

AUSTIN FRIAR
2020



The Furniture Makers' Company
the furnishing industry's charity

“

Our vision is for a thriving British furnishing industry with a talented workforce delivering high-quality products, which supports those in need from within its ranks and those who have served it in the past

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The Furniture Makers' Company the furnishing industry's charity

The Furniture Makers' Company is the City of London livery company and charity for the furnishing industry. We foster the industry by supporting those in need, nurturing skills and expertise and inspiring excellence.

It has been a turbulent time for the UK furnishing industry with macroeconomic factors affecting many businesses resulting in some fallout.

Our programme of Education, Excellence and Support is of vital importance, especially during times like these. The industry needs a skilled workforce and our programme of educational activity ensures we nurture talent.

Our Guild Marks provide individuals and companies the opportunity to attain an accreditation of excellence – a point of difference from others in the marketplace.

Meanwhile, our occupational welfare support safeguards the industry's most valuable asset – the people working up and down the country.

This yearbook charts our progress during 2019–2020 in the aforementioned areas of output as well as celebrating the laudable dedication of our members, who facilitate our success and in turn cherish the camaraderie and sense of belonging that comes from being an active member in a modern livery company.

Introduction	04 / 09
Education	10 / 25
Excellence	26 / 49
Support	50 / 57
Membership	58 / 81

THE FURNITURE MAKERS'
COMPANY IS THE CITY OF
LONDON LIVERY COMPANY
AND CHARITY FOR THE
FURNISHING INDUSTRY

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU
AND YOUR INDUSTRY

Alpha Spirit by
Hypnos



Malabar by
Cormar Carpets



2019 Design
Guild Mark holder
Atticus Durnell



Wycombe Grand by
Parker Knoll

Fernanda Nunez
and her Guilloché
Bedside Tables



Lexington by
Panaz





THE MASTER

Dids Macdonald OBE, Master of
The Furniture Makers' Company 2019-20

As Master, I have championed our industry with pride, and it has been an honour and a privilege. The friendship, fellowship and fun I have experienced along this incredible journey have been palpable. Thank you for placing your trust in me.

As a recipient of the extraordinary generosity of other livery companies, I have experienced how highly regarded we are by those who have many more centuries of history, a testament to the significant profile of British furnishings today.

What makes the furnishings industry matter? Quite simply, in the wealth of activities, opinions, events in our 2019-2020 Austin Friar yearbook. It is a compelling snapshot of our livery and charity's endeavours. I would like to extend a huge thank you to all involved, it is you and all you do that makes our industry matter.

Our corporate member engagement has been a tower of strength, underpinning and supporting our ambitions in design, manufacturing and retailing excellence. At the same time the dedication and commitment shown from individual members, giving up so much of their time, is commendable.

The Royal Charter Dinner at Apothecaries' Hall holds a special memory for me. Quite by chance at a Mansion House reception, I met the vice principal of Drapers' Academy and told her that I had been let down by a choir I had intended to entertain us.

She immediately said, 'We've got a choir, why don't they entertain you?'. Fast forward to a glittering celebration when 20 nervous school children sang so beautifully and received a standing ovation, led by our generous charity president, The Lord Kirkham CVO.

Now having visited their school, we're hoping some of their students will participate in the 2020 Young Furniture Makers exhibition. It's amazing what a tiny snippet of conversation can lead to.

Representation and relevancy remain high on my continuing priorities as I step down. Unless we engage younger interest in our livery, encourage more women to aspire to senior roles and attract broader ethnicity, we will not look like the industry we serve.

I was proud to introduce a new Master's award during the year, named after our first Master, Sir Stanley Wharton. It gave me enormous pleasure to invite Cherrill Scheer of the famous Hille family and an inspirational female role model to be the first recipient for her exceptional contribution to this industry over many decades. She has also been one of the champions in the development of our Design Guild Mark.

My focus for the year has been the furtherance and promotion of our occupational welfare support through the One Step at a Time campaign. I have been amazed by the support the industry has shown and surpassing our goal of

100 companies registered as One Step Champions three months early was a huge victory.

The campaign has had real impact and resulted in a huge 42% rise in welfare applications, reinforcing our charity's message that we're here to help when times get tough. But this is only the beginning of the welfare journey.

No Master's year would happen without the great support of the two wardens, David Woodward and Tony Attard OBE DL. Master elect David Woodward will now, through his determination, enthusiasm and passion for the industry, bring a very special dynamic to our company and I know I can count on everyone to support the next chapter in our welfare campaign. David's 'Step 2 It' initiative is going to be an exciting and fun challenge.

Dids Macdonald



MASTER ELECT

David Woodward, Master Elect of
The Furniture Makers' Company

How times change. Since writing this introduction, we've been hit with a national and global challenge as never before in our lifetime, the COVID-19 pandemic. It has radically changed our lives and brought the UK furnishing industry - and world - to a standstill. While times are hard, our resolve must be positive in the belief that better days are to come. Our main priority now is to provide support through our welfare grants and plan to rebuild not just the The Furniture Makers' Company but the industry at large.

It has been decided that the wardens and I should serve two years in office, providing continuity throughout these difficult times.

When the pandemic has been beaten, the country needs to unite and develop strong ties internationally. It won't be a walk in the park but with determination, cooperation and ingenuity we will succeed. The furniture and furnishings industry has a golden opportunity to become a world leader in design and quality within our sector.

We must invest in our young people to give them the tools they need to develop their considerable talents and take our industry forward, making us the 'go to' nation for the very best in quality design and desirability.

Throughout this process we must not lose sight of the need to support those either in or retired from our vast industry, who have hit hard times.

My plan will be to build on the considerable achievements made by Master Dids Macdonald OBE by continuing the One Step at a Time campaign but adding a new dimension, 'Step 2 It'.

Involving as many companies and members as possible, my challenge is for us to collectively achieve 100,000 miles by either walking, running, riding, rowing or swimming, raising at least £1 per mile, while spreading the word that we are here for you.

I will also strive to strengthen our work in education and excellence and develop the involvement of our new young freemen and

the education sector to provide more of the opportunities that are needed to take the industry forward.

Guild Marks should become the guarantee of quality and workmanship recognised by the public and internationally. I will challenge businesses to get behind them, acquire them and use them to market great British products.

As a City of London livery company, we are perceived as being London-centric while the industry we represent is national. I will work with our regional committees to build nationwide involvement and recognition of our charity.

None of this can be achieved unless our fundraising activities rise to the challenge, so help us to help you by supporting our campaigns.

Above all, I want my time in office to be exciting and fun for everyone with the emphasis on the fun in fundraising.

Nina Naveršnik won the Young Furniture Makers Design Award for the Lucy Light



EDUCATION

Developing the next generation

From small acorns mighty oaks grow, and at The Furniture Makers' Company we have developed a comprehensive and enriching education programme to develop, steward and inspire the next generation of designers, makers, retailers and leaders to make it stronger

and more prosperous than ever before.

Through our many prizes, bursaries, tours, programmes and opportunities for professional development and growth, we are devoted to the enduring success of our sector and its future workforce.

Why Education Matters

Wendy Shorter-Blake MBE is a liveryman of The Furniture Makers' Company and will be installed as Master of the Worshipful Company of Upholders in April 2020



"I started my career in upholstery and soft furnishings in the mid-nineties. After a 20 year career in the film industry as a production coordinator, I retrained after having my daughter and realising that films and a baby was never going to work.

I trained at London Guildhall University, now London Metropolitan University, gaining my professional qualifications with distinction and then worked on private commissions. In 1999 I started teaching City & Guilds upholstery courses at West Herts and Dunstable Colleges. I also went back to teach advanced upholstery at London Metropolitan University between

2004–2007. In 2006 I was made redundant when the colleges lost their funding for craft subjects. With the support of a group of enthusiastic students who wanted to continue, and who thought it would be a good idea if they all came to my house, I ended up opening my own training centre, Wendy Shorter Interiors in Colney Heath, Hertfordshire. What started as a bit of a joke has now developed into a thriving business, employing three other tutors and over 65 students going through each year.

I became a member of the Association of Master Upholsterers & Soft Furnishers (AMUSF) in 1999 and was made director of training in 2007. At that time, the trade had

concerns about the lack of good quality qualifications and training, so I developed the AMUSF suite of qualifications that were designed for our trade and that would be monitored and verified by experienced members of the trade.

Training in upholstery and soft furnishings has been a big part of my career for the past 20 years, and during this time as well as developing my own training centre, I have encouraged and supported 17 other training centres based around the country. I also sit on various other industry and government bodies advising on upholstery and soft furnishings skills and education.



Wendy with one of her students

Through the Furniture Makers, we have been able to develop a Level 2 Modern Upholstery and Level 3 Advanced and Traditional Upholstery Apprenticeship. However, my concern is that unless companies take on and train young people, particularly in the traditional hand-stuffed and stitched skills, we may lose these skills in this country. This would mean that should there be other fires like those at Hampton Court and Windsor Castle, we may have to go abroad to find the craft skills required to restore the furnishings.

Together with the Heritage Crafts Association, I am currently working on a 'Craft' Apprenticeship to help those craft micro-businesses. that currently have no access to funded apprenticeships and training.

My plea to the furniture and furnishings industry is to please take on and support the training of young people. If you pay into the Apprenticeship Levy, please use that levy to employ and train new young people, not just to upskill your existing staff. If you have excess funds, please pass them down the supply chain. For the smaller, non-levy paying businesses, please remember that there is funding through the Trailblazer Apprenticeship scheme. Funding is never going to be handed to you on a plate, but there is funding and support for those that want to see our industry thrive." ♦

wendyshorterinteriors.co.uk

“Unless companies take on and train young people, particularly in the traditional hand-stuffed and stitched skills, we may lose these skills in this country”

Today, skills and training in upholstery and soft furnishings are just as important to our sector as they were when I retrained. The only difference being that currently craft subjects like these are not funded. Art and craft subjects are also being dropped at many of our state schools, because these subjects are not funded in the same way as Maths, English and the Sciences. With little or no funding this means that young people coming out of school have little or no knowledge of these craft skills and the career opportunities that may be open to them. The knock-on effect of this means that the use of traditional craft skills is diminishing.

Wendy supporting the Student Industry Tour



Millie Harper, National School Design Prize winner



Our Education Programme

Inspiring creativity, nurturing talent and supporting the career development of the next generation

School Design Prize

The passion for making starts at school. We want to nurture and reward it, to ensure gifted makers continue their studies in design and making.

Our School Design Prize has been running for eight years now. It shines a spotlight on the talent brimming in classrooms up and down the country, with the aim of inspiring students early enough so that they may consider developing their burgeoning skills and pursuing a career in the furniture industry.

Every year we send hundreds of sponsored copies of curriculum textbook *Design of the 20th Century* by Charlotte and Peter Fiell to schools and colleges around the country, asking teachers to award it to their most outstanding design and technology student.

The National School Design Prize winner in 2019 was Millie Harper who was awarded first place for her Egg Cot.

Supported Schools

In 2019 we continued developing our Supported Schools programme, which helps selected schools that have a strong design and technology department, by providing financial aid, helping the school build links with industry and inviting students from the institution to exhibit at our annual Young Furniture Makers exhibition.

Last year we continued to cement our partnership with John Hampden Grammar School in Buckinghamshire, while investigating other suitable schools around the country to benefit from this important scheme.

Student Industry Tour

For those learners who have shown an interest in the industry and want an understanding of the inner workings of businesses, the Student Industry Tour is perfect.

The annual tour takes 30 students on a three-day excursion of businesses in the north-west of England, providing a broad understanding of how the sector operates.

Last year the students once again visited Corian distributor CD (UK) Ltd, tool manufacturer and tour sponsor Festool,



Phoebe, a School Design Prize winner



retailer Furniture Village, bed manufacturer Harrison Spinks, contract furniture maker Knightsbridge and foam manufacturer Vitafoam.

The students got to see inside factories, design offices and stores of some of the UK's leading furnishing businesses, getting an understanding of sales, marketing, manufacturing and design.

Seminars

Listening and learning by experience from people who are experts is invaluable for young people still in education or fresh out of university eager to make an indelible mark on the industry. Over the past few years we have cultivated an insightful

seminar programme that tackles subjects students want to hear about from relevant, inspirational speakers. In 2019 we took the programme on the road, holding seminars at Bath Spa University, the Building Crafts College, Plymouth University and KI's pop-up showroom during the 2019 Clerkenwell Design Week.

Scholarships, Bursaries and Industry Partnerships

The cost of tuition continues to rise and with it so does the need for financial support to ensure students can put themselves through their studies. Our Royal Charter Fund provides scholarships and bursaries to students at colleges and universities that

teach furnishing related courses. Several of the colleges and universities we work with also benefit from grants and bursaries for students at BA and MA level, which go towards tuition fees and materials.

Meanwhile, our Industry Partnership initiative gives students a project with actual deadlines to work towards. We currently have an Industry Partnership running through William Hands and the Gordon Russell Museum with Rycotewood Furniture Centre. The winner of the 2019 Industry Partnership was Paul Lippard for his Login Desk.

Young Furniture Makers Exhibition

The Young Furniture Makers exhibition

brings together all elements of our wide education output, the culmination being a tremendous celebration of incredibly creative and talented designers looking to make an impact on the sector.

It was established more than 10 years ago for schoolchildren, students and university graduates to showcase the future of design to potential employers and members of industry.

Around 150 of the freshest designer-makers exhibited cutting edge furniture and lighting for one day only in the spectacular

setting of Furniture Makers' Hall and the Dutch Church in the heart of the City of London in October 2019.

We were delighted to welcome award-winning designer-maker Sebastian Cox as our special guest to present the Young Furniture Makers Awards.

Awards and Prizes

Our Young Furniture Makers Awards are the student equivalent of our Guild Marks, recognising excellence in the fields of bespoke, design and innovation. With each passing year comes more entries and the bar of quality consistently rises, and 2019 was no exception. The designs that impressed our judges on paper were then invited to show at our Young Furniture Makers exhibition where the winners were selected.

The winners were:

- The Bespoke Award was awarded to Matthew Hensby for the Kent Stick Chair
- The Design Award was awarded to Nina Naveršnik for the Lucy Light
- The Innovation Award was awarded to



- Huw Evans for the Concertina Collection
- The Best in Show prize, sponsored by Blum, was also awarded to Huw Evans
- Ten outstanding pieces were also selected to be included in a special room set installation at the 2020 January Furniture Show (19–22 January, NEC Birmingham).

We also support and sponsor other prizes to inspire young makers. The Master attended Celebration of Craftsmanship & Design at Cheltenham College's Thirlestaine Long Gallery in August 2019 to judge and award the Furniture Makers' Design Award.

The winner was Fernanda Nunez for her Guilloché Bedside Tables, which were inspired by a Guilloché pattern from an Art Deco mirror.

Professional Development

Through our extensive membership of major UK businesses, we can offer an unmatched continuous professional development scheme for future leaders of the sector, the

Young Professional Industry Experience.

The Young Professional Industry Experience is our three-week intensive programme where aspirational young people are given the opportunity to visit leading industry companies and understand all areas of the sector, including materials, design, manufacturing, pricing, marketing, sales and customer service.

The experience offers an opportunity to explore the wider trade while helping professionals forge links with senior-level

members of industry as well as each other.

This year's participants were Jess Bowyer, sourcing and corporate social responsibility manager at Ocee Design; Oliver Clegg, junior quality assurance analyst at Camira Fabrics; Ryan Goddard, operations graduate at Herman Miller; Kieran Gunn, technical support at Ercol; Emily Nickless, digital marketing manager at Parker Knoll; Hattie Speed, design engineer at Ercol; Josh Stancer, business development/trainee veneer specialist at Mundy Veneer; and Carl

Sunderland, development CAD technician at Parker Knoll.

Following the experience, all the participants were offered a mentor to further their learning and invited to attend regular networking events with all the previous participants of the Young Professional Industry Experience.

Master Certificate Scheme

The Master Certificate Scheme, run by City of London livery companies in partnership with City & Guilds, recognises excellence and promotes career progression from Apprentice to Journeyman and Master level.

In order to qualify for a certificate at any of the three levels, the applicant must provide evidence of having achieved an appropriate level of responsibility within the industry and having a technical knowledge in the sector in which they work.

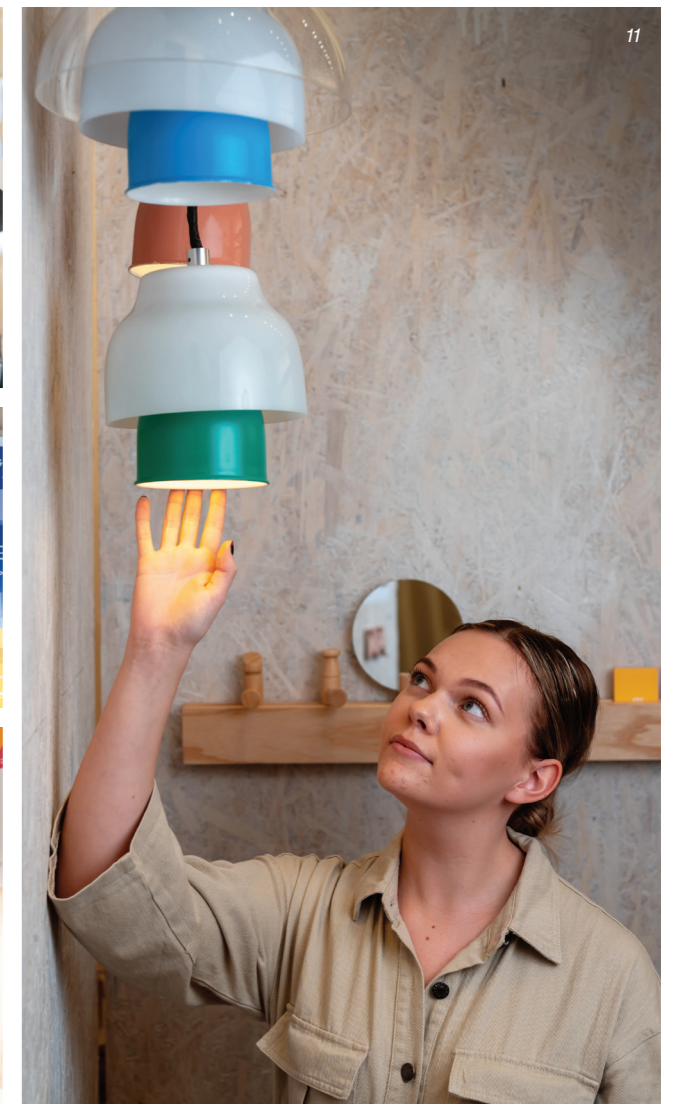
In March 2020 Oliver Fuller was presented with the Apprentice Certificate and John Cotter, Paul Fuller, Andrew Mayes, Rupert Senior and Ian Smart were awarded the Master Certificate. The ceremony took place at the Mansion House, London.

“We also support and sponsor other prizes to inspire young makers. The Master attended Celebration of Craftsmanship & Design at Cheltenham College's Thirlestaine Long Gallery in August 2019 to judge and award the Furniture Makers' Design Award”



Young Furniture Makers exhibition 2019

- 1 Beth Lewis received a commendation
- 2 Huw Evans being awarded the Blum Best in Show Prize by Sebastian Cox
- 3 Natalie Yung and the Stack-it Pouffe
- 4 Simon Bulley from the Edward Barnsley Workshop exhibited Library Steps
- 5 Zac Brewer and his Steam Bent Coat Hook
- 6 Tilly Farmery's Seateasy was selected to be part of a special feature at the January Furniture Show
- 7 Faaria Satvilker and the Ashley Duo Dresser
- 8 The exhibition gives students and graduates the opportunity to network with the industry
- 9 Milo Tonry-Brown and Droplet
- 10 Xin Gao won third place in the Design Award category for the Hat Light
- 11 Rachel Mounsey and her RM3 Pendants



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January FURNITURE SHOW | NEC
24-27 JAN 2021

The Furniture Ombudsman

The Frederick Parker Collection and Archive

Although as Furniture Makers we are primarily focused on the present and future of the industry, we are proud of our heritage too, and always keen to learn more about furniture making in the past and to share our history with others.

One of the ways we do this is through the Frederick Parker Collection, a fascinating collection of around 200 chairs dating from the 1660s to the present day, including ornately carved baroque examples from the 17th century, elegantly formed classical styles of the Georgian and Regency periods, early modern pieces from the 1950s and 1960s and recently acquired designer items from the last two decades.

Most of the chairs were originally collected by Frederick Parker & Sons over 100 years ago, when there was a strong demand for reproduction furniture. The firm became Parker Knoll in the 1930s and continues to this day as a familiar and successful brand in upholstered furniture. The antique chair collection and an extensive archive of the furniture designs and business records of the Parkers and Parker Knoll were saved by a trust and have now been placed with The Furniture Makers' Company.

It's a wonderful educational resource, on long-term loan to the London Metropolitan University (the former London School of Furniture) and accessible for study to anyone by appointment. We are especially keen for it to be used by schools and

colleges to support courses in design and technology and have developed a touring exhibition which is available for loan. We have also exhibited at the Young Furniture Makers Show and the January Furniture Show.

Our big aim now is to make it much more accessible online, and we are working with London Metropolitan University to generate high-quality digital images of the chairs and some of the rich material in the archive such as pattern books, furniture catalogues and publicity brochures, to create a dynamic interactive site which we hope will encourage an interest in furniture design and history. ♦ **Enquiries about visiting the chair collection and archive should be made to specialcollections@londonmet.ac.uk**



The Frederick Parker Collection
part of The Furniture Makers' Company

An Intellectual Property Masterclass

Intellectual property is a significant factor underpinning the success of major brands in the furnishings sector and through the Anti Copying in Design (ACID) mini intellectual property (IP) masterclass, part of the Young Professionals Industry Experience, IP is being better understood by tomorrow's leaders.

Our thanks goes to the three ACID legal affiliates: Gavin Llewellyn of Stone King, Sarah Merrifield of Boulton and Liveryman Kelly Hudson of McDaniel & Co. for their fascinating input and expertise they bring to the ACID mini IP masterclass.

As a follow-on from the session, ACID asks the participants to write an essay on the importance of IP to the company for which they work.

Emily Nickless of Parker Knoll was chosen as the winner and was awarded a magnum of champagne and the IP Essay Award Certificate. Meanwhile Parker Knoll was awarded a free corporate ACID membership. Read Emily's essay below.

Why is IP Important to Parker Knoll?

IP encompasses all the intangible elements associated with a brand, from copyright and trademarks to design rights and patents. There have been numerous reports published suggesting that customers consider trust in a brand to be their main reason for choosing one over another, above

price and other factors, highlighting the importance of IP in attracting customers within a competitive market.

When the IP rights for Parker Knoll and subsequently Collins & Hayes were purchased, it gave the organisation the exclusive rights to the historical designs, logos and marketing materials, including products that are, and have been, produced by the brand itself. The monetary value for which the brand was purchased was determined based on the potential and significance of the IP. It can therefore be argued that IP is the most powerful monetary element of the Parker Knoll brand. The Parker Knoll brand is also unique, celebrating 150 years of heritage, which is their most substantial differentiator compared with competitors.

Parker Knoll can manage their IP among retailers by controlling the brand communications and distribution of materials. This allows them to protect Parker Knoll's reputation and visual identity, ensuring that the most valuable part of the business is preserved.

Parker Knoll has been built by the success of its designs as well as its credibility; known for their iconic and innovative sofas and chairs. Not only are the historic designs protected, but also IP that has been subsequently produced as well as future designs. The ability to create and introduce new protected products to market

is an element that keeps the business competitive, profitable, and sustainable. IP infringement, therefore, can be considered a threat to the brand. However, proving infringement can be costly and difficult. For example, a situation recently arose, once Parker Knoll had acquired Collins & Hayes, in which an external company manufactured products and utilised the brand name to market their offering. This use of the name to market their products was infringement upon the Collins & Hayes IP, to which they actioned a response.

Whatever the financial cost, doing so can often strengthen the brand's position in the market to show not only that they care about the financial value of the business, but that they are the true custodians of the brand's reputation. The Parker Knoll brand has changed hands several times throughout its lifetime, but its connotations are elements that have kept it alive for many years and will continue to support its growth. As a result



Shoreditch Chair by Parker Knoll



Emily Nickless and Master Dids Macdonald OBE

of this rich heritage, the product and brand name have become synonymous. When a customer considers Parker Knoll, an image is generated, they see the logo, values and design signature of the brand. The heritage is positively unusual and has created a story that consumers can align with, understanding Parker Knoll to manufacture high-quality, comfortable furniture. The ownership and rights to this history, the brand and its connotations is Parker Knoll's primary unique selling point, an element that defines the brand's position in a competitive industry. It is therefore vital it is safeguarded and protected.

Now, more so than ever, with the potential loss of protection in EU27 post-Brexit, it is essential for 'Furniture Design UK' to help ACID in their quest for guidelines, certainty and clarity to ensure that IP rights, and in particular unregistered design rights' protection, are not eroded. ♦

acid.uk.com

Marquis divanstead with a Montpellier headboard
from Somnus by Harrison Spinks



EXCELLENCE

Distinguishing the excellent
from the ordinary

The UK has a long, well-founded international reputation as furniture makers of absolute regard.

Furniture manufacturing is one of the top three divisions driving manufacturing growth in the UK. Meanwhile the design economy as a whole contributes £85.2bn in gross value added (GVA).

While membership of the Furniture Makers is open to all who work in the wider furnishing industry, our Guild Marks recognise the traditional arts and modern marvels that are involved with the making of furniture.

Our Bespoke, Design and Manufacturing Guild Marks are designations of excellence acknowledging the outstanding achievements of individuals and businesses whose innovations in the field of design and production ensure that the UK remains a world-beater.

What makes these accolades so significant is that they are independently judged by revered experts, offering the winners illustrious peer recognition and an invaluable opportunity to market their piece or company globally as a champion of the British furnishing industry.

Why Excellence Matters

Liveryman and Design Guild Mark chairman Rodney McMahon is the managing director of Morgan Furniture



Rodney with the Design Guild Mark's Textiles, Wall Coverings, Surfaces, Carpets and Floor Coverings judging panel

"I ventured into the design world in 1986. I began accompanying my wife to furniture exhibitions when she was doing her MA in Furniture Design at the Royal College of Art. I was appalled at the lamentable design available from UK furniture manufacturers, when even companies like Cassina and B&B Italia were represented by agents operating out of obscure premises in North London. The British were not generally exposed to good design then the way they are now. I felt that we must be able to contribute to the conversation.

At Morgan – my company – we believe the design and manufacture of truly original, high-quality furniture is the result of passion, care, design integrity, experience,

craftsmanship and an unfaltering dedication to quality. This commitment could not be realised without fully integrating the design and manufacturing processes.

For me, design excellence is when the combination of form, function and materials arrives at something that is as beautiful as it is useful. To achieve this needs a variety of skill sets of which the original inspiration is only the starting point. 'Excellence' is often only arrived at as the result of a restless and relentless experimentation and iteration that develops and refines ideas as embodied by all the innovators in history.

Picasso used this approach and his huge collection of sketches, studies and finished works is evidence that raw talent needs to be nourished by committed hard work. Malcolm Gladwell predicates this with his 10,000-hour rule, which he applies to Bill Gates, concert pianists, sports people as well as designers and innovators.

The Design Guild Mark, which I've chaired for four years, is a way of celebrating the hard work of those in the design sector. The mark gives credence to the designer, who will have gone through quite a journey to get a design into volume production,



Jeremy Myerson and Rodney presenting Catherine Aitken of Another Country with a Design Guild Mark

is not confined to the design environment. However, as the world develops, and this is happening very fast especially in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), Britain can expect much stronger competition to emerge. This is where excellence and education converge.

British education encourages creativity and independent thinking, where many other countries focus on technocratic skills. What design education could do better is to increase the emphasis on technical knowledge and on materials and processes so that graduates are better informed of the practicalities of the world in which they will work.

I am not sure that the education system any longer supports excellence or innovative thought. Simply, its huge expansion must mitigate against the cultivation of excellence. Senior educators in engineering, jewellery design and product design tell me that students now want to be provided with a solution, rather than wrestle with concepts in their own minds so that the process of restless iteration, I describe above, is no longer able to be performed, nor seen as valuable.

If this is true, the celebration of excellence, championing those in the sector who do strive for it, and providing them with a platform to promote design, British design, is more important than ever before." ♦

morganfurniture.co.uk

with our panel of judges sharing their belief in the product and warrant it as a design for the ages.

It is independent of commercial imperatives or blandishments; benefits from well-regarded and independent judges; bestows a mark which recognises excellence and is, finally, directed at designers and not commerce.

My favourite part of the process is the judging day. It is fascinating to hear the judges' design perspectives on the entries and observe the discussions and

deliberations around their differences or agreements. I learn a great deal and it allows me to hone my own design eye and mature my judgements.

British design has been highly regarded internationally for many years, and the slightly eccentric and devil-may-care attitude of British society has been a fertile breeding ground for innovative thought. Consequently, Britain is also a leader in many other innovative industries including fintech, finance and pure scientific research so this creative attitude to life



Designer Mark Gabbertas presenting to the Design Guild Mark Furniture category judges

BESPOKE GUILD MARK. EXCELLENCE RIGHT DOWN TO THE LAST DETAIL

The Bespoke Guild Mark recognises excellence in design, materials, craftsmanship and function for exquisite pieces of furniture made as single items or a limited run of up to 12. This year two exceptional pieces met the stringent criteria to be awarded the mark. ♦
furnituremakers.org.uk/excellence/bespoke-guild-mark

BGM 475 The Moon
Cabinet by Rupert Senior



BGM 474 Aran Desk
by Aled Lewis





MARC FISH

It's fair to say that Marc Fish has built a career in pushing the boundaries, being ambitious and daring to go that bit further.

"If we weren't on the edge of failure, then we wouldn't get the success we want," says Marc. "We must push ourselves constantly. If it fails, it goes in the bin. That is how we learn."

However, breaking new ground is impossible without first understanding the fundamentals. It was only after mastering the skills used for centuries by craftsmen that Marc began exploring new materials and ways to produce fluid, sculptural pieces inspired by the curvilinear forms of Art Nouveau.

His process pushes the limits of 21st century furniture design and transcends the barriers of art, design, sculpture and furniture.

Indeed, Marc's latest triumph, the Vortex Table, is testament to his reputation for logic-defying works, and a very worthy winner of the 2019 Claxton Stevens Prize.

The prize is presented annually to the most outstanding design awarded our Bespoke Guild Mark, which recognises excellence in design, materials, craftsmanship and function for exquisite pieces of furniture.

Marc says: "The Bespoke Guild Mark is a great accolade and gives clients the confidence in my abilities, resulting in better commissions. On a personal level it

boosts your confidence, reassures you that you are getting better and it feels amazing to be part of a small group of Bespoke Guild Mark holders, many of whom were inspirational in my early years."

A holder of five Bespoke Guild Marks, with two of them having been awarded the Claxton Stevens Prize, Marc's latest masterpiece was inspired by his fascination with eddies.

"The Vortex Table came from my interest in whirlpools, tornados and even the way the water drains down the bath. I wanted to truly capture the energy and dynamism."

Both a functional object and a sculptural anomaly, the table was crafted using Marc's signature technique of combining laminated veneers with resin, which was then hand-carved and polished. The base was made with 2,000



Marc being presented the Claxton Stevens Prize by the Lord Mayor of London Alderman Peter Estlin



Marc exhibiting at Evolution of Tradition in 2018

individual veneers, meticulously hand-placed and carefully dyed with squid ink, and reinforced carbon fibre, while the top utilised 130kg of resin.

“Resin was chosen for the top because we knew we could cast, mould and carve it into the shape we wanted. The base uses our unique technique of laminating overlapped veneers to create double compound curves.”

Interestingly, when the table is viewed from above, the resin distorts the veneers underneath and resembles an image of sand dunes. The top of the table is like an optical illusion as it looks as if it plunges in the middle, but it is actually flat.

“It appears to have the dip or the centre of a whirlpool. This has been created by casting a large lump under the top and carving the twist onto

the underneath of the top. It is very convincing even close up.”

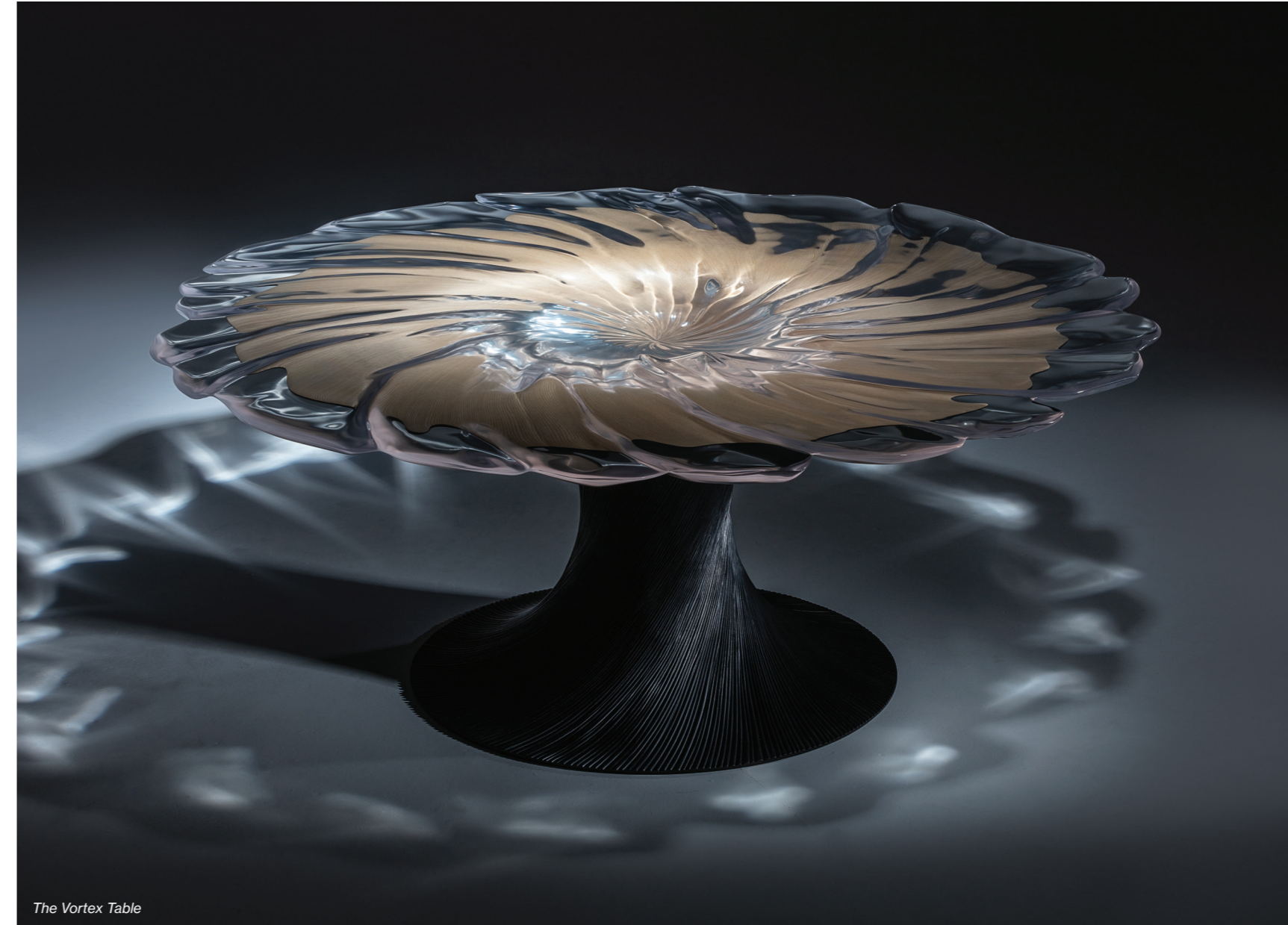
Achieving this effect isn't quick or simple, though, as Marc explains.

“Pouring 130kg of resin in one day in very accurate quantities was very challenging, each pour has to be timed with the previous one just as it is starting to cool down. While resin cures it creates heat and if you pour too much the build-up of heat can cause the resin to crack, warp, create clusters of bubbles and shrink.”

In fact, Marc estimates that the Vortex Table represents a total of 1,000 hours of work from design to completion.

Christopher Claxton Stevens, benefactor of the prize, said of Marc's piece: “The judging panel all agreed that Marc's sheer bravado and inventiveness in design and execution made his table stand out from the other entries. It was attractive in form and proportion, the top appearing to ‘pour’ inwards towards the centre when in fact it was actually flat and functional. Marc boldly experimented with new materials which worked out really successfully.”

Marc said: “I am honoured to be the recipient of this year's Claxton Stevens Prize for the best Bespoke Guild Mark of 2019. The Vortex Table was an exciting piece to work on as it allowed us to push boundaries and experiment with techniques, and it's great to see that kind of work being recognised. There are so many new techniques to discover and a lot we can learn as we keep making and designing.” ♦ marcfish.co.uk



“Marc's sheer bravado and inventiveness in design and execution made his table stand out from the other entries. It was attractive in form and proportion, and Marc boldly experimented with new materials



DESIGN GUILD MARK. HITTING THE MARK OF EXCELLENCE

The prestigious Design Guild Mark is awarded to drive excellence and raise the profile of British design and innovation.

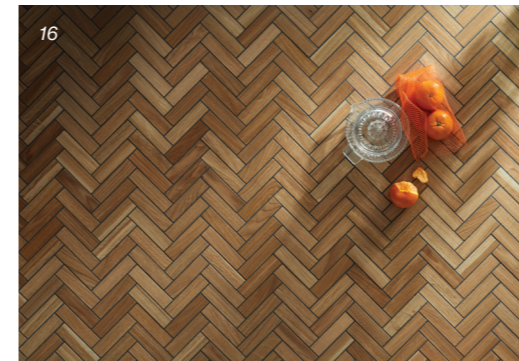
The mark recognises the highest standards in the design of furnishing in volume production, by designers working in Britain or British designers working abroad.

In 2019, 22 designs were awarded, 15 in the Furniture category and seven in the Textiles, Wall Coverings, Surfaces, Carpets and Floor Coverings category.

The Ori Guest Bed and Igneous were judged to be the best designs from their respective categories and awarded the Jonathan Hindle Prize for Excellence. ♦ designguildmark.org.uk

- 1 DGM 212 Ori Guest Bed by Catherine Aitken for Another Country
- 2 DGM 213 Oran by Mark Gabbertas for Allermuir
- 3 DGM 214 William Lounge Chair and Ottoman by Mark Gabbertas for Gloster Furniture
- 4 DGM 215 Oxbow Lounge Chair by Namon Gaston for Dare
- 5 DGM 216 BOB by Paul Kelley for Bisley
- 6 DGM 217 Panel by Lucy Kurrein for Capdell
- 7 DGM 218 Rock by Yorgo Lykouria and Rainlight Studio for Allsteel
- 8 DGM 219 Isla by Tom Potts for Lyndon
- 9 DGM 220 Barrel by Philippe Malouin for SCP
- 10 DGM 221 Bure Collection by Steven Owens for &Bespoke
- 11 DGM 222 Newson Aluminum Chair by Marc Newson for Knoll International
- 12 DGM 223 Object Collection by Jonathan Prestwich for OPM Furniture

- 13 DGM 224 S-Range Dining Chair by John and Sylvia Reid for Nathan Furniture
- 14 DGM 225 WW Armchair CS3 by Alejandro Villarreal for Hayche
- 15 DGM 226 Latis Collection by Samuel Wilkinson for The Conran Shop
- 16 DGM 227 Mosaico by Another Brand in partnership with Qualita
- 17 DGM 228 Aalya by Gary Bridge for Axminster Carpets
- 18 DGM 229 Corian Solid Surface with Resilience Technology by CD (UK) Ltd
- 19 DGM 230 That's Caffeine by Atticus Durnell
- 20 DGM 231 Artistic Liberties by Claire Kimble and Helen Lloyd for Milliken
- 21 DGM 232 Quirky B, Alternative Flooring with Liberty Fabrics by Alternative Flooring
- 22 DGM 233 Igneous by Nathan Philpott and Jemma Ooi for Cushtom Design



Igneous wallpaper by Custhom



DESIGN
GUILD MARK

CUSTHOM

The transformative power of wall coverings is irrefutable. A living space can be instantly revamped with a new coat of paint or the addition of some statement wallpaper or decadent soft furnishings.

In fact, the use of decorative textiles, wall coverings, surfaces, carpets and floor coverings are very often the difference maker between 'just a room' and 'an interior'.

Recognising the significance of the sector, in 2018 we launched a new Textiles, Wall Coverings, Surfaces, Carpets and Floor Coverings category for our Design Guild Mark, to recognise the highest standards in the design of furnishings for volume production.

The introduction of the new category brought with it an opportunity to celebrate the work of another stratum of the design community while giving applicants an opportunity to present to a panel of distinguished judges.



London-based design studio Custhom – made up of Jemma Ooi and Nathan Philpott – caused quite the positive stir in 2019 when they pitched their unique wallpaper range, Igneous, to the jury.

Made from carbon powder, Igneous uses Custhom's innovative process of hand-foiling wallpapers, the effect being an inimitable distressed or highly polished non-repetitive finish, which is available in a wide range of metallic hues.

Jemma explains what initially inspired them to develop Igneous: "We had been experimenting with a range of ways to apply metallic foil to a wallpaper that moved

beyond the repetitive nature of traditional screen or roller printing design. We are always interested in reducing unnecessary waste or materials and developed a method of creating an adhesive out of waste materials. There is an elegance in the fine detail captured by this process of foil application which led us to develop this design collection."

The finished result mimics the distinct crystallisation of igneous rocks, formed through the cooling and solidification of magma or lava, hence its namesake.

"Igneous is one of our most popular designs, due to the light reflective properties





of the gold foil areas, the subtle details and fluidity of texture. The most challenging aspect of it is communicating the subtlety and level of detail of the design because to see it react to light is very different from looking at an image of it.”

Custhom is a research-based design practice born out of Nathan and Jemma’s shared love of paper and passion for textiles. The pair met while each studying for an MA at the Royal College of Art and first collaborated on a series of personal projects that were documented through a blog titled ‘Curse these tiny hands of mine’.

What started as a passion project snowballed and became a viable business and in 2010 Jemma and Nathan set up the studio to respond to a growing interest in larger design consultancy projects.

They now work with clients on concepts for branding, retail spaces, restaurants and domestic projects, often in collaboration with respected architects and interior designers.

“We both really enjoy the opportunity to have a space where we can create instinctively without commercial pressures. Working for ourselves means we can take our time with designs and be experimental in our making, until we are happy for it to be launched. As collaborators we tend to start our ideas independently and pass them back and forward as they evolve.”

The new Textiles, Wall Coverings, Surfaces, Carpets and Floor Coverings category is still in its infancy but has already garnered much attention, with lots of recognisable designers and brands in the sector having submitted applications for the award.

Being awarded a Design Guild Mark warrants a huge celebration in itself but to have your design be named the best in category and recipient of the Jonathan Hindle Prize is a huge honour –

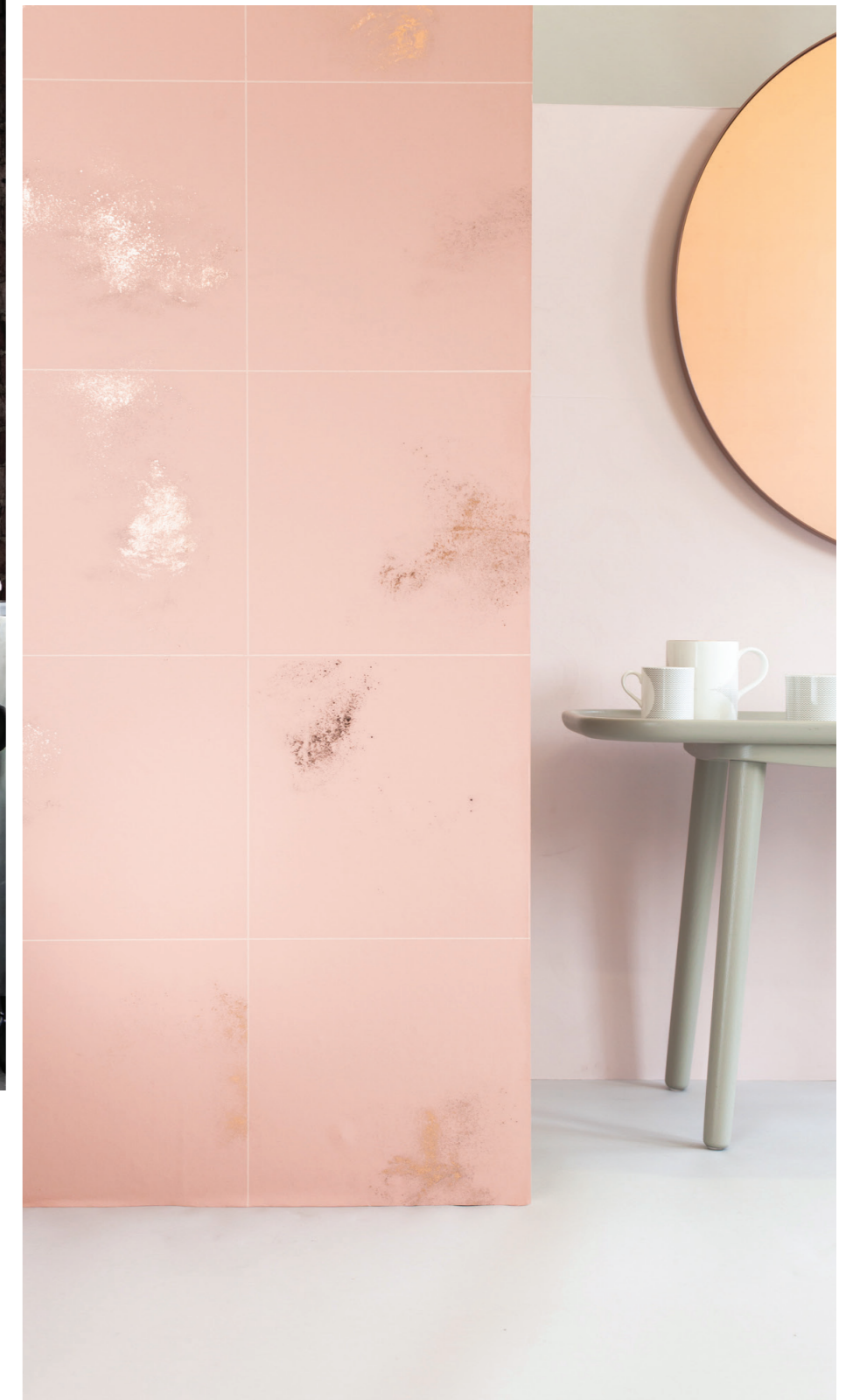
something that Custhom can proudly tell their customers.

Commenting on winning both awards, Jemma said: “We felt the design had an interesting making process and a unique finish which we hoped the judges would really appreciate. We are so pleased we had the opportunity to present and explain this to the panel because of their expertise and eye for great design. Having a varied panel of experts to present to and discuss our



collection with really validates the Design Guild Mark and we are absolutely thrilled and honoured to receive both the mark and the Jonathan Hindle Prize.”

Rodney McMahon, Design Guild Mark chairman, said: “The Igneous Collection was named the best Design Guild Mark in its category for 2019. The beauty of the product was an immediate standout and by bringing together intriguing processes, using recycled materials, thereby creating original and unique, non-repetitive patterns using a handmade technique, in Britain, was very impressive.” ♦ custhom.co.uk



Design Guild Mark
The Jonathan Hindle Prize
Awarded by The Furniture Makers' Company



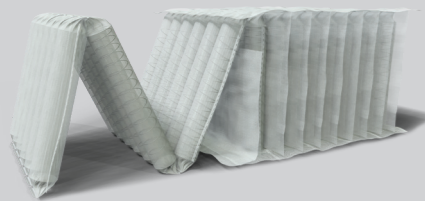
MANUFACTURING GUILD MARK. PILLARS OF EXCELLENCE

The prestigious Manufacturing Guild Mark, awarded by The Furniture Makers' Company, has been the mark of excellence, distinguishing Britain's top furnishing manufacturers, since 1993.

It is awarded to British manufacturers that have demonstrated incredible standards across all areas of the business by successfully passing a rigorous, independently reviewed audit against a comprehensive set of criteria, including design, product development, manufacture, human resources, financial stability, sustainability, sales and marketing. ♦



Cortec™, an innovative, recyclable spring system, by Harrison Spinks



Vienna 160 Gas Fire table with LED lighting by Rivelin



Infinity Plus Shaker Forest by Wren Kitchens



Haddon Painted Charcoal from Kitchen Makers by Burbidge



SPONSORED BY





Gratnells Rover Trolley



GRATNELLS

What do brands Colgate, Lego and Twitter all have in common? It's not a trick question. Believe it or not, they all started out as providers of goods or services of something completely different from what they ultimately became famous for.

There are many companies that have built huge business empires this way, and Manufacturing Guild Mark holder Gratnells is no different.

The colourful tray that the privately-owned British manufacturer produces is a design icon, but the origins of Gratnells can be traced back to 1890 and a household ironmongery company set up by William Hudson in Shoreditch, East London.

During the 1940s the company diversified, developing the Seymour Television Table and later, during the 1960s, the flat-packed clothes wardrobe, Pacta, which launched at the Ideal Home Exhibition, Olympia.

In 1971 the current Gratnells Company was incorporated as a limited company, based in Leyton, East London. It focused on the schools' market and in 1972 introduced the slotted square tube frame system, which is still in production today.

In 1985, Gratnells launched the now iconic injection moulded F type shallow plastic tray, the dimensions of which are now the standard for the development of most school furniture worldwide. In 2007, the tray design became a registered trademark.

Gratnells' continued growth and reinvestment in the business has resulted in it becoming a leader in school storage products – namely metal frames, metal trolleys and injection moulded trays – with its trays setting the standard in educational storage across the globe.

Current managing director Murray Hudson has been at the helm of the family business since succeeding his father in 2012. Today, the business exports directly to 65 countries worldwide and its products are found in many more, with the global company run from Harlow, a mere 25 miles from its original Shoreditch workshop.

In 2019 the company was awarded our prestigious Manufacturing Guild Mark, which has been the mark of excellence, distinguishing Britain's top furnishing manufacturers, since 1993.

"We found out about the Manufacturing Guild Mark from Hille, best known as manufacturers of a range of modernist chairs," explains Murray. "The Manufacturing Guild Mark is an integral part of our marketing positioning for both house products and contract work. Gratnells sees the Manufacturing Guild Mark as highly compatible with our positioning and philosophy. We believe our customers see the mark as a type of assurance."

Gratnells Classroom Tray Inserts





“As a proud UK exporter, it is extremely important for us that existing and potential customers have confidence in who we are, in what we do and in how we do it. For us, the Manufacturing Guild Mark helps to promote this.”

Sponsored by Biesse Group and Lectra, the mark is awarded only to companies that demonstrate the highest standards across seven assessment criteria: design, product development and function, manufacture, human resources, financial stability, sustainability, and sales and marketing.

Innovation and product development are areas that Gratnells takes very seriously. Climate change has dominated global headlines over the past 18 months, with unsustainable consumption no longer something that companies can afford to take lightly.

Ever the innovator, Gratnells – aware of what’s happening in the macro-environment – has launched a new bio-based, compostable plastic injection moulded tray, made from annually renewable plant resources, for 2020.

“We’re really excited to be introducing the first compostable tray to the education

sector. It’s strong, easy to clean and will perform well in the demanding classroom environment. In the future, we believe demand for these products will only increase and we will continue to invest in product development to ensure we bring the most innovative ideas to our customers.”

It must be pretty heartening for Gratnells’ employees, knowing that they work for a company that cares and takes a responsible approach to business. And Murray recognises that having a Manufacturing Guild Mark is an opportunity to celebrate the hard work and achievements of staff.

“The Manufacturing Guild Mark is highly visible throughout the manufacturing facility and is used to underline our commitment to quality with staff and visitors. We use the mark on our website and in brochures we publish.

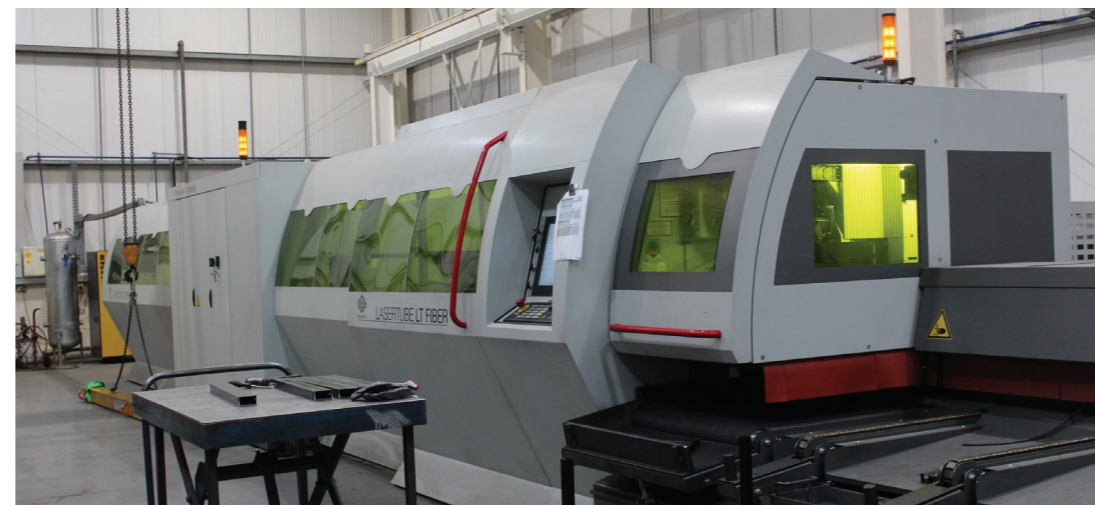
“Our staff recognise the work that went into gaining the Manufacturing Guild Mark and each member of staff knows they contributed in some way. This fosters a sense of ownership of tasks and pride in the work we do.” ♦ gratnells.com



“

As a proud UK exporter, it is extremely important for us that existing and potential customers have confidence in who we are, in what we do and in how we do it. For us the Manufacturing Guild Mark helps to promote this

”



John was supported to pay off rent and council tax arrears when work as a warp knitter diminished



SUPPORT

A lifeline in times of need

Supporting the welfare of people who work in the industry is arguably our most important function.

Our charity was set up over 100 years ago to help people from the furnishing industry in times of hardship.

We do this through the awarding of grants for essential household items or bills, funeral expenses, property repairs, mobility and medical equipment, respite or convalescent breaks, general financial

hardship or pre-tenancy costs and removal costs.

Welfare has had an unmissable headline over the past 12 months through the launch of our One Step at a Time campaign.

With the help of the trade, we've been able to spread the word of our occupational support service to more people than ever before and ensure everyone working in the industry knows where to turn in times of financial need.

Why Welfare Matters

Robert Livingstone, operations director at Silentnight Group, talks about the importance of welfare and why he registered the bed manufacturer as a One Step Champion



The Silentnight Group supports multiple local charities, some of which support people affected by cancer, help deliver programmes for the local homeless, food redistribution, and offender rehabilitation. We are also corporate members of The Furniture Makers' Company and have been since 2015.

The first time I heard of The Furniture Makers' Company was through a conversation with my old chairman, Peter Keen. He is a Past Master and was very proud of his association with the Company.

I have been very interested in their work since then and have become more involved recently after Silentnight was awarded the Company's Sustainability Award in 2017 and 2018. This put me in contact with many of the current freemen and liverymen and inspired me to join the Company as a member in my own right in 2019.

Our employees are our biggest asset and make our business what it is today. The Silentnight Group has a long, proud history in the Lancashire area and we have multiple generations of the same families working for the group. We are significant employers in our respective areas and have husbands and wives who rely on us as their sole source of income.

We have a very comprehensive benefits package to support our employees should they ever need it, but any additional help or advice we can offer them is always well received, which is why we signed up to the

Furniture Makers' One Step at a Time welfare campaign.

Along with the posters and cards we received in the campaign's welcome pack, we have been promoting One Step at a Time through our joint consultee committee and on our internal digital media screens throughout the business. We have sent out a group wide email detailing the charity's work including the case studies, and how people from our business and industry can apply for help. We will also be discussing the One Step at a Time campaign at all our sites during visits throughout the year, to ensure all our colleagues are aware of the help available to them.

The campaign has really helped clarify the support the charity can provide, and one of our employees has already been in contact and subsequently awarded a

grant of £2,000 after seeing one of the case study posters in the canteen.

The staff have been supportive of the charity and openly acknowledge that our involvement is a very positive step towards securing their own futures, even after they have left the industry. They have complimented the action taken by the business for supporting the charity and The Furniture Makers' Company for having such a thoughtful charitable fund.

One Step at a Time is a huge positive for any business and its employees. It is helping people from our industry who need it most at a time when they might have no one else to turn to.

I strongly urge any business that hasn't signed up to the campaign to do so. After all, what is more important to a company than the welfare of its employees?" ♦

silentnightgroup.co.uk



Supporting You in Your Hour of Need

Our charity is here to help people working in the furnishing industry when they need it most. Here are a few examples of the individuals and families we are proud to have supported

Luke and Lauren's Story

The first few months with a new baby are meant to be some of the most special moments in parents' lives, but when Luke's partner, Lauren, was placed into critical care following the birth of their daughter, Fayora, he struggled to pay the rent due to taking leave from work to care for their newborn.

He was advised to apply for universal credit, but it was taking weeks for his benefits to be sorted out. Luke had no access to Lauren's bank and she was unable to contribute to the household finances until she was out of hospital.

Luke has worked for a bed manufacturer since 2015. He was told about The Furniture

Makers' Company by his manager when he found himself in financial trouble. Luke contacted us to ask for help to pay his rent, which was due in a couple of weeks.

We agreed to cover their rent for three months to give them the necessary time for housing benefit to be awarded.

Luke was very relieved to be able to concentrate on looking after his baby and helping her to spend time with her mother, while she recovered enough to return home.

We're delighted that the couple have been able to move on from the traumatic experience and are able to now enjoy parenthood.



David's Story

David has had an extremely tough couple of years battling spinal cancer followed then by the devastating news that it had spread to his prostate.

Despite the stress that comes with dealing with this, he has remained upbeat.

After five rounds of chemotherapy, David was given the fantastic news that he was in remission.

However, due to ongoing mobility difficulties, David can't return to his job as a heavy goods lorry driver at a manufacturer. He now has to walk with aids and cannot bend down.

David got in contact with us after being recommended by his employer when the condition of his garden was becoming a worry due to his inability to maintain it.

We were able to support the family by paying for artificial turf to be laid, enabling the family to continue to enjoy the outside space without the maintenance required. ♦

furnituremakers.org.uk/welfare



Craig's Story

Craig's life was turned upside down following a series of strokes that left him unable to work and provide for his family.

Craig has worked as a mattress assembler and more recently as a goods-in porter for over 15 years.

Without Craig's source of income, the family started to struggle with paying the bills.

Fortunately, the human resources team at Craig's employer pointed him in our direction to see if we could help.

Our welfare officer, Sue, quickly assessed Craig's household income and

expenditure and was able to process his application swiftly.

A large grant was awarded to soften the family's cash flow difficulties, enabling Craig to focus on his recovery in preparation for a phased return to the workplace, as was recommended by his health care professionals.

Craig said: "The help my family received from The Furniture Makers' Company eased our financial burden considerably allowing me to focus on my recovery. We will forever be grateful and humbled by your generous help, thank you."

One Step at a Time

We launched a new campaign in 2019 to spread the word of our welfare support to more people than ever before

Our charity has been supporting the welfare of employees in the interiors and furnishing industry for more than 100 years.

Our welfare support is there for anything life throws at you, from a minor bump in the road to a major crisis. However, the hard fact of the matter is that the majority of people working in the UK furnishing industry are unaware that our help exists.

To counter this, we launched a new campaign in May 2019 called 'One Step at a Time', challenging companies in the furnishing sector to raise awareness of our support so every industry colleague knows where to turn in times of financial need.

The campaign asked companies to sign up as One Step Champions and commit to communicating our welfare provision among their employees.

Our goal was to sign up 100 companies as One Step Champions in the first year to start us on the road to ensuring all 338,000 people working in the wider industry, in addition to retirees and former workers, know the charity can be a lifeline in hard times.

The initiative was spearheaded by Master of The Furniture Makers' Company Dids Macdonald OBE, who has made it her Master's Challenge and focus for the year.

The response to the campaign has been overwhelming, capturing the hearts and minds of so many in the industry. The popularity of the campaign was such

that we reached our target of 100 registered companies three months early in January 2020.

We want to thank all the companies, large and small, that signed up and helped spread our message to their employees. ♦

To see the full list of One Step Champions or if you want to sign up, go to furnituremakers.org.uk/one-step-at-a-time



Liveryman Jason Clancy is furniture conservator at the Royal Household



MEMBERSHIP

Helping change the industry



The Furniture Makers' Company is a force for good in the UK furnishing industry and our members are the fuel that fire the engine and enable us to educate for the future, inspire and champion excellence and support those in need.

The number of pro bono hours they provide in support of our many activities is testament to the importance they place in what we do.

We're very fortunate to have a diverse spread of members – all of whom are connected with the furnishing industry and

bring a wealth of knowledge, experience and contacts they are keen to share.

They are designers, manufacturers, distributors, craftsmen, retailers, suppliers, lecturers, PR practitioners or journalists. We have individual and corporate members, men and women, young and old.

And we're always keen to welcome new people into the fold so they too can experience the fun and fellowship that comes with being a member of a livery company.

Why Membership Matters

Court assistant Jessica Alexander is executive director at the National Bed Federation (NBF) and director at PR agency AKA PR. She tells us why membership matters

“Membership allows me to give something back to the industry from which I have earned my living for my entire career”

“It’s hard to believe but I’ve now been working in the furniture industry for almost 41 years. I started straight out of university in September 1979 as a cub reporter on *Cabinet Maker* magazine.

One of my first assignments was as a researcher on the magazine centenary issue in 1980, so I got a chance to meet some of the industry’s greats and learn a lot about the development of the trade through the 20th century.

It was while working on that centenary edition that I first became aware of the charity – known then as the Furnishing Trades Benevolent Association (FTBA) – and the livery company.

In 1987 I joined the National Bed Federation as their publicity consultant, just before the flammability regulations came into force – a baptism of fire, if you excuse the pun. At the same time, I set up my own PR agency, AKA PR, which worked with the FTBA for almost 12 years, until the merger between the livery and charity in 2013.

It was Peter Keen, chairman at bed manufacturer Hypnos, who persuaded me to join the livery in the early 2000s and before long I was persuaded to join committees, then the court.

I have some very fond memories of being a member over the past 17 years, including the amazing visit and private tour of a

furniture exhibition at Chatsworth, when we met the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire and had a sneaky glimpse of their private apartments, viewing an amazing bed by Irish furniture designer Joseph Walsh.

Another great memory is getting soaked to the skin on a Master’s outing to Venice in a rainstorm and arriving dripping to our lunch venue to find the ground floor was flooded out.

Prior to the merger, the livery company was less well known and perceived as a rather remote, elitist organisation to most of those working in the trade – especially if you lived and worked well outside London.

However, since the merger it is certainly clear to me what the Company stands for and what it does. It’s still the industry’s charity, reaching out to help those struggling. But it also has a wider role on the educational and excellence side of things, which are equally important to the ongoing success of the industry.

For me, membership allows me to give something back to the industry from which I have earned my living for my entire career.

What is special about the industry to me is the people I’ve met and worked with – there are quite a few still around I’ve known for most of my 40 years, many of whom are also livery members. It’s such a friendly industry, I’m often told that newcomers are surprised that even competitors talk to each other.

Getting the right balance between the marvellous national aims of welfare, excellence and education and the tradition, fun and special opportunities that come from being a City of London livery company remains a bit of a challenge in my view. Too many people still think it’s a bit elitist and London-centric. That view is slowly changing but it does still present some clashing tensions.

It’s never going to be easy but that’s part of the challenge, and where the importance of membership comes in. There is still a lot of work to do to raise awareness of what we do, but it’s inspiring to have so many dedicated, hardworking people prepared to do so in their own time.” ♦

akapr.co.uk



Jan Turner, Jessica and Tony Lisanti at the Royal Charter Dinner



Jan Turner and Jessica at Northern Big Shots



Sajid Butt, Jessica, Past Master Nicholas Radford, Fara Butt and Shakeel Baig at the Northern Curry Night

OUR HIGHLY VALUED
CORPORATE MEMBERS
AND SUPPORTERS



CORPORATE LIVERYMAN

Profile

Steve Bulmer

Corporate liveryman Steve Bulmer is CEO of furniture making machinery manufacturer Biesse Group UK



“My father started in the furniture industry in the 1950s, first as an employee, then as a partner in a new business selling furniture making machinery. I guess sawdust was in my veins as I followed him into the business in 1983, working in a sales role. I was then involved with the creation of the UK subsidiary of Biesse in 1993.

Biesse Group UK, a fully owned subsidiary of Biesse Group S.p.a., was founded to enable Biesse to provide the best possible support to the UK woodworking sector.

Based in Daventry, Northamptonshire, our 48,500 square foot centre of operations has training facilities, a fully functional showroom and an after care, spares and service support department.

Today Biesse Group produces highly sophisticated and technological machines and systems to satisfy every industrial requirement for creating and assembling furniture, doors and windows, furniture accessories, and everyday objects in wood, glass and stone.

We have come a long way in the UK as we started with just three people and have now grown to almost 100.

I first found out about The Furniture Makers' Company from Martin James, commercial director of training provider Didac, who is also a freeman of the Company.

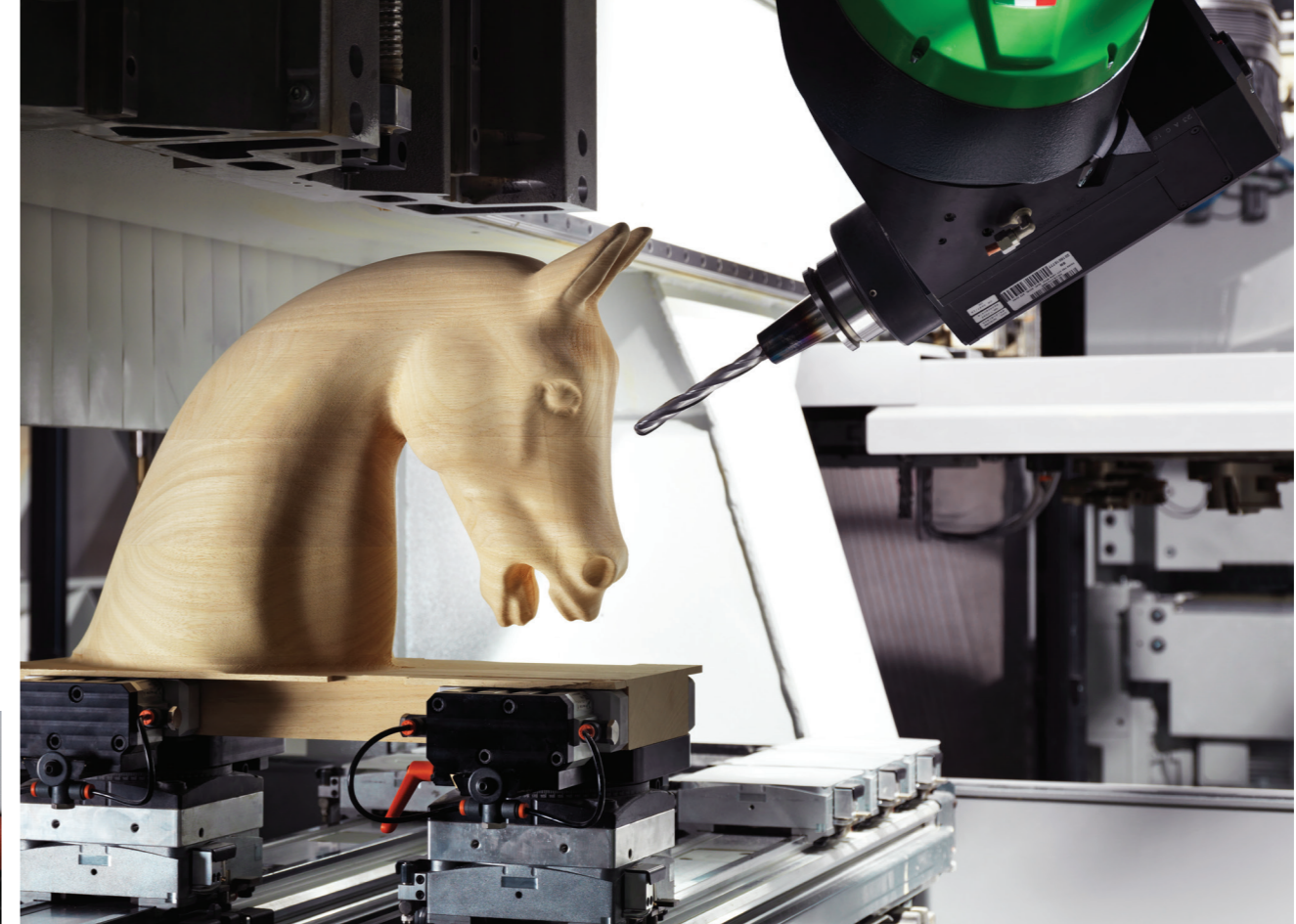
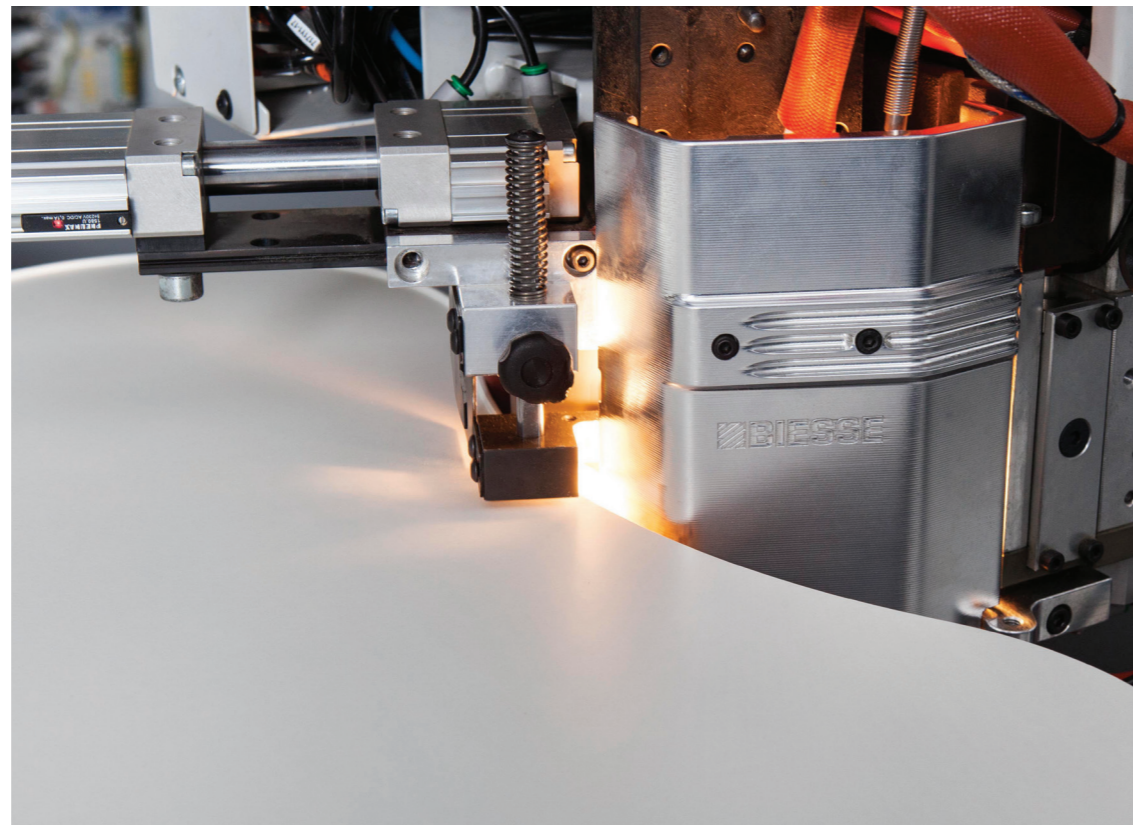
After he suggested that we got involved, Ben Burbidge, a Past Master and Manufacturing Guild Mark chairman, approached us. I already knew Ben well as Biesse Group has previously supplied machinery to his company, Burbidge & Sons. The case for joining was quite compelling.

Membership has provided us with a great opportunity to support the industry as a whole through the charitable focus of The Furniture Makers' Company but also to

encourage manufacturing excellence within the UK furniture industry.

We've also been able to engage more closely with the industry, through events like the Best Practice Days and the Confederation Lunch, as well as understand the challenges that the industry and our customers face.

Following our admission as corporate members, we decided to get involved with the Company's Manufacturing Guild Mark as co-sponsors with Lectra.



material in our Daventry tech centre and educating our sales team so they can help explain the potential benefits to customers on a one-to-one level.

We also held a Manufacturing Guild Mark open day at our premises in November 2019, which has led to three companies being awarded the prestigious mark. We know that existing holders have benefitted greatly as the Manufacturing Guild Mark demonstrates that they have achieved and maintain the highest standards in all aspects of their businesses, so obviously we are happy to support that. We are supporting this initiative further by hosting another open day later this year.

By having such a strong family connection to the industry, I am very passionate about the British furniture industry and am convinced that collectively we can demonstrate that as a UK industry we are 'best in class'. As an organisation I believe that our involvement with the Furniture Makers and the Manufacturing Guild Mark supports this.” ♦

biesse.com/uk

I believe quality has always been a key factor for the UK furniture industry and Biesse has always produced high-quality products to help improve customers' product quality. We work with both SMEs and the largest producers in the country, so I really felt it was a natural fit to become a sponsor.

In doing so we pledged to help raise awareness of the mark to both existing and potential customers through various channels, including displaying promotional



LIVERYMAN Profile



Kelly Hudson and Master
Dids Macdonald OBE

Kelly Hudson

Liveryman Kelly Hudson is a director of IP specialist law firm McDaniel & Co.

"I became aware of The Furniture Makers' Company through Dids Macdonald OBE, the current Master.

I am a director of a law firm, McDaniel & Co. The firm is a specialist IP boutique, meaning we only deal with intellectual property law, something which is particularly pertinent to the furniture industry. Most furniture will have some form of IP in it – often more than one – and the creator, be that a company or individual, will usually have some form of brand to protect.

I undertook a law degree, graduated in 2008 with first class honours, and joined the firm as a trainee. I have worked my way up from there. In 2015 I also cross qualified as a trademark attorney.

I have worked with Dids since 2008 as the firm is involved with her trade organisation, Anti Copying In Design (ACID).

Dids told me about the Furniture Makers when she became involved and it seemed very relevant as, historically, we have done a lot of work with the furniture industry in terms of protecting and enforcing IP rights.

There seemed to be something we could add to The Furniture Makers' Company in this regard, as it brings a different angle on involvement in the furniture industry. The furnishing sector is so diverse and full of talent and quality craftsmanship. It is also a very innovative sector.

My colleague Niall Head-Rapson and I became freemen five years ago and I became a liveryman at the end of 2019.

It has been excellent to learn more about the industry and meet the other members of the Company, both freemen and liverymen. It affords excellent opportunities to get to know others within the industry and the charitable arm is wonderful and not something many people know about or realise may be available to them. I am looking forward to helping spread that message.

All the areas of the organisation's work are very important but the one that resonates most with me is the education programme. I have, for the last few years, had the pleasure of taking part in the Young Professionals Industry Experience course that the Company runs, helping educate

the participants on IP rights and their relevance to the industry.

The young people involved have always been very engaged and I have often had follow up questions after the event which is great as it shows that the course really has an impact and people are thinking about the discussion points.

It has also been great to get involved in the charitable aims of the Company and we are working on plans to increase membership in the north-east, as that is where our firm is based. In the past the firm has hosted a seminar for members, and we are currently looking at ways to increase northern membership and raise funds in the region. ♦ mcdanielslaw.com

“

It has been excellent to learn more about the industry and meet the other members of the Company – it affords excellent opportunities to get to know others within the industry and the charitable arm is wonderful and not something many people know about

”

FREEMAN Profile

Daren Newton

Freeman Daren Newton is division director – design and architecture at Media 10



“My career in the design world started about 30 years ago when I was introduced to the world of publishing.

Over the years, I have published many design titles including *FX*, *FMX* and *Blueprint* magazine, to name a few.

We started Media 10 back in 2003 and my first project was launching *Icon* magazine. This quickly became the first choice for many in the architecture and design community, not only in the UK but internationally. The demand for advertising at this time was very strong so I decided to launch a workplace focused sister title to *Icon* and with that *Onoffice* was born.

In the last 10 years my career has taken a more event-based role by launching Clerkenwell Design Week, which showcases the best of the area's creative brands and businesses, and reinventing 100% Design.

These days, the media world is very different and with the growing demand for digital I have to split my time accordingly.

At Media 10, we craft experiences and content that win hearts and minds. We're

proud that our work engages millions of people and transforms industries.

My focus now is about creating the opportunity for our clients to promote their products through our brands but via all platforms, print, digital and live events. This keeps me very busy.

I have known about The Furniture Makers' Company for many years, but it wasn't until I had a meeting with Cherrill Scheer and Jonathan Hindle, managing director of KI, in 2014–2015 about the launch of the Design Guild Mark that I started to really understand the Company's role in our industry. This is when I decided to give my support via our media and event channels.

The Design Guild Mark recognises the absolute best in British design, which is something we feel very passionate about. Over the years we have championed that message by providing a platform at our exhibitions to celebrate the winners and promote it to our community through seminars and speaking events. We are proud of this partnership.

I have also been part of the Design Guild Mark committee for some time now and through this I have learned much more about the great work and passionate members of The Furniture Makers Company, hence my reason for recently joining.

In my interview I think the Master even pointed out that I was already doing the

work of a member, so it would make sense to make it official.

Going to a Furniture Makers' Company event reminded me just how many good people I have met during my time in this amazing industry.

The experience has been really positive and I'm looking forward to supporting the Company in the future.” ♦ media-ten.com



YOUNG FURNITURE MAKER

Profile



The Concertina Collection

Huw Evans

Designer-maker Huw Evans was awarded the Innovation Award, the Blum Best in Show Prize and January Furniture Show Award at the 2019 Young Furniture Makers exhibition for his Concertina Collection

"I was fairly late in coming around to the idea of becoming 'a designer', I just enjoyed making. Weekend projects for my own enjoyment ignited an interest in furniture and lighting during my sixth form studies.

My love of making directed me to the south west and the 3D Design course at the University of Plymouth, opting to follow the obvious route, for me, of designer-maker within the course. This granted me many workshop hours, allowing me to experiment with materials and machinery. Consequently, I gained a comprehensive understanding of materials and processes which have helped inform my current design process.

In 2017 I attended the Young Furniture Makers exhibition, organised by The Furniture Makers' Company, as a student visitor. Conversing with the exhibitors and seeing the creativity on display re-energised my drive for design, which I then carried through into my second year of study.

Having seen the talent and different disciplines of design on show, I was determined to be part of the next Young Furniture Makers exhibition. The following year I applied and was awarded second place in the Innovation Award category for my Obelisk side table, a glass-topped table which houses a domestic plant within.

In 2019 I returned to the exhibition with my Concertina Collection and was incredibly thankful for the positive responses I received.



The Concertina Collection plays with the fluidity of wood, cutting timber in varying thicknesses, lengths and frequencies, allowing the natural splay to dictate the designs. Countless hours of practical research were involved before even considering the final product, numerous experiments manipulating the timber were needed to see what was possible. It was a gradual process of trial and error to fully understand the limitations of the timber.

One of the earliest challenges I faced proved to be the biggest. The cutting process involves consecutive linear cuts, which may sound simple when machinery such as the bandsaw are designed for this. However, this proves difficult when your stock material moves and changes size during the cutting process itself. Systemically cutting the timber turns a once rigid material into a semi-fluid material that flows like a slinky due to the wood's natural spring and flex.

Understanding how to control this flexible material is still providing new challenges when trying to commercialise the process for production. However, I'm making excellent progress in developing the Concertina Collection with The Conran Shop.

Winning the awards at the Young Furniture Makers exhibition has been the most remarkable way to finalise my transition into the industry. Hilariously, I was caught further off guard with the second award having missed my name on the announcement! It was a surreal evening, full of laughter, which made for a truly memorable night.

Meeting designers like Sarah Kay and Sebastian Cox at the exhibition and having conversations about design and – in Sebastian's case – environmental conservation have been incredibly motivating and are helping shape my design practice." ♦ huwevans.co.uk

Lifetime Achievement Award

Design icon Sir Terence Conran CH was honoured in 2019 with our Lifetime Achievement Award

Sir Terence Conran CH, one of the world's best-known designers, retailers and restaurateurs, was given our Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019 in recognition for his outstanding contribution to the design and furnishing sector.

Sir Terence was presented the award by the Lord Mayor of London Alderman Peter Estlin at the Mansion House in the City of London during the Installation Dinner of Master Dids Macdonald OBE in May 2019.

Born in 1931, Sir Terence founded the Conran Design Studio in 1956 and in 1964 opened the first of the Habitat chain of home furnishing stores that revolutionised design on the British high street in the sixties and seventies. Later he established The Conran Shop and opened stores in London, Paris, New York and across Japan.

In the nineties he founded the Conran Restaurants group that opened iconic restaurants, hotels and bars in London, Paris, New York, Japan and Scandinavia including Quaglino's, Bluebird, Mezzo, Guastavino's and Le Pont de la Tour.

Throughout his career, Sir Terence's companies have designed, owned and operated shops, restaurants, hotels, bars and cafés around the world as well as working across the fields of architecture, interiors, products and graphics.

In 1989 he founded the Design Museum in London, the world's first museum dedicated to design, which moved to larger

premises in the former Commonwealth Building, Kensington, in 2016.

Today Sir Terence designs furniture for Benchmark, Content by Terence Conran and The Conran Shop, and remains involved in the restaurant industry through The Boundary and Bibendum.

He has written over 50 informative books that broadly reflect his design philosophy and is an honorary professor of the University of the Creative Arts.

Dids Macdonald OBE, Master of The Furniture Makers' Company, said: "You have been a pioneer and game changer in British design, which encompasses innovation, technology, creativity and craftsmanship, and been an inspiring influence in our lives in more ways that we can imagine – thank you!"

Commenting on the award, Sir Terence said: "In my heart I have always considered myself a furniture maker, it has given me more pleasure than anything else during my rather long career. As a very young boy I vividly remember the absolute joy of finally finishing making my very own bookcase and it has been in my bloodstream ever since. So it was truly thrilling to be recognised by The Furniture Makers' Company and to enjoy a very special evening with fellow craftspeople who share my love of making furniture. One of my big fears is that as a nation we often appear to have lost the joy of making things so it was uplifting to be surrounded by passionate furniture makers and see that the talent and passion in our industry burns as brightly as ever." ♦ [conran.com](https://www.conran.com)

“Conran has been a pioneer and game changer in British design, encompassing innovation, creativity and craftsmanship”



Livery Events

City of London livery companies comprise London's ancient and modern trade associations and guilds. Today there are more than 100 liveries that support matters of trade, education, charity and fellowship within their sector.

There is a broad programme of events for our members to enjoy.

The Master's Installation at St Mary-le-Bow church, followed by the celebratory dinner at the iconic Mansion House and our annual Royal Charter Dinner – held last year in Apothecaries' Hall – give our members and their guests an opportunity to enjoy an evening of formal frivolity in some of the City's most resplendent venues.

Meanwhile, other City organised events, including the comical annual Sheep Drive over London Bridge, the United Guilds' Service at St Paul's Cathedral and annual election of sheriffs and Lord Mayor, provide freemen and liverymen chances to take part in some of the age-old traditions of London's famous square mile. ♦



Fun, Fellowship and Fundraising

We organise a wide variety of events during the year, providing members and non-members alike with the opportunity to socialise with likeminded individuals on a regular basis and develop lifelong friendships.

Fundraisers, including five-a-side football tournament the Herman Miller Cup and our longest running event, the National Golf Day, bring together industry colleagues from around the country to enjoy fun-packed days with just a hint of friendly competition.

Nearly 200 people came out in support of the 25th anniversary edition of Big Shots, which raised more than £34,000 for the charity. The silver anniversary celebrations were complemented by an after-lunch talk from Victor Ubogu, former Bath and England rugby player.

Special thanks to Ruairi Giles, commercial director at corporate member Harrison Spinks, who ran the 2020 Virgin Money London Marathon in aid of our charity. ♦



Marathon runner Ruairi Giles of Harrison Spinks



A trip to the Concorde Experience at Brooklands Museum



A visit to luxury yacht builders Sunseeker



Furniture Village's Charlie Harrison, Victor Ubogu, Master Dids Macdonald OBE and Jonny Westbrooke at Big Shots



The players at the 2019 Herman Miller Cup

Regional Events

The UK furnishing industry is made up of businesses of all shapes and sizes all over the country. We are extremely grateful to have the support of key influencers within the sector who come together for the good of our charity and raise vital funds by organising events through six regional committees.

- Heart of England region, chaired by Neil Stevenson of NEJ Stevenson, includes Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire Nottinghamshire and Rutland.
- North East region, chaired by Niall Head-Rapson of McDaniel & Co., includes Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and County Durham.
- North West region, chaired by Mark McCann of Cavendish Upholstery, includes Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire. This region is instrumental in the organisation of the Northern Big Shots clay shoot that raised £9,000 in 2019.
- South West region, chaired by Past Master David Dewing, includes Cornwall, Dorset, Devon, Gloucestershire and Somerset. The committee raised £5,000 through a golf tournament, clay shoot and special exhibition of furniture from makers in the region called 'Out of Wood'.
- Southern region, chaired by Past Master Peter Keen of Hypnos, includes Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire. In 2019 the committee organised an Indian Summer Party that raised £7,500.
- Yorkshire region, chaired by Fara Butt of Shire Beds. The region built upon the success of previous years with a Curry Night attended by 100 people who raised £3,000. ♦



Furniture Makers' Hall

A versatile venue for catering for all events

Furniture Makers' Hall is a stunning hub for the furnishing industry for events of all sizes, ranging from both grand and intimate dinners, drinks receptions, Christmas parties, exhibitions, seminars, product launches, presentations and roadshows – even weddings!

The hall is based in the heart of the City at Austin Friars and has state-of-the-art audiovisual facilities and onsite catering provided.

The hall is available for any company or individual to book, but members of The Furniture Maker's Company receive preferential rates on hiring and catering charges, so take advantage of this fantastic venue. ♦ **For more details contact:**
fmhvenuehire.co.uk
sales@furnituremakers.org.uk
+44(0) 20 72 56 71 00



The British Furniture Confederation

By Jonathan Hindle, British Furniture Confederation chairman

The British Furniture Confederation (BFC) is an executive body made up of representatives from the UK's leading furniture, furnishings and bed trade associations. It meets to discuss developments within the sector and strategies to further its aims and communicate these to government.

The latest government figures from 2017 put total consumer expenditure on furniture and furnishings at £17.5 billion that support 338,000 jobs. There are 52,000 registered companies in the wider furniture and furnishings sector, including specialist retail but excluding general retail.

Furniture manufacturing is one of the top three divisions driving manufacturing growth in the UK, according to official statistics. In

2017 manufacturing turnover for the sector rose to £11.8 billion, emanating from 8,489 companies employing 120,000 individuals. Export performance has continued its upward trend, increasing by 12% from 2016 to 2017 to £1.14 billion.

The BFC continues to make progress in the areas of Skills and Education, Trade and Exports, Standards and Regulations, and the Environment and the Circular Economy.

Skills and Education

The latest BFC survey, which was completed by 65 companies, revealed that 79% of employers are concerned that their ability to recruit adequately skilled staff will not improve over the next three years.

The industry has acted by forming the Furniture and Interiors Education, Skills and Training Alliance.

The BFC is supportive of the government's efforts to increase the take up and reputation of apprenticeships. The BFC is concerned by proposed cuts in funding for apprenticeship and training relating to further education colleges, especially considering the potential challenges faced by furniture businesses if access to the EU labour market is restricted post-Brexit.

Trade and Exports

Regarding Brexit, British companies look to the government for support and stability during the transition period and beyond.

There is clear concern that the eventual relationship will not be beneficial to the industry. The BFC has repeatedly noted that the maintenance of EU single market access was a key priority. Likewise, the movement of both finished goods and materials should be a key consideration of the negotiations, and that tariff-free trading should be a priority. It is imperative that in future trade negotiations 'Rules of Origin' issues are resolved in a satisfactory way.

The BFC has communicated these concerns and provided evidence on the government's trade bill during the Public Bill Committee stage. The BFC will continue engaging with officials to ensure that this is reflected in future trade negotiations.



Josh Smith, senior account executive at Brevia Consulting, Jonny Westbrooke, CEO at The Furniture Makers' Company; Jeremy Stein, CEO at the British Contract Furnishing Association; Jonathan Hindle, BFC chairman; Phil Reynolds, COO at FIRA; Suzie Radcliffe-Hart, technical manager at FIRA; and David Beamer, managing director at Brevia Consulting

Standards and Regulations

The BFC is a strong supporter of fire safety in the form of the Furniture & Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988, as amended. The BFC has welcomed the review conducted of the regulations by the government and is happy to see the response to the 2016 consultation finally published at the end of 2019. The BFC intends to engage with the government in the next stages of the review into furniture fire safety regulations.

The BFC recognises environmental concerns around the use of some fire-retardant chemicals and it supports the aims of the REACH regulations in controlling the use of chemicals that may be harmful to health or the environment.

Finally, the BFC is pushing the government to amend the Machinery Directive so that higher risk, machine-incorporated furniture is also covered by the UK's furniture flammability regulations.

Environment and the Circular Economy

The BFC and the furniture industry are committed to decreasing carbon emissions. 62% of survey respondents shared this aim. The BFC remains invested in moving 'Circular Economy' initiatives forward

alongside government consistent with its environmental objectives.

The BFC welcomes Zero Waste Scotland's partnership with the National Bed Federation (a BFC member) to develop an extended producer responsibility scheme.

All-Party Parliamentary Furniture Industry Group

On 27 January 2020 the All-Party Parliamentary Furniture Industry Group (APPFIG) was reformed following December 2019's general election. The group will now be chaired by Mike Wood MP alongside newly elected vice-chairmen Rosie Cooper MP and Mark Eastwood MP and standing vice-chairman Baroness Warsi.

The APPFIG exists to raise awareness of the furniture industry and to publicise and promote the industry in the UK in order to protect jobs and investment. The group meets throughout the year, in the UK Parliament, offering the BFC and its members the chance to raise policy concerns with parliamentarians.

The BFC would like to congratulate former chairman, Maggie Throup MP, who was appointed as government whip, Lord Commissioner of HM Treasury, in September 2019. Unfortunately, this required Ms Throup



Jonathan Hindle congratulating Mike Wood MP on his election as APPFIG chairman

to resign as chairman. The BFC has passed on its thanks to Ms Throup for all her work and support.

Under Ms Throup's leadership, the APPFIG has achieved a great deal including the government's publication of the long-awaited response to the flammability regulations consultation and the Confederation Lunch on the House of Commons terrace that was well attended by members, peers, furniture industry representatives and Kelly Tolhurst MP in her ministerial capacity. Furthermore, Ms Throup's securing of a Westminster Hall debate on the UK furniture industry allowed valuable attention to be paid to the work of furniture manufacturers around the country.

◆ britishfurnitureconfederation.org.uk



Junior warden Tony Attard OBE DL, Jonathan and Kelly Tolhurst MP

The Furniture and Interiors Education, Skills and Training Alliance

By Gary Baker, FIESTA chairman



The Furniture and Interiors Education, Skills and Training Alliance (FIESTA) was formed in 2017 to address the skills gap issue within the furnishing industry.

The association is made up of members of the major trade bodies in the UK furnishing industry – British Contract Furnishing Association, British Furniture Manufacturers Association, The Furniture Makers' Company, Kitchen Education Trust, the National Bed Federation and the Association of Master Upholsterers and Soft Furnishers – with support from training providers Activate Learning and Didac.

Over the past 12 months, FIESTA has made substantial progress in setting up an infrastructure to support companies to recruit, train and assess apprentices.

Closing the Gap Conferences

FIESTA has continued promoting the value of apprenticeships particularly as a way of stemming the looming employment crisis the furniture and interiors industry faces by organising two conferences – one in the south of England and another in the north.

The events served as a way of launching Furniture and Interiors Skills Plus, a new service that enables furniture and interiors businesses of all sizes to easily train and recruit employees for all job functions.

Formed through a partnership between FIESTA and the Apprenticeship Management Group, Skills Plus offers businesses a

specialist apprentice recruitment service, Apprentice Training Agency (ATA) and Levy Management Company. As Skills Plus is a levy payer, micro-business and SME non-levy paying employers can access a much wider selection of funded skills training, while large employers can outsource the apprenticeship management to obtain best value for money and real-time monitoring from their apprentice levy digital accounts.

Renewal of Level 2 Apprenticeship Pathways

FIESTA finished 2019 on a high after confirming that eight level 2 manufacturing apprenticeship pathways will be renewed in 2020.

Back in July 2019 the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE), the controlling authority on apprenticeship standards, warned that the current Furniture Manufacturer standard would need reviewing before the end of 2019 as it was no longer fit for purpose.

This meant that the existing single standard with pathways would need to be replaced by separate standards for each specialist occupation if government funded skills training was to be maintained.

Due to a lack of uptake and concerns surrounding funding, FIESTA had planned on rationalising the current standard, phasing out five pathways and creating four new level 2 furniture pathways:

- Fitted Furniture Installer
- Furniture Manufacturer
- Modern Upholsterer
- Wood Machinist (incorporating Furniture CNC Specialist)

FIESTA undertook a campaign to win support from manufacturers for the other standards and has since received backing from bed manufacturer Silentnight and sofa manufacturer and retailer DFS. Both companies will support the development of the Bed Manufacturer standard and the Modern Furniture Service Repairer standard, respectively.

Furthermore, the Modern Upholsterer standard is to be reviewed with the support of apprenticeship experts Achieve and Partners. FIESTA has also received industry support for the review and development of the Furniture Restorer standard.

The news of the renewal of the level 2 pathways follows the completion and imminent launch of the level 3 apprenticeship standards in New Furniture Product Developer, Advanced CNC Technician, Bespoke Furniture Maker and Advanced Upholsterer.

End Point Assessment

FIESTA is now partnering with Achieve and Partners, which will be dedicated to offering End Point Assessment in the furniture and wood merchanting industry.

End Point Assessment is the final assessment for an apprentice to ensure that they can do the job they have been trained for.

After the current round of level 2 renewals takes place, any future new standard development or any renewal work will be undertaken by Achieve and Partners. It is in their interest to have standards in place

because without a standard there is no End Point Assessment work for them to earn from.

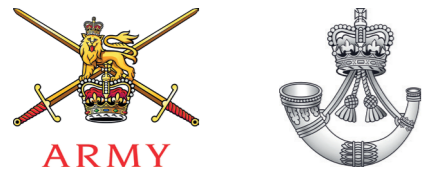
Further benefits of this new partnership include the work that Achieve and Partners will do to establish a trust network/forum of the specialist industry training providers. Currently FIESTA relies on out-of-date generic government data to manage key performance indicators. The training providers have the live data of who is participating on a given standard. Achieve and Partners can collate this and enable us to better monitor progress. Further, Achieve and Partners will work closely with the team at Furniture and Interiors Skills Plus to feed them with industry specific knowledge to help develop the offering to suit our industry.

This means that FIESTA has now established a full support offering for the industry around vocational training. ♦

fiestalearning.com



The Closing the Gap conference at Furniture Makers' Hall



2 Rifles

The Furniture Makers' Company is very proud of its continuing affiliation with the 2nd Battalion, The Rifles. 2 Rifles, as they are known, have been busy in 2018–2019 preparing for an upcoming deployment to Kabul, Afghanistan in April 2020.

2 Rifles continue to be very much in demand, operating and exercising across the world, conducting a plethora of different tasks and training. The battalion has sent large groups of riflemen to Jordan, the Falkland Islands, Romania, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Slovenia and Gabon.

In August/September 2018, A Company deployed to Jordan, to train alongside the Jordanian Army. The task of moving a whole Company with stores for over a month into the remote desert was a challenge – but one that A Company met admirably despite the somewhat austere environment.

A few weeks after A Company had deployed, B Company flew down to Mount Pleasant Airbase in the Falklands. The riflemen spent the next three months conducting deterrence patrols, live-fire training and reassurance to the local community. The battalion headquarters visited in October to observe training, assist in an exercise and conduct an excellently delivered battlefield study of the Battle at Goose Green.

C Company added a West African jungle slant to Middle Eastern Desert and South Atlantic Winter conditions that the riflemen



have operated in this year. The Company deployed to Sierra Leone in November 2018 to train the Sierra Leone Armed Forces and to run some challenging live-fire tactical training in the jungle.

While C Company were training the Sierra Leonian Armed Forces, I Company were training park rangers in Gabon in counter-poaching tactics. One of the highlights of the year, the Gabon training teams form a strand of the British government's strategy on combating the illegal wildlife trade. Often overmatched by the sadly all-too-frequent poaching in the country's national parks, the rangers appreciated the instruction on intelligence-gathering and patrol skills.

After a well-deserved Christmas break, the battalion deployed to Sennybridge Training Area in the Brecon Beacons, to



Best Young Rifleman Award winner
Lance Corporal Woods and Master
Dids Macdonald OBE

practise and assess its ability to operate as fighting companies. The weather was inclement, with ankle deep snow and freezing temperatures. The battalion ran a platoon level patrols competition, the Bramall Trophy, which was named after the first commanding officer of 2nd Battalion Royal Green Jackets, the antecedent forebearer of 2 Rifles, the recently passed Field Marshal Lord Bramall. Despite the harsh conditions, the riflemen performed superbly, and Prince Edward, the battalion's royal colonel, helicoptered in to see the riflemen operate in the snow.

The battalion finally came together in February for a battle group deployment to central and north Kenya – Exercise Askari Storm. From the freezing climes of Brecon to the arid, hot deserts of Northern Kenya, 2 Rifles achieved huge success, setting

the conditions for the Afghanistan deployment in spring 2020. Though all these hardships and challenges, Lance Corporal Woods was selected for the Best Young Rifleman Award in October 2019 for his impressive performance, receiving a generous prize from The Furniture Makers' Company in recognition of his achievements.

Summer leave over, the battalion's focus has shifted to pre-deployment training, developing the specialist skills required to provide the Kabul Protection Unit in Afghanistan as part of the ongoing NATO mission supporting the government of Afghanistan. The pace of life is demanding, and the riflemen continue to rise to the challenge, impressing all with their professionalism, dedication and humour – swift and bold. ♦

The Tower

Image credit: Rik Pennington

St Mary-le-Bow

Dids Macdonald OBE, Master of The Furniture Makers' Company, writes about the Company's association with St Mary-le-Bow church

Livery companies have had close ties with the church since medieval times and many believe that to be born within earshot of the Bow Bells, the bells of St Mary-le-Bow, defines one as a cockney.

Bow Bells are probably one of the most well-known in the world and meshed into London folklore when, famously, Dick Whittington heard them beckoning him to become Lord Mayor of London. The bells are used by the BBC's World Service as a symbol of hope across Europe and still heard loudly today, reinforcing the church's influence in the heart of the City of London.

The Furniture Makers' Company is proud to be associated with this historic church and its current chaplain, rector of St Mary-le-Bow, the Reverend George Bush, whose sage and amusing homilies make us smile.

The original church was designed by Sir Christopher Wren and prayers are offered every weekday. It is a place of peace and tranquillity in the midst of the City and, more importantly, our own 'parish church'.

St Mary-le-Bow is a polar axis for so many activities. Take the Boyle Lectures for example, named after Robert Boyle, a prominent natural philosopher. The lectures consider the relationship between Christianity and the new natural philosophy then emerging in European society. Every Tuesday there is a weekly 30-minute meditation group which is organised by and affiliated to the World Community of

Christian Meditation. Together with the faith and work forums, which offer a distinctive approach to Christian formation for people at work, the group meets weekly and fellowship is at its core.

Not to be missed is the Café Below, a friendly, family-run restaurant serving rustic handmade food using fresh, simple

ingredients in a quirky setting, an ancient crypt beneath Bow Bells.

If you are a freeman or liveryman of our company, why not think of the church as a venue for a wedding, baptism as well as for memorial services, or if you fancy rekindling an enthusiasm for singing, why not join the Cheapside Chorus? ♦ stmarylebow.org.uk



“

Thank you for supporting us during the year

”



Once again, this yearbook serves as a testament to progression for a livery company and a charity at the heart of its industry.

We've read stories of success. To help those peers and colleagues who have been less fortunate, we've talked. Our One Step at a Time campaign has created conversation, which has in turn generated action. The results of that can be seen in our increasing welfare work.

We've looked at the incredible designs being created by our young furniture makers and heard about their tremendous appetite for the industry. Our education programme is both underpinning and channeling that raw, natural talent.

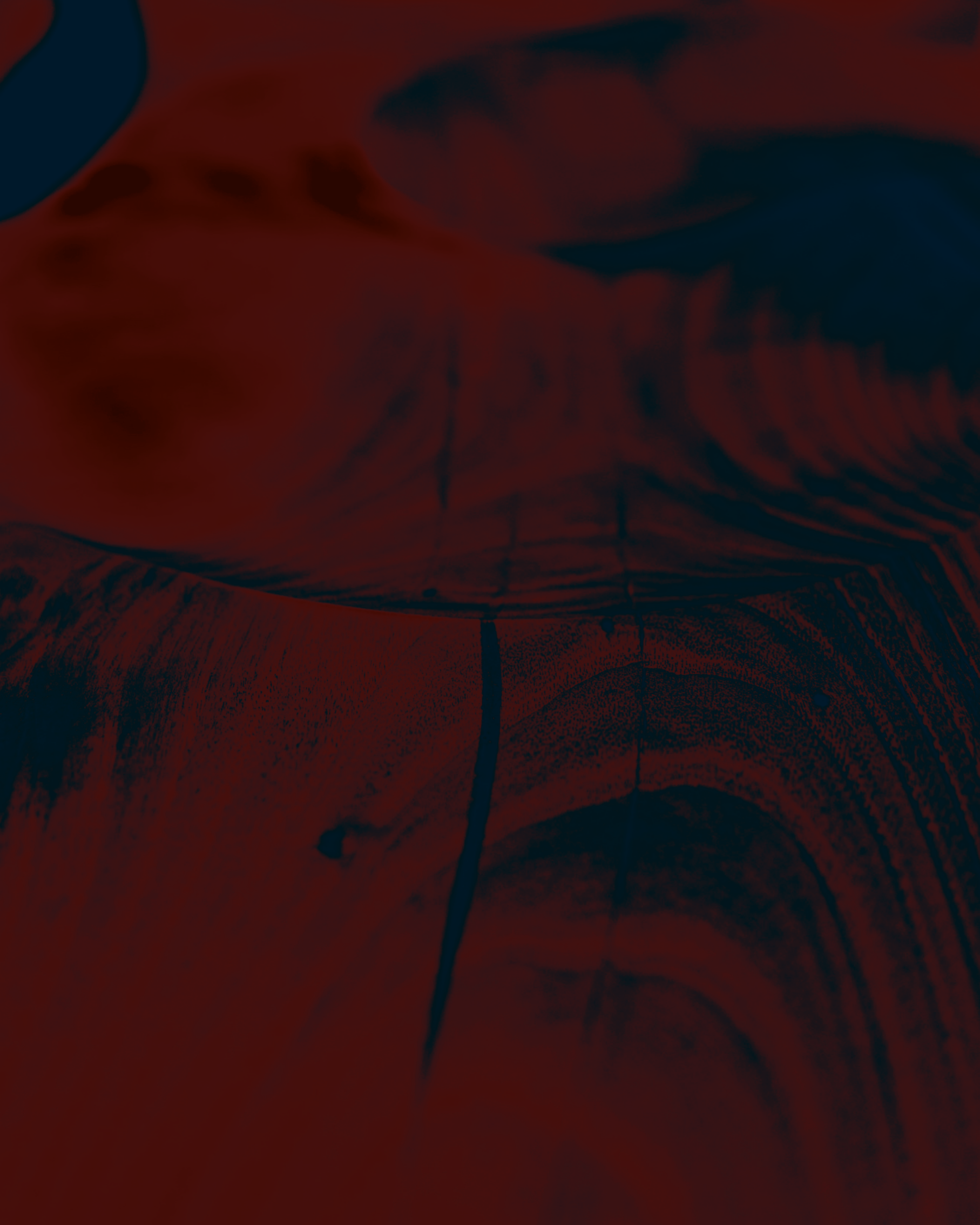
The work we do to nurture, create, inspire and support is only possible because of you. The companies and individuals mentioned on this page are some of our most generous donors, giving of their money, their time and their professional expertise. Our thanks go to them and the many others who have directly and indirectly made it possible for us to lead the change that this industry needs.

Our challenge going forward is to sustain what we are creating. To support the demands on our welfare. To champion education. If you've supported one of our fundraising campaigns, volunteered your time or your expertise, lent a hand, or your holiday home, bought a raffle ticket, sponsored a cyclist or a runner, raised your hand at an auction or raised a glass at one of our events then thank you. You are helping us to rise to that challenge and together, we are supporting an industry to be proud of.

Billy Quinn
Fundraising chairman

Thank you for your support

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Barker & Stonehouse	Dids Macdonald OBE	Ideal Furniture	Service Timber
Belfield	Dr Sue Powell	Jane Bennett	Shire Beds
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Colourfast World	Handy Ltd	Martek Contracts Ltd	Bathroom Installation
Cormar Carpets	Harrison Spinks	Martin Jourdan	The Carpenters' Company
Crofts & Assinder	Hayden Davies	Media 10	The Furniture Industry
David Dewing OBE	Headlam Ltd	Millbrook Beds	Research Association
David Imrie	Herman Miller	Mike Clare & The Clare	The Furniture Ombudsman
		Family Trust	The Isaacs Charitable Trust
		Mix	The Lord Kirkham CVO
		Muirhead	The National Bed Federation
		NEJ Stevenson Ltd	The NAV People
		Nicholas Radford	The Nicoletti Family
		Northern Paper	The Science Museum
		Ocee International	The Tusler Studio
		OFAS	Tony Attard, Panaz
		Oliver Godfrey of Cheffins	Tony Smart Hon DUniv MBE
		Panaz	Vispring
		Parker Knoll	Warwickshire Golf Club
		Paul von der Heyde	Whitemeadow Furniture Ltd
		Paul Walsh and team	William Hands



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