chaos of his studio. In particular, he wished to sort out his papers in a catalogued archive collection, to avoid putting the onus for this task onto his heirs. To achieve all this, he worked with Thomas over a nine-year period, allowing careful reflection on all aspects of the design

before they were implemented. The project is finally complete, and is clear evidence of how architecture can benefit from being done slowly.

The conversion is at one level simple and straightforward, but the way it has been done is full of subtle artistry, employing the qualities of natural materials in the round and an almost Japanese quality of natural light. The main move was to arrange the floor of the barn on two levels, with the archive and pieces of sculpture at the upper level, and a lower level allowing the sculpture to be viewed from a low viewpoint. The wall is a tour de force, painstakingly constructed from interlocking large and small stones from a redundant quarry, inspired by the famous Inca walls. The main steps between the levels are heavyweight granite monoliths, but there is also a contrasting set of lightweight steps constructed of triangulated steel rods, so light that they can be moved by one person.

The space for 'uncluttered headspace and serenity' was inspired by the wonderful painting by Antonello da Messina of St Jerome (and his lion) in his study or *studiolo*, a wonderfully evocative freestanding piece of furniture for private study and contemplation. It is supported on four timber legs and clad in cork, overlooking the studio and the landscape via a balcony. This is counterweighted so that it can be secured shut, and the balletic opening and closing of the balcony and its handrail, and of the perimeter shutters at ground level, provides a ritual element to the opening of the barn in the morning and its closing at night.

There is an effective strategy for lowering the carbon footprint of the barn by zoning the spaces. The sculpture display area is unheated, depending on the environmental filter of the external envelope of the barn, as is the archive storage, which has dehumidification to maintain the right environmental conditions. Only the tetrapod study is highly insulated and heated by means of a wood-burning stove.

The barn is a fine illustration of the benefits that can derive from a lengthy gestation, with the opportunity to reconsider and refine the approach, aided by the close rapport between father and son, artist and architect, and the building team, consisting of Peter's assistants in the sculpture studio. Sadly, this is all too rare in today's architectural scene. Nevertheless, I am pleased to note that the reuse of old buildings, of which this is such a fine example, is now becoming a respectable branch of architecture on account of their embodied carbon, and the stimulus to invention that they represent is at last beginning to be recognised.

Richard Griffiths

12 May 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

Time, place and techniques: a journey in lettering –
GED PALMER

Ged Palmer took to the stage wearing a smart workman's jacket emblazoned on the back with 'Luminor Sign Co.' – telling us, before he spoke a single word, that for all his artistry what he did was a job of work, a theme he returned to throughout his illuminating talk.

After a short showreel displaying his work and process, he explained the importance of graffiti to his teenage self growing up in rural Oxfordshire. How he kept a 'black book' full of designs and 'tags' that he constantly experimented with. These books would be shared among his contemporaries. He described it as his 'moving portfolio'. In one sitting he would fill a whole sketchbook with up to 70 tag designs on each page, creating literally 1,000s of images. This energy and enthusiasm was the foundation for his passion for creating letter shapes. His tag pseudonym was the appropriately zen-like 'Jedi'.

Ged gave us a rudimentary introduction to graffiti art by showing excerpts from the film *Style Wars*, an expose on the New York graffiti scene of the early 1980s. At one point the narrator explained how 'graffiti writing in New York is a vocation, its traditions are handed down from one generation to the next'. This statement preceded what Ged later related about the rituals involved in lettering: the importance of preparation, the attention to detail, the tradition of being taught by elders and then in turn passing on what you have learned.

Ged showed us details from his blog, *A Journey in Typography*, and explained to us how whilst travelling in North and South America he discovered signage that was neither type, calligraphy nor graffiti but something else, an art form of its own making but at the same time taking something from each discipline.

After thoroughly describing and differentiating the separate disciplines of the process in making letters – calligraphy, lettering, typefaces, typography, signwriting and graffiti – Ged spoke passionately about examples within these genres from which he took inspiration. He showed us the importance of posture and regulated breathing, as illustrated in the work stance of the calligrapher Paul Antonio, which helped him create a perfect stroke in one single gesture. He also showed us incredibly complex gilding work by Dave Smith aka 'The Goldfather' that was stunning, and you could hear in the tone of Brother Ged's voice how he still got excited when he sees Johnston's London Transport typeface on the front of a number 8 bus.



But it was when Brother Ged spoke of his own introduction to the art of enamel sign writing that the passion for his craft shone through. Describing when he had to outline a 'G' on his first day, he remembered that 'it was just so exciting that you could pull a line that looked that crisp on a half circle, rolling the brush in your fingers as you turned the corner to guide it'. He was, as he put it, 'Mind blown!'

He attempted to explain the unexplainable in describing how to paint the perfect 'O'; it has to be slightly wrong to look right, imperfect perfection.

Ged told us that he would describe himself as a letter artist rather than a signwriter and sees his work not as 'Art' but as a service to a client, a working process where he is committed to providing his best answer to the customer's needs.

Rob Ryan

26 May 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

The Impact of Glass
ANDY McCONNELL

Andy McConnell arrived hotfoot from Chelsea after a day spent presenting art glass at the Flower Show in his role as an ambassador for glass in the UN International Year of Glass 2022. Still panting after his journey, he launched into a lively, superbly illustrated and instructive lecture on the impact of glass on the world throughout history, from early man to the space age.

Andy explained that he first got into glass as a rock & roll journalist in the 1970s. He was touring Germany with Jefferson Airplane when, by chance, he met the antique dealer Günter Kramm. Kramm introduced Andy to antique glass and they then traded together for 20 years as Andy morphed from being a journalist into a dealer, learning as he went along.

So, what exactly is glass? Glass is made by melting 60-75% sand, 5-12% lime, and soda ash (12-18%) or natural natron, the soda used for making soap since ancient times. The first man-made glass dates from about 3000BC and was probably first used as cutting blades, then as beads. Enamels were developed in Egypt by 1352BC (Tutankhamun) and the first hollow vessels were formed by wrapping molten glass round sticks packed with dung from about 1500BC.

Glassblowing first began around 50BC. By 100AD, with the peace and trade provided by the Roman empire, hollow, blown glass was being made throughout Europe and the Middle East. Following ceramic shapes and styles, glass was formed as practical cups, bottles and containers, some mould-blown and even signed by the maker. But it remained mostly a material used only by the rich. Artworks were also being developed, such the outstanding cameo cutting of the Portland Vase (1st century AD) and later the relief cut Lycurgus Cup in the British Museum (4th century AD) dichroic, depending on whether the light is reflected (green) or transmitted (ruby).

Above: *The Impact of Glass* – Andy McConnell
Opposite: *Mirror elements* – Ged Palmer

With the fall of Rome, glassmaking greatly diminished and Anglo-Saxon glass (500-1000AD) remains rare, few examples surviving intact. Until 1750, most European glass was of poor quality and tainted green from the iron content of the sand.

Meanwhile from 0-1400AD, beautiful glass continued to be made in the Middle East, by the Byzantines, the Sasanians and later the Muslim cultures centred on Damascus. Their repertoire included elegant, enamelled lamps and vases. In fact, 90% of glass history is Middle Eastern! But in 1405 Tamburlaine invaded Syria and the glassmakers fled west to Venice, where their skills were welcomed by the tentative early glassmakers of Murano.

It was a seamless move and Venetian glass was born, typically lightweight, enamelled and containing filigree threads. Glassmaking then gradually spread to Spain, the Tyrol and Bohemia, afterwards to France, the Netherlands and England. Banking and trade between the Netherlands and Venice fostered the new Venetian styles of Dutch glassmaking from the 1590s. By 1650 the Netherlands entered its Golden Age of painting and glassmaking.

Jacopo Verzelini, from Altare in Italy, is generally recognised as 'England's first glassmaker'. After arriving in London from Antwerp in 1571, Verzelini was granted a royal patent to make glass and some 12 pieces of his survive, one in the V&A dated '1586' and another gilded with an Elizabethan royal cypher.

In 1545 Henry VIII's royal flagship, the Mary Rose, sank with only five pieces of glass on board. In 1665 HMS London sank off Southend with hundreds of glass objects on board, testifying to the growth of glassmaking and the use of glass in that century.

The emergence of the robust 'English bottle' from c.1650 transformed Britain's wine and spirits trade by enabling the long-term storage of drinks. This was vital in the days when water was often contaminated and the purity of the most practical alternative, alcoholic beverages, could be more easily judged in a glass.

In 1662 Christopher Merrett's English translation of Antonio Neri's glassmaking textbook, *l'Arte Vetraria*, provided local glassmakers with tried and tested recipes. The resulting rapid development of glass enabled the production of scientific instruments, most notably lenses and mirrors, alongside the humble bottle.

The impact of glass on society and science in the 17th century should not be underestimated. Elsewhere in the world, society was based on ceramics, technologically marooned, still anchored in the Middle Ages.

Glass was the catalyst enabling the West to forge ahead in technology almost alone until the mid-

20th century, when societies outside Europe and North America began to make glass themselves, enabling them to participate in modern science. Glass has transformed architecture with increasingly superior, diverse and large window glass. Almost all the technological developments of the 20th century – in transport, medicine, pharmacy, chemistry, cinema, television, containers, telescopes, telephones, fibre optics and the space age – incorporated glass as a vital component.

Looking forward, the future of the world lies in glass. Yet most of it is now machine-made and handmade glass has returned once more to be an expensive luxury.

After warmly thanking Andy, Master Tracey Sheppard asked him if his home was full of glass. It isn't, but only because Andy's is stored in six railway arches. When asked by Joe Armitage how he had acquired all this knowledge, Andy said it had taken him some 40 years and a keen memory, likening the acquisition to standing on a windy mountain with jigsaw pieces of knowledge flying at him, enabling him to gradually build an ever-expanding picture of glass and its history.

Andy has never claimed to be an expert, more a specialist with knowledge of certain fields, including the social history of glass and glassware, the most important substance ever created by mankind.

Katharine Coleman (with thanks to Andy McConnell)

23 June 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

A House of Curiosities: unpicking the psychology of the collecting bug
SIMON HURST

When the advertised speaker was unable to deliver her lecture due to rail strikes, Simon Hurst stepped in at the last minute to fill the gap. What we heard was a bravura talk, delivered extempore, about an extraordinary collection and how and why Simon has put it together. Many members know Simon as the Guild's Honorary Architect. Not so many will have known the astonishing range of his collections or the motives that have driven him to collect, but what Simon said about what drives him will have rung bells with everyone.

His talk was structured around a virtual tour of his house, discussing the objects that he showed, their sources, and using them to illuminate the collecting mentality. One wonders how he fits everything into his house, but this doesn't bother him – another square inch can always be found. 'You don't need to be able to wander round and swing a cat,' he said. But although one can



The Moroccan Conservatory



Simon Hurst's collection of bottles

always shove things along a shelf until something falls off at the other end, that does not do justice to the meticulous and sensitive way in which all these things are displayed until the sum of their arrangement is as much as its parts. One might initially see Simon's collecting as obsessive, but that would entirely miss the point. He does not collect things for the sake of having complete sets or insisting on original examples; he is happy with a reproduction of the Portland Vase or a Persian oil lamp if their design or their intrinsic interest please him and authentic ones cannot be had. And – another difference from the obsessive accumulator – he knows when to stop.

Common to almost everything in Simon's collection is making connections. The immediate connections are visual: what looks right with what. But just as important for Simon are personal connections with their sources. He claims to remember where he acquired everything. He admits to being a compulsive traveller and recently brought back 70 kilos of acquisitions from Morocco, including several enormous mosque lamps. When he was hauled off a plane from Equador, the police were very disappointed when instead of drugs all that they found beneath the bubblewrap appeared to be stuff from junk shops. He has fascinating things that probably none of his audience knew anything about at all, like charming, traditional, earthenware good-luck models from Peru, which he knew nothing about either until he saw one on a market stall.

But there are also connections of other kinds – between past and present: between people and usages long ago, and more recent employment of the same technologies. There are connections when things from very different cultures are made in similar ways or from similar materials. Tiles are an obvious example: the patterns on tiles from Uzbekistan are of course very different from Victorian tiles from England, but they are all earthenware, flat and

glazed and made for the decoration of built surfaces. There are connections when different solutions meet common problems. A good example of this was Simon's collection of locks and keys, from a huge variety of periods and places and with an extraordinary diversity of approaches and forms, but sharing the universal challenge of security. But connections explain too his often being content with reproductions; objects are valuable to Simon by virtue of the purpose or the aesthetic that they illustrate or the associations they evoke, not necessarily in themselves.

And if this suggests that Simon is a magpie, he is the most knowledgeable and sensitive magpie that ever was. Many collectors are saved the trouble of making judgments by simply getting every example they can of whatever it is they collect. Most people's tastes are culturally restricted: Simon's collections are only filtered through his exceptionally wide knowledge and his curiosity about what he sees, through a disciplined discrimination, and by that indefinable awareness that can only be called 'having a good eye'.

Simon shares with most collectors the thrill of the chase. But a deeper, shared characteristic he explicitly acknowledges is the wish for control. This is not simply control over possessions and experiences (though without that, his house would be the most chaotic accumulation ever seen.) It is a matter of organising how one lives. This ordering does not need to be limiting or prescriptive. Simon seems naturally relaxed about it, but it is a precondition not only of his being a highly successful architect but of needing to work only four days a week so that when he gets up in the morning he can ask himself, free from pressures, 'What am I going to do today?' One feels that Simon is not just in control of his surroundings, but also of his life – which sounds just as interesting.

Nicholas Cooper

New Members Night

Stephen Richards – Landscape architect

Stephen stressed the influence of the landscape of our childhoods and how we project ourselves both on to and into the landscapes we occupy. The origins of landscape design are in ancient gardens, and for the gardens of NEO Bankside Stephen borrowed from the traditions of Japanese gardens: the points of crossing and thresholds. The new Elizabeth line station at Canary Wharf features a roof garden open to all. This evoked the era of discovery and the introduction of plants from all over the world to Britain through the London Docks. Local residents were asked which plants have specific cultural meaning to them, and these were included. Finally, play: Stephen showed us the scheme at Elephant Park, London SE1 – a play-scape open for all, for children to explore, a place for wonderful adventures.

Ruth Guilding – Art historian, design historian

Ruth took us through the journey of her family and career; the choices she might have made and those she did make – working as curator for the Crown Buildings Group at English Heritage, looking after Osborne House; being unexpectedly self-employed, and then academic studies and interests resulting in *Marble Mania*, an exhibition at the Soane Museum in 2006, and a book, *Owning the Past*, 2014. She spent a good deal of time in western Cornwall writing monographs of the St Ives group of artists and co-curated an exhibition with PM Alan Powers on John Betjeman at the Soane Museum in 2006. Ruth became close friends with Past Masters Glynn Boyd Harte and Roderick Gradidge and participated in events in the Hall and she described being here this evening as a sort of homecoming. In 2004, Ruth began writing for *The World of Interiors*, documenting the homes and studios of creative people, including many connected with the Guild, and alongside this she devised the *Bible of British Taste* online magazine.

Tessa Eastman – Ceramic artist

Tessa's studio is at Cockpit Arts, close to the Guild and with a similarly close relationship to it. She studied ceramics at the University of Westminster (2003-06) and at the Royal College of Art (2013-15). Between the two courses she made the *Burning Slices of Death* series, which was featured on the cover of *Ceramic Review* magazine in 2011 with an accompanying exhibition at the Contemporary Applied Arts Gallery in 2012. She showed us two new large works shown at the Collect Art Fair this year and two *Punk Clouds* ceramic works made for the London Art Fair – where the



Crossrail Place Roof Garden – Stephen Richards



A page from Ruth Guilding's *Bible of British Taste*



Punk Clouds, 2022. Glazed stoneware – Tessa Eastman.
Photo – Juliet Sheath

exhibits had to have a connection to music. The following was written about them: *Tintinnabulation runs through the body, conjuring up dynamism, the beat goes on ...*

Kit Stiby Harris – Architect

Kit works in London. He showed us the sculpture he made at art school from spare wood for an art festival he and friends organised in Winchester – portable and carried around and then pointed towards events going on in the city. His final year project at Newcastle University was a design for a Montessori School looking at their principles of learning through play and stacking and attempting to moderate the confliction Kit has between a love of architecture and the destruction that building can sometimes inflict on the landscape and environment. He also showed us examples of his technical exhibition design at the V&A Museum and the conversion of an old ironworks into a Buddhist retreat. The two worlds of conservation and exhibition design have been vying for his affections and he is in love them both.

Eleanor Crow – Painter, illustrator, designer

Graphic design: Eleanor has designed about 1,000 book covers for Faber & Faber, The Folio Society and others. The work is collaborative, often working with other artists and photographers. She is especially interested in working in design in series – variations and repetitions.

Illustration: a 10-year project to paint watercolours of shopfronts was published in 2019 as *Shopfronts of London*. It garnered extensive press coverage, resonating with many fearful of the demise of small shops.

Painting: Eleanor also works as a painter and has been working full time on this recently. She showed us her portrait of PM Phil Abel, which hangs in the Guild. With painting, as in graphic design, there is an interest in variations of themes, whether still life or interiors.

Jane Adam – Jewellery designer

Jane has been making jewellery from anodised aluminium and precious metals for more than 40 years. Anodisation gives a dense colourless surface that absorbs certain dyes, which can then be sealed in – giving wonderful results for jewellery. She has experimented for decades in these industrial methods and materials, which were almost totally ignored when she studied at the RCA in the 1980s. She also showed us more recent work in silver and bimetal using processes new to her, such as soldering, as well as a brooch made in 2021 of aluminium with precious metals – a combination she used to keep separate. Jane doesn't think her work is really finished until it has found an owner and is being worn.

Neil Jennings



Tim Walker *Wonderful Things* at the V&A. Photo – Kit Stiby Harris



Pollarded Trees Pimlico, April Afternoon – Eleanor Crow



Ochre florid brooch, oxidised silver, silver & gold bimetal and anodised aluminium – Jane Adam



Alixe Bovey at a vitreous enamel workshop at West Dean College

29 September 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

*Material Witness: learning from looking,
making and materials in the digital age*
ALIXE BOVEY

Alixe Bovey is a specialist in the art and culture of the later Middle Ages, with particular interest in illuminated manuscripts, pictorial narrative, and the relationship between myth and material culture across historical periods and geographical boundaries. She is Dean and Deputy Director of the Courtauld Institute, and Head of Research.

Alixe founded *Material Witness*, a doctoral training programme for research students in the Consortium for the Humanities and the Arts, to develop critical and practical skills that enable the sophisticated interpretation of material artefacts. Her talk asked what close encounters with objects, materials and the experience of making can teach all of us.

Alixe started with an account of her own attempts at stained-glass making, where blood, sweat and tears were all part of the experience. In an increasingly digital world, she felt that researchers were missing out on the touch,

feel and actual struggle sometimes involved in making, which would lead them to a deeper understanding of the art and craft of their field of research.

She charted the speed of change, from the Gutenberg press and moveable type evolving from 1450 to 1500, which she called a cradle period for significant change. We are now 40 years into a new 50-year cradle from the invention of the internet. In the art world, this had moved from grainy camera film images to the ultra-high-resolution scanning of today.

Back in 2004, Alixe was researching the Tiberius Psalter manuscript c.1050 in the British Library and noted that seeing the actual object revealed so much more than any photo could: the incised setting out marks (blind ruling), texture, even smell. To her it was a life-changing experience.

In more recent years the British Library has uploaded much higher resolution images, but still these only reveal a small proportion of what can be learned from the actual article. Of course, there is a balance between the risk of degradation from mass handling of original items, versus the wider audience that can at least get a knowledge of such objects, even if just on a monitor or tablet screen.

Inspired by a trip to study a tapestry, where the richness of the actual material was so much more

informative than any photo, she was spurred on to launch the Material Witness programme. This covered a wide range of study topics: including photography, textiles, manuscripts, stained glass, stone and many others. Trips to quarries, for example, gave her students a greater understanding of the scale of sculptural and architectural projects. Scale is an attribute that is hard to translate through a digital medium. Smell is even harder: she remarked that Latin and Greek manuscripts smell differently.

Making is another aspect of the programme where some much more profound understanding could be gained by following a master and then attempting to craft a version oneself. Intaglio printing, wood engraving, stained-glass making, and vitreous enamelling have all been areas where academics have learned something deeper through making.

Alixe has a particular passion for drawing and encouraged her PhD students to draw rather than just talk or write about drawing. She showed, for example, some of her fine detailed drawings of weeds.

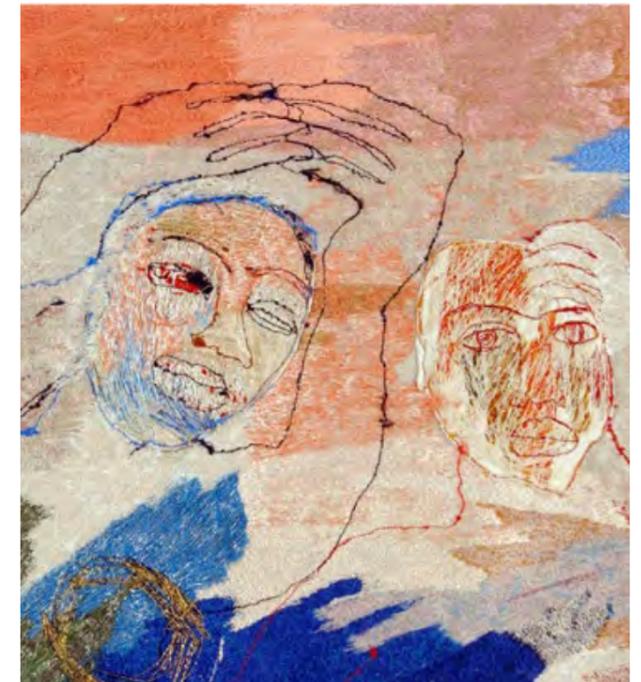
In 2014 the Guild organised the first Material Witness event for her and her students, where Brothers demonstrated many of their skills, and this event was repeated earlier this year.

So, what did we learn? The practical experience of doing helps students understand how historic artefacts are bound by the medium's inherent limitations or freedoms. The act of struggling to replicate an historic crafted object imbues a deep respect for the craftsmanship. Some of these attempts have led to quite comical results; an example was shown of one of her best friend's attempts at a fleur-de-lys enamel plaque, where the central motif was more phallic than floral.

Joy has been a by-product too: the sharing of experiences, drawing together, using one's hands – digital in the original sense. Haptic knowledge is knowledge. Alixe ended with something she knew we all knew: that making is thinking. Although we were aware of this, we enjoyed the journey she had taken us on to get there.

Questions followed. Many Brothers could attest to learning coming from drawing and doing. It was agreed that technology, such as infrared, could reveal things the naked eye could never see, but that there would always be complementary benefits from both digital and physical examination. Alixe ended hoping that in the future, if human beings continue to exist, people would still draw and make. We all applauded in agreement.

Simon Hurst



Detail, *Odyssey* – Alice Kettle

13 October 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

Entangled stories
ALICE KETTLE

Our Master and the speaker got to know each other on the school run. Years later, many friends from the textile world gathered in the Hall to listen.

Alice Kettle is a determined contemporary artist, but drawing on the rich lineage of narrative embroidery she integrates mythology with her personal history. Her threads create a world that can knot the past and present together.

Alice came from a family of seamstresses, going back to great grandparents on both sides. Remnants of Liberty print fabrics seemed to be the centre of family life, and all the cupboards in her childhood home were crammed full of material; many in the Hall murmured in sympathy at this fabulous problem.

When Alice moved to Greece, where she has family, she discovered that making textiles gives us time to search for a feeling of home. A 4m tapestry depicting Odysseus's adventures of self-discovery described themes of faith, endurance and self-renewal. When she lost her home there, Alice felt like Penelope: faithfully weaving and unweaving.

Alice uses the thread on the underside of her sewing machine as the front of the image, meaning that she can't actually see what she is doing when she



Singing Blooms – Alice Kettle

stitches. The chaos of this technique demands that she be fully absorbed; each tapestry is an epic voyage, moving across a sea of drawing, sweeping left to right, searching and storytelling.

Golden Dawn (2014-15) is a tapestry about an unstable and bankrupt Greece, where her family were terrorised by protest. It depicts Odysseus (representing their expelled political leader), taking the golden thread into the labyrinth to confront the Minotaur; the gold reflecting and absorbing light, both magical and useful. Someone in the Hall blurted, ‘Teach Putin to sew!’

Loukanikos the Dog and the Cat’s Cradle showed the stray dogs of Greece on the front line of protests, mediating between power and powerlessness. The dogs are in the centre with three girls playing cat’s cradle, perhaps Alice and her two sisters, or Alice’s three daughters, all making new patterns to make change.

As professor of textile arts at Manchester School of Art, she collaborates with artists of different disciplines, teaches collaboration on a major scale, and uses advanced technology with more than 20 types of sewing machine. A 14m x 5m piece, hanging on the wall of the university, was co-designed by five students and made by Alice in print and stitch. Alice’s daughter started a charity providing legal support for refugees in a Dunkirk camp, prompting Alice to question how textiles could express the patterns

of migration and the powerful narratives her daughter was finding. Alice could offer collaborative sewing projects, but worried about the challenges of ethics, authorship, cultural appropriation and funding. Much time was needed for Alice to gain the trust of the participants, to be completely inclusive, and then design and make with optimism. What emerged were three tapestries showing three sites, connecting trade routes, spaces and people. Alice shared moving stories about her talented participants, describing herself as narrator, opening up conversations, and like a journalist in thread, representing the stories she was told.

The mind-blowingly large *Stitch a Tree* therapy project grew out of this time. Using the tree as a universal symbol, more than 10,000 stitched trees, from all over the world, pay homage to those in trouble, and bring women out of the home and into the public sphere to share their skills. Stitched together, the work resembles a forest, regenerating and correcting itself.

After a career telling difficult life stories, Alice was rejuvenated by her move to Somerset, to a spacious studio with a garden. This peaceful end to a slide show was a good place for a questioner to ask, ‘How did you get from sewing being about dresses to this enormous journey, taking on all the world’s problems?’

Alice generously told us how her mother had given her the gift of thread, and then tragically died in a car crash



Archive of DNA – Louis Thompson. Image – Ester Segarra

on the first week of Alice starting her painting degree. After some broken years painting it was the bond with thread and the need to work within that inheritance that led her to read Bro. Constance Howard’s book on machine embroidery and apply to Goldsmiths. Once there, she knew she would be OK and her journey really began. Bro. Diana Springall, Alice’s former tutor, expressed her amazement at the work, saying that what Alice had brought from the inside to the outside was phenomenal, and unique.

Rachael Matthews

27 October 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

This is only the beginning
LOUIS THOMPSON

Louis Thompson titled his talk ‘This is only the beginning’, and if there is more to come then those of us who appreciate his work – as did everyone in the Hall – are in for a feast. He has, he said, more than a lifetime’s worth of work in his sketchbook. The Master said she was ‘blown away’ by his two sets of 81 pieces shown at Salisbury Cathedral in 2016 and that was

both an appropriate expression to describe the work of a glassblower and summed up the admiration of his skills felt by all. ‘My language is hot glass,’ said Louis as he took us through 35 years of blowing glass, from being a student at North Staffs Polytechnic in the late 1980s to teaching at the Royal College of Art (RCA), Pilchuck Glass School and glass centres in the Czech Republic now.

Louis has spent his working life blowing glass for eight hours a day, training under old-school technicians from Wedgwood in his first job and learning through the fabled 10,000 hours of practice how glass works. He still loves the alchemy, artistry and skill that the material demands, and is transfixed by its magical properties. We saw standard vessels, delicate bubbles that looked like drops of water, collages of screen-printed enamels, vacuum-coated forms that looked like metal, objects playing with the idea of not being able to distinguish the inside from the outside, tall pieces that ought not to have been able to stand up (attached by magnets) and glass with silky or textured surfaces to look like skin. These last were inspired by life-drawing classes that he took some 20 years after his first job, when he was making his own expressive pieces while at the same time working as a jobbing gaffer. This led him to a four-year part-time degree course at the RCA and later to winning the British

Glass Biennale in 2012 and being part of the Jerwood Prize in the same year.

Like many glass artists, Louis is interested in the illusory nature of glass and wants his viewers to be pleasingly confused by what they are presented with. He also wants them to feel the different textures that he has experimented with over the years – and if that means some breakages at exhibition, well, that is the nature of glass. Far more important is the human interaction with the medium. Louis likes to watch how people interact with his work – trying to pull out a stopper that is solidly attached, putting their fingers in confusingly shaped bubbles to see what is glass and what is water, not being quite sure of the materiality of what they are looking at. One such is *Sigmund Freud's Dream-catching Apparatus c.1910* made for the Sigmund Freud Museum in 2009, which is both technically brilliant and conceptually exciting; we are looking at the idea of distilling dreams in fictitious bottles with connecting tubes hinting at future analysis.

The idea of analysis gives rise to investigating human interactions in series of objects: a row of white glass objects with differently shaped red interiors; a sequence of variously constructed recycled glass and plastic objects with eco overtones; 81 coloured bottles to express the 81 statues of saints on the frontage of Salisbury Cathedral. The point of such variation on a theme is to highlight the production-line training of the industrial glass-blower's lot – no longer existing in this country – and to show how one learns by repetition that functional objects can also stretch the imagination and play games with interior and exterior space.

For many years now, Louis has been doing his own work at a hot-glass studio in Wiltshire or his own workshop for three days a week and making Bro. Peter Layton's design pieces for two days at the glassworks in Bermondsey (where everyone can come to watch). Louis also fabricates work to other people's design and enjoys the synergy of working together to jointly author new work. During questions in the Hall afterwards, many were struck by the generosity of using your own skill to realise someone else's vision – and your minute-taker endorses that, having been one whose skills were not up to what she knew was possible and whom Louis helped to achieve some pieces many years ago.

Asked what he wanted his legacy to be, Louis said the best remark anyone had made was that they saw the joy in his work and that he hoped we did, too. I think we all did.

Jane Dorner

10 November 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

*The Glitter in my chest hair: pantomime
dames – historical, hysterical and personal*
JULIAN EARDLEY

Surely the AWG never had a lecture before like Julian Eardley's account of his career as a Pantomime Dame, including a summary of the pantomime tradition, plus the practical aspects that Art Workers always want to know about: the dressing, the make-up, and finally a bit of a show on the very boards of the Hall.

Our speaker was looking for digs while performing as a Dame in Winchester in 2008, and formed a bond with his landladies, our Master and her partner, Scotty, returning faithfully every year. He began his talk in mufti, standing mid-stage to evoke the 3,000-year sequence from the comedies of ancient Greece (scholarly and silly, like the Cambridge Footlights) and the satyr plays (more like Raymond's Revue Bar). The Romans invented sitcoms with their three doors opening on to the stage and the Renaissance built on these, giving us Shakespeare's comedies of mistaken identity and ultimately the *Commedia dell'Arte*. A re-write of *Doctor Faustus* in 1685 was the first play with pantomime innuendo.

The winding road led through Georgian England to reveal that outstanding ancestor of modern panto, Joseph Grimaldi, and the sandwich formula of the pantomime – with its more-or-less serious opening, followed after the transformation scene by the harlequinade and the slapstick of clown and Pantaloon. While there had been cross-dressing performers before, Dan Leno (1860-1904) created the Dame as we know her, the ancestor of Douglas Byng, Arthur Askey and Cyril Fletcher.

Our speaker was five years old when he first saw Danny La Rue at the Palace Theatre, Manchester; a contrast, perhaps with his Methodist Sunday school, although that gave him his first taste of acting – as Jesus walking on water and turning water into wine. His intended career studying maths was deftly avoided by going to Aberystwyth for drama and finding his mojo when performing Sondheim's *Gypsy* at a party. The stages of his journey included working as a costumed interpreter at the Museum of the Moving Image, and leading role-playing courses for English Heritage, all preparation for the big time.

The Dame finally had her day in a Cleo Laine wig, playing village halls across the Home Counties, before

Opposite: Dame Dolly Dumpling in a production of *Dick Whittington* at the Theatre Royal Winchester



hitting the big time in Consett, County Durham, where ‘Sadie, Sadie, the Bra Lady’, an ex-glamour model running the local lingerie shop, knew what he needed most – a 48FF, filled with waterproof kapok and window-washing sponges for absorption. The successor to this garment was duly donned, and costumes (thanks to Rose and Evie from Bournemouth School of Theatre Design) and the dresser for the night, Doukissa True Love ... (aka Leigh Milsom Fowler) had them fitted before you could say ‘Velcro’. The Master and Stephanie Gera assisted our star by duetting in ‘Chick-chick chicken’ and ‘Run Rabbit Run’ with vocal support from the house, all coordinated from the console by the newly elevated Prince Edmund.

The AWG is always interested in how things get done and along with the entertainment we learned much about the secrets of this rare and special art form.

PM Alan Powers



A pincushion – Lara Maiklem

14 November 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

Mudlark (/ˈmʌdlɑːk/) noun
*A person who scavenges for usable debris
 in the mud of a river or harbour*
 LARA MAIKLEM

This engaging and informative talk was well worth the wait – the speaker generously re-scheduling after being stymied by a train strike in June.

Lara Maiklem has been mudlarking for 20 years. Today’s mudlarks are no longer the desperate, clothed in rags and covered in sores, who trawled the ‘slowly moving cesspit’ of the Thames for anything which might fetch a few pence in the inns of Rotherhithe or Shadwell. Unlike them, she chooses the foreshore for its space and solitude, measuring her own reward by the deep connection with ordinary people whose lost possessions she finds. She brought with her to the Guild a Tudor shoe, still with the clear impress of the young wearer’s foot, and handed round a pincushion stuck with ancient pins – bent, corroded and resonant – generously inviting each of us to take one, as pins are the commonest of all the artefacts to be found.

Each section of the foreshore, we were told, has a different character, according to the business of each adjacent wharf. There is no need to dig; once one’s eye is in, a slow fingertip search is quite enough, and the tide reveals a different selection each day. Pins, pottery and pipes are the most common finds (pins, handmade but made in vast quantities were cheaper than buttons, and date from around 1400-1800), and objects of all ages

are jumbled together, sorted only by size and weight by the tides.

There are 160kms of tidal Thames. Far out in the remote estuary there are Roman finds, but also unexploded ordnance and bomb craters now filled with treacherous mud from which the RNLI has to rescue anyone reckless enough to go that far without a guide. Lara herself found a complete Roman cooking pot, just sitting fully exposed on the mud, and also a human skull, at a point where research showed there had been a prison hulk in the early 19th century. She told us she occasionally suffers from nasty stomach infections, in spite of careful washing, and her final image was of foreshore covered in plastic rubbish. Sadly, she altered Philip Larkin’s line: ‘What will survive of us is’ ... plastic.

Even after – or specially after – a talk so rich with information and interest, there were many questions. Tom Crame (guest) asked whether there is an international network of mudlarks; there is, mudlarks turn up anywhere where there are both tides and a dense history. Simon Hurst asked what Lara Maiklem’s Holy Grail might now be – having recently found a 14th-century pilgrim badge – and was told it would be a bone blade from a skate worn for the Great Frost Fair of 1608. She was asked how she classifies her finds – ‘chaotically’ – and how she started; she grew up on a farm, with noisy brothers and a need for silence, a midden in the garden, an abandoned village in the fields, and an old chest of drawers in a barn to store her museum.

PM Prue Cooper



Tulips – Flora Roberts

24 November 2022 · ORDINARY MEETING

Always painting flowers
 FLORA ROBERTS

Flora Roberts’s excellent talk was delivered with humour, an easy lack of vanity, and lots of wonderful illustrations of her work, which is both bold and subtle.

When Flora was small her grandmother passed on her own copy of Bentham and Hooker’s *Handbook of the British Flora*, encouraging her to continue the tradition of colouring in the line illustrations as she found each flower, dating and signing each one, as her grandmother had done. But botanical artists tell one truth, and Flora Roberts favours a different truth, the more distilled reality also conveyed in the work of her forbear Winifred Nicholson.

Flora is the youngest in a family where everyone made things or painted, and where looking at paintings in a gallery was a regular and un-intimidating event, so art school was a natural move. Glasgow School of Art was ‘edgy’, but although she found the challenging teaching enjoyable and useful, she recognised that ‘it wasn’t my bag’, and moved on to study textiles at the Royal College of Art. A chance commission to paint a full-sized tiger on a bathroom floor gave her the idea that something like this could be a way to earn a living, and ‘after lots of cold calling’ she got mentioned in glossy magazines as a mural painter. This led to a huge commission from the decorator Nina Campbell. It was so huge that (being on

stretches of canvas) Campbell rented the Theatre Royal Windsor, which had an enormous roller for scenery to be painted in sections. The several panels had to go around corners and accommodate a grand wooden staircase.

But time is a tricky factor and switching from murals to wallpaper seemed a practical step, and one that suited her interest in pattern, and ‘the importance of awkwardness’. A commission to rework some designs by May Morris involved ‘changing the negative spaces’ – another thread running through her work is the importance of empty spaces.

Designing for wallpaper companies such as Zoffany, and now for Hamilton Weston, involves getting to grips with computers, a skill Flora has found stimulating rather than daunting. She described the creative jolt of manipulating colours – separating them out, rebalancing them, reversing them – and changing the scale. Several times Flora mentioned how much she enjoys risk, and the stimulus of recent life drawing classes making her want to get out and about.

Often, she referenced other Guild members, particularly PM Ed Fairfax-Lucy, and the discussions she had with him about colour, and mixing density and opacity in paint.

Always the flower studies are her starting point – fresh flowers from a network of growers, or from her mother’s garden – or allotments where ‘everyone has their own little patch, but the total is a wonderful garden no one would have been able to design’. This comment seemed particularly relevant given Flora’s extraordinary skill at designing apparent randomness.

Questions followed, the Master asking if she had her own wallpapers at home – but no, Flora said she lived in a minimal space, with white walls. Emma Barker commented on Flora’s unusual ‘anti-composition’ designs. Cameron Short asked whether she plans to include textiles in her ranges – answer, ‘yes’. Many questions more rounded off a very enjoyable and illuminating evening’s talk.

PM Prue Cooper

15 November 2022 · ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Conservation of wall paintings, sculpture and church monuments – Winchester, Worcester and beyond
 RUTH AND TORQUIL McNEILAGE

Ruth and Torquil McNeilage have been working together on the conservation of historic painted surfaces for 25 years, and six different case studies, which they described



Ruth and Torquil McNeilage – Salisbury St Thomas
the eye of Esther Eyre, during cleaning

with great clarity, illustrated the range of the problems they are asked to solve.

Their first example was the roof bosses in the presbytery at Winchester Cathedral. Here there is a late 15th-century rib vault, executed in timber in imitation of stone. At the intersections of the ribs are foliate bosses, the principal bosses having been enhanced by Bishop Fox in the 1530s. The bosses had all been painted originally, but had been overpainted many times and in a variety of mediums, generally with minimum regard to those originally employed or to the long-term stability of those used in successive restorations. Even work done in the 1950s caused more problems than it solved, when the ceiling was sprayed with chalk emulsion and crudely regilded. Thick layers of later paints left the ceiling's basic condition hard to assess, while many modern techniques – micro sections, recently evolved solvents – had not then been available. However, it was found that beneath these many layers the original surfaces had survived remarkably well and, after six months' work, they are now once again almost as bright and legible as in the 16th century.

The second case study was the mid-16th century altar tomb of Anthony Harvey in the cathedral at Exeter. Here the top slab was lifting in a way that clearly indicated rusting ironwork beneath, necessitating lifting the slab to investigate the source and correct it. Inside the chest – hollow, as is normal – it was discovered that earlier repairs had involved reinforcements in both oak and iron. Surprisingly, a small jumble of unidentifiable bones was also found, as well as re-used fragments of an earlier stone screen bearing extensive painting. The bones and the painted masonry were left where they were, the decaying repairs replaced.

The third case discussed was in one of the houses in the 14th-century Vicars' Close in Wells. Here, extensive fragments of wall painting had been discovered on an internal, first floor wall. These could be identified as sections of a Tree of Jesse, and further investigation showed that more had survived than could at first be clearly made out. Conservation involved analysing the techniques employed, cleaning and stabilisation. Research following historical and heraldic pointers indicated that the work had originally been carried out between 1340 and 1368, soon after the building of the house itself. Comparing before and after illustrations, it was very remarkable how much had been recovered.

The fourth and fifth cases were post-medieval: the recovery of an elaborate Victorian decorative scheme at East Harptree in Somerset, which had been painted over with white emulsion in the 20th century when such things were out of fashion; and the stripping of a pair of 17th century wall monuments in St Thomas's church in



Wall painting, Vicars' Close, Wells Cathedral depicting a prophet

Salisbury. These, carved with portrait busts and kneelers and originally brightly painted, had later been covered in brown varnish to tone down what was then felt to be garish. Over the years the varnish had darkened further, making the original colours all but indistinguishable and the overall effect thoroughly depressing. The audience will have agreed that stripping this dark varnish had hugely improved the two monuments, while an area on the side of one of them had been left as a record of what had been done earlier.

The final case was the treatment of three medieval, Ham Hill stone effigies at Nettlecombe, Somerset. These were in a sorry state – decaying, fragmentary, so crudely repaired that one figure appeared to have two elbows. Here, too, deterioration was halted and later repairs largely removed. The only exception was a large, headless hound, lying with crossed paws by the side of a female effigy, a touching and unique figure to which Victorians had added its missing head. This was allowed to remain, an endearing, enduring companion for his unknown mistress.

The speakers did not for the most part explicitly address the more general issues that were raised by their work: how to assess the historical importance of later work against original, how and when to use original materials and when to use new. It was notable that much of their work involved the removal of earlier attempts at restoration and repair, which had in the long run simply made things worse. But it was clear that they were constantly thinking about these issues, acknowledging that such judgments are ultimately subjective and have to be made on a case-by-case basis. Their clearly described examples will have impressed the audience with the speakers' sensitivity as well as their expertise and prompted those who listened to consider these questions further.

Nicholas Cooper

• CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN BROTHERS •



Left: Fleur Oakes at St Mary's vascular unit. Image – Colin Bicknell (surgeon). Right: Dr Will Houstoun

Fleur Oakes and Will Houstoun

Fleur Oakes: Are you going to shuffle cards? They're not going to write out the words 'shuffle, shuffle'.

Will Houstoun: Yes! I'll say what I do, because people often think magic, I'm just about kids' parties. The two aspects of magic I like in particular are using close-up sleight of hand, to make impossible things seem to happen, and the history of magic. Dexterity isn't what magic is in entirety, but it absolutely is a big component of the kind of thing that I'm interested in. Dexterity is a tool you use to create an experience rather than the point in itself.

Fleur: I should say that the coin that Will did have in his hand has now disappeared. I've watched you do the most extraordinary things just while you're drinking your coffee, but with the other hand you've split a pack of cards into three and then rotated them round, one-handed, while you were chatting.

Will: Yes, you really want to be able to do the difficult stuff so comfortably and so well that you don't need to think about it, so that all of your focus can go on to the story of the coin appearing and disappearing or whatever the

trick is. Magic is always collaborative, because when you're doing a trick in the mirror you know the secret, you're not making assumptions about what's happening, and you don't get the experience of something impossible going on. You have to do it with and for someone, they have to respond to it and you automatically get feedback. And it seems to me that your work is less collaborative?

Fleur: It is, except the medical work is all collaborative. Even if it's just a consultant surgeon allowing me to watch them work, there is a collaboration there and the conversations are a collaboration. The first medical model I made, the Textile Body, I made by myself; the second one was the Epiploic Cube – as soon as you told me you had a qualification in engineering I thought, 'Will's the one to help me with this.' And the anti-knife crime project has two other Guild members' work in it and on it to make it work properly. Rachael Matthews did some fantastic three-dimensional knitting, and then Rachel Warr actually performs the book.

Will: She navigates the relationship between it and an audience?



A seemingly impossible photo for Fleur's 'Half Sick of Shadows' project – Will Houstoun

Fleur: Yes, she navigates between me, and it and the audience. I had to tell her what I was trying to do with it, and she made a soundtrack of ideas, and conversation and music, and she then performs it.

Will: As a puppeteer, as an expert in manipulating objects in ways that tell stories.

Fleur: And portraying empathy in an object as well. And she's had to train other people to perform it, so the collaboration keeps going on. The piece was mounted at the Wyvern Bindery, so it was very much a Guild thing.

Will: And the most exciting things that happen at the Guild, to me, are these unexpected collaborations. Someone says, 'How are we going to explore knife crime with young people in underserved communities?' The response, 'Well, we're going to have a surgeon, a knitter, a three dimensional embroiderer, a bookbinder and a puppeteer. That's obviously the right answer.' I can't think where else that could evolve.

I think the development process is interesting, too. With a magic trick you get this lovely exciting bit, 'Wouldn't it be cool to have someone choose a card, make it disappear after they've signed it whilst they're holding the deck ... then, I'm going to take my wallet out, and there's going to be a signed envelope inside sealed with wax. I'm going to give it to someone, they're going to cut it open ... and they will find the card inside.' I get all excited about this impossible thing, then have a ridiculously tedious few months learning some difficult, technical sleight of hand that I hope I might be able to do well enough to make the trick work. Then the last 10% of the work makes it a real thing or leaves it as a mostly developed idea that you can't actually do.

I started by thinking that any idea that doesn't get fully realised was a failure. But Borges had this idea that he could write a review of an imaginary book that would say everything that was great about the idea and without needing to bother writing the book itself. Sometimes these ideas are things to just tuck away until the right time comes up.

Fleur: So, does that mean that sometimes you recycle bits of ideas into other performances?

Will: Yes, there are building blocks of everything. I did a production at the Royal Opera House where somebody jumped into a river and needed to vanish, so I worked

out a way that other actors would swirl around her as the raging waters of the river. Then they would whoosh away and there would just be a pile of clothes left where she had vanished. That's certainly something that I'll use in other places where I need to make somebody vanish and there's a particular set of constraints.

You mentioned earlier three-dimensional embroidery. How does 3D work, and how do you plan it?

Fleur: There were embroidered fabrics before there were printed fabrics; the raised work stems from a slow evolution of making the flat work more and more fancy. All those incredible ceremonial outfits that we saw at the Queen's funeral, there's more work underneath all that gold work, because you have to build a raised surface. That's not what I do.

Will: Yes, I've seen things you've made which are like a wasp's nest.

Fleur: Yes, mine are done purely with the thread itself. So, for example, I did a series of dead leaves, something that's quite easy to draw flat and make flat, but by being wired, you can then turn it into a very 3D object.

To create voids and forms, to make something convex or concave, you have to know at what point to decrease stitches or increase them, and where the tail of your thread is eventually going to end up. There's a constant to and fro between the artistic vision and the technicality, and as we said at the beginning, you can't be wondering what your hands are doing at that point, because it's your brain that's doing everything now.

Will: Your studio space – it's a lovely outbuilding in the grounds of a fancy house with a dove loft in the garden outside. And an actual fireplace where you can burn actual wood. What does a physical space need to do for you?

Fleur: Well, I amass a lot of stuff, as you have witnessed; for me that's my external hard drive. I need to be able to look at it, even if it's just a casual gaze across the room, because every object is there because it's informative, and it's telling me something.

Will: Do you see something and go, 'That is going to be this thing in the future, so I'll have it for this'? Do you have things in your studio where you go, 'I remember that being great, that's no longer resonant with me, so that can move out of my studio.'



SomeBody, diaphragm and gut – Fleur Oakes



William Morris inspired playing cards, designed by Will and printed on the best quality card stock – Will Houstoun

Fleur: In a way all of those, I've always collected stuff and I've always thought the best reason to have something is because you like it, it's okay, because in 10 years' time I've looked at this thing and gone, 'That's just what I need at the moment.' Some things are physically useful, and some things are the emotional memory sticks that I need. Some things I've just hoarded and it's time to go, but I never throw things away, they're always passed on to someone else who needs them.

The silence is very important for me – and I have to keep the fire going.

Will: I know you listen to music while working. What's the balance between those things?

Fleur: I do choose things specifically for what I'm doing. There is music that I can be on a sewing machine to, that I would never be listening to if I'm doing hand sewing. It's mood, atmosphere, rhythm, because when you're sewing, rhythm is very important.

Will: It's like when your grandma's knitting you a jumper and you can tell when she got to the exciting bits in the detective stories, because the stitches all get tighter and tighter.

Fleur: Yes, but there are other pieces of music that I save for specific pieces of work as well. You can be playing a game on screen and listening to music on a computer at the same time, can't you, and your brain is being quite ambidextrous. I use that facility a lot when I'm working, the ambidextrous brain bit.

It's interesting that idea of performance, though any artist's work eventually performs without you being there, because people are looking at it.

Will: In my world you don't produce that tangible end point, but there is the production phase, the experience of seeing a trick; it's a narrative thing over a period of time, and people do engage with that.

I think the big challenge that occurs in magic is an almost inherently problematic power structure; the base level assumption that an audience comes in with is that the magician knows how the tricks are done – they're 'smart', the audience don't know how the tricks are done – they're 'stupid'. So, the big thing that you have to do with an audience is to say, 'You're just as important as me, because unless you're here none of this stuff happens. I need you as an audience.' We both bring something important to this. You also have to try to make sure that

people know that this is something that you're doing with and for them, so you're trying to create these little moments of fun, surprise and astonishment as a pleasant gift, rather than doing things at people or to people, which is much more a practical jokey 'ha-ha, you're dumb, I'm smart' approach, which nobody enjoys.

Fleur: I've noticed that you don't let anybody touch any of your cards.

Will: Yes, if somebody grabbed my pack of cards and shuffled them there's a good chance, they're going to bend a couple. That's going to irritate me no end. Different packs of cards have different thicknesses and different stiffnesses and all sorts of nerdery like that, but I like my cards to behave in a particular way.

Fleur: I know, because I once gave you a pack of cards that was from the 1930s. And you were positively disgusted by them.

Will: When cards are varnished, they get varnished on the top surface and the bottom, but the edges don't get sealed after they get cut. So, the more you handle them the more grease and dirt seeps in between the layers of varnish, which means they're not smooth and they clump together. I'm sure you would have a reaction to somebody giving you a needle that had some rust on the point or something.

Fleur: I have a reaction to when people have skeins of embroidery thread that look like tangled Barbie hair, and I just think, 'How can you abuse your materials like that?' I think it's down to looking after your tools and your materials.

Will: You do collaborate with the objects that you use, whether they're playing cards or thread or needles, the same way a violinist wants a nice violin to play rather than a scraggly £25 one.

Fleur: You need your materials to perform for you. You need to know that the cards are going to slide across each other in a certain way, the same as I need to know that the thread is going to pull through the needle beautifully and I'm not going to be struggling with it knotting or fraying. I don't have to think about my materials. They've got to be of a certain quality to do the job.

Will: Absolutely, and a degree of effort and time goes into making sure they can. Even when cards are brand new, they're not going to be quite right, so you handle



SomeBody, lung – Fleur Oakes

them for three, four hours, in a particular, gentle way, and that wears them in just enough that they're at a peak point. Then they're lovely for a day or two before they tip over the edge, and you move to your next pack. I use a couple of packs a week.

There's a really interesting experimental branch of magic performance – the idea is, what happens if you remove the performer from the performance? I guess this is what we're talking about, a performer is essential, and things happen in real time in the space between magician and audience. How can you violate that or upset that? A really smart French magician had this idea for a pack of cards that would have instructions printed on. And the deck of cards does a trick on you. It's a really interesting idea, removing the performer, and very much about a physical object. Which is the complete opposite of everything that we've said magic is over the course of the last hour ... That feels like quite a nice contradiction on which to end our chat.

Fleur Oakes is a textile artist and embroiderer
www.fleuroakes.com

Will Houstoun is a magician
www.drhoustoun.com



Left: Martin Grierson © Lara Platman. Right: Tony Wills in his workshop. On the left of the workshop image is his 'robot' – a 4-axis CNC milling machine and on the right, his bench which has a chisel on it (not visible) – 'I'm happy using either or both.'

Omega table – Tony Wills

Martin Grierson and Tony Wills

(Martin Grierson died on 29 March 2023. He was a valued and active member of the Guild since his election in 2005 and will be greatly missed.)

Tony Wills: I was thinking about my history and how it's like driving on a road and getting diverted and ending up somewhere that you weren't planning on going. I'm interested in that, because it's happened to me several times.

Martin Grierson: Well, things happen that you don't plan for. When the war broke out, my brother and I were sent up to Keswick boarding school, in the Lake District. They did woodwork and art, which were my two best subjects. And our woodwork master saw a potential in me and encouraged me. Having some kind of making activity at school is so important.

Tony: I think it's part of the problem with kids' mental health now. They suffer because they don't make things anymore.

Martin: When I was at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, it was still being run along the principles of design being taught by leading designers, coming in for one or two days a week and developing a project with you, and the craft side being carried on by permanent staff, technicians. But very high standard. And all that's been thrown away by the university system.

Tony: My starting point was very different. I knew that I liked making things. I was lucky to get into a grammar school that converted into the biggest comprehensive school in Britain. They asked me what I wanted to do at A-level, and I said, 'Engineering.' They said, 'Oh, we've never done that, so we'll do it just for you.' So, I had one-to-one teaching. Later, I went into industry for two years but then somebody told me about art college. It was an epiphany of sorts.

Martin: Did you see yourself as more technically minded, rather than artistically?

Tony: Absolutely, at Brighton Poly, I used to show up very early in the morning and a terrific wood tutor called Bert Marsh kindly took me under his wing between eight and 10 in the morning. So again, I got one-to-one teaching in techniques.

Martin: What was the course?

Tony: Wood, metal, ceramics and plastics. They were very keen for people to go up to the Royal College of Art. To my surprise I got in! Nobody taught us much, we mostly learned from each other. When I was at the Royal College, I did a lot of private work, so I learned how to deal with clients. I had designed two wall lamps, and it was a shellshock introduction to the world of production when London Lighting gave us the showroom window

for a month and asked us to fill it with the lamps. We'd only got prototypes, so converting them into a real thing that could be made in their hundreds was a steep learning curve. We subcontracted the metalwork and painting and discovered how to source components. We decided to have a zero-return policy, so they had to be perfect. My philosophy is that a product needs to look good and work well. If it does one of those things unequally, it's not good enough.

Martin: Having finished at the Central, I applied for a design job with G Plan in High Wycombe. But I realised I didn't want to be part of a manufacturing team, where you would probably design one or two things in a year. My hero was Charles Eames and my ambition was to be a designer, like him. I won a Royal Society of Arts bursary and travelled around Denmark and met all the furniture people and absorbed the quality of design in detail. The detailing of a handle, that wasn't just a handle stuck on, it was part of the design. Then when I was with Trevor Dannatt he asked me whether I could make a model of one of his projects. So, I developed a technique of using natural materials, unsanded wood, veneers for brickwork and things like that. We did the Economist Building for Peter Smithson, and seeing and hearing the arguments between Alison and Peter on the advantages of this or that version of the design, and would I make both? Then I set up really to design for manufacturers. No thoughts about making, although I had enjoyed making at the time.

Tony: But don't you think you need to know how to make in order to design?

Martin: You do. In fact, to design through making; make a detail and see it for yourself.

Tony: That is the problem with working in computer-aided design. What really drives me is simplicity, so I am completely incapable of decoration. My father was in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), and he couldn't bear the idea of me going to art college. It was my bid to escape. Later, an architect offered me a large sum to set up a product design studio. He was Colin Cave, a kind man and managing director of the architectural practice DEGW, which became DEGW international.

Martin: Yes, I did a job with them.

Tony: DEGW were the brains of architecture. They taught me how to think about the working environment. We ended up designing furniture for huge companies like Kinnarps of Sweden. I was then managing director of a company with 14 staff doing product design, graphic design and something we invented called building identity. Architects would design a building to reflect their own identity. Then an organisation would move in, so we would make the interior reflect their identity.

I love working with other people. And I like a process called synectics, where you take people from different walks of life and you say, 'Here is a problem, solve it.' A builder, a doctor, a physicist, a chemist, an engineer, you just put them all in one room and say, 'Design something.' I like that thing where diverse people look through different keyholes at the same problem. Somehow the



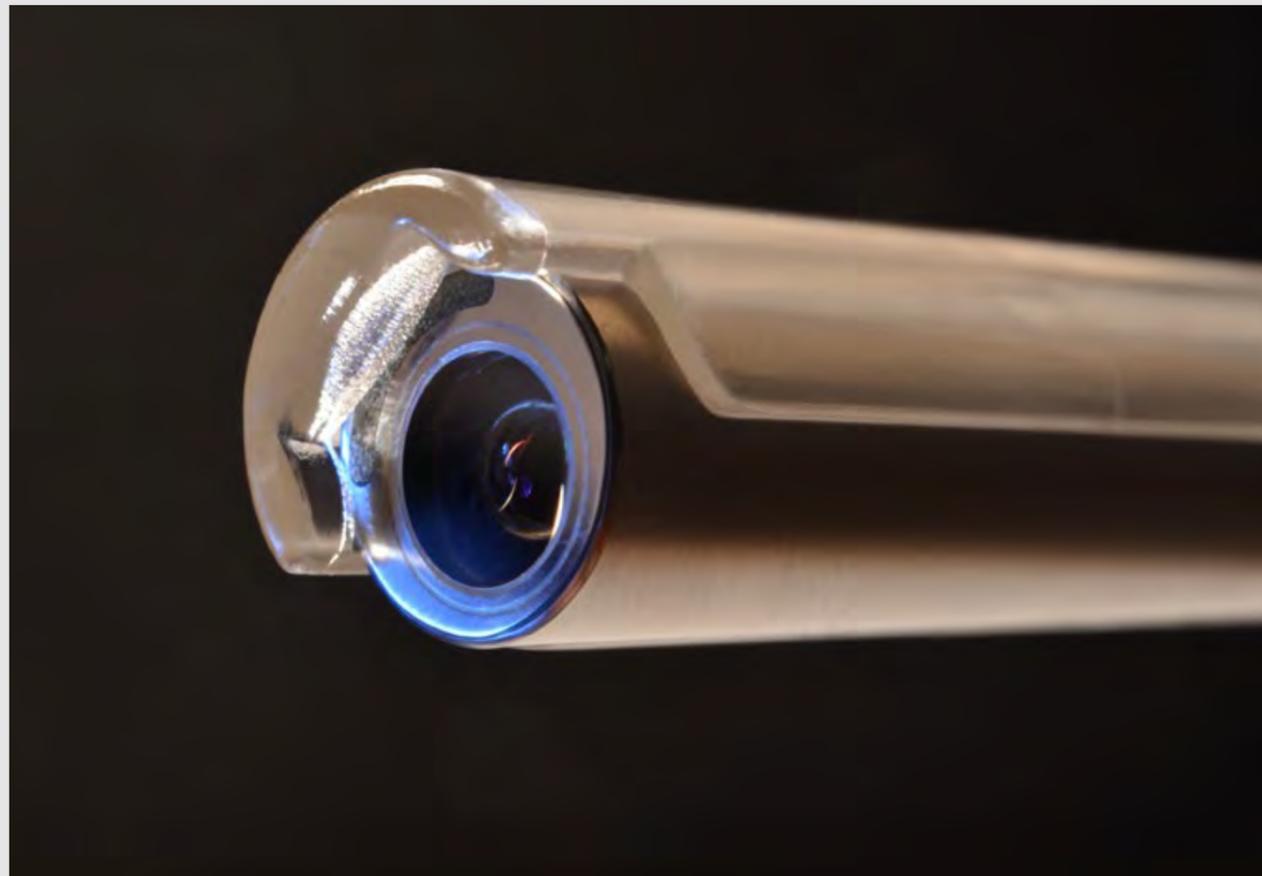
Foyer bench for Sainsbury Wing of The National Gallery – Martin Grierson



D Form street furniture under construction – Tony Wills



D Form street furniture – Tony Wills



OpClear – Tony Wills

problem gets solved by the Gestalt, and nobody's ego is involved.

Martin: Does it sort of resolve itself around a leader within the team?

Tony: It can do. But I think the leader's job is to be a facilitator more than a leader.

Do you like simple things?

Martin: Well, I tend to add detail to a simple line drawing on white paper, as I find the plain outline drawing too simple. Remember I am designing bespoke work, which requires individuality.

Tony: I think we can agree to disagree on that.

Martin: Well, it is probably because I am being lazy and not visualising it as the finished object sitting there on the page.

Tony: Saint-Exupéry said something like, 'A designer's job is done not when there is no more to add, but when there is no more to take away.' That eliminates a lot of things that might be very beautiful but hopeless

when you use them. There is no reason why, if it is designed properly, it shouldn't be beautiful as well as working well.

Martin: The Charles Eames influence early on led to my attempting competitions. And one of the most important was a European competition for a chair by Arflex. They were lovely people to work with, unlike British manufacturers, who didn't want to promote the designer at all. After about 10 years I was getting very bored with companies who wanted the same design they had always been making with some element that they could call new.

I thought, well, maybe what I should do is set up as a maker. The Charles Eames approach was designed for high-quality manufacture, but not hand-crafted work. What I wanted to do was work to commission and get people to come to me because they liked what I did, and ask me to make something for them, rather than make it and then try to sell it.

Tony: Another thing that changed my course was when researchers from Imperial College said, 'We've got this medical device concept and we want your team to design it to be a manufacturable product.' I'd never worked on a medical device before, but I really wanted to do it,



London Chair by Martin Grierson – winning design for Arflex/Domus competition 1960. Produced by Arflex. SPA



Button-fix panel fixings – Tony Wills

because I thought it was fascinating and a real challenge. We even talked to people who made components for NASA, and they couldn't make the Imperial concept work either. We cracked it, but it took five years and big budgets to do it.

An architect came to see a washroom system we had designed, and said, 'I love it, but I hate those little metal fixings you've used to hold the panels on.' I remember turning to my business partner and saying, 'That is a good problem, why don't we do a better one?'

Martin: Is that Button-fix?

Tony: Yes. We had to get into the management of a product business, rather than a product design business. It proved to be a good business model.

Martin: What really interested me were furniture problems. Like this room (the Gradidge Room). I said, 'Let's see whether we can make the table become other beautiful tables and put them around the walls.' It had a requirement that Elspeth had to be able to move it around the room single-handed and put it up from one arrangement to another. I did four or five jobs where the table in different ways would turn into other tables, which left the room free. Problems like that, or just housing a large television and making an elegant cabinet to take it. I still hanker after the original aim of being a classic, modern Eames-type designer.

Every commission is different. My influence would very often come from the personality of the client. The big advantage over designing for one manufacturer was

that you met the client and you saw the place that the furniture was going to go.

Tony: I usually prefer not to meet the end user, because then we would be designing for a specific individual. We are not designing a one-off object; we're designing for production and probably making many thousands of them. That's my preferred challenge.

Martin: I found that very difficult for that reason, that I didn't know where it was going to go. Every project had a client and a space that I could view, and which influenced the design. I would start by doodling drawings, usually based on traditional structures, and you would do a drawing which emphasised that.

I gave a talk to the Art Workers' Guild about my work, which was titled something like Three lives, from being a student, from being a designer working with architects with Charles Eames in mind, to being a designer-maker being influenced by all my clients.

Tony: Yes, Three lives. I like that. Mine would be My life in dust, because every time I sweep up the workshop, I think about that. This may fly in the face of some of the Guild ethics, but I don't mind whether I'm using a chisel or a robot, provided what's in my head gets out there in the world.

Martin Grierson is a furniture designer and maker
www.martingrierson.co.uk

Tony Wills is a furniture and product designer
www.wills-watson.co.uk



Left: Flora Ginn. Right: Sue Lowday with her fly press and tools

Flora Ginn and Sue Lowday

Sue Lowday: Memories get lost in time, don't they? That's the problem. I'm quite interested in the history of stuff.

Flora Ginn: I preserve and restore and conserve the history, not just for the present but for the future as well. I wouldn't be doing it if I didn't love it. Slow, satisfying, rewarding. I could tell by looking at the book, or the leather, when it was done, how it was done. It's how we learn from the past. We try to be more creative as we go along, but binding is such a historical craft.

Sue: I think the repair work that I really did enjoy was at the Sheffield Assay Office. The Assay master used to buy in damaged bits and pieces of silverware. He'd say, 'There you are, Sue. Repair that.' So part of my job, apart from looking after all the assay marks, was repairing these lovely, very old pieces of Sheffield-marked silver.

Flora: I do a lot of restoration work and paper conservation. If a book is really in bad condition then I have to pull it apart, put it in a hot bath, wash it, hang it to dry, then press it and put it all back, as much as I can. Anything missing I will have to match with my tools or leather, and age it to match the original.

Is there anything worse than repairing a bad repair? A few weeks ago, I was repairing a 17th-century book,

very badly repaired in the 18th century, and another bad job in the 19th century. All the materials had been used wrongly, three centuries of bad repair. I can't replace the 19th-century marbled paper in the 17th-century book. Budget-wise, it's such a dilemma, how to compromise and make the best out of what can be saved. It's difficult, it really is. Saving the original material is very important, because so much is the history of the book.

Sue: I did a wonderful leather conservation course with Theo Sturge, a really top conservator interested in applying silver leaf on to leather. There are whole rooms covered using this technique. You'll still see screens made of it in some of the big houses that are the repurposed wall coverings. I did a screen myself using the silver leaf technique. I drew images of bits and pieces around the kitchen, and then coated them in this leaf.

Are you using primarily goatskin?

Flora: Well, I use goat. I use calf. And I use vellum taut, which is the white vellum. Some of them have got texture, maybe a straight grain, or sprinkled.



Opposite top left to right: Spine before and after repair – Flora Ginn
Opposite bottom: Leather 'skin' Flora Ginn uses in bookbinding



You use vegetable tanned leather, I suppose?

Sue: It's primarily veg tanned, but I quite like using goatskin as well. When I go to the supplier, I usually have a rummage to see what they've got that's interesting. I found some frog, once.

Flora: Yes, I've had lizards and snakes.

Sue: And I like using shagreen. I've always been interested in the 1930s style, shagreen was used a lot then. I was given a whole bundle of lizard skins about 30 years ago; I like that they're incredibly thin – perfect for doing a really thin lining. My problem has always been finding really, really fine, thin leathers for bags.

Flora: Did you have them pared?

Sue: Yes, I've got a manual machine. It requires quite a lot of skill to get it evenly pulled through, doesn't it? Every piece of leather behaves differently, so you have to pull a few bits through before you know what that particular piece of leather needs. I use a skiving tool to pare off edges. You can ask the tannery to pare it down to your thickness, but I want to be able to get different thicknesses out of it.

I need to be able to try and make use of every piece of a hide, as it is expensive and being able to skive down pieces gives me flexibility to avoid too much wastage. My hides are usually around 2.5mm to 3mm thick and for some jobs, say making a wallet, it needs to be 1mm or less in thickness.

Flora: Do you do much paring with a paring knife?

Sue: It's interesting, you say 'paring', I say 'skiving'! Yes. So, I've got a moon-shaped one, and one that is chamfered.

Flora: Yes. That's the kind of knife I use. I use a bookshave for paring my leather, as well. I start off with the paring knife, just on the edges, and then shave.

Sue: Are you pinning it out so it doesn't pucker?

Flora: No, I just butt it up to the edge of the stone with my tummy. My old master (Bernard Middleton) used to say, 'Man's beer belly helps. Women will have to

make alternative arrangements.' Anyway, if it's a very small skin, I might have to clamp it, but otherwise I just push my body right to the edge to hold it. The best finish is really by hand.

Sue: I have used vegetable tanned leather's unique properties to shape the leather. I decided to see how far I could take this idea adapting my tools for shaping metal – using my trusty fly-press. The first bag, which looks a little like a ball with a soft top springing out of it, was inspired by looking at blood cells. I was surprised at how successfully the shape held together and how tactile it felt. So, ideas rapidly rolled forward, experimenting making different press tools.

Probably the biggest thing I've made is the crozier case. It was technically very challenging. The crozier splits into three pieces and Joanne (Joanne Grenfell, the Bishop of Stepney) wanted the case to work as a backpack, with a handle that could be tucked away and the crozier not to 'flop about inside'. And she wanted a certain font for part of a Gerard Manley Hopkins poem embossed into the front of the case. I cut the letters out by hand. I looked into getting them laser cut, but by the time I'd marked it all out, I might as well just cut them out myself; it would be quicker, because I'm quite handy with a jewellers' saw. She wanted an image of dragonflies and a kingfisher, so again, I cut those out and used my hand engravers to cut out the feathers and wings to get the detail.

Flora: A few of my clients would like to see the designs proposal, which I think is safer for them; but the majority say, 'Just go ahead,' which is nice, because then it's what I think is appropriate for the book. Obviously, you read the book, and try to get the feel of the contents – colour, sentiment, the gist of it. It shows our best if we are given the full freedom to do how we want it.

I don't know how you started. I started off going to art school, and the most amazing experience in my life was the foundation year, where I saw people carving, stone, slate, marble, and sneaked myself into the department, picking up chisels and mallets, and carving letters. I got so hooked that I went for a course on calligraphy. I discovered bookbinding by accident. Then, I realised, bookbinding suited me more, because there's a lot more involvement with my hands. I'm the black sheep in the family. One of seven, all of them academic. I'm the only black sheep doing art!

Opposite: Crozier Case front and interior – Sue Lowday

Sue: Right from being a youngster I was always interested in making things, or trying things out. My parents never went to college and they were a bit worried I was going to get in with a bad lot – they imagined them all to be a bad lot, not having any direct experience of the art world. I went off to do a foundation in Sheffield and, like you, I'd never realised how wonderful foundation is. It made me open my eyes to see how broad art and craft could be. I was quite taken with ceramics, although I didn't like getting my hands all wet and soggy, but they also had this silversmithing jewellery department. My dad used to take us at the weekends up to the north coast from Hull to Scarborough to collect pebbles. You could find jet and carnelian, and he used to do a bit of lapidary in the evenings at home and ended up teaching it at night school. So, I thought, 'Well, if I do go into jewellery, they'll not be too worried about me.' It's this thing about how on earth do you make any money being an artist? But I never regretted it, because I loved taking a piece of metal and hammering it and forming it.

Flora: Even before I could read and write, I went home from school one day with a drawing I did. I showed my grandmother, but she wasn't impressed and I was very disappointed. I just kept looking at it. I think that was my first indication I wanted to be an artist. And once my father took me to a shop and said, 'Pick a fountain pen that you like.' Maybe that made me interested in calligraphy. I never picked up a needle at home, but there was a needlework class at school. Buttonholes, tweed jackets, hand sewn linings, everything. Jacket, trousers, skirts, you name it. Shirts. Even then, I didn't realise I could do so much with my hands, until I went to art school. I enjoy it so much.

Sue: When I was at school, I used to buy bags of leather scraps and I used to make little purses, which I sold to my schoolfriends. I used to buy camera cases and things like that from jumble sales, because they're beautiful, interestingly stitched and lined, interesting shapes. Veg tanned leather is so adaptable, I have worked it very much as I would work metal, shaping, embossing, and stamping and colouring.

My neighbour showed me a WW2 binoculars case the other day and I thought the quality of the craftsmanship was superb. The case has a gorgeous patina from years of handling. I like the way vegetable tanned leather ages. It's a bit like a loved piece of

wood. The leather takes on a little bit of the qualities of the owner.

Flora: It's so hard for young people. There's a lack of full-time education in bookbinding, so it's hard to get a good foundation in understanding the craft and the possibilities, which they need to practise before moving on to conservation and restoration. It would be nice to bring back the old apprenticeship system, which was very disciplined and consolidated what they learned. Sadly, I fear this is no longer commercially viable. The Repair Shop is trying to raise awareness for the younger generation to come forward, which is nice.

Sue: Yes, and I think it gives people a little bit of insight into just what goes into the special things we do. The hours of work and the hours of dedication, and the care that has to be taken.

Flora: We had to really have the passion to be able to do our best, rather than just think of the income.

Sue: The problem nowadays is that workshop spaces are so expensive. I'd like to do teaching myself, but there's just not enough space here in my workshop. The Isle of Wight has never had any industrial buildings to speak of, and anything small gets turned into a holiday let. So, you're battling against all of that. I think of Yorkshire Artspace in Sheffield, which works very well for a group of artists and craftspeople who can make all sorts of connections. It's rentable workshop spaces where you meet other people who can help with advice. We have tried to get something like that started here, but it's down to local councils, and they're always strapped for cash. A small germ like that could grow. How else do kids realise the opportunities ... You're not going to earn a fortune, but you're going to have a life doing gorgeous things.

Flora Ginn is a bookbinder and restorer
<https://designerbookbinders.org.uk/fellows-and-licentiates/ginn-flora/>

Sue Lowday is a leather and metal worker
www.suelowday.co.uk

Opposite top: *The Engravings of Eric Gill*, by Christopher Skelton, Skelton's Press. Binding by Flora Ginn. Covered in Harmatan black goatskin with onlay of alum-tawed pigskin and gold tooling; doublures in black goatskin and blind tooled; flyleaves in brown goatskin with black goatskin onlays.
 Opposite bottom: Oblong Capsule Bag – Sue Lowday



• MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS •

Jane Adam

Brother
Jeweller

Jane Adam's jewellery deals with certain qualities: a balance between symmetry and irregularity, surface colour and texture, a consideration of what preciousness is, and an empathy with the wearer, making her feel more like herself. Her distinctive work in dyed, anodised aluminium and in precious metals is worn and recognised internationally, and is in many major public and private collections, including the V&A, Crafts Council, the Goldsmiths' Company and the National Museums of Scotland.



Jane Adam – Courtesy of Cockpit Arts. © Alun Callender

Tom Croft

Brother
Architect

Tom Croft founded Thomas Croft Architects Limited in 1995 as a design-led practice concentrating on complex one-off residential and commercial projects, often involving renovations of historic old buildings, or the design of new buildings in historic contexts. He has served on various advisory panels, including on The Georgian Group planning casework panel in 2005-18 and the South East Regional Design Panel in 2007-13. He is on RIBA's Conservation Register.



Tom Croft

Bill Dunster

Brother
Architect, planner, product designer

Bill Dunster set up the Zero (fossil) Energy Development (ZED) initiative in 1998 to design BedZED. The company has evolved to incorporate renewable energies under the wider name of ZEDpower, but from day one has concentrated on perfecting low carbon building, urbanism and product design. Bill believes that integrating energy efficiency with renewable energy, storage and the latest building physics anticipating climatic change will produce an ecological vernacular with its own unique contemporary aesthetic. Bill specialises in zero-carbon housing and enjoys designing all aspects of a climate neutral lifestyle and workstyle, with a unique track record of delivering ZED buildings in the UK and worldwide. He enjoys cli-fi and would be pleased to collaborate with artists interested in exploring anthropomorphic climatic change.



Bill Dunster



Luci Eyers

Luci Eyers

Brother
Painter

There are two life-long threads in Luci Eyers' art. The first, more obvious, thread is painting. She draws mainly from her mind's eye, creating scenes about human interaction and behaviour. Predominantly watercolours, varying in scale from miniatures to murals, they begin with autobiographical memories, often ending up as more veiled, atmospheric, metaphorical scenarios. The second, more complex, thread is collaboration. After various collaborative projects, including several large wall-drawings, Luci founded Eye to Pencil in 2021, an interdisciplinary drawing studio, based in Clerkenwell, which helps people from different disciplines and professions visualise and express their ideas through drawing.

Henrietta Harford

Brother
Tailor, weaver

Based in London and Berlin, Henrietta Harford creates quiet pieces of considered design and function grounded in the traditions and heritage of bespoke tailoring. Each garment is unique to her client and their needs, informed by the individual qualities of that relationship.



Henrietta Harford

Angela James

Brother
Bookbinder

Angela James works almost exclusively on commissioned fine-bindings and work for exhibitions, including the shortlisted books for the Booker Prize. Her binding work involves dyeing and colouring the leather she uses, and she also creates the whole book (artist's books), using letterpress and drypoint etching. She lives in rural North Yorkshire with a large garden just inside the North York Moors National Park. Angela's bindings are in many public and private collections. She is a Fellow of Designer Bookbinders and was President from 1990 to 1996.



Angela James

Ana Maria Pacheco

Brother

Sculptor, painter, printmaker

Ana Maria Pacheco has been sculpting for more than 50 years. Born in Brazil, where she trained, she has exhibited across the world and held one-person shows in many cities, including New York, London and São Paulo. Her work draws on medieval art, Catholic ritual, Renaissance art and classical mythology. She also makes prints, principally as a means of exploring ideas and imagery for sculpture, and her prints are much sought after in their own right.



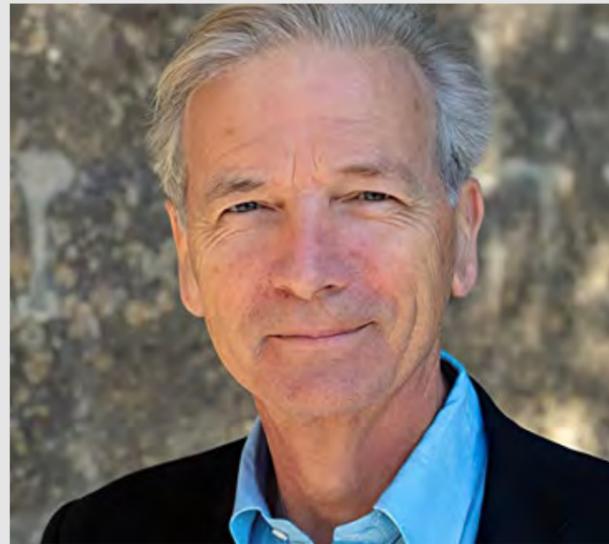
Ana Maria Pacheco

Clive Aslet

Associate Brother

Writer, publisher

Clive Aslet is a writer, publisher and visiting professor of architecture at the University of Cambridge. He is recognised as an authority on British architecture, about which he has been writing for 40 years. He was editor of *Country Life* from 1993 to 2006 and editor at large from 2006 to 2016.



Clive Aslet

Rachel Bebb

Associate Brother

Art gallery owner

Rachel Bebb trained as a garden designer and was the proprietor of The Garden Gallery for 28 years until recently. The new iteration of the gallery, Rachel Bebb Contemporary, exhibits small sculptures for interiors, ceramics, engraved glass, wood engravings, letter carving and original prints, all by contemporary artists. Rachel is keen to support young and emerging artists, and to promote the old skills of wood engraving and letter carving.



Rachel Bebb



Charles Brooking – Courtesy of SurreyLive.

Charles Brooking

Associate Brother

Architectural historian

Charles Brooking is an architectural historian and consultant specialising in period building details. His unique knowledge and experience have involved him in a number of projects for historic royal palaces, the National Trust, government offices and private clients. These include a wide range of building types, from large stately homes to modest terrace houses covering the period c. 1650–1970.

Loyd Grossman

Associate Brother

Architectural historian, heritage policy

Loyd Grossman's lifelong interest in history, the arts and heritage has involved him in a number of organisations. He is the president of The Arts Society (formerly NADFAS) and a vice president of the Churches Conservation Trust and was previously chairman of the Heritage Alliance (2009-18), chairman of the Churches Conservation Trust (2007-16), chairman of the University for the Creative Arts (2008-12) and deputy chairman of the Royal Drawing School (2014-17). He is a governor of The British Institute of Florence, vice president of the Grinling Gibbons Society, a trustee of The Warburg Charitable Trust, patron of the Association for Heritage Interpretation and patron of Heritage Open Days.



Loyd Grossman

Gemma Metheringham

Associate Brother

Fashion design

After 30 years working in creative and design leadership roles in the fashion industry, enough is enough! Over the last five years working as creator and creative director of Label/mix, a collaborative project designed to support emerging and establishing brands backed by Next PLC, I have simultaneously become more and more aware that fashion, as we know it today, is unsustainable and that our throwaway attitude to what we wear needs to change. In 2020 I founded my instagram feed @the_elephant_in_my_wardrobe and started talking about consuming differently, wearing and repairing what I have more, and meeting like-minded people. This research led me to apply for the Fashion Futures MA at London College of Fashion, which I will be starting in September. My mission is to find and support scalable circular design solutions capable of transforming the industry.



Gemma Metheringham

• WORKSHOP •



Natural dyes sourced from local plants
Led by Penny Walsh of AO Textiles

A delightful escape from ‘long lockdown’ was the plant dye workshop held by Penny Walsh on Saturday 28 May. Lovely bunches of wild plants greeted us, alongside a mysterious vat of blue. Penny had selected the most reliable plants for us to chop and brew, but first we must make our mordants. Without these all colours are fugitive and I suspect even Mr Morris with his love of faded tapestry colours wanted them to last the year at least! He worked with Thomas Wardle on his plant dyes and Thomas dyed the yarns for his wife Elizabeth’s recreation of the *Bayeux Tapestry* displayed at Reading Museum. As an embroiderer it doesn’t get much better! And rather like William, Penny is a keen advocate of these low impact dyes and methods.

We chopped privet and nettle and dissolved alum and wood ash to create four mordants and then steeped our fabric swatches over a lunch break. Meanwhile, the mysterious blue was revealed as the wonderful indigo, which works in a very different way and requires no preparation of the fabric other than washing. It doesn’t like oxygen though, so extreme care is required as you slide the fabric in and out of the vat. Then, by magic, a rather odd greenish tint to the fabric

changes before your eyes into the familiar denim blue as oxygen has its way with the dye. Repeated dips darken the shade and before the Tudor innovation in black dyes this was the basis for all black (and expensive) cloth.

Once the mordanted fabrics were ready, it was time for plants! Weld (yellow), madder (orange toned red), brazilwood (crimson) and buckthorn (golden yellow) were ground, shredded and pulverised, and added to hot water vats. Penny is a mine of information about the many combinations of dyes that you can use for a very full colour range, and with the different mordanted fabrics showed us just how many shades we could achieve. We overdyed in indigo for greens and purples and finally ‘saddened’ our colours with after-baths of iron (old nails in water). Madder on wool is a coral red, but after a dip in indigo it is a grey lilac. Brazilwood on cotton is pale pink, but on silk turns claret after a ‘saddening’ iron bath.

We all left with handfuls of beautiful swatches and the knowledge to start a rather lovely new skill.

Fleur Oakes

Above left: Penny selecting raw dye materials.

Above right: Dyeing using tongs.

Opposite: Indigo in raw state.

All images - Jane Cox

• TABLE TOP MUSEUMS •



18 September 2022

The sheer barminess of the collections on display continues and enhances the tradition laid down since its inception in 2014, when George Hardie and Stephen Fowler first launched the concept of what has since become an annual event, much to the enthusiasm of Guild members and outsiders.

This year's event must have been the most successful to date in terms of the number of exhibitors and the fact that the cram-packed tables extended through from the Hall to the yard and upstairs to occupy the Gradidge room. Visitor numbers have risen over the years with the event coinciding with London's Open House Weekend, so Simon Hurst's entertaining and informative tours of the building were well attended.

Collections were well up to the standards of dottiness and obsessions displayed in previous years. In no particular order of rank, Stephen Fowler's *Loch Ness Monster Museum* exhibit held a special attraction for me since a few decades ago I had been the art director of *Fortean Times* – the magazine, and the philosophy of Charles Fort, that was at the heart of his show. James Birch's collection of *Trophy Plates* was striking, and James can always be depended upon to surprise and

impress by the seeming effortless with which he conjures up one collection after another.

Diccon Alexander's beautifully considered and arranged collection of sand samples from round the world made an impression with its subtlety; as also Fleur Oakes' table bursting to the point of overflowing with a mountain of babies' bonnets and tiny clothes, all painstakingly handmade, where a mother's love was clearly evident. I have a soft spot for post-war East European graphics as collected by Zara Huddleston, though rather less so the packaging that interests her; mine is more the political and theatre posters that blazed a trail for the graphics revolution that influenced and inspired a generation of European and American designers in the period that followed.

I could easily have spent the rest of Sunday in the company of fellow Brothers and engaged in conversation with complete strangers but, sadly, I couldn't. Not this year anyway, but I look forward to next year's Table Top Museum with relish!

Richard Adams

Above left: ZEEL's mobile menagerie 'o' crazed creatures

Above right: Museum of Dust - Sally Kindberg

All images – Leigh Milsom Fowler

Table Top Museums 2022



6 Queen Squares – Jane Dorner

Little Folks – Claire Fletcher

• OUTREACH SCHOOLS PROJECT •



Stone carving by the schoolchildren



Papier mâché by the schoolchildren



Woven portraits made by the schoolchildren



Portraits painted by the schoolchildren. All images by Nick Carter

Over the summer Outreach ran a pilot project at the Sir John Heron Primary School in Newham in which four Guild members ran sessions for children from Years 4, 5 and 6, teaching them craft. The aims were to help the children develop their motor skills, introduce them and their families to the idea that careers in the arts are viable options for their futures, and – through the activity of making – help with their general social and emotional development.

The project emerged from a series of brainstorming sessions the Outreach Committee held in 2019. Committee members were asked to put forward an ideal ‘fantasy’ project and among these was Jeremy’s for a travelling ‘roadshow’ of Guild craftspeople visiting community centres, and Sonia’s for the Guild working with primary schools to inspire children with an early experience of working with their hands under the expert tuition of an artist at the top of their profession. With Sonia already having a connection with the Sir John Heron Primary School in Newham it made sense to put these ideas together and the Schools Project was born.

Newham is an ethnically diverse borough but one of London’s poorest. Sir John Heron is a resourced school, meaning it specifically caters for children with autism and multiple learning difficulties, and over the past few years it has additionally developed a speciality in working with refugee children and their families, most recently from Ukraine. In a project such as this we felt it particularly important for the Guild to be directing its energies in partnering a school with these characteristics, and so we were excited by the school’s very positive response.

Spurred on by the school’s enthusiasm for the scheme, we set about recruiting Guild members to run the sessions. Uncertain about what the response would be, we had originally put together a draft structure based on two members, so we were hugely encouraged, when we did a call out to those who we knew had teaching experience, to receive expressions of interest from nine and messages of support from several others who were not in a position to take part. The nine eventually resolved into four – Julie Arkell (papier mâché), Paul Jakeman (stone carving), Bobbie Kociejowski (weaving) and Renée Spierdijk (portraiture). The task of organising was greatly simplified by an agreement that each would independently negotiate the days and times of their sessions directly with the school, and the fact that this worked so smoothly is a tribute to both the flexibility of the school and the commitment of our artists to make it all work. This being a pilot, we wanted to test things out in as straightforward a way as possible, which came down to each of the artists working with a group of 10 to 12 children over three two-hour sessions, aided by one of the school’s teaching assistants.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, as they say, and there’s no better illustration of how the children took to the sessions than to see what they produced, as in the photographs here and on the website (www.artworkersguild.org/what-we-do/outreach/schools-project).

In her sessions, Julie’s group set about manipulating the papier mâché they had made into a wonderfully diverse range of figures and models, from a 50cm wingspan jet to a model of the dog that a recently arrived

refugee girl had had to leave behind in Ukraine with her father. She spoke little English and the work she did with Julie was clearly important in helping her manage this major life event.

Working with the children’s stories was much in evidence in the other groups, too. Renée asked her group to portray someone they admired, and this resulted in paintings on hardboard of, among others, a mum, Usain Bolt, Malala Yousafzai and the late Queen. Under Renée’s guidance these were remarkably sophisticated images, with painted and collaged backgrounds showing something of their creators’ lives and interests. Portraits, but this time self-portraits, were the subjects of Bobbie’s weaving group. It is remarkable how much can be expressed in a woven face based on a copper ring. Once the intricacies and principles of weaving were grasped to form the basic face, clear personalities emerged as hairstyles, headscarves and glasses were added. Meanwhile, in contrast to the delicate manipulation of thread that the weaving group was learning, Paul’s young stonemasons were getting to grips with working blocks of limestone with hammers and chisels. Working outdoors, the sight and sounds of Paul and his group created a huge amount of interest from children and staff alike, as birds and creatures of various kinds emerged in relief from the stone.

The sessions culminated in an exhibition at the Guild in November and a visit by the participating children to see their work professionally displayed – and to see and hear about the Guild. We felt it important for both the Guild and the school to learn about each other in this

way and the discussion we and our four artists had with the children about their experience of the sessions was a fitting conclusion to the year’s work.

The school was extremely pleased with how the project went and appreciative of all the Guild’s hard work, commenting not only on the quality of our four artists’ teaching and the work the children produced but also on the impact of the experience on the children’s personal development:

“Many of the children that took part in the sessions lacked confidence and social skills. It was wonderful to see how working with the artists brought them out of their shell. They could engage creatively with the sessions in a way they couldn’t in the more academic side of our school curriculum. They were extremely enthusiastic to continue and finish each project, and incredibly proud of the work they produced.”

We will be returning to the school next year to run a further programme, appropriately tweaked to take account of the feedback we got from our artists, the school and the children. This will form the basis for documentation to take to other schools that we plan to approach for 2024 and to external trusts for any additional funding necessary for such further development.

Jeremy Nichols and Sonia Tuttiatt

• REPORTS •

Master
TRACEY SHEPPARD

It has been a year! Covid has continued to lurk and train strikes have upended plans across the country. Things did not go according to plan. Never mind! Catherine, Elspeth and Leigh propped me up and encouraged me. They are utterly brilliant. The Trustees have steered a straight, wise course and the Committee and Sub-Committees have worked with clear minds, practical hands and kind hearts. As for the two splendid Hon. Secs, Mark and Isabella, ... I would have been lost without them! You all stuck with me and I am eternally grateful to everyone.

The lectures have been varied and the speakers unfailingly generous, sharing their knowledge, passion and expertise with us. From first to last, they have been stars. It has been a particular joy to have a number of Guild members among them, giving us the opportunity to get to know them and their work better, more fully appreciating their skill and talents.

We have delighted in the fabulously varied technique and approaches of three of our illustrators, Hannah Coulson, Zebedee Helm and Ruth Martin; and witnessed Helen Whittaker's constantly evolving approach to stained glass in an awe-inspiring range of scale and content. We have been introduced to the energy and inventiveness of graffiti and seen how it inspired and informed Ged Palmer's amazing work. Most recently, we have enjoyed the truly sumptuous work of Flora Roberts, who, thank goodness, is 'always painting flowers'.

New Members' Night – when six recent recruits introduced us to their widely varying worlds – was well received. It was a great pleasure to meet them, to put faces to names and to enjoy their work. I really hope that this type of event might be explored again. It provides an opportunity to found friendships between new and old.

We have seen how the ancient has inspired the modern in Kim Wilkie's gloriously sculpted landscapes, and how some of the same land masses feature in the exquisite wood engravings of Howard Phipps. We have heard how Lara Maiklem, the London mudlark, traces 2,000 years of our history on the Thames foreshore and were privileged to be able to handle some of her amazing finds. The trials, tribulations, triumphs and often muddy challenges of working for our largest heritage charity, the National Trust were clearly explained by Wendy

Stott. Jo Sealy introduced us to her recent project, in which she showcases and celebrates established black makers in traditional sectors of UK heritage crafts – an enlightening lecture highlighting a vibrant and diverse group. I very much hope some connections might grow from this particular meeting of minds.

We marvelled at the refinement and beauty resulting from 'slow architecture' when father and son team Peter and Thomas Randall-Page took us on a virtual visit to the Art Barn – the stunning result of nine years of designing and crafting. Andy McConnell took us on a rather more rapid tour across the centuries following the mind-blowing development of the first manmade material to be declared 'carbon neutral' – glass. Louis Thompson's exposition of his personal and creative journey with this magical medium was both luscious and inspiring.

Alixé Bovey gave clear strong witness for materials and making, while freely and clearly acknowledging the importance and relevance of digital developments. And, materials, or to be more specific, thread, stitched us to the rest of the world in an amazing and moving evening spent with Alice Kettle.

On November 10 we were transported backstage by the Panto dame Julian Eardley in a dazzling mix of the history of pantomime, personal journey and performance. An exuberant, lively, laughter filled evening which brought out the child in everyone! There have been extra-curricular activities too. A visit to Winchester in May, which took in a fine Ravilious exhibition among other treats, was enjoyed by a merry band.

More recently the Hall was the scene of a glue fest with young (and old) guests encouraged to make collage cards and shadow puppets at the Jolly Halloween Jamboree. My thanks to Hannah Coulson and Rachel Warr for making this happen. Bright smiles and careful concentration. Everyone enjoyed both the activities and the space, not to mention cake!

We have been treated to a feast with numerous courses. I sincerely hope that there has been something for everyone.

It would be remiss not to mention the other wonderful things that have happened at the Guild: London Craft Week, mentoring webinars, and the Table Top Museum, to name but a few. Outreach has been busy on a number of fronts and, before I close, I would like to draw particular attention to the fabulous work done with the staff and pupils at the Sir John Heron Primary School, Newham. The artwork produced by the pupils was exhibited in the Master's Room. It was wonderful. A testament not only to the pupils who made it but also to their teachers, who

encouraged them, and to our fellow Guild Members, whose care, dedication and skill enabled the project to happen. You should all be immensely proud of what you have achieved.

In short, the Art Workers' Guild is alive and very well and has so much to give.

Thank you all for giving me so much this year.

Chairman of Trustees
PM PHIL ABEL

Once again the Trustees have had to deal with a challenging financial situation this year. We have been fortunate to have been guided by our Treasurer, Alec McQuin, and our Secretary, Catherine O'Keeffe. Their careful management has seen us through a period that could have caused the Guild grave problems, but thanks to them our financial situation has continued to improve.

The staffing of the Guild is one of the Trustees' major responsibilities. I have therefore been meeting Elspeth and liaising with Catherine and Leigh to discuss how to handle her changing capabilities. As you will know, in recent months we have taken on temporary staff to cover tasks that we did not feel we could ask Elspeth to continue with. These arrangements have given Catherine and Leigh a good deal of stress and extra work, and we are really most grateful to them.

Elspeth has given so much to the Guild over many years and I know that we all thank her most sincerely as she approaches retirement.

Making the wrong decisions about staffing matters can have very serious consequences and Alec McQuin's experience and advice have been invaluable as we have done our best to look after the interests of our employees and of the Guild as a whole.

Hon. Treasurer
Year Ended 30 September 2022s
ALEC McQUIN

The year, despite some continuing Covid-related issues and uncertainty, has been a successful one for the Art Workers' Guild and I am pleased to once again submit the annual accounts as your Honorary Treasurer.

My report below compares the figures achieved during the year against budget, both of which were set taking a cautious and realistic view. The budget figures for this year are shown in brackets.

The hiring and catering income was affected, as the Guild was closed for some of the year and it took time for confidence to return to our hiring customers. Income derived from these activities was £94,953.00 (£99,866.00)

Despite the difficulties, I am pleased to report that we achieved a respectable surplus for the 12-month period.

We again did not furlough the administrative staff, as they worked tirelessly meeting the needs of the membership and completing the myriad list of Zoom meetings, Guild meetings, Guild organisation, minutes, blogs, organising maintenance of the building and its equipment, along with the endless administrative and financial details that keep us in check.

I would like here to acknowledge the heroic work undertaken by the Guild Secretary, Catherine O'Keeffe, our Administrator, Leigh Milsom Fowler, and the Guild Steward, Elspeth Dennison, for the exceptional support they have given us during this challenging and demanding year – thank you.

I would also like to acknowledge the support and generosity of the individual donations, bequests and trusts that assist the Guild and support our work, in particular the whole membership for their continued support.

Income

Income for the year was £262,556.00 against budget (£264,690.00) a small deficit of £2,134.00 – 1%. This was an excellent result despite the difficulties and challenges we faced during the year.

The income was made up as below (budget figures in brackets):

- A. Rental income and investments: £95,786.00 (£94,750.00) Difference £1,036.00 (+1.1%)
- B. Subscriptions: £42,872.00 (£42,331.00) Difference £541.00 (+1.3%)
- C. Donations, Gift Aid, bequests & fundraising: £14,310.00 (£13,762.00) Difference £548.00 (+4%)
- D. Hiring of rooms and catering: £94,953.00 (£99,866.00) Difference -£4,913.00 (-4.9%)
- E. Other income: Guild guests, outings, postcards, outreach and sundry: £4,404.00 (£3,652.00) Difference £752.00 (+21%)
- F. Cleaning and insurance reimbursements: £5,203.00 (£5,635.00) Difference -£432.00 (-7.7%)

Expenditure

Total expenditure was £229,590.00 (£232,902.00) Difference £3,312.00 (+1.4%)

Overall position:

The accounts show a surplus for the 12-month period of £32,966.00 (against a budgeted figure of £31,789.00). Difference £1,177 (+3.7%)

Balance sheet:

The balance sheet stands at £538,418.00, as compared with £505,453.00 last year, an increase of £32,965.00 (+6.5%).

In addition to the above, the items detailed below should be noted:

- Despite the difficult trading conditions during the year, we have ended the year with a reasonable surplus.
- The building is in excellent condition and only regular maintenance items should be required in the future.
- The administrative team have worked exceptionally hard and supported the membership and myself brilliantly during this difficult time.
- Our monthly P&L management accounts are accurate and timely.

The Art Workers' Guild remains a viable and successful charity and continues to strive to fulfil its aims and objectives. In what may be a difficult trading year ahead with inflation and a potential recession looming, we are in a good position to weather the storm.

I would conclude by thanking everyone for their support and encouragement in the year, in particular our Chairman, Phil Abel, and our Master, Tracey Sheppard. I would also thank the Trustees and Committee for their constant support and help, and finally our membership for their continued loyalty and support during the year.

Hon. Secretaries

MARK WINSTANLEY (HON. SEC. 2015–22)

It has been a great privilege to serve the Master, Tracey Sheppard, whose tenure of the Chair we have greatly enjoyed.

Your Hon. Secs. are pleased to announce the proposal of Chris Keenan, who will, if elected, take up the duties of your new Hon. Sec. in January 2023.

On a personal note, quite how to express the happiness that the seven years in a blue robe has given me is very difficult. The friendships, the camaraderie and the laughter I have shared with our Masters,

whose patience was often tried, will always be a glow in my heart.

Thank you to Celia Ward, Rebecca Jewell and Charlotte Hubbard, whose calm, serene and pellucid council kept me on the rails.

Out in the serried ranks of the Brethren, there are 22 Brothers who have written up the minutes. My gratitude for your forbearance, patience and fortitude will never be quite enough. The odd breakfast at the Savoy was scant reward for all your efforts.

We are fortunate indeed that the office is run so brilliantly by Catherine and Leigh. Their support is generously given. I must also give my thanks to Elspeth for her unfailing help. Now, the deluge is over and you, the Brethren, are in the safe hands of Isabella and Chris.

Hon. Architect

SIMON HURST

This year has again been one of keeping expenditure to a minimum, with some essential repairs being carried out and some cosmetic works to keep the place looking shipshape.

Next year we shall restart the Decoration and Building Committee's meetings and resurrect some projects that had been put on hold over the last couple of years. I would therefore hope that my report this time next year will have some more exciting things to report.

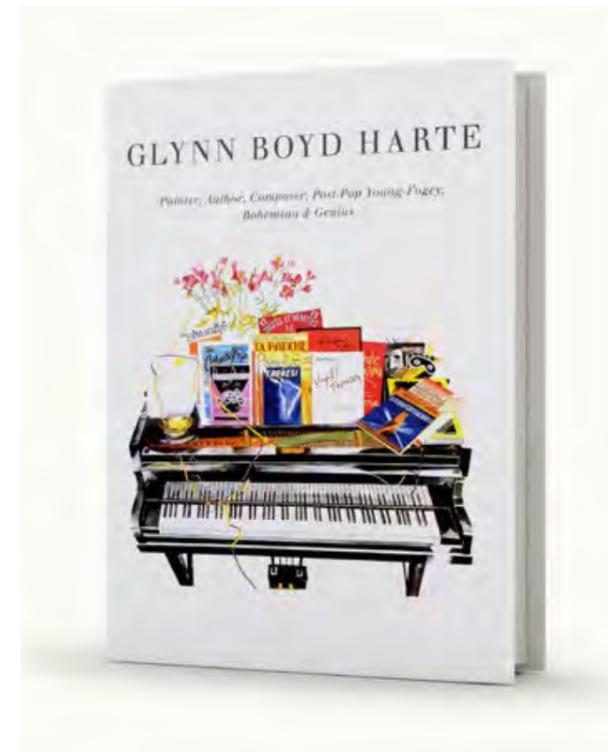
Hon. Curator

NEIL JENNINGS

The year began with the continuation of the popular exhibition celebrating the life and work of the late Josephine Harris.

We also saw an exhibition of new watercolours by Ian Archie Beck and an exhibition and launch of the new book on the life and work of the late Glynn Boyd Harte. Vicki Ambery-Smith displayed her exquisite architecturally-based jewellery and silverware and celebrated the publication of her new book. William and James Shand exhibited their recent watercolours.

In the Master's Room we had a selling exhibition devised by Georgy Metichian of work by more than 15 members, showcasing the breadth and depth of talent within the Guild. This exhibition continued until the end of January 2023.



Glynn Boyd Harte, published September 2022

The current display in the Gallery (continuing until early 2023) is a visual survey of Guild revels, beginning with *Beauty's Awakening* in 1899; through the inter-war Shrovetide revels with their wordplay and varied typographical designs and on to the revival of revels, pantomimes and light-hearted entertainments towards the end of the century with wonderful props and ephemera by Alan Powers, Ian Archie Beck, Glynn Boyd Harte and others.

This autumn has seen a significant Outreach project exhibition in the Master's Room: Sonia Tuttiert and Jeremy Nichols managed a programme of hands-on teaching and making with children from Years 4, 5 and 6 from the Sir John Heron Primary School in Newham. Huge thanks and congratulations are due to Sonia, Jeremy, the schoolchildren, all at the school and of course to the teachers – Julie Arkell, Paul Jakeman, Bobbie Kociejowski and Renée Spierdijk – for giving their time, expertise and enthusiasm. The work produced by the children lit up the Master's Room and wowed all those who saw it and it is hoped that this will be an ongoing project and a strong link.

Next year promises exhibitions of work by Prue Cooper, Joe Whitlock Blundell and others, as well as a display of contemporary architectural drawings.

I would like to thank Alan Powers for his unerring curatorial eye and thank Elspeth and Leigh for ... everything.

Hon. Librarian
RACHAEL MATTHEWS

One book at a time, we slowly find a new order. Thank you to all that have helped so far. Please get in touch if you love indexing!

Outreach Report
PM ANNE THORNE

Eight years ago the Guild established its Outreach Committee, 'to initiate, consider and promote projects or events which further the Guild's educational objectives'. Since then a number of very successful Outreach programmes and activities have been set up, three of which are now established as part of the Guild's main calendar and run separately – its involvement with London Craft Week, the annual Table Top Museum and the Guild's Mentoring scheme – and are reported on other pages. Also reported separately is the hugely successful schools project, which we very much hope will also be repeated in coming years.

In addition to these, there have been three Useful Parallels events this year. The first was the fourth of the annual Material Witness study days arranged for post-graduate art history students, to help them understand how the objects they were studying for their doctorates were actually made and the materials and techniques used by their makers. The second was the Useful Parallels event for MA architecture students at the London School of Architecture (as buzzing and lively as last year's), and the third, for the first time, for students at the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) studying a range of crafts.

We were delighted to include two of the makers who featured in Jo Sealy's project *The Black Artisans* (see minutes on page 12) our line-up of demonstrators for Useful Parallels with UCA. Feedback from the students has been really positive; they left the Guild feeling 'inspired' and 'excited'. They also said how much they valued hearing from 'friendly, approachable' demonstrators, particularly relishing behind-the-scenes insights. 'It was wonderful to hear all the makers talk about their areas of expertise and their individual journeys – both the highs and the lows – and hearing tips about setting up a business.'

We also hosted a supper in March for about 30 people, half of the guests being members of the Guild

who wished to be involved with Outreach activities (or who were involved already) and the other half people from outside the Guild who have similar concerns and interests and who feel that involvement with the Guild could be mutually beneficial. The supper was very informal (we did our own catering on a small budget) and it proved to be an ideal forum for forging connections and chewing over ideas. Some ideas emerged that could be acted on almost at once; others will hibernate and mature or become a working part of something else. That the Guild is able to work in this way is a unique advantage.

Everyone has found these activities rewarding and enjoyable, and Guild members can involve themselves in a variety of ways. Please contact me or a member of the committee if you would like to be involved with Outreach programmes. Volunteers are, of course, key to their success.

Mentoring Committee Report
LLEWELLYN THOMAS

The Mentoring Committee planned and ran three successful webinar events through the year. Three panel discussions took place on the themes of collaboration, designing for manufacture, and managing change in professional creative practice.

Full advantage was taken of the new broadcast system in the hall and for all three events there was a significant virtual audience. This feature is especially important for the mentoring initiative, as potential new mentees can look in with curiosity and assess the opportunities we could offer them as they consider the need and purpose of a mentor as they develop their career. A focus for the Mentoring Committee next year will be how we can better make our usefulness connect to developing creatives outside London, further afield and even globally.

The panel discussion format seems to work well and certainly gives an opportunity for Guildsmen to contribute and share personal experiences in an engaging way. Next year the format will continue with a series of evenings that focus on some of the specialist areas of practice, and the discussion will be chaired by someone knowledgeable within that particular area.

The committee will be meeting to discuss plans for next year and to replace the chair, who, as the rules state, has reached the end of tenure. We are looking for new committee members as well as a new chair to carry on the mentoring initiative.

Guild Chest

The Guild Chest is a contingency fund to help Art Workers deal with the unexpected. Stuff happens! If you are in the throes of an unpredictable moment, talk to us in complete confidence.

We can help with anything that affects your career as a craftsman – a project that has fallen through, ill health or bereavement, equipment you can't afford to upgrade, or even a steep heating bill. We can't help fund exhibitions, but try one of us and we'll see what can be done.

Bro. Angela Barrett (Chairman):

abarrett316@btinternet.com | 020 7833 3262

Bro. Jane Dorner:

jane@editor.net | 020 8883 2602

Bro. Simon Smith:

info@simonsmithstonecarving.com | 020 7277 7488

Guild Secretary's Report
CATHERINE O'KEEFFE

This year saw the return of London Craft Week to its usual time of mid-May. The Guild held an exhibition with demonstrations plus a series of talks over the weekend of 13–15 May. It was extremely well attended by the general public and Guildsmen alike and was deemed a great success by all. The Table Top Museum during Open House weekend at the end of September was also revived in its usual format, with tours of the building and displays of people's weird and wonderful collections. Visitor numbers were higher than ever, and we were greatly helped by volunteers from Open House, who manned the bar and the door, thus giving members the chance to enjoy the event without interruption.

We have taken on a freelance social media marketing person, Megan Blythin, who has done sterling work promoting these and other events at the Guild. She is also responsible for maintaining our general presence on social media and has met with some success, with our followers on Instagram now numbering more than 7,000.

Elspeth's illness has been a great worry during the past year. We feel for her and have been doing our best to ensure that she does not carry out tasks that could put her in any danger. We have recruited four temporary catering staff, who between them have shared Elspeth's workload as much as they are able, while trying to absorb all her accumulated wisdom and knowledge about the hirers and their various needs and requirements. Her calm and reassuring presence will be greatly missed by all of us.



NEW MEMBERS IN 2022

New Brothers

Jane Adam – Jeweller
Tom Croft – Architect
*Bill Dunster – Architect, planner,
product designer*
Luci Eyers - Painter
Henrietta Harford – Tailor, weaver
Nick Hughes – Wallpaper designer, printmaker
Angela James - Bookbinder
*Ana Maria Pacheco – Sculptor, painter,
printmaker*

Associate Brothers

Clive Aslet – Writer, book publisher
Rachel Bebb – Art gallery owner
Charles Brooking – Architectural historian
*Loyd Grossman – Architectural historian,
heritage policy*
Gemma Metheringham – Knitwear design

VALETE

Juliet Barker MBE
James Butler MBE
Jane McAdam Freud
Diane Haigh
John Harris OBE
Thomas Hudson
John Rawson
John Rae
Jenny Lagnado

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 2022

Master – Tracey Sheppard
Immediate Past Master – Alan Powers
Master Elect – Fred Baier
Master Elect Elect – Rob Ryan
Chairman of Trustees – Phil Abel

HON. OFFICERS

*Hon. Secretaries – Isabella Kocum
Mark Winstanley*
Hon. Treasurer – Alec McQuin
Hon. Architect – Simon Hurst
Hon. Librarian – Rachael Matthews
Hon. Archivist – Frances Spalding
Hon. Curator – Neil Jennings
Hon. Editor – Prue Cooper
Chair of Outreach Cttee – PM Anne Thorne
Chair of Mentoring Cttee – Llewellyn Thomas

ORDINARY MEMBERS

Karen Butti
Eric Cartwright
Hannah Coulson
Tanya Harrod
Ruth Martin
Joe Whitlock Blundell

Guild Secretary – Catherine O’Keeffe
Guild Administrator – Leigh Milsom Fowler
Guild Steward – Elspeth Dennison

