THE ART WORKERS' GUILD
PROCEEDINGS AND NOTES · NO. 29 · JANUARY 2015

What is the Guild For?

This question has been asked more and more in the last few years, mostly by new or prospective members. It became particularly urgent to have an answer when we started to ask for large chunks of money from outside sources, who, reasonably enough, would like to know. And we ourselves need to know the answer, so that the palpable energy which is so often felt when we gather, can be harnessed and the aims of our founders be fulfilled in ways that are relevant now.

In 1886, J.D. Sedding asked 'What is the Guild?' and answered: 'If we rest content with social meetings for self improvement, we are doomed'.

Perhaps the Guild's greatest strength is also its greatest weakness; nowhere else do all art and craft disciplines meet regularly, on equal terms, discussing common concerns and interests, in an atmosphere of sociability. The danger is that pleasure in sociability makes us forget that out of that fellowship grows a sense of common purpose, on which we should build.

The Guild was founded by young Turks who wanted to shake things up. Their average age was 37; the average age in 2014 is 63. The 'buzz' often remarked on by older members in the last few years comes, most obviously, from the number of much younger members who have been joining. They value what the young have always valued in the Guild – the sense of continuity, and interaction on equal terms with those of greater experience – and the young in turn are valued for bringing fresh ideas and approaches, and equally, for the sense of continuity.

Bro. Stephen Fowler's astonishingly successful Table-Top Museum event was a blast of fresh air which upturned any notion of the Guild's stuffiness (a journalist on the *Art Newspaper* commented 'Stuff Frieze; this is where it's at'). PM George Hardie's mentoring initiative, the revived plans for an apprenticeship scheme, and the various projects all capitalise on this enthusiasm, and go part of the way towards answering the opening question.

Outreach projects included:

- Three events in collaboration with Bro. Roger Kneebone funded by the Wellcome Trust: one (titled 'The Intelligence of Touch') for an audience of students and educators (both arts and medical); two for detailed discussions of craft techniques (such as 'thread management'), between clinicians and craft practitioners.

- A joint event with East London Textile Arts (a successful community project), with presentations and discussion around how ideas are conjured up, and come to fruition.

- An event organised jointly with the Courtauld Institute for PhD students wanting to acquire a physical understanding of the material culture they are studying.

- Initial collaboration with Grizedale Arts, leading to possible longer-term projects; funded jointly by the de Laszlo Foundation and the Guild Outreach budget.

There are several projects and events planned for next year; we need more members to get involved – the rewards are two-way. And we need the young – bring them on!It has been a huge privilege to be part of all this, working with people so full of ideas and energy. This year is the centenary of the mastership of the remarkable and delightful Thomas Okey, basket-maker, whose words I echo: 'I owe more than I have skill to express to my generous friends and fellow members of the Guild. *Vivat!*'

PRUE COOPER, MASTER FOR 2014

Guild Business

Julian Bicknell entered the Hall for the last time as Master, and swiftly moved on to the introductions of two new Brothers: John Benjamin and Nick Carter. As is customary on Master's Night, a bowl was passed round to raise money for the Guild Chest, bringing in a little over £800. Hon. Sec. Rachael Matthews thanked Julian Bicknell for a wonderful year, and in turn he praised the committee members for the smooth way the Guild is run. He exited the Hall to a round of applause.

Five minutes hence the bell rang for Master Prue Cooper who entered a full Hall, to yet more applause.

Lecture · Master's Night · MASTER PRUE COOPER

The Master started to explain how much she had appreciated the advice of Past Masters in compiling her programme for the year, and hoped her chosen subjects would interest Brethren of all disciplines and draw them together.

She explained how the Guild's recent fund-raising initiatives have thrown up questions about how the Guild can be of use to the outside world, thus re-enthusing our obligation to educate. She stressed the importance of our continued work on apprenticeships, mentoring schemes with colleges, and proposed talks and workshops with other organisations.

One hundred years ago, our predecessors had the foresight to raise the money to buy 6 Queen Square, knock it into shape and build the Hall. We must remember that our building is 'The Goose that Lays the Golden Egg'. We are responsible for keeping it in good condition. Members were encouraged to see the Master afterwards to find out how they can get involved.

It took years for the Master to discover clay. We started with a charming photo of her family before she was born. Her father stood for Parliament four times for both Liberal and Labour, but sadly for him he never won. He thrived on conflict and shouting and would have loved the House of Commons. Prue's mother, known as The Great Enjoyer, taught her the joy of making things. Prue's brother, the writer Heathcote Williams, was very much part of the counter-culture of the 60s and 70s, and his utopian vision led him to co-found the Albion Free State, also known as Frestonia: three streets in Shepherd's Bush which declared independence from Britain. We saw the Master's passport.

Prue entered the Byam Shaw School of Art, 'an art school for students with clean fingernails', at a young age, and fortunately while Maurice de Sausmarez was Principal and writing his book *Basic Design* which was illustrated with students' work. Completely absorbed, she revelled in the classes, but on leaving college at the age of 19 had read that Roger Fry recognised that he would never be a great painter 'because he never forgot to have lunch', and nor did she. It was time to find other ways of making a living.

Heathcote saw an advertisement in a sweetshop window saying: 'Art dealer requires assistant' and Prue got the job. The dealer was a slightly shady character, who needed Prue to write letters to Emile Littler, a theatre impresario and collector of Jacob Epstein bronzes, who was fed up with buying bronzes from the same person. Prue's job was to pretend to be other people, with different reasons for selling bronzes and the dealer posted the letters from his contacts in different parts of the world to maintain the fiction. One evening Littler was interviewed on television by Cliff Michelmore about his bronzes and he said, 'People write to me from all over the world offering them to me'. Years later, *The Sunday Times* ran an article stating that Epstein's widow had been churning out bronzes, after someone noted that eleven busts of Churchill existed out of a limited edition of six.

Excited by the saleroom, Prue left and started buying and selling 18th and 19th century drawings and watercolours. She worked from home and put on an exhibition every 18 months, at the Alpine Club (in those days the only gallery available to hire) and she invented an employer for herself: a louche character she named Roland Beckett. He was always having motorbike accidents, which was why he never appeared, and five years on Prue was confident enough to kill him off.

We then had a show of artworks Prue had collected or sold, and there were two exhibitions she regretted not having put on. One was 'Good Drawings by Awful Artists', another was to be an exhibition of drawings of disputed authorship – with betting slips attached, and priced according to the odds. Some of the paintings contained unidentified buildings, which led her to research at the National Buildings Record where she met Hon. Archivist Nicholas Cooper, pictured in his youth: the next slide was of their wedding day.

Prue came to pottery by chance, when they moved into their house and she joined an evening class to make tiles for the kitchen. Luckily the tutor encouraged her to use slip clay and lots of pennies dropped.

Prue loves the directness of slipware as it shows the potter's immediate touch. Red clay is straight forward, and pressed dishes are made like jam tarts. Brushing slip onto newspaper cut-outs, she sgraffitos the internal lines with a porcupine quill. It then gets transferred onto the damp clay and the paper is peeled off. The usefulness of the dishes is what appeals, and to make things that communicate through their function. Large dishes for food can't help but convey sociability and common purpose.

Words on her dishes are all quotations, because literature is freely available, which in itself inspires a sense of sharing. We then saw an entertaining slideshow of dishes, with charming and funny quotations and drawings, some of which looked like Prue and

Nicholas throwing a jolly good party.

To end, the Master showed us a newspaper clipping of a Japanese man waiting on a railway platform, and sitting on his Apple Mac laptop, which he had opened and turned on its side to make a stool. He looked comfortable and was reading the newspaper. The Master said she has this pinned to the wall because he would make a great Guildsman. He is so comfortable with his machine that he uses it in a way unimagined by its designers, yet he takes delight in reading a newspaper, made with technology that is hundreds of years old.

Hon. Sec. Rachael Matthews

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30 January · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

The customary notices were given and the speaker introduced.

Lecture · The Museum of British Folklore

SIMON COSTIN

Simon Costin opened his talk with a challenge, asking why we do not as yet have an open and functioning Museum of British Folklore. To make the point he showed images of the Whitby Penny Hedge ceremony, the remarkable Saddleworth Rush Cart and the famous Abbots Bromley Horn Dancers, speculating on the presumed genesis of these seasonal rituals. He noted that the reindeer antlers held by the two teams of Abbots Bromley dancers had been carbon-dated to 1065. In a more contemporary vein, he showed images of the Notting Hill Carnival and reflected on the more recent phenomenon of Ghost Bikes, white bicycles attached to railings close to places where cyclists had been killed.

He argued that slang expressions, superstitions, urban myths and legends, jokes, fairy tale and rituals are all ways in which we communicate our shared identity at a local or national level. He felt so strongly about this that in 2009 he registered the name the 'Museum of British Folklore' and took advice from his old friend Hilary Williams, Director of the Ditchling Museum of Art & Craft.

Williams suggested that he 'go on the road' in a caravan to raise support. In 2009 Costin bought a 1976 Castleton caravan, which he gutted and decorated with fairground motifs. After a star-studded fund-raising event at Cecil Sharp House, with guests including Helena Bonham-Carter and Tilda Swinton, he set off in the caravan, which was filled with folk and popular art literature and with objects from corn dollies to fortune-telling tea-cups to a Mark Hearld platter. Costin acknowledged his creative use of the magnificent archive created by Doc Rowe since the 60s in which Rowe recorded and filmed cultural traditions and vernacular arts in the form of folklore, song and dance.

The Museum of Folklore has since carried out evaluation strategies and has come up with a business plan. In 2011 the Paul Hamlyn Foundation gave funds for a schools programme. As the folkloric caravan travelled to seasonal folk events, a photographic record was made of individual participants in a pop-up camera studio. This interest in photography led to the show 'Collective Observations: Folklore and Photography' held at the Towner Gallery, Eastbourne in August 2012. Here Costin showed images of the remarkable Britannia Coco-Nut Dancers of Bacup with their blacked-up faces and their costumes which resemble the foustanella of Greek national dress.

The caravan tour led to a two-year exhibition programme. Costin showed footage and stills from Doc Rowe's collection, part of the 2012 show 'The Doc Rowe Archive: Fifty Years of Focusing on Folk', held at the Museum of East Anglian Life. This showed Rowe's still images and his Super-8 films as well as the equipment he has used over the years, including all his recording equipment that has shrunk in bulk as technology developed.

As a result of the donation of the Maurice Evans fireworks collection Costin staged the show 'Remember, Remember: a History of Fireworks in Britain' at Compton Verney in December 2011. Simon Costin showed images of the imaginative display with its firework-shaped display cases and made the case for the bold typography and graphics of firework packaging as a form of folk art.

Reverting to the Towner Art Gallery show of photography, Costin talked about events surrounding the show including the use of live feed from Flickr which generated hundreds of images. Costin went on to describe the fascinating 2013 reprise of Barbara Jones's Festival of Britain show 'Black Eyes and Lemonade' at the Whitechapel Art Gallery (where the exhibition was originally held) curated by Costin in collaboration with Catherine Moriarty. Moriarty and Costin found many of the objects in the original show including the famous Airedale dog fireplace.

The re-opening of the Ditchling Museum led Costin to the Ditchling Museum's Adam Richards Architects who have drawn up plans for an actual building for a national Museum of British Folklore, set in a wood and designed in the form of a star-shaped wheel of the year, reflecting seasonal customs with special collections housed in triangular buildings.

Costin reflected on recent projects, including Morris Folk, intended to document the variety of Morris Sides' costumes in England by sending out dolls to be clothed in miniature by regional teams. He explained how on 31 October 2013 (Halloween) the entire collection of the Museum of Witchcraft, an independent museum in Boscastle, Cornwall, comprising 2500 objects and originally set up by Graham King was gifted to the Museum of British Folklore.

Simon Costin then live-streamed a short film about the Museum of British Folklore (watchable

on Vimeo) that made an eloquent case for the support of the project, with contributions from Alice Rawsthorne, Adam Richards and Ronald Hutton. Costin explained that the remit of the Museum would concentrate on seasonal activities and ceremonies. His scope would be narrower than Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane's Folk Archive. The film was then shown.

Questions followed. Carrie Bullock mentioned a Museum of bygones near Bristol and suggested that grave-stones were an interesting example of a popular art form. Chris Brown complimented Simon on his talk and asked if the Bengali, Chinese and other immigrant communities would come under the rubric 'British' folklore. Costin replied that this would be the case and that the Museum team were already involved in the Hindu Diwali festivities, seeing them as analogous to other fire festivals. Ben Pentreath noted that folklore was essentially ephemeral and suggested that the projected museum buildings were too formal. His alternative suggestion was a collection of caravans. Costin agreed there was a disconnect between performance and museums which were usually associated with objects) but argued that caravans would be impractical.

The question was raised as to whether buildings designed for a specific purpose had a limited lifespan. Celia Ward mentioned the Museum of the Romanian Peasant founded in Bucharest by Alexandru Tzigara-Samurcaș as a possible model. Nicholas Cooper wondered, given that folklore is continually being re-invented, if folkloric ceremonies change when they become the object of media interest and of study. On this matter of authenticity Costin argued that activities like the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance were localised and that many traditional groups knew nothing of other folk activity and were not interested in it or in the attentions of outsiders. Carrie Bullock asked about Government Health and Safety legislation, citing the famous Flaming Tar Barrels of Ottery St Mary, Devon. Costin agreed that this could be problematic, noting the banning of the Coco-Nut Dancers of Bacup from dancing on the public highway brought to attention because of YouTube.

Bro. Tanya Harrod

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13 February · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

An outing on 26 February to the William Morris Gallery was announced, to see the Jeremy Deller exhibition. Notice was given of the fund-raising party on 4 March, with demonstrations from Guildsmen in aid of the Guild's building development. The Master emphasised an immediate need for £100,000 to push on with the project, indicating the gift forms on the table.

Lecture · The Intelligence of Touch

ROGER KNEEBONE WITH JOSHUA BYRNE AND PAUL JAKEMAN

Picture three gentlemen seated formally across a raised platform, leaning inwards, communicating with generous hand gestures; making connections. One is lean and precisely shaven, another sports a long, vigorous beard shaped to a point, the third is neatly presented with tidy, light-brown hair. On the right is Professor Roger Kneebone, in the centre is Paul Jakeman, both Guildsmen; on the left is Joshua Byrne, Savile Row tailor. During the evening a discussion will develop about their manner of working, their use of tools, the traditions of their chosen craft; they may discuss relationships with colleagues and with those they serve (patients, customers, patrons) and distinguish certain areas of common and contrasting experience.

Roger Kneebone, professor of surgical education at Imperial College, starts with a slideshow. With great clarity he describes the world of surgery. He shows to those who dare look, waxy-yellow and moss-green intestines being touched and explored for a surgical procedure to be carried out, he says, by 'a collaborative group enacting a performance'. Then a gentler image is screened, also green cast. It is an artwork by Barbara Hepworth showing surgeons in scrubs, standing in the operating theatre, all eyes focused down on the unseen patient, their hands as yet unmoving.

Next we see an image of an anatomical textbook where every tiny part of the human body is named. Roger explains that although it provides essential knowledge for students, this alone is insufficient; they should familiarise the internal body parts by actually touching them. We are told that keyhole surgery is a very different procedure, its dependence being on a magnified screen image. With this aid the surgeon and his team will need to make a translation, and, for this process, touch may not be quite so essential.

The surgeon now leaves the comfort of his knowledge and ventures into the world of the tailor. We see him struggling to sew a garment with large needle and small thimble, observed by Joshua. They show surprise at the difficulty caused by the unfamiliarity of the materials and the tools, the touch, the procedure. For Joshua the tailor, repetition allows him to work instinctively; while telling us about his craft he touches the fabric like a friend. A potter is now seen raising a shiny cylinder on a wheel. Near the top the clay may be over thin and might collapse. Roger draws a neat parallel with stitching up thinning skin. We see images of familiar Guildsmen at work: Bro. Paul Jakeman using his stone chisel; PM Stephen Gottlieb and his lutes together with templates, laid on a table like tailors' patterns. A further image shows a musician, comfortable with both lute and electric guitar, and we are told that he is able to 'move across procedures like a surgeon'.

The Wellcome Trust have commissioned Professor

Kneebone to make a film re-enacting a now obsolete operation. Three retired surgeons carry out a process that will provide a useful record of skills from times when action was connected directly to the patient before the days of keyhole. It is relevant to this audience of experienced craftsmen whose handwork may well be superseded by automisation but whose knowledge will continue to be sought, often in the field of restoration.

To return to those three gentlemen. Our stonecarver lifts his heavy chisel, turns it with his hand; it is familiar, he feels its intentions. He then carries a weighty stone to the platform (he is Atlas); with patient carving a gothic leaf will evolve. He describes the process while his hands move instinctively, emphasising his words. The tailor is also patient; he knows the jacket he is preparing will take time to form. The internal structure he has cut and sewn will be maintained but the lengthy white external stitching is only scaffolding and will continue to change until he and the client are satisfied. Joshua Byrne tells of a well-tried process, of his tools and materials. He comes from a tradition that will continue; so will Paul's just as long as there are people requiring the individual and caring craft they offer.

The suit, the stone, the body all require sensitive and individual attention. A common bond becomes clear: it is a dependence on traditional and new skills and a deep understanding of the requisite tools and materials. There is degree of flexibility, of creativity in Paul and Joshua's work, but is this an option for a surgeon? Perhaps we would rather not know!

Contributions from the audience are encouraged so Hon. Sec. Rachael Matthews begins by commenting on the need for giving confidence before formal instruction to her students. PM Julian Bicknell distinguishes the hands and the mind; the first controlling the craft, the latter intellectualising the learning procedure. Hon. Archivist Nicholas Cooper observes that whereas a musician's skill relies on repetition, the bellringer, like an on-course bookmaker, will know instinctively when to shorten the odds. Bro. Caroline Washington believes that observation is all important and Master Elect Elect (ME) David Birch worries that there is a danger we may lose traditional forms of communication and understanding of process. Architect Bro. Anne Thorne speaks of her experience of changing the process required from individual to teamwork. Bro. Graham Miller tells of his experience (or rather the lack of it) when, as an apprentice photographer, he was forbidden to go under the black cloth! His understanding depended on what he saw externally. Would he rather have been a trainee surgeon where the professor tells us 'they start with bits of it?'

Our three contributors provoked questions and discussion that continued during refreshments with calls for wider discourse on a future occasion. Before breaking up and after loud applause in appreciation of an excellent evening organised by Bro. Kneebone, the audience were asked to respond, in the form of ideas and impressions, to be written or sketched on a sheet of blue card; alternatively notes might be communicated to him by tweeting to #awg13feb – initiating the Guild's first foray into the Twittersphere.

PM Sally Pollitzer

27 February · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

The Master reminded the company of the forthcoming fund-raising party and gave us the good news that the Prince of Wales had endorsed our efforts; notices were given and the speaker introduced.

Lecture · The Ethics of Conservation and Creativity

KATY LITHGOW · HEAD OF CONSERVATION AT THE NATIONAL TRUST

The central topic of Katy Lithgow's talk was whether creative conservation was a contradiction in terms – and to anticipate, her emphatic conclusion was that for conservation to succeed in all its objectives, conservators needed to be creative.

There are a number of principles that conservators observe, many enshrined in the 1964 Venice Charter. These include the essential need for research into all aspects of an object before one starts; the importance of using techniques that don't mislead; and the basic rule that one should do as much work as is necessary while at the same time doing as little work as possible. In practical terms, these principles lead to a number of further rules. The conservator must record every process and every material used. Ideally, the treatment should be reversible if for any reason it is decided to restore the object to an earlier condition. On the other hand, reversal may not always be possible, so it is more important that the materials one uses should be compatible with the object being restored, and should not deteriorate at a different rate or react to physical conditions in different ways. Then there is the question of what to do with machines and other things that are meant to work and are therefore bound to wear out. Any conservation involves informed risk-taking and cost-benefit analysis, and making an assessment of what might be lost as a result of what is done. Such judgements mean that creative decisions are called for.

How the conservator deals with an object depends on an assessment of its significance, but there may be no one 'authentic' way of dealing with it. Objects can mean different things at different times and in different circumstances, and may be important in different ways to different people. Central, therefore, to the speaker's theme was the importance of context. The same piece of well-worn furniture, for example, that would look totally in keeping in an old manor house, would need to be immaculately restored to suit a smart Edwardian interior. There is always a potential tension, too, between conservation and public access, and the ways in which objects

are displayed or visitors are involved are changing all the time. Furthermore, the older the objects are, the more associations they acquire from the people who have owned them, from the different ways they have been regarded or the different ways in which they have been used. Some of these ways transcend the physical, as in the case of things valued for associational or sacred reasons. In circumstances like these there may be no 'right' way to restore things beyond following the rules set out earlier about accountability, reversibility and so on: there may however be several 'authentic' ways to choose from depending on context.

The speaker illustrated all of these issues with highly illuminating examples. At William Morris's Red House – a particularly relevant case in view of Morris's association with the Guild and his foundation of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) – an owner in the 1960s had painted the interiors white in deference to what was then seen as the significance of the house as a pioneering work of functionalist architecture. Currently, however, generations of overpainting are being removed to reveal the original murals in acknowledgement of the house's significance for Morris and his friends and a different version of history. In another case, restoring an 18th century clock to working order meant restoring its ability to do what it did originally, and thus involved making new parts. The line between a restoration and a replica may be a difficult one to draw, and where one draws it will often have to be decided case by case.

The conflict between access and conservation may be resolved sacrificially, so to speak; at Chartwell, furnishing fabrics have been re-made so that visitors can be allowed to sit on chairs at the Churchills' breakfast table and enjoy Winston Churchill's morning view. Associations can stimulate the creation of new works of art in an historic setting, as with some extraordinary, literally electrifying, installations at Cragside, the first English house to be lit by electricity. All of this arises from the fact that conservation is not an end in itself. Its ultimate end is to enable people living in the 21st century to engage with the cultural heritage, and to make this possible demands creativity and imagination on the part of the conservator.

Such stimulating ideas naturally provoked questions and comments, all of which the speaker responded to with charm and fluency. Bro. David Birch spoke of the German tendency to over-restore; Bro. Carrie Bullock spoke of the Burra Charter; Bro. Edward Sergeant commented on the use of modern materials; Hon. Sec. Rachael Matthews spoke of the problems of historic textiles, costume, and more generally of the problems of usability. It was clear from the applause and from subsequent conversations in the Hall how much Katy Lithgow's witty, erudite and thought-provoking talk had been appreciated.

Hon. Archivist Nicholas Cooper

The supper afterwards was prepared by the Master's daughter, Kitty, who conserved everyone's energies with pepperonata and feta, lamb and fennel, and French fruit tarts.

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13 March · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

Minutes were read, and announcements were made about forthcoming events.

Lecture · Carscapes – Architecture, Landscape and the Motor Car · JOHN MINNIS

The Art Workers might be thought to represent the antithesis of all that the motor car represented. But the speaker pointed out that it was worth remembering that PM Voysey designed a filling station in 1929, that PM Lutyens had designed motor houses for many of his early, well-heeled clients, and that PM Charles Harrison Townsend had written the most comprehensive manual on private garages to be published before the First World War.

John Minnis would concentrate on buildings and development in the period between the wars, when motoring grew from being the hobby of a rich few to being the preferred transport for the middling masses. In the 1920s, cars and vans had not yet cluttered the streets of old market towns nor led to the destruction, for parking, of the workshops and back yards that lay behind street frontages. However, the first relief roads were already planned and being built, and the roads that were meant to bypass town centres rapidly brought about the suburbanisation of the countryside that they passed through. The seaside too would become suburbanised – as at Jaywick where the streets of little cabins have such names as Morris Road, Austin Road and Vauxhall Road. This growth coincided with the first commercial use of air photography, and we were shown striking aerial views of town centres that were still traffic-free, of new suburbs and of ribbon developments, of the earliest arterial roads, and of serious traffic jams from as early as the 1930s. Already, the freedom that the car was meant to bring to the masses was creating new kinds of immobility, and the first urban ring road would be slashed through the heart of Coventry in 1936.

Then there was the matter of finding the right architectural idiom for buildings of new kinds. The car was meant to open up the countryside – to make England's Green and Pleasant Land, its old churches and its village pubs, accessible to everyone with a car. But cars need fuel, and filling stations needed an appropriate style. Responding to the bucolic image of leisure motoring that was assiduously fostered by its promoters, filling stations were very often self-consciously folksey, with canopies modelled on lych gates, with half-timbered gables or rustic stonework,

and even with thatched roofs. Or they might represent the last, poor flowering of the genuine vernacular – the simple creosoted shed, bejewelled with tin advertising signs. Occasionally they could be genuinely exotic, such as the chinoiserie filling station in Beckenham with lacquered pumps. It was only at the end of the speaker's chosen period that filling stations actually began to look like the new building type that, of course, they were.

Those who motored out into the country needed refreshment as well. The Road House was another novel building type – a destination in itself, frequently sited on one of the new roads, where one could eat and drink, swim and play tennis and perhaps (but not necessarily) spend the night. These too favoured half timber and thatch, though some from the 1930s would adopt the modernism that was already losing its functionalist credentials and being seen simply as a style that was suited to the new age. And if the traditional and the modern did not provide enough choice of styles, there was ample scope for themes, such as a road house outside Nottingham that originally had port-hole windows and waiters dressed as smugglers – or the (sadly unbuilt) design for 'The Blinking Owl' which would have been surmounted by an eighty-foot-tall Art Deco owl with searchlight eyes.

John Minnis's fascinating talk brought a number of comments from the floor. These touched on the styles of filling stations in France, garages that members had known and loved, garages that one member had destroyed, and the speculative market for motor houses in Metroland. All of these the speaker responded to with light-hearted learning, and the audience showed by its applause how much the evening had been enjoyed.

Hon. Archivist Nicholas Cooper

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27 March · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

The Master announced the Guild trips to Stoneywell and Leicester on 19 May and to South East Devon on 13 and 14 July. Details went out with the spring newsletter.

Lecture · Grizedale - Renewing the Function of Art
ALISTAIR HUDSON

The speaker is Deputy Director of Grizedale Arts, in Cumbria, which encourages community activity to take contemporary arts in new directions, away from the romanticism of the last 200 years of art history. Alistair Hudson was preaching to the converted in a full Hall. His manifesto reflected the values of the Young British Artists who had been influenced by the writings of our ideological cousin Ruskin. Grizedale Arts has its centre at Lawson Park Farm on the Brantwood Estate, high on the hills above Coniston Water. It was built by monks in 1338 and redeveloped in 2009. The remote Grizedale settlement exists as a farm, a school, a 'sculpture', a creation, and a work in progress. Artists go there and do purposive things.

A paddy field, a wild-flower meadow, a vegetable patch, a library, and an eclectic collection of furniture, all steeped in romantic detachment, help to contemplate the bursting of a small élite bubble called Contemporary Art, splattering us all with pragmatic sparks, starting with – the hot rod tea urn, by Jeremy Deller, which has a sister urn at Tate Modern, the presence of which increases its value at Coniston with every cuppa made. How can art make sense when there is chocolate box scenery all around you? The Lake District oozes romanticism, but at Grizedale Arts the wind blows towards other scenes; to NorthWest Japan, where an equally beautiful landscape hosts tourists and doesn't need enhancing with big sculptures. Developing honesty stalls, and using the farmer's market as a space for performance, metamorphosised rice farmers into artists who engage with holiday-makers. Wild-bracken shoots and cherry-blossom tempura, eaten with chopsticks is a new experience for the regulars at the nearby Coniston Mechanics' Institute with whom Grizedale artists work. Built by Ruskin as a holistic education for the workers, the Institute was funded with sales of paintings and help from his friends. He believed that art should be embedded in society, for evolution of the state, to grow entrepreneurs, and keep us all out of the pub. Flower arranging, life-drawing, mechanics of hand; physically and conceptually, the Mechanics' Institute offered it all.

As a professor at Oxford, Ruskin made the class of 1874 dig a road between two villages. His students, among whom was Oscar Wilde, learned about art through social action and the dignity of digging. We *all* develop our skills to influence society. The Guild was born from this; Ghandi agreed, and so did many others.

The Institute's windows were rotten, the roof leaking, and once a week a librarian limped in from Kendal. As the chopsticks settled, the villagers began to question: 'What's this space for?' 'With a £3m grant we could build a conference centre!' a villager cried from a geriatric-proof chair.

The strange artists up on the hill were invited to help. When planning a reformation of society, it's best to start with a refurbishing scheme.

Cross-generational 'Boon Days' gathered together volunteers with sandpaper and paint brushes to make good. Ray Davies, from the Kinks and singer of 'Village Green Preservation Society', wrote a difficult school play, performed on the stage at the Royal Festival Hall, Coniston Institute, the Village and Radio 4; all curated by Alexander Sing from New York City.

Suddenly, kitchen cupboards with padlocks were not acceptable. Villagers managed to raise funds of

£10,000 for a kitchen as an artist's studio. Ruskin's migratory dairy school rose from the dead, maturing cheese in its founder's ice house. Japanese miso experts taught Sellafield's neighbours the benefits of anti-radiation soup.

Art was working for the people. The library became honest, the walls repainted, pictures rehung, and glass doors reprotected special collections. Groups from Tate Modern popped in to do printmaking and the Youth Club ditched sport to 'make stuff'.

The valley is now a cultural infrastructure; artists come and artists go. The honesty shop brings in cash for the villagers and Grizedale artist Laure Prouvost won the Turner prize in 2013 with a film inspired by Kurt Schwitters. Locals like Bob and Fiona proved that art is for the local people; he prospering with his rhubarb, and she enjoying a plug for her gingerbread by John Craven on BBC's Countryfile.

So how do we value art in society? The Coniston newsagent wasn't selling nearly so much confectionary as the honesty shop, so he invited the artists next door for Mary Portas-esque advice.

Lettuce Drake, a guest, asked how Alistair Hudson feels about the word 'art'. His view was that to rethink what artfulness is, to reassess its value, and to learn from its process is good. Folk don't buy art out of sympathy, so let's re-see aesthetics as they are.

The Youth Club had huge success with vermin sausage and wild berry cordial which they sold to visitors at Frieze Art Fair, raising some £1000 a day. Bro. Annie Sherbourne wanted to know how the mechanics of Utopian dreams are really funded. The Arts Council pour in 50 per cent and the rest, it seems, falls with the rain and other grants.

We'd heard about the new cricket pavilion, the relocation to Brazil, and 'Horsefalling': a pop-up shop in Manchester, associated with the Museum of Useful Art. Bro Tanya Harrod asked, in relation to aesthetics, where did they belong? Are they designers working with artists, or are they a movement in the art world?

The word 'mechanics' is useful for dodging this question. Alistair Hudson feels liberated with blurred boundaries. To lose supreme authorship must be as humbling as a walk on the fells. ME Anthony Paine brought us back to Bloomsbury with a final observation that Grizedale Arts are recreating what we were set up to be. Alistair was mobbed with questions over dinner and continued to dish out inspiring ideas and information until everyone had gone home.

Hon. Sec. Rachael Matthews

The dinner afterwards continued the Lake District theme, prepared by a composite of cooks who variously presented nettle soup, Cumberland sausage, Lancashire cheese and Westmoreland pepper cake.

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10 April · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

The Master thanked Bros Jane Dorner and Phil Abel for their editing and design (respectively) of the new newsletter which had just gone out and said she had previously had no idea how much work was involved in it.

Lecture · Making Puppets for Performance

SUE DACRE AND RACHEL WARR

Two eminent figures from the mysterious world of puppetry held the stage on this evening. Sue Dacre is a puppet designer and maker; Rachel Warr a director and dramaturge; both are expert puppeteers. Through the evening's conversation, a mysterious world took shape in front of the audience. At one level, this shone a light on techniques of a lesser-known branch of theatre, where making, directing and performing are seamlessly interwoven. At another, it raised profound philosophical questions about the relationships between drama, life and death.

Not unexpectedly, perhaps, Sue and Rachel have had unorthodox career paths. Both 'fell into' the world of puppetry by accident rather than design, rapidly becoming hooked by its peculiar fascination. After turning down the opportunity to become the receiving end of a knife-throwing act in a travelling circus, Sue seized the chance to join a miniature marionette company. Rachel's path has included dance, directing and a residency at the Little Angel Theatre.

Sue and Rachel both spoke of puppets as occupying a hinterland between the animate and the inanimate – held in a complex relationship between puppet and puppeteer. At some stage during its construction a puppet 'comes to life', even if it is made of extremely simple materials. The speakers then drew on three productions which featured Sue's creations to explore these and other complex issues.

Passing On (Santé Theatre Warwick and Little Angel Theatre) was a challenging production about dying, centred around an elderly woman at the end of her life (played by a life-size puppet manipulated by actors on stage). Developed in conjunction with clinicians and researchers, this puppet (constructed using apparently simple techniques of cardboard, string and papier maché) lived and died on stage, raising issues about how puppetry can capture waking life, sleep and death. The performance was able to convey emotion so vividly that audience members were convinced that the puppet had smiled and frowned, despite its unmoving mask-like face.

Drifters (Strange Arrangements) featured a fantastical array of body parts which were fitted together in myriad ways as the performance unfolded. The final production was the result of a long process of evolution and uncertainty, where the puppets themselves were developed as the production took shape. A vivid sense of the close (and sometimes challenging)

relationship between puppet maker and theatre director underpinned Sue's description of the work.

La Tempesta (Scarabeus Aerial Theatre and Little Angel Theatre) was an outdoor production combining puppets with aerialists in a highly unusual collaboration. Sue's expertise in creating Sicilian puppets was amply demonstrated by a series of photographs taken during preparation of the piece, showing details of design, construction and integration with human actors.

The presentation then broadened into a more general discussion of puppetry in theatre, highlighting the expressive richness and subtlety of these apparently lifeless objects and their dramatic power when placed in expert hands. The presenters pointed out that although puppetry is often seen as children's theatre in the UK, the reality is very different. Puppets have been central to every culture throughout history, dealing with themes of war, politics, power, violence and betrayal as well as fantasy and humour.

Questions from guest Tom Crame, and Bros Michael Sangster, Luke Hughes, Ron Sims, Carrie Bullock and Nicholas Cooper raised issues around parallels between puppetry and mask in classical drama, the relationship between puppets and actors on stage and the darkness of adult puppetry, as well as more technical queries about the mechanics of stringing marionettes. The discussion brought to a close a glimpse into a remarkable world which combines creativity, craft, emotion and challenge at the intersection of making and performance.

Bro. Roger Kneebone

The dinner afterwards was brought in by the Master with roly-poly gammon and spinach reminding the company of childhood connections to puppetry; and French fruit tarts reminding those present of deliciousness.

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24 April · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

Before any other business, the sudden death was announced of Bro. Madeleine Dinkel, who was at the heart of the Guild for 40 years, and a mistress of the unexpected. There were many affectionate reminiscences, even from those to whom she had been fascinatingly rude. PM Peyton Skipwith told of her spending a day up a ladder, fashioning a celebratory wreath for William Morris, to replace one that she felt didn't come up to scratch. Others spoke of the great distinction of her work, and her clear understanding of quality, regardless of style, and the marvellous costumes made for Guild pantos. Bro. Luke Hughes spoke of a surprise meeting in St Petersburg airport, where she treated him to a lengthy and detailed analysis of a huge Soviet propagandist painting. ME Anthony Paine reminded us of her mission to get everyone to SPEAK UP. And Madeleine being a great gardener, Bro. Jill Carr told of visiting a particularly good garden with her. Madeleine had gazed round, and said slowly, 'This makes me feel quite humble' … pause … 'horticulturally speaking'. The Brethren then stood to remember Brother Dinkel in a minute's silence.

Two new brothers were introduced: Joshua Byrne, a tailor, and Wally Gilbert, a goldsmith, both of whom were warmly welcomed.

Presentations · New Work, New Projects, New Brothers

Then followed six presentations, either by new brothers, or of new work by brothers of longer standing. Hon. Sec. Rachael Matthews had a large notice ready to warn speakers of over-running the strict five-minute time limit, but it was not needed.

Bro. Elisabeth Ball had the unenviable task of going first, but she set the pace and immediately engaged the interest of those in the Hall, with a snippet of biography (she came to London from Poland in 1976) and many images of her work. A gilder and conservator, she had worked for many distinguished London dealers (such as O.F. Wilson), on 18th-century gilded furniture, icons and objects of virtue, and now has turned her hand to decorative lamps.

Next, Bro. Stephen Fowler described 'drawing with fabric', and showed slides of his Wild Man costume, which was a big hit at both the Hayward and Turner Contemporary, in Jeremy Deller's 'Strawberry Thief' exhibition. He spoke of his interest in the connection of materials and subject matter, and of his interest in primitive printing processes, and he showed pictures of his prints carved from india rubbers, and yams. The yam prints were of coelocanths.

PM George Hardie then, characteristically, delivered confusion with graphic clarity. He described, with slides of his drawings, his theory of The Golden Measuring, an illustration of the near impossibility of dividing a measure of liquid into three equal amounts, in glasses of wildly differing shape. The liquid in that case was Chateau d'Yquem (being golden), and it was, he said, a dry drawing of sweet wine. He reflected how very often his graphics have involved bottles, glasses, pouring, etc, and described a professional beer tasting, using black glasses, in order that all senses other than taste would be disabled. Except, as the speaker said he found bad taste a lot easier than good taste, he had painted a glass with black paint for the photograph, and the whole story of beer tasting was made up.

Bro. Celia Ward managed to give a vivid account of her professional life, full of wit and detail, but neatly within the five-minute limit. After an extremely successful start as a watercolour painter in her twenties, she founded East London Textile Arts. It is a community arts organisation, and the projects she oversees run alongside her own work – alphabets of the world, East London patchwork maps, embroidered, painted, simplified for reproduction, adapted; wonderfully made, to extremely high standards, by

people of all faiths, ethnicities and abilities and displayed and used all over London. She also showed images of her own large watercolours of fantastical political fables, beautiful and beguiling, though barbed with satire.

Bro. Michael Petry came next, showing images of a recently completed project inside a seven-storey wooden tower near Antwerp. Called 'At the Core of the Algorithm', the installation comprised many dozen suspended coloured glass spheres, configured according to Alan Turing's mathematical description of the universe. Each sphere was made with a chunk taken out, in homage to Turing, whose bite from an apple caused his death, and inspired many references. As the author of a recent book entitled *The Art of Non-Making*, Bro. Petry was of course perfectly happy to acknowledge the glass-blowers who made the spheres; it was the scale and the concept which astonished.

Last up was Bro. Daniel Heath, who uses screen-printing on an interestingly wide range of materials. His silk-screened cushions are sold at Heals, and his wallpapers are not only bespoke, but his designs have a narrative, and he works closely with Retruvius (the salvage specialists) screen-printing fabrics for recycled furniture. He has also pioneered a technique (not unlike pressing watermarks into paper) for impressed designs on corduroy. When Retruvius bought a quantity of oak being chucked out of the Natural History Museum, Bro. Heath used laser engraving, as he did on recycled roof slates and reclaimed mirror – sustainability with great style.

Often at these events members display their work on tables; PM Marthe Armitage was the evening's only exhibitor, but the three new linocuts she showed were quite marvellous, and feast enough.

Many Brethren were struck by the intensity of the evening, and how much can be conveyed in five minutes.

Master Prue Cooper

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8 May · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

The Master announced the sad death of PM and Honorary Curator Stephen Gottlieb. Anticipating that many people would want to speak in tribute, she suggested that this should be postponed until the next Guild meeting when Bro. Jane Dorner could be present.

The first phase of building work will start in the summer using emergency reserves to cover the costs. A fund-raising party has been organised for 23 June to which Brethren were encouraged to invite guests who might want to act as supporters.

The Master asked those members interested in being involved in the Guild Mentoring Scheme to get in touch with PM George Hardie.

Bro. Edward Sargent announced plans to compile a biographical dictionary of past masters of the Guild with a bibliography of works, providing an accessible online archive. He asked Guildsmen for recollections and anecdotes of past masters, both recent and long forgotten, that could help to inform and enrich their biographical profiles.

Lecture · Urban Basketmaker · LOIS WALPOLE

As this year is centenary of basket-maker Thomas Okey, Master of the Guild in 1914, it seemed an appropriate time to welcome Lois Walpole, an artist who uses basket-making, as the evening's guest speaker.

Her excellent lecture took an autobiographical form as she said she found it impossible to separate her life from her work, anticipating that she would never stop making and would 'die happily on the job'.

After describing her time at boarding school in Kent, where her knees froze and she was made to hold smelly dogs, she showed a photograph taken on a Welsh beach in 1968, aged 16. Her Land-Art arrangement of washed-up detritus showed not only an acute sense of design, but also an early engagement with the reappropriation of found materials.

Studying sculpture at St Martin's, she found that her way of working was at odds with the abstract welded steel sculptures created by her tutors and peers. She was left to 'do her own thing' producing, for her final show, an exquisite life-size figure of a male sprinter made from wood and 'locally sourced' woven cane – locally sourced, that is, from Eaton's Bag and Shell shop round the corner from the college.

After graduating, she lived in the East End in an Acme Artist Association house and found work teaching basket-making as occupational therapy in care homes and hospitals. When teaching evening classes, she stayed one step ahead of her students by reading up the night before about the techniques she would teach the next day. She finally decided to 'learn how to do it' and took a four-year Creative Basketry course, cleverly collapsing it into one year by attending four days a week instead of one – a telescoping technique she would later apply to her 'jack-in-the-box' baskets.

At various points during her talk, the speaker described how at times she felt like a blinkered donkey, not knowing where she was going, creatively – a condition with which many in the audience could empathise.

Aware of the dying basketry industry in Britain, she was searching for new ways to employ traditional techniques. A turning point came in 1982 when husband John suggested she put her painting into her baskets, which she said opened up everything.

Always mindful of the sustainability of her work, she began to feel uncomfortable about using chemically treated imported cane. She noted that

traditional basket-weavers used only what could be sourced locally, and that the techniques they used and the designs they developed were very much determined by the intrinsic properties of the available material. She began to use discarded cardboard, drink cartons, packing straps and netting gathered from Spitalfields market, using their given colours and patterns in her designs. Thus, the contemporary potential of baskets was recalibrated by Walpole's imagination.

Her work was 'of the moment'. A feature written in *Crafts Magazine* tagging her as 'The Urban Basketmaker' led to a perpetually ringing telephone and enough work to last two years.

In 1987, Lois set up Rapid Eye Baskets Ltd, cleverly utilising waste and found materials to produce a range of beautiful objects for the home that combined practical use with painterly abstraction. The business became highly successful, but Lois was growing tired of the trade's demand to make her things cheaper, and was increasing reluctant to repeat objects rather than finding new challenges. After ten years, she finally called a halt to the business.

In 1999 she undertook a PhD at the RCA where she began her Grown Home project at Kew Gardens, developing willow cultivating processes that allowed her to 'grow' household objects and furniture: 'living' laundry baskets, tables and chairs, which could then be cut off and used. She brilliantly demonstrated how easily we might all grow our own coat-hangers.

Now living and working in France, she also lives part-time in Shetland. Here she uses flotsam and jetsam washed up on the beach and other found local materials to make stunning objects – always thoughtfully designed, ingenious and emblematic of resourcefulness and sustainability.

A passionate teacher, she is keen to pass on her own knowledge to others and to research and document the working processes of other basket-makers to ensure that thousands of years of knowledge are not lost. As she said, studying an object doesn't necessarily help you to understand how it was made.

The speaker's talk generated much interest from the audience.

During questions and comments that followed, Hon. Sec. Rachael Matthews said that she found the work very moving. The speaker recounted how talking to old craftsmen, to whom no one had previously paid much attention, could be quite emotional.

The Master mentioned having seen the wonderful woven living willow fence outside David Drew's troglodyte home in Villaines. This, Lois said, was in fact the second version as the first had been planted around his vegetable garden in Somerset.

Bro. Jane Nissen asked about the influence of Navaho Indian baskets, which Lois said she had always found inspiring and which she had learned about from books her mother owned.

Having interviewed several basket-makers, Monica Grose-Hodge commented on the enormous diversity of the craft and found it sad how undervalued these skills were.

Bro. Carrie Bullock raised a question about existing toxins in plastics washed up on the beach. The speaker hoped that the action of the sea would have done much to eradicate these. Bro. Bullock also commented on traditionally made shrimp baskets and the stronger tradition that exists in France for making use of such crafts. The speaker agreed, mentioning a new magazine being published in France, solely on basket-making. Very encouraging.

Answering a question from Bro. Mary Ann Simmons about gladioli leaves, the speaker explained the techniques involved in making them suitably strong and pliable to plait and weave. She had not, she confessed, (when prompted by a question from the Master) made a gladioli basket for Dame Edna Everage.

An entertaining and inspirational evening that provoked further questions and discussion during refreshments that followed.

Bro. Graham Rawle

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22 May · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

A number of Brethren spoke of PM Stephen Gottlieb. PM Edmund Fairfax-Lucy spoke of Stephen's inexhaustibly enquiring mind – of his unquenchable interest in everyone and everything. Bro. Martin Grierson remembered how welcoming Stephen was to those who visited his workshop, how packed it was from top to bottom with interesting things, and in return what pleasure he took in visiting other people's workshops. Bro. Tony Wills, on a similar theme, recalled a wonderful dinner with Jane and Stephen and a certain competitiveness regarding the respective quantities of their pliers. Bro. Luke Hughes spoke of Stephen's deep affection for the Guild, of how he personified all that was best in it, and of his great skill as Master in pouring oil on troubled waters. Bro. Sally Scott recalled her great pleasure in a visit to his workshop and a concert afterwards. Bro. Jane Dorner then spoke of her own appreciation and gratitude for the wonderful turn-out at Stephen's funeral, which included nine PMs or officers of the Guild. She recalled his successful year as Master, and his satisfaction in devising a programme that had pleased everyone. The Guild had meant a great deal to him, and being Master had been a turning point in his life. Above all, she said, the brotherhood of the Guild gave him the confidence to be himself. The Master asked those in the Hall to stand for a minute in silence, in Stephen's memory.

Following these tributes, notices were given out, the minutes of the previous meeting were read out, and Bro. Alan Powers introduced Emma Barker, art historian teaching at the Open University, elected as an Associate, who signed the book and was welcomed with acclaim.

Lecture · The Lust For Lustre –Why English Popular Art Keeps Coming Back · ALAN POWERS

Bro. Powers's central theme was to look at the way in which popular art had been seen and appreciated, but in the process he threw a good deal of light on what popular art actually is. It's anonymous; idyllic; it may be pictorial or abstract; it embodies an unselfconscious, bottom-up creativity; and it is poised somewhere between folk art and the culture of industrialised consumerism. Its creations are often shiny, often brightly coloured, are usually highly decorative even when they purport to be useful, and can sometimes be extremely elegant. Their original owners were themselves unselfconscious in artistic matters, and because such things were often cheap, their purchasers might with care accumulate a fine display.

Although such things might occasionally have been appreciated by more sophisticated artists in the remoter past – the speaker cited Dante Gabriel Rossetti – it was between the wars that they came to be more widely noticed. He showed Olive Cook's photographs of cottage interiors with inexpensive treasures proudly arrayed on the mantelpiece: the point here was to note that Olive Cook had actually thought that such an interior was worth recording. He showed Osbert Lancaster's contrasting cottages from *Homes Sweet Homes* – in the first, an old lady sits reading a popular paper, surrounded by all her cherished clutter; in the reformed cottage she has been re-housed in a modern interior of bare sterility, and is reading the *New Statesman*.

Alan Powers provided many other examples of a growing appreciation, on the part of the more sophisticated, of what might be described as an underclass of culture. Sacheverell Sitwell took Diaghilev to Pollock's toy theatre shop, inspiring the ballet *The Triumph of Neptune* by Diaghilev and Lord Berners. Edith Sitwell's Mr Wagg in *Façade* turned out to be a cut-out figure from a toy theatre melodrama. And this new awareness merged with a rediscovery of Victoriana, by John Betjeman and others, that was originally part naughty, part nostalgic.

From the 1930s onwards, a growing number of practising artists would find inspiration in the traditions of popular art, whether as objects to be collected and enjoyed for their own sake or else used as subject matter for the artists' own work. Bro. Powers spoke of Barbara Jones: her drawings; her books; the pioneering exhibition 'Black Eyes and Lemonade' that she arranged at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1951; and of her appreciation for what she herself termed 'Fairground Baroque.' Not dissimilar was the work of Enid Marx: the books that she wrote jointly with Margaret Lambert, and her interest in the traditions of canal barge decoration.

More mainstream, perhaps, would be the use of images from the popular arts in the work of other artists – of Kenneth Rowntree, for instance, and of Eric Ravilious. Bro. Powers noted in particular Ravilious's abstract, geometrical engravings and observed that while the innocent eye is hard to replicate, in these designs Ravilious comes close to the work of the anonymous, self-taught designers of popular print and ceramic ornament. Such use and appreciation has continued, for example in the work of Sam Smith and of PM Glynn Boyd Hart, and in private collections made by the speaker and by many members of the Guild.

This appreciation of the popular arts has followed a familiar path. When first noticed, arts that seem primitive are seen as a challenge to conventional good taste. After further, sometimes horrified, attention, they are seen as quaint; next they are seen as charming, and finally as good. Popular and folk art are not the same things, but they are closely related, and as with Barbara Jones's pioneering Festival of Britain exhibition at the Whitechapel, they have come to be seen as aspects of national character. For better or worse, they are about to receive their ultimate accolade when early in June a major exhibition of folk art is opened at Tate Britain. Alan Powers concluded by wondering whether this will have been curated by intellectuals or by aesthetes – speculation which itself provokes deep thoughts about what Popular Art actually is.

The questions that followed showed how much there was to think about. Bro. Gareth Mason wondered whether the appeal of the popular arts was a deep nostalgia, uncoupled from time. The Master felt that they provide an escape from the creative pressure associated with the fine arts. A guest noted how front rooms and the things they contained became shrines. Bro. Tanya Harrod mentioned hand-written graphics as a continuing aspect of popular art. Bro. Phil Surey had observed on a visit to Bangladesh the speed and spontaneity with which objects there were decorated and signs written. It was clear that Bro. Alan Powers had touched on a subject whose essence lay close to the ideals of a very great number of the brethren.

Hon. Archivist Nicholas Cooper

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5 June · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

The Master was delighted to announce – to loud applause – a grant of £100,000 from the Monument Trust, to be spent on improving disabled access to 6 Queen Square. This would allow work to be undertaken soon. However, there are many other things to be done, and much money is still needed to fund them.

Bro. Alan Powers gave details of a forthcoming outing to Eastbourne, Bexhill and other places in Sussex.

American Night · Perception, Illusion and the Craft of Magic · PETER SAMELSON

'I can't really do magic' said the speaker; 'I can only help you to see it'. Peter Samelson's talk, although illuminated by some truly astonishing tricks and deceptions, had a serious purpose: to demonstrate the magician's necessary craftsmanship and creativity, and to explore how people interpret (or misinterpret) what it is that they think they see.

As children we do not understand causes and effects; all is magical. Peter Samelson was brought up in Princeton, the son of a mathematician: he had, he said, played as a boy in Einstein's back garden. His own progress was from that childish innocence which we all share, to the study of physics, which is how we try to explain and understand the world. Thence he moved to philosophy, and thence back to magic again, which links both philosophy and physics in exploring how the real world is perceived by us.

Magic operates wholly on the minds of its beholders; it does not exist without an audience. We see what we think we see. To show how readily the mind can be deceived, Peter Samelson showed a number of optical illusions, some familiar and some less so. A revolving pin-wheel left an after-image that seemed to make flesh creep. Context and expectation are everything, and the brain is innately programmed to make sense of the impressions it receives. By controlling the context, dark can appear light, straight lines can seem to wave about, squares to seem round, and colours appear to change their hues.

The mind justifies and explains what it perceives in three ways – through reason and logic, by reference to what it knows, or through appeal to the emotions, and the speaker showed by his examples how easily the mind is fooled. By narrative and gesture, the magician prepares his onlookers' minds for what they are about to see. His relationship with them is central to what he does, and without an audience, magic does not exist. But the magician is not unique. In manipulating preconceptions, he shares his exploitation of these modes of perception with all artists, and perhaps the only difference between them and the magician is that the magician is totally truthful: he says at the very outset 'I am a professional liar, and therefore you cannot believe what I am about to show you.'

Lest it should sound as though Peter Samelson's talk was dry and theoretical, in fact it was anything but. Throughout the evening his reflections were illustrated by amazing illusions, all completely baffling save when – which was not always – he explained them. He touched on the history of magic, telling how in the mid-19th century the French had demonstrated seemingly supernatural powers over mighty warriors from the Maghreb. Conversely, he touched too on the liberating power of magicians in explaining away superstition and witchcraft. His talk concluded with two more demonstrations of the magician's craft. In one, Bro. Alan Powers was recruited to hold a roll of loo paper, from which the speaker tore pieces that he then retrieved, scrunched up, out of every pocket of Bro. Powers's jacket. The second concluded with the air being filled with confetti, which the Master and willing helpers spent some time, at the end of the evening and unaided by magic powers, in picking up from the floor of the Hall.

Not surprisingly, such a stimulating and entertaining talk brought many questions and comments, many of which concurred in the speaker's view of the affinities between magic and art. PM Julian Bicknell spoke of the ethics of deception, recalled the sad case of Conan Doyle and the fairies, and described magic as a special view of truth. Bro. Joanna Selborne recalled how when she was seven years old, the Master's brother had sawed her in half; clearly it is only by the power of magic that she appears still to be in one piece. PM Fairfax-Lucy recalled Hieronymus Bosch's depiction of the old trick of the cups and the peas, and observed that art itself presents a fantasy view of the world. In applauding Peter Samelson's remarkable talk and demonstrations, the audience showed how much it appreciated his penetrating analysis and his virtuoso exhibition of the magician's craft. We are all magicians, he seemed to say, and in Peter Samelson the Guild clearly recognised one of themselves.

Hon. Archivist Nicholas Cooper

The Master's supper afterwards demonstrated a different sort of magic, with the Master herself conjuring perfect celeriac *remoulade* out of her own inimitable hat with ham and other condiments that she had prepared earlier, and spirited into the capable hands of two serving girls.

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19 June · ORDINARY MEETING

Lecture · Staying Alive – A Career in Progress
RACHAEL MATTHEWS

This was a completely fascinating glimpse into Rachael Matthews's way of thinking, with inspiring insights into what is possible if we think laterally, out of the box, in a blue-sky frame of mind, or try to push the envelope as far as it will go. But management-speak should not be used in the context of Matthews's approach to creativity and social activism – except that she *really does* think out of the box, push the envelope, etc.

Matthews spoke a little about her background, introducing us to her grandfather and his heroic salvage work in the Lake District that led to the creation of the Windermere Steamboat Museum. George Harry Pattinson had a passion for the boating history of the Lake District. Some he owned, like S.L. Branksome, whilst others were donated or given on long term loan by boat enthusiasts to The Windermere Nautical Trust to be displayed in the

purpose-built Museum that opened in 1977. Several, including the world famous Dolly, were raised from the lakebed with the assistance of divers.

George Pattinson wanted the public to see the boats afloat on the lake, where they could be appreciated on the water for which they were built, and where he could still steam-power them on the lake for demonstrations. With a building firm in the background and the refitting of historic craft going on all around her, fixing stuff seemed a natural activity to Rachael Matthews. She spoke eloquently about boats and about dolls, bringing to mind the writings of Baudelaire and Rilke on this subject when she recalled the old leather hands of some of her dolls, and the Cloth Kit dolls made on her own sewing machine at the age of seven or eight.

By 1982-3 she was interested in fashion, copying clothes from Vivienne Westwood's Nostalgia of Mud collection and she soon found herself at Central St Martin's School of Art studying textiles – not an entirely happy experience. An archaeologist boyfriend took her to the deep England of the Ancient Technology Centre where she stayed for some time, making a loom, dyeing cloth and doing lots of drawing. Coracles and hut dwelling suited her but, nonetheless, on returning to the Central she was awarded a First.

A conventional career in textiles did not suit her and she left Italy for a job in Tower Hamlets where she worked on literacy and sewing projects with Bangladeshi women. Off-duty she began making unnerving puppet-like dolls, soon, paradoxically, taken up by the fashion world, and she founded the Cast-Off Knitting Club for Boys and Girls as part of a project to recuperate the 'low crafts' and to reclaim public spaces. This was relational aesthetics at its best. The Club's activities – knitting en masse on the Circle line and in the Savoy Cocktail Bar – soon attracted press attention with headlines like 'Political Protest turns to the radical art of knitting'.

Being Britain, the press did not quite appreciate the radical nature of the knitting project but coverage from France and Germany recognised the politics behind the craftism. There were events in Paris, the publications of the books *Hookorama* and *Knitorama* and huge crowds gathered at the Craft Rocks evening at the V&A in 2004. But Bro. Matthews began to find headlines like 'Welcome to my woolly world' and the growing numbers of folk who wanted to knit alongside her overwhelming, even oppressive. She signed off with the remarkable 2006 Knitted Wedding of Freddie Robbins and Ben Coode-Adams and she began to think deeply about materials, very much in the spirit of the great interwar women textile artists – Elizabeth Peacock, Margery Kendon and Ethel Mairet.

She opened Prick Your Finger (PYF) as a place to buy, source and create with natural fibres (and not so natural ones like old cassette tapes) with a fellow graduate from Central St Martins in 2007, designing and building the shop – learning carpentry along the way. Here the story becomes densely woven and this scribe may have left things out, but striking projects include working with Look Ahead Housing in Bow to create Freestyle Haberdashery in the form of sofa action in 2009; participation in 'Louder than Bombs – Art, Action and Activism' at the Stanley Picker Gallery in 2009 where Prick Your Finger showed a bike-powered woollen mill and, using wool from City Farms, taught carding and spinning wool; and in the same year PYF appearing on the bill for the Chicks on Speed Girl Monster event in Austria, playing with Ian Tea Thompson of the Hackney Secular Singers – a gig that involved Bro. Matthews spinning cassette tapes on stage plus comrade Louise carding and spinning yarns; and being invited to appear in the High Fibre show organised by the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington with Rachael bringing over a remarkable narrative bed addressing issues of inequality, historic protest, Gandhi's swadeshi movement, high and low art. The bed was first exhibited in the gallery Riflemaker in 2012.

The most recent PYF project is in the Yan Tan Tethera commission at Cecil Sharp House curated by artist David Littler and linking textiles and folk song, textile and text.

Questions came thick and fast. Bro. Annie Sherburne praised Rachael's dedication and asked what she thought about when knitting – to be given a Delphic reply. Hon. Archivist Nicholas Cooper commented on Rachael Matthews's ability to break down barriers between high and low art, and between fine and popular creativity – which he felt summed up the ethos of the AWG. Bro. Fleur Oakes noted the limitations of the British press when dealing with making and design and the lack of textile galleries in London. PM Edmund Fairfax-Lucy expressed interest in the customs associated with St Blaise's Day and his role as the patron saint of wool carders. Secretary Monica Grose-Hodge expressed interest in childhood experience and shaping a future asset of interests and values while Bro. Jo Volley noted that the artist William Coldstream's father used to knit and even created a knitted suit, an observation which led on to a discussion of gender and knitting. PM Sophie MacCarthy raised the matter of knitting machines. Rachael Matthews owns several but noted their imposition of a different time frame on the knitter. Carol McNicoll told of an embarrassing knitted bathing suit while Bro. Annie Sherburne discussed fluctuations in interest in knitting and the rather intimidating virtuoso knitting revival of the 1970s and 1980s that was less inclusive. Applause and thanks followed.

Bro. Tanya Harrod

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3 July · FILM NIGHT

Sicilian Puppets

For a Film Night, Guild formalities went by the board – no robes, no Minutes, no notices.

We saw a captivating documentary about a Sicilian surgeon, gripped from childhood with a passion for the epic tales of heroism and love depicted in the centuries-old puppet tradition of Sicily. His engaging circle of friends – poets and academics – dedicated themselves to the preservation of the theatres and puppets themselves, and to the recording of the culture, before all was lost with the arrival of television.

There were interviews with ancient puppeteers who had travelled from village to village, performing all voices – evil, tender, terrifying, wily, heroic – and making all the puppets and scenery. Also interviews with passionate fans, now toothless, and descriptions of techniques of construction and performance. And of course stirring scenes from performances themselves.

The combination of the academic with sheer enjoyment of the puppets and the subtleties of characterisation; the ancient narratives, and the hands-on involvement by performers and makers, all held great appeal for the Guild audience.

Master Prue Cooper

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25 September · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

It was the Master's unfortunate duty to open the new term with news of the death of PM Assheton Gorton. Bro. Sally Scott spoke movingly of the 50 years in which she had known him and on collaborating with him on *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and other films. He produced wonderful drawings as preparation for all his film design and, she said, *The Knack, Get Carter* and *Blow Up* were iconic and had changed the visual filmic landscape. The minute's silence was then observed.

In observation of The Rules, the Master reminded the audience that all were entitled to propose the Master Elect for 2016 and she encouraged members to think about it. The two stand-in Hon. Secs (both Past Masters) gave out notices about the Guild Auction, the Table-top Museum Day (all with highly intriguing titles) and autumn exhibitions by Brethren. There were no Minutes as the last meeting had been a film night.

Lecture · African Textiles at the V&A 1853-1979: Some Techniques of Making · NICOLA STYLIANOU

The evening's speaker then proceeded to tell us about the little-known and rarely displayed collection of African textiles in the V&A. So hidden had they been, that her initial forays into the textiles department had been met with denial that they had any African collections at all, when – as she went on to demonstrate – they so clearly had. However, no museum display was dedicated to African textiles and by some unexplained quirk of policy, before 2009 historic material from south of the Sahara was not deemed collectable. Nevertheless examples from Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mali and other parts of West Africa had somehow or other made their way into the archives. And very fine pieces of weaving and embroidery they were too.

In acknowledgement of the audience's interest in making things, the speaker promised to give detail of techniques, though one sensed her own interest was in cataloguing, dating and bringing the collection to light. Broadly, the slides she showed fell into two camps: those made by men for men to wear, and those made by women for use in the home.

The more intricate lengths of cloth were woven, dyed, embroidered and worn exclusively by men: men who could afford expensive ceremonial garments that took months to make and used costly silks that had to be imported. All of them were woven in narrow strips, standardly 12 cm wide (sometimes a quarter of that), and sewn together. Questions from the floor later elicited that they used a form of backstrap loom which provided the flexibility needed by tribal people alert to danger. Such looms could be easily dismantled and quickly moved without spoiling the weave. The speaker theorised that one reason why weaving was done in strips is that they were used as a form of currency and strips were practical as a form of money.

Embroidery generally clustered around the neck and breast-plate area and were done in intricate patterns that might take two men two months to stitch. Nicola Stylianou claimed that the patterning itself had no symbolic significance, comprising geometrical subdivisions, stripes, chevrons and spirals common to embroidered cloths in many parts of the world. The difference with these cloths – mainly done by the Hausa or Nupe people – was a preponderance of knives in the design: two-knife, six-knife and eight-knife according to the status of the wearer. The significance of the knife motif is unclear.

Some of patterns in Hausa embroidery are similar to *zayanna* ornament put together by Koranic scholars, some of whom would draw out the designs preparatory to their being sewn. A reddish-brown ink used for the drawing can be detected on the paler cloths. The cloth itself was most commonly dyed with indigo – an important industry in northern Nigeria which, in the 19th century, had some 2000 dye pits. The colours we saw ranged from pale blue to almost black. Reds and pinks were also common; green, being more rare, was an auspicious colour.

The second type of weave – that done by women – was less expensive as it was not embroidered, but the pattern was woven into the cloth. Many of the audience would have been familiar with this as a technique used in *ikat*. The speaker valiantly attempted

to describe how this kind of weaving is done, but after she had confessed that her own father couldn't follow her explanation, some in the Hall gave up trying and concentrated on looking at the pictures. Painted cloths, tie-dye, wax resist and stencilled examples of a type known as *adire* cloths were brought to screen – almost all dyed with indigo. An intriguing design detail is the presence of a row of spoons. Top quality cloths apparently have five spoons, the average four and the least good three. Spoons for the textiles made by women and knives for those done by men! An intriguing and unexplained background reasoning.

After explaining that V&A photography had not supported her work and that the photographs were all her own, Nicola Stylianou ended her whistle-stop tour of West African textiles. Questions followed: who wore the embroidered tops; was there a relationship with similar Dutch cloths; had the speaker gone to West Africa and were the same techniques being used; why did the V&A not know what it had; what was the Islamic influence on pattern and did the colours fade? All were answered in a measured and scholarly way until the final applause marked the end of the talk.

Hon. Ed. Jane Dorner

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9 October · ORDINARY MEETING

Lecture · Working With Pattern
JACQUELINE PONCELET

Jacqueline Poncelet, described her evolution from potter to maker of public art, and her long relationship with pattern.

She left the Royal College of Art as one of a group of potters who changed the face of studio pottery in the 70s. As a student, describing herself as 'an awkward customer', she had questioned the prevailing rule that pattern should follow form; so a year in the US, with a bicentennial fellowship, was transformative. 'New York was Heaven,' she said. 'Pattern was everywhere, and I found examples of what I wanted to believe in'. All those spare, bare, skyscrapers – the minimalism subverted by a riot of pattern – in the reflections in all the windows.

After a year of revelation in the US, London in the early 70s seemed a depressing contrast, but after a year of producing what she described as miserable work, she was able to re-invent herself. She altered her view of what a pot could be, realising that pattern need not be 'the skin of the thing', but could be the thing itself. She made pots with no regard for shape, and with 'random relationships with pattern'; 'Collision pots' she called them, asking, 'Who decides matters of taste, and ugliness; and why?'

Although regarding pots as 'home', Jacqueline turned to other materials, and her dislike of lumpen plinths led her to explore carpet. While the purpose ofa plinth is to give clarity, Jacqueline found that a carpet had a great appeal 'as an example of willingness to destabilise the ground we walk on'. Never one to take the easy option, for her first project using carpet, she asked potter and fellow believer Carol McNicol to round up a load of strongly patterned carpet offcuts, and she made a patchwork. Working with pieces that she hadn't herself selected forced her to address, and try to understand, the structure of pattern. Thinking, 'Two things close together should be greater than singly,' but asking, 'How many patterns can you put together, and they still survive?'

This patchwork carpet was a commission for the Festival Hall; an added element was the realisation that whereas to the maker a pattern may be abstract, to others it may be a part of their lives – 'Oh look! My gran had that carpet in her living room' – and the further realisation that in all cultures fabric is used to spread propaganda, and to inform.

Thence to fabric design, using photographic images, sometimes movingly connected to the brief, but repeated to abstraction. Jacqueline compared the transformation that takes place, with the repeated redoubling of the image, to a ballet, with the pattern reinventing itself as it multiplies. We were shown images demonstrating the magic of this metamorphosis, and the present writer thought of Muriel Spark's dictum: 'Art is the transfiguration of the commonplace'.

Asked to create a shell for the 1960s university maths building in Mile End Road, she repeated a photograph of piles of books on shimmering blue glass panels. Though the original image of books is buried within the pattern, the final result looks geological, and subverts the flatness of the façade.

This led on to the magnificent 'Wrapper' project above Edgware Road station – 1500 square metres of vitreous enamel tiles, covering a huge windowless expanse of wall in joyous, generous, luxurious pattern and colour. At first glance the repeat patterns of the huge patchwork appear abstract, but a closer look reveals design elements from tube maps, trains, signage, and local architecture, weaving together elements from local history and people. Not only was the lack of windows on the building a gift, but also, Jacqui pointed out, was the lack of an architect to be upset.

Many questions followed this measured and illuminating talk. Bro. Mark Winstanley said the Wrapper cheered him every day as he bicycled past on his way to work; Bro. Carrie Bullock questioned the role of rationality, as against necessary subversion; a guest asked why the speaker had studied ceramics rather than textiles – we learned she had indeed originally intended to study textiles – but Bro. Mary Ann Simmons pointed out that beginning in ceramics must have encouraged the understanding of form, and (interestingly) of intimacy.

All present responded to the warmth and humour of this account of a fascinating career evolution, and applauded heartily.

Master Prue Cooper

23 October · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

The Master announced with regret that there had been three recent deaths: Ron Sims, painter; Hermione Hobhouse, architectural historian; and Rodney Fitch, designer. It was decided that only one would be discussed in detail that night; the others would follow in due course. Guildsmen spoke movingly of Ron Sims and his unique and unwavering approach to his particular style of almost cubist axonometric painting. PM Edmund Fairfax Lucy said that Ron Sims in his art had grown as a single tree; he had remained an oak and not been tempted to be a larch or an ash. All stood in silent tribute.

Notices of exhibitions and a toy theatre performance were announced. The Guild fund-raising auction was discussed.

Lecture · Between Fantasy and Reality

DAVID INSHAW

David Inshaw began by showing an early landscape from 55 years ago. Its free-flowing style and brushwork were influenced by Ivon Hitchens. Heroes and influences proved to be one of the themes of the evening. The talk was long and discursive and shot through with humour and candid self-revelation. The art teacher at his local Grammar School in Beckenham had encouraged him to go to art school where Inshaw was impressed by the beatnik girls in fishnet tights, 'It was a den', he said admiringly, 'of iniquity'. He had grown up in the 'shanty town' of Biggin Hill – a place where people had developed their own buildings on bought plots. 'It had', he said, 'an air of strangeness about it', a phrase which might sum up the effect of many of his own later paintings.

In the early 1960s he won a scholarship to Paris. His work at that time comprised collages of found images and words. Later there were intricately-made large canvases inset one within the other with repeated words, such as 'Yes Yes' which referred to Molly Bloom's soliloquy in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. One read 'KISS KISS KISS' and apparently people did just that in front of the picture.

'I was in love with paint', he said, and his work moved through various stages. There were freely-brushed painterly landscapes thick with impasto, then carefully crafted assemblies of words and tickets recording romantic journeys, or 'memory pictures'. His object was always to evoke rather than describe. He found his metier in a series of garden paintings. These paintings were imbued with personal mystery and typically contained conjunctions of trees, hedges, translucent skies and enigmatic figures. Troubled pastorals, peopled by blindfolded girls, rooks, flags, complex topiary, and various stages of the moon. 'If in doubt', he said, 'put in a moon, or an owl'. His garden paintings had a pre-Raphaelite attention to detail, 'every blooming blade of grass, every leaf on the tree' as he put it. His celebrated badminton scene of two girls playing in a garden was perhaps the best-known example. There was a haunted dream-like quality about them. All were as scenes from unwritten novels. He was influenced by Thomas Hardy, and by Virginia Woolf, Elgar, and Ruskin too, who all appeared in collages. The intensity of the surface detail of the large garden paintings eventually became too much: half-way through one he abandoned the technique resulting in a looser sky than was planned. It seemed that he reached a level of perfection in his work and then suddenly changed direction as if to test himself. He was keen to guard against mechanical repetition. Thus for a while his paintings became smaller and more freely painted. There were echoes of Paul Nash, Stanley Spencer, and Samuel Palmer, yet all true to his own vision. He wanted the viewer to be free to interpret the image for themselves.

It was obvious from his asides and comments and from the work itself that the pursuit of love and women were vital components of his work. There were scenes of naked autobiography, such as the playing out of his various and many relationships in dual portraits with life-sized nudes. He moved to Wales and was mostly unhappy there. He painted bonfires and smoke, 'Bonfires', he said, 'were death, Fireworks were life'. These were often depicted on the same canvas. Dying embers were the failure of his marriage. His luminous painting of a cricket match at Little Bredy in Dorset was almost bought by the playwright Harold Pinter.

He would half see something in the landscape and then try to capture it in memory. Images of the iconic Silbury Hill were shown as well as disasters at sea with vivid rescue flares and lifeboats. In the end he thought his best picture was a very small and modest one, that of a dead Robin simply and movingly painted. He overran through enthusiasm and the Master had only just enough time to raise two points: that you can no longer walk up Silbury Hill, and had he ever eaten rook pie? 'Goodness no', he replied. Followed by acclamation from a full Hall.

PM Ian Archie Beck

The final Master's Supper of the year quickly ensued. A mackerel and beetroot starter followed by a warming stew of chicken, fennel and petit pois with a thin broth and new potatoes made by the Master, and her daughter, Kitty, supplying a professional lemon meringue pie with little peaks reminiscent of the speaker's paintings.

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6 November · ORDINARY MEETING

Guild Business

The meeting opened with thoughts on the late Brothers Hermione Hobhouse and Rodney Fitch and a minute's silence was observed.

Lecture · Is Craft Good for You? · CATHERINE ROSSI

Dr Rossi said that her last visit to AWG was for the launch of the *Journal of Modern Craft* and she went on to describe the subject of her thesis at the Royal College of Art. It looked at the craft dimension embedded in post-war Italian design – a largely hidden history - and was supervised by Bros Glenn Adamson and Tanya Harrod.

Despite being at the AWG, her talk was going to examine what people think of craft rather than the practice of craft. Showing one of her extensive collection of images of advertisements and signs – this from a dry cleaners promising 'Care by Craftsmen' – Rossi posed the question, why is the idea that craft is intrinsically good so pervasive? And further, what problems might such an idea create?

She discussed the marketing and labour policies of various famous coffee-shop chains in which a crafted image was projected as a way of building relationships with customers. When last year the USA Government was on the verge of economic grid-lock, Starbucks offered 'free' coffee along the lines of buy one and get another free to give to a needier person as, Rossi quoted, 'a small act of generosity and civility'. Meanwhile the Great British Bake Off offers a showing-and-making ethos which has affected our consumption of baking tools and materials while Etsy offers an online marketplace for the hand-made 'to reimagine commerce to build a more fulfilling world'.

Craft clearly conveyed a caring image – exploited by Kettle Chips who had invited makers to craft chips in various materials to underpin their image. Likewise the smoothie company Innocent has invited customers to knit a tiny hat to fit on their bottles as part of a charity fundraiser for Age UK. At the luxury end Hermes and Vuitton all emphasised the craftedness of their products at a time when customers are particularly interested in the ethics of production processes and seek transparency about how the goods they buy are made. The young designer Thomas Thwaites has, via his Toaster Project, exposed the poisonous materials, often sourced from remote impoverished regions of the globe, that are required to make a cheap item of white goods.

Rossi moved on to government propaganda, citing David Cameron's 2012 'Great' campaign in which a series of posters announced 'Britain is Great', 'Creativity is Great' 'Design' and even 'Craft' is 'Great'. John Hayes, Minister for Further Education Skills and Lifelong Learning 2010-12, promoted the elevation of the practical while Ed Vaizey has spoken passionately about making and William Morris. The Chancellor George Osborne has announced the 'March of the Makers' and has described the British as a nation of makers, doers and savers. As further evidence of craft beneficence the Crafts Council announced that craft contributed £3.4 billion to the economy while prison reformers could cite Fine Cell Work as a worthy craft enterprise within HM's Prisons.

If politicians see value in craft, there also has been an efflorescence of positive literature – by Richard Sennett, Matthew Crawford and the woodworker Peter Korn. As Korn put it 'I think working with actual materials helps us to inhabit our humanity to its fullest'. During the 2011 riots the Crafts Council tweeted that making things was a solution to teenage anomie, making young people skilled and socialised.

Rossi went on to discuss the impact of the V&A show 'Power of Making' of 2011 – the most popular free show the V&A has ever staged. But challengingly Rossi asked if all this endorsement of craft stood for a Renaissance or a Requiem. Was craft actually in its death throes?

She looked back to the last big craft moment in the 1970s – when Rozika Parker published T*he Subversive Stitch* and Ivan Illich wrote of 'convivial tools' – and further back to the Arts and Crafts Movement of the late 19th century and Crane's wonderful visualisations of noble labour, noting the machines were invisible in William Morris's *News from Nowhere*. John Ruskin meanwhile wrote negatively about perfect finish and the Arts and Crafts Movement came to differentiate between true finish and trade finish in objects. The production structures, the appearance and the affective relations produced in the world of craft were all deemed good in all these revivals.

To conclude Rossi argued that we should not see craft as inherently good. The USA sociologist Thorstein Veblen has, in the late 19th century identified handmade objects as luxuries, standing for a fetishisation of the 'rough hewn'. When Monsoon the clothes store announce that they were 'passionate about working with crafts people using traditional tools' they did not reveal that they used child labour. The famous handmade Nike football was likewise revealed to have been handstitched by children in the Third World. Etsy had to confront the problems of mass production by hand and allow vendors to use some machine manufacture. A Louis Vuitton advertisement showing a Vermeer-like image of a young woman making a leather bag had to be pulled because it did not reflect the reality of Vuitton bag production. Starbucks, with all its talk of crafted coffee, did not pay proper UK tax.

Rossi argued that craft gets to be elevated when it is almost redundant. Nonetheless we need craft that can be identified as truly good and need to work to ensure that craft is always as good as it can be.

Questions followed with Hon. Sec. Rachael Matthews noting the relative prices of materials for knitting and a cup of latte. Bro. Annie Sherburne praised Rossi's grasp of the economic issues. Bro. Phil Abel talked about the products of high tech machinery being taken for handmade. Bro. David Birch spoke up for the slow nature of craft in the context of an Alec Peever commission and urged a visit to Bro. Fiona MacCarthy's show at the NPG: 'Anarchy and Beauty'. Bro. Gareth Mason spoke about the soullessness of the international art scene.

Bro. Tanya Harrod

20 November · ORDINARY MEETING

Lecture · Roland Penrose and the English Surrealists
ANTHONY PENROSE

The usual Guild business was delayed by a technical hitch, but the speaker produced spare plugs and tools from his bag, and, with the help of Hon. Sec. Rachael Matthews, rigged up a sound system with re-routed wires, gaffer tape and a carpet sweeper. He seemed unfazed by this, and with unflustered grace began his talk about his father, the painter, writer and founder of the ICA, Roland Penrose.

To the horror of his own father, a painter of Victorian genre pictures, Roland Penrose, encouraged by Roger Fry, abandoned Cambridge and his study of architecture, which bored him, and opted for a 'startlingly sinful' life, studying painting in Paris.

There he met his first wife, the poet Valentine Boué, and through her he met the Surrealist poets André Breton and Paul Éluard, and the surrealist painters Max Ernst and Joan Miró, who remained lifelong friends. That Max Ernst painted 'to provoke, not to decorate' chimed with Penrose's conviction that art is a way of changing life, an echo of his strict Quaker upbringing.

He became committed to the ideals of surrealism, and dreamy himself, he was much influenced by the dreaminess of Ernst's work. His portrait of Valentine portrayed her in the blue of distance, with a collar of thorns bloodlessly piercing her skin, and with butterflies instead of features. The speaker interpreted this as describing her attachment to the idea of Nirvana, conflicting with Roland's wish to change the world through art. So when they both travelled to India, she chose to stay, they divorced, and Roland, after 14 years, left France and returned to London.

In 1936, he staged the groundbreaking Surrealism Exhibition, in which English surrealists such as Eileen Agar and Penrose himself showed work alongside artists from many countries. Salvador Dali gave the inaugural lecture, wearing full diving gear, to show his intention to 'descend to the depths of the subconscious'. He nearly suffocated, and had to be released from his helmet by a young poet with a handy spanner.

Artists close to the Surrealists, such as Picasso, Arp, and Giacometti, were also represented, as were Paul Nash and Henry Moore – and Humphrey Jennings, the influential film-maker and writer of *Pandemonium: The Coming of the Machine Seen by Contemporary Observers*, which was cited as the inspiration for the opening ceremony of the London Olympics. Judged by visitor numbers, and public outrage, the exhibition was a huge success.

His friendship with Picasso, and his Quaker pacifism, led to Penrose's arranging for Guernica to tour Britain in 1938; and in 1939, he joined the Home Guard, painting by day, and patrolling by night, later working with a camouflage unit, which, he felt, satisfactorily combined pacifism and surrealism. He had by then met Lee Miller – a moment he described as 'being struck by lightening' – an American who had worked for Man Ray in Paris, and was herself a gifted photographer. With the generous blessing of her Egyptian husband, she and Roland had moved back to England. He painted her as 'night and day', with 'practical legs', clouds for a body, signifying her emotional detachment, and with a sun for a head.

Himself he painted with a painter head, and a curator head; increasingly he turned to curating, and in 1946, he and Herbert Read founded the ICA. The first exhibition was called '40 Years of Modern Art'; the second was called '40,000 Years of Modern Art'.

In 1954 Penrose was commissioned to write Picasso's biography, which the artist said was 'as though we sat at the same table and wrote it together', and in 1960 he curated the artist's major show at the Tate Gallery. He was much criticised by his friends, who thought he had sold out to the establishment, but he defended himself by pointing out that the best way to make change is to be part of it.

He and Lee Miller bought Farley Farm after the war, but appalling experiences in her childhood, and as a war photographer, took its toll on her.

With questions the speaker, their son, spoke movingly of the impact on him, and the writer of these minutes, who as a teenager knew him and his parents, was touched by the understanding and compassion he had salvaged from a lonely childhood.

There were many questions from the floor, leading to Tony Penrose's account of the background to the famous photograph of Lee Miller in Hitler's bath. She had come straight from photographing the liberation of Dachau. Her boots, clogged with Dachau mud, dirtying Hitler's bathmat; a photograph of Hitler propped up to prove the context; her photograph taken by her colleague, a Jew. 'That was two fingers', she said, 'to the Nazis'. No one felt inclined to follow that, and a stunned silence was followed by appreciative applause.

Master Prue Cooper

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REPORTS

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE TRUSTEES

During the past year the meetings of the Trustees have been pleasingly uneventful. The Guild's finances are in good order; our building and chattels are being well looked after; our tenants are well behaved; our staff continue to provide excellent service; other institutions using the premises seem happy; the Guild itself is thriving and continues its role as a centre of excellence.

Finance: The financial affairs of the Guild are in good shape thanks to our excellent Hon. Treasurer, Tom Chippendale, with the backing of, the Guild Secretary, the Guild Steward and our professional

book-keeper. The Hon. Treasurer's report confirms that our income balances our outgoings and that our assets are in good order. The chief financial business of the year has been the raising of funds towards the new Courtyard Project. The Trustees had agreed to make funds available from the Guild's investments if necessary, but the first stage of the work can now go ahead in April without having to break into them.

The Guild continues to establish relationships with individuals and institutions with related interests and the Trustees have now agreed to set aside a budget for such exercises in the future.

Staff: Eleanor Cherry has been appointed as assistant to the Guild Secretary and has provided invaluable help both in the office and in the organising and manning of certain events. The Guild is extremely fortunate in both the Secretary and the Steward who manage the day-to-day business with such care and enthusiasm.

The Year Ahead: The Committee have approved the appointment of Trustees for the year ahead. Bro. Tony Wills takes the place of PM Alison Jensen. Bro. David Birch (previously a nominated Trustee) continues ex officio as Master Elect. PM Julian Bicknell is reappointed as a Nominated Trustee.

PM Julian Bicknell

REPORT OF THE HONORARY ARCHITECT

This past year has seen fund-raising for the Courtyard Project get going and we now have sufficient donations to commence phase 1 in April 2015. Therefore, next year will see the most dramatic upgrade of the Guild's premises since its opening 100 years ago. This will include a ramp from the main Hall level up to the courtyard with wheelchair accessible WC, a newly-paved courtyard with double the usable floor space, and a new coat cupboard and chair store. It will also include all the enabling works to allow the glass roof to be built over the courtyard in 2016 subject to further fund-raising. It is hoped that all of the crafted building elements will be provided by our members, this includes current agreements to donate hand-turned timber balusters for the ramp handrail and raised and fielded doors.

This past summer we carried out a number of upgrades and refurbishments. The Guild Steward's flat had a new kitchen floor and lighting, and a revamped bathroom. A high quality CCTV system has been installed to improve security and provide recordings of all those entering and leaving the premises. In addition, the door-entry system has been replaced by one with video screens, again so screening of those entering the building is possible as a security measure. Furthermore the entrance hall and stairs have had a complete overhaul with redecoration and a new carpet, very generously part-funded by Bro. Ben Pentreath.

The DAB committee have met a number of times and we are planning some further enhancements to the Yellow Gallery, including postcard display, and a noticeboard. Also a projection screen is to be installed in the Master's Room to enhance the facilities for hirers.

Hon. Architect Simon Hurst

REPORT OF THE HONORARY TREASURER

Our focus during this twelve month period has been to accumulate funds – through the appeal fund – in order to carry out the works on the Courtyard Project. At 30th September this stood at £186,009 and since that date further funds have been added. The auction in November produced over £48,000 and there have been other donations which now bring the total funds to over £240,000. We can also make a further claim for Gift Aid which should add at least £5,000.

This accumulation of funds has made it possible for the Trustees to authorise the first part of the Courtyard works to be carried out in 2015. The cost of this part of the work is estimated to be £200,000. The total cost of the project will be around £550,000 and so we are not yet half way towards our target.

The income and expenditure account shows that our total income for the year has increased from 2013, although our costs have also risen during the year. We now have the wages of the secretary's assistant – this will be £10,000 in a full year.

Premises expenditure has been increased mainly on the repair and replacement of equipment. This expenditure during the year has included an upgrade to the mechanism for operating the blinds in the Hall which cost £17,980. A new security system has also been installed – at a cost of £8,326.

Some preliminary work has been carried out in connection with the Courtyard Project for professional fees and surveys.

We have ended the year with a deficit carried forward of £16,646. This has been financed out of current and deposit bank accounts.

Subscription rates to be charged for 2015 have increased to £72 for country members and £114 for town members. This will be the fourth year in our projected plan to increase the subscription rate over a five year period by 10% per annum.

The Guild Chest made one distribution during the year of £1,600.

Hon. Treasurer Tom Chippendale

REPORT OF THE HONORARY LIBRARIAN

The Library purchased 26 items over the past year, at a total cost of £535. The most notable acquisition was probably Bro. Alan Powers' biography of Eric Ravilious.

A further cost to be taken into account was the £384 deficit remaining from last year's payment of £560 to Bro. Flora Ginn for the re-binding of the Guild's photograph albums. This brings the total amount spent on the Library to £919 well within the upper limit of £1000 set by the Treasurer.

Our late Brother Madeleine Dinkel donated a book by Bro. Lawrence Binyon (an essay on the life

and work of John Sell Cotman), and Hon. Archivist Nicholas Cooper donated a 5-volume set of *Artifex: A Journal of the Crafts* produced by the Guild between 1968 and 1971.

Hon. Librarian John Nash

REPORT OF THE HONORARY CURATOR

I have been assisting and standing-in in this role for around a year and in my turn have been wonderfully assisted by many brothers of the Guild, but especially by the Guild Secretary Monica Grose-Hodge and her assistant Eleanor Cherry. We will all sadly miss PM Stephen Gottlieb in the role of Hon. Curator.

Two events stand out in 2014. The first, a one-day event initiated and organised by Bro. Stephen Fowler in which 22 artists, designers and makers (including brothers and the laity) presented Table-Top Museums in the Hall.

The second, a Centenary Guild initiative taking over a year to organise and culminating in an exhibition and auction of Guild related work, (the success of which was largely due to the organiser of the submissions, catalogue, and website, Bro. Christopher Claxton-Stevens).

Other exhibitions have included The Lady Google Collection curated by Bro. Celia Ward and two exhibitions of Brethren's works to accompany fund-raising parties. A further hanging was for the London Open House weekend in September; about 700 people came through the doors. We are discussing the Guild's involvement with the London Design Week next year and will also be involved with the pilot week for London Craft Week in May.

This year two new Past Masters' portraits have been approved by the Trustees and Committee: PM Brian Webb (by Bro. Eileen Hogan) and PM Julian Bicknell (by Charlotte Menfort).

PM George Hardie

REPORT OF THE HONORARY EDITOR

The spring and autumn editions of the Newsletter were circulated to everyone in paper form for the first time this year, much to the approval of most Brethren who preferred something in the hand to an electronic version disappearing online. It had been redesigned by Bro. Phil Abel and carried news items, articles of general interest and reports on Guild events and outings. Historical events such as the centenary of the Hall, Elspeth's 35 years at the Guild, and the anniversary of the Artists Rifles sat alongside what happened at parties and fund-raising events and accounts of the Outreach activities.

Proceedings and Notes returned to Phil Abel to tweak it back to the shape from which it had strayed as a result of amateur use of technology and the result is this edition. The editorial policy is to retain the individual voices of the diverse contributors and not to cover contributions with the blanket of uniformity.

The website remained static, while funds were being deployed elsewhere, though it came into its own in enabling online fund-raising donations and bids for the auction.

Hon. Ed. Jane Dorner

REPORT OF THE HONORARY SECRETARIES

The technology has pretty much worked all year – until the last ordinary meeting when the speaker fortunately brought his own toolkit, and Elspeth's carpet sweeper works very well as a microphone stand. There have been many, fully booked dinners and some extra dinners designed by the Master to introduce new Brethren to old. Many members have cheerfully helped with door and bar-tending over the year. We now try and keep the Minutes and notices short so out-of-towners can catch trains.

My role has morphed into also working on the new Outreach Committee. Our first big project this summer was to form a team of brothers to run a workshop with Grizedale Arts at Ruskin's Coniston Mechanics' Institute. Our trip was an introduction to the people of Coniston and to find ways of restoring the Mechanics' Institute to be a centre of education and craft as Ruskin intended, based around the idea of decorating the hall. The project was difficult but successful, with brothers discussing complex ideas, demonstrating their work, teaching, and afterwards, working hard on reflections and future proposals. Ideas have been composting over the summer and autumn and we are almost ready to make a further proposal to Grizedale Arts. It was felt by all concerned that this project encouraged us to think about what we can do as a Guild, look into our history, and push our ideas into the future.

Later in October, Bro. Celia Ward hosted the first of what the Outreach committee hopes to be a series of AWG Lunch-time Conversations. A group of 20 ladies from East London Textile Arts (ELTA) visited the Guild with their packed lunches, and with the aid of short presentations from Master Prue Cooper, PM George Hardie, Sonia Tuttiett from ELTA, and myself, we discussed 'where ideas come from'. The group were fascinated to learn about why the Guild exists, tell tales of their own craft experiences and to reflect on how their community projects happen. The event was fast, fruitful, with no cost, and great value. We hope this event can be a model for further lunch-time conversation, between brothers and other organisations.

Hon. Sec. Rachael Matthews

REPORT OF THE GUILD SECRETARY

The year 2014 has been a definitive year for me. It is my tenth year at the Guild and I reflect on the changes here with a mixture of pride and frustration. Having never worked for a charity or a club before coming to 6 Queen Square I have had to learn to be patient for change, learn how to help committees along and manage the good will and generosity of volunteers.

Every Master brings his or her own style and

agenda and this makes working here never dull. This year has been a particularly important one for me, because Prue (titles don't sit well on her) has bridged the goal of fund-raising for the Courtyard Project and the aims of the Guild. In other words, she realised that it is easier to raise money for the Guild if we fulfil our obligation of fostering excellence in the arts and crafts and letting the world outside know that 6 Queen Square is a 'hub' for the arts and crafts organisations across the UK.

With the formation of the 'Outreach Committee' and a designated budget for projects with other organisations, I can finally see the Guild engage with other wonderful arts institutions and do some amazing things together. I have had the privilege of representing the Guild in many events and on many boards, but never, until now, have I been able to say let's do something together. All I could do is offer the Guild as a venue.

I can now concentrate on representing the Guild more, which I have always been passionate about. Added to which I have the lovely Eleanor to help me in the office twice a week. Having her has made a huge difference, not least as I have some company in the office, but also her efficiency at a time when we are busier than ever has been indispensable.

It has also been a sad year for me personally. It is always hard to lose members of the Guild but when it is a Past Master who you have worked with so closely for a year or members who came very regularly it hurts deeply. They loved the Guild that little bit more and we loved them.

Lastly, everyone has been very positive and kind at the arrival of my little dog Lola Doe. Elspeth and Eleanor are great friends of hers and I hope you see her as part of the Guild in the same way; she already sees 6 Queen Square as her world.

Monica Grose-Hodge

NEW GUILDSMEN IN 2014

Joshua Byrne: tailor
Brigid Edwards: botanical illustrator
Wally Gilbert: silversmith
Tif Hunter: photographer
Jeremy Jessel: painter
Charlotte Knox: painter and illustrator
Sally Mangum:
heraldic art, calligraphy and illustration
Thuyha Nguyen: jeweller, silversmith and designer
Ged Palmer: signwriter
Dewy Pryson: blacksmith
Jane Smith: milliner
Conrad Thompson: sculptor

ASSOCIATES

Ellis Woodman: architectural critic, writer
Emma Barker :art historian
Dr Jenny Freeman: historian

VALETE

Madeleine Dinkel
PM Stephen Gottlieb
PM Assheton Gorton
Ron Sims
Hermione Hobhouse
Rodney Fitch

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE OF THE ART WORKERS' GUILD 2014

MASTER
Prue Cooper

IMMEDIATE PAST MASTER
Julian Bicknell

MASTER ELECT FOR 2015
Anthony Paine

PAST MASTERS
George Hardie
Edmund Fairfax Lucy

HON. OFFICERS
Hon. Secretaries Rachael Matthews
and Perry Bruce-Mitford
Hon. Architect Simon Hurst
Hon. Treasurer Tom Chippendale
Hon. Curator PMs Stephen Gottlieb
and George Hardie
Hon. Librarian John Nash
Hon. Archivist Nicholas Cooper
Hon. Editor Jane Dorner
Hon. Chaplain Revd John Valentine

GUILD SECRETARY
Monica Grose-Hodge

ORDINARY MEMBERS
Phil Abel
Vicki Ambery Smith
Christopher Claxton Stevens
Katharine Coleman
Mark Winstanley
Celia Ward

GUILD STEWARD
Elspeth Dennison

THE ART WORKERS' GUILD

6 QUEEN SQUARE • BLOOMSBURY WC1N 3AT • TELEPHONE 020 7713 0966

CANDIDATURE FORM 2015

NAME .... Letters after name.....

Primary discipline .....

Address .....

.....

Telephone ..... Email.....

Website .....

Date of birth .....

We, the undersigned Members of the Art Workers' Guild, from personal knowledge of the above candidate and of their work, propose him/her for Membership of the Guild.

Proposer .....
(Please print name and sign)

Seconder .....
(Please print name and sign)

Sponsors are required to supply letters of recommendation in support of their Candidate, which may be read out at the Election Meeting.

DECLARATION OF CANDIDATE

I wish to become a Member/Associate Member/Affiliate Member of the Art Workers' Guild, and I undertake to furnish any information required by the Committee as to my qualifications and suitability for Membership, and to abide by the rules of the Guild.

Signed .....

Date……
(Please print name and sign)

NOTE: A standard portfolio for full and affiliate membership should show:

- no more than 6 finished pieces of original work suitable for exhibition;
- a sketchbook, storyboard or research notes for a finished work;
- publications or press cuttings;
- a CV and artist's statement.

Candidates who work on a large scale may have to show their work photographically, but where possible the Committee prefers to see 3D work rather than images. Candidates should make every effort to produce actual work to avoid having their application deferred, or provide an explanation of why this has not been possible. Candidates are advised to arrange their own insurance cover for this period. The Guild will not accept responsibility for loss or damage however caused.

THE ART WORKERS' GUILD CHEST

The Guild Chest is a benevolent fund for Guildsmen in special need. It is financed by legacies and donations from Brethren, and the annual collection that is made on Master's Night. It is administered in strict confidence by the Guild Chest Trustees who at present comprise PM Alison Jensen, Bro. Matthew Eve and Bro. Angela Barrett.

The Trustees of the Chest are keen that Brothers should use this facility. It is your charity. Monies might be needed for vital materials or studio equipment, or perhaps to purchase frames for an exhibition. A loan might be seen as a stop-gap in difficult times. When money is borrowed, it can be paid back, without interest, entirely at the convenience of the borrower.

Please contact the Guild Secretary or one of the Trustees, whose contact details are in the Directory.

The Art Workers' Guild, 6 Queen Square, London WC1N 3AT
Telephone 020 7713 0966 Fax 020 7713 0967
www.artworkersguild.org