



Austin Friar

2024



The Furniture Makers' Company
the furnishing industry's charity

**OUR ROLE IS
TO SUSTAIN 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**



The Furniture Makers' Company
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The Furniture Makers' Company is the City of London livery company and charity for the furnishing industry. We are a modern livery company whose membership comprises individuals and businesses that make up the diverse, vibrant and creative UK furniture and furnishing industry.

Welcome to Austin Friar 2024, our annual publication that reflects on our accomplishments from the past year.

Despite the economic turbulence affecting businesses and individuals, membership levels in the 2023–2024 livery year held up well, with corporate membership numbers outperforming estimates. Pleasingly, an increasing number of businesses from the industry are recognising the vital work we do in encouraging the next generation through our education initiatives, inspiring excellence through our Guild Marks and supporting the welfare of current and former workers.

Last year was particularly auspicious as it was the 60th anniversary of our Company being bestowed livery status. To mark the occasion, we ran a special campaign, 60 for 60, that honoured 60 young people who are demonstrating exceptional commitment to their career.

We were overwhelmed by the positive response to the 60 for 60 campaign. It proved to be a wonderful showcase of the breadth and depth of talent we have working in the sector and demonstrated that the future of our industry, and livery, is bright.

03–09
Introduction

10–17
Welfare

18–43
Excellence

44–57
Education

58–91
Membership

92–93
Fundraising

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



Main Line Twist by Camira



Rowan by Bisley



Marshlands Cabinet by Elliott Butterwick



Elmbridge by Howdens Joinery



Romana table and Heritage chairs by Ercol



Y-Table by Ocee & Four Design



Centurial by Sleepeeze



The Master

Amanda Waring, Master of The Furniture Makers' Company

WHAT AN AMAZING YEAR! IT HAS BEEN SUCH AN honour to be Master of the Furniture Makers. Thank you for putting your trust in letting me represent our livery and charity. After such an extraordinary 12 months, I feel even more connected to our industry and aware of all the unique and exciting opportunities it has to offer.

Being Master, you quickly get used to being in demand, whether it be attending committee meetings, chairing the Court or representing our Company at some of the marvellous events in the City and beyond. I feel incredibly privileged to have been an ambassador for the Furniture Makers at some truly special occasions. I have attended dinners, church services, lectures, city walks and joined our members on garden visits and workshop tours. I have very proudly welcomed many to our beautiful hall in Austin Friars, for dinners and events, as well as conferences and workshops.

The highlight for me, though, was being a guest at the dinner at Mansion House in the City of London for their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla, held to celebrate the former's coronation. To be present at such a major event is something I will never forget and brought home the significance and importance of this position of office.

As both a City livery company and charity, we have a unique role within our industry to support, educate and inspire excellence, while bringing together people for networking and fellowship. It has been heartening to discover how respected we are within the City livery movement for our strong links with our trade, a connection that I believe is stronger than ever.

I was very fortunate for my year to fall on two significant milestones for our collective organisation – the 60th anniversary of the livery company and the 120th anniversary of the charity. To commemorate this occasion, we ran a very successful campaign, 60 for 60, which recognised 60 exceptional young people from our industry who are showing dedication to their careers and promise as future leaders. The campaign really resonated with the industry as we were inundated with applications from people working at companies far and wide, representing all sectors of our diverse and creative industry.

Witnessing the excitement and joy of the 60 winners and their colleagues and loved ones at the award ceremony at the end of 2023 was something truly to behold, and further cemented the notion that the industry can be a sector of choice for young people to pursue careers, if we continue to create the opportunities for them to grow, develop and succeed. To this end, I'm thrilled that our new education and training strategy has got off to such a strong start with the launch of our new early careers recruitment website, My Furniture Career, one of the many highlights from the year.

Finally, it only leaves me to thank our members – many of whom give up their time to support our endeavours – the office team, my wardens and our clerk, for all their support.

May I wish the Master-Elect, Brian Ahern, and his consort, Annette, a wonderful year.



The Master-Elect

Brian Ahern, Master-Elect of The Furniture Makers' Company

MY ROUTE TO 'THE CHAIR' HAS WEAVED MORE

than a little but I have enjoyed a very lucky life so far. An electrician by trade, I moved into the commercial world of electrical wholesaling as I didn't really take to building sites in December. After a few years, I decided to move on because I wanted to sell original products. Through a family connection, I arrived at an Oxfordshire cabinet manufacturer where I spent 18 happy years. More recently, I have been chairman of the British Furniture Manufacturers association and currently I chair the Furniture Industry Research Association council. I joined the Furniture Makers in 2004, mainly for networking and the chance to attend some special events. I became a liveryman in 2006 and was invited to join the Court in 2013.

Over the years, I have sat on and chaired several of our committees and seen firsthand the dedication and extraordinary work our members perform to help us achieve everything we do in the areas of education, excellence and welfare. Not to mention growing our membership and fundraising for our charity too. They give their time freely, such a valuable thing to do, and we really do appreciate their contribution.

Being Master was something that I honestly never envisioned on first joining. However, it's amazing how much you get out of something, the more you put into it. The more you do that, the more you want to contribute as much as you can. Which was one of the

deciding factors for me when I put myself forward to climb the ladder. This is a great organisation that has welcomed me, and through it I have made many friends and enjoyed some fantastic experiences. I am greatly honoured and humbled to have been elected as Master. I plan on giving as much time and effort as I can to live up to the expectations of the position and emulate the great work of my predecessors.

It's for that reason that during my year, one of my focuses will be growing our ranks and helping build on the strong cohort of individual and corporate members that we already have. Over the past few years, we have made some fantastic inroads, establishing a network of regions around the UK where members can support our activities and promote our values at a local level. I plan on putting significant time and effort into growing membership in areas where we may be underrepresented, and in doing so further strengthen our regional network. It may sound a cliché, but we really are stronger together. The wider our circle gets, the further our message spreads and the more we can do to support our industry.

Ahead is a year full of wonderful opportunities and occasions, more than a few challenges and so many chances to help people and promote the livery and charity, but crucially, the industry. I hope to continue the success of my predecessor Amanda Waring who has been a wonderful Master and colleague.

Our charity has been supporting the welfare of employees in the industry, past and present, for 120 years. Working with HR teams and professionals in the industry, we hope to make sure that everyone who is entitled to support knows where to turn in their time of need.

Through our benevolent fund, we're able to offer quick grants to help with things like essential household items, essential household bills, funeral expenses, disabled adaptations, essential property repairs, disabled / medical equipment, respite / convalescent breaks, general financial hardship and pre-tenancy costs and removal costs.

If you know someone whose financial situation has changed and they are struggling to pay their bills, please put them in touch with us.

We continue to work with Shout to provide a free, 24/7, confidential text service for people who are struggling with their mental health. Anyone wishing to start a conversation with a trained volunteer simply needs to text the word 'COMFORT' to 85258.

Remember, we are here for you.



Welfare

Why Welfare Matters

Tarja Youssef is HR manager at corporate member Tempur UK



Tarja Youssef
Tempur UK



AT TEMPUR WE AIM TO CONTINUOUSLY improve our welfare initiatives and explore new ways to support employee wellbeing. We believe supporting people's welfare is about both big and small things, emphasising the importance of creating a comfortable and engaging work environment.

One of the ways we've been able to keep colleagues connected is through monthly 'all-hands' meetings where we ask everyone – circa 130 employees – from all areas of the business – office, warehousing and retail stores – to attend in person or online.

The meeting is led by our managing director, Tobin James, and our heads of departments share updates from their areas. The meetings are open forums for employees to ask questions. This is followed by a lunch for all employees who are in attendance.

Something that we have implemented since the pandemic is a Wellness Week, which is run in conjunction with our other territories around the world. Last year's optional activities included mental health awareness training, biometric screenings, and financial wellbeing sessions. This event was well received and gave us a dedicated event to focus in on the importance of colleagues' welfare. We're currently in the process of planning the 2024 event which is going to include an app-based competition to encourage physical activity.

In addition to the above, we offer colleagues complimentary healthy snacks, payday lunches, a suggestions portal for feedback, as well as company-wide social events that include an annual away day in the summer and a Christmas party.

I was introduced to The Furniture Makers' Company and the work the charity does when I first started at Tempur nearly four years ago. I connected with Sue, the welfare officer at the time, and have continued to have a good relationship with Jo, the incumbent welfare officer.

We promote the charity internally by hanging the posters up at all our sites. I frequently send them out to the stores as well to remind colleagues that it's there, so

CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW
Tarja at one of our welfare events; the Tempur team during their 2023 Wellness Week; Tarja networking with other HR professionals; Tarja with 60 for 60 awardee Louisa Gao, Tobin James and Laura Why

BEING CONNECTED WITH THE FURNITURE MAKERS' COMPANY HAS ALSO BEEN BENEFICIAL TO ME – I'VE ATTENDED THE COMPANY'S WELFARE AND WELLBEING EVENTS WHERE I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO NETWORK WITH PEERS

it's not forgotten. Periodically, I'll also raise it at our town hall meetings. I think that our people are now very much aware of what the charity can do for them.

From the mental health text service to the financial grants awarded by the charity, we have had quite a few people who have been supported and they have

been quite vocal about it, saying it was a lifesaver. The feedback we've had has been overwhelmingly positive and that the process is very quick and easy and that the team are very helpful and supportive.

Being connected with The Furniture Makers' Company has also been really beneficial to me. I've attended the Company's welfare and wellbeing events where I have been able to network with peers. After those events, a few of us have kept in touch and we share ideas and bounce problems off one another. They've been incredibly useful as people in HR don't tend to go out often. I encourage other HR professionals to attend future events as they offer such a valuable networking opportunity. ●

uk.tempur.com



Supporting people through difficult times

Welfare

As the charity for the furnishing industry, we have been supporting the welfare of people working in the trade since 1903. Every day people have to cope with financial hardship due to the impact of bereavement, relationship or family breakdown, illness, reduced work hours, an unexpected loss of income or redundancy, but they don't have to deal with this alone.

Here are a few examples of the individuals and families we are proud to have supported.



Lesley's story

Case study

LESLEY, AN EXPERIENCED UPHOLSTERER with a burgeoning business in Portsmouth, was left struggling financially when she took compassionate leave to care for a member of her family.

Lesley has worked in upholstery for over 15 years, having studied furniture design at university and then an upholstery diploma. She started her career at Morgan Contract Furniture and then S Roberts Upholsterers, before taking the bold move to start her own full-time upholstery business in 2020.

Living with autism, Lesley has overcome many challenges in the business world and worked tirelessly to keep her company going throughout the pandemic.

Just prior to Christmas 2023, Lesley made the decision to take on less work so she could focus on supporting her family member, but the loss of earnings left her short in covering her outgoings.

Lesley found out about us via social media and reached out to see if we could help her with managing her bills and payments until she was able to work at full capacity again.

Very quickly, we awarded Lesley a welfare grant to cover her costs for a month so that she would have one less thing to worry about.

Lesley recently expressed her immense gratitude: "Thank you to The Furniture Makers' Company for giving me a welfare grant that covered my loss of earnings and proved to be an incredible lifeline. The charity works hard to support people like me. The thing I appreciated most was how straightforward their help was at a time when my brain was struggling to work properly. I didn't have to beg or jump through a million exhausting hoops. I just stated my case through their straightforward application, included some relevant paperwork and then waited for their answer which arrived very quickly.

"I want to offer an extra special thanks to Jo, their welfare officer, who reviewed my case and recommended it to the board. We only spoke through email, but your kindness was massively felt and appreciated."

We're delighted that Lesley has since been able to resume full time work and is loving being back in business.

Lisa's story

Case study

LISA AND HER HUSBAND HAD SUCCESSFULLY OPERATED AN interiors business in Yorkshire for over a decade, utilising their design, styling, and business skills to create a thriving company. Unfortunately, in 2021, a series of complex circumstances, aggravated by the ill health of Lisa's husband due to alcoholism, led to the collapse of their family business. The subsequent financial strain resulted in the breakdown of their marriage. Tragically, her husband passed away, leaving Lisa and their daughter in a state of financial destitution.

Overwhelmed and desperate for assistance, Lisa reached out to us seeking financial relief while navigating the daunting legal and administrative challenges from her husband's death and the business folding.

Recognising Lisa's need for aid, we offered her a grant of £1,000 to provide some breathing space and alleviate immediate financial burdens.

Receiving the grant brought a sense of relief to Lisa. Lisa said: "I was anxious about applying and didn't think for a moment we'd get any funding. It's such an amazing charity for those of us who are in genuine need of financial aid. It really did give me that warm feeling in my heart. We're suffering mentally and financially due to our situation which was something we had no control over. It's incredibly tough and miserable, especially for my daughter, who doesn't grumble and accepts our situation, having lost her dad at 16 to such a brutal illness. I am so proud of her acceptance and compassion."

Lisa is working tirelessly to try and hold onto the family home but her situation is incredibly tough. She is exceptionally grateful for the help our charity has provided her during this difficult time.

"We pray one day life will change for the better. We will most likely lose our home, which makes us incredibly sad, but we have faith we will create another home where we feel safe and secure. Thank you to the Furniture Makers, you truly are the kindest people I have ever been in touch with."

Matt's story

Case study

MATT, A FORMER RETAIL MANAGER, HAD spent 15 years working diligently in a bed store. However, his life took a turn for the worse when he had to stop working due to a series of complex medical conditions, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and diabetic retinopathy.

The pandemic and a relationship breakdown exacerbated his struggles, leading to a decline in both his mental and physical health. Matt found himself trapped in a state of despair, unable to leave his house or even stand for more than five minutes. As a result, he struggled to perform essential household tasks, including cooking. Relying on family members for food preparation became his only option.

When his old cooker finally gave out, Matt sought help from us, having discovered our charity through an internet search. Upon learning about Matt's situation and his urgent need for a functional cooker, we swiftly responded to his request for assistance. Recognising the significance of having access to warm and healthy meals, we decided to provide him with vouchers from Curry's to purchase a new cooker.

The support we provided had a profound impact on Matt's life, as he expressed his gratitude, stating: "Thank you very much, that has been a godsend. I truly appreciate and am humbled by your help."

Jo Goga, welfare officer, said: "With the new cooker in place, Matt's family was able to resume their role in preparing nutritious meals for him, ensuring his dietary needs were met. The provision of this essential kitchen appliance not only alleviated the burden on Matt's family but also restored a sense of dignity and independence for Matt himself."



Natalia's story

Case study

NATALIA, A QUALITY CONTROL WORKER AT A Nottinghamshire upholstery manufacturer, has been under significant financial pressure since a relationship breakdown a few years ago compelled her and her daughter to leave the family home and move into rented accommodation.

This transition brought about an increase in her monthly expenses, as Natalia was now juggling rent payments alongside contributions to the mortgage on the family home.

Despite the financial strain, Natalia persevered in her efforts to support her daughter and ensure their wellbeing. Recently, some tragic circumstances had meant that Natalia and her daughter could return to the home. However, on inspecting the property, she discovered that it had fallen into disrepair, rendering it unsafe for them to live in. One of the most concerning issues was the unsafe electrical system, which posed a serious risk to their safety.

Natalia started to arrange for repairs to the house so they could move back and ease some of their financial burden, but the task was huge and there were many jobs that needed to be completed to make the house habitable.

In need of assistance to address the extensive repairs, Natalia reached out to us for support after being told by her employer of the grants we provide.

On hearing Natalia's story, we took swift action and offered her a sum of money to contribute towards the reinstallation of the electrical system. In addition, we purchased a new microwave for Natalia, making it easier for her to prepare meals while she saved up for essential kitchen appliances.

Natalia shared her gratitude, saying: "Thank you so much; your help is truly a lifesaver for us, and we appreciate it more than words can express."

We continue to recognise, celebrate and elevate the prominence of British design and manufacturing through our three distinct Guild Marks: the Bespoke Guild Mark, Design Guild Mark, and Manufacturing Guild Mark.

To maintain their prestige, each Guild Mark is meticulously judged or expertly audited by industry influencers and respected parties, adding an enviable cachet to those who attain them. Beyond the honour, holders of our Guild Marks gain a powerful marketing tool, proven to yield substantial sales benefits and effectively spotlight their product or business.

The following pages recognise the individuals and companies that have won or maintained these coveted awards in the past livery year.



Excellence

Why Excellence Matters

Daniel Hopwood, acclaimed interior designer and Bespoke Guild Mark chairman, talks about the pursuit of excellence and why it matters

THE CONCEPT OF EXCELLENCE FOR ME

has such an air of achievement and even excitement about what is possible. Such a contrast to perfection which I believe is so overrated and quite boring. Designers in pursuit of perfection end up with something that lacks character. Perfection in its soulless entity is certainly confident and simple to recognise but that's not the case with excellence, it's less tangible. I spot excellence through innovation, a narrative that reveals the reason why it exists.

As an interior designer, I've avoided perfection, even rejecting the notion of good taste as being a compromise and too self-aware. However, I have strived for excellence my entire career but feared that I might not have captured it. That doubt strengthened with the introduction of social media as I scrolled through the beautiful images of other designers' work. Maybe I just lacked confidence in what I do, after all it's a common trait in the world of design, as creatives we have bouts of self-doubt. Finding true excellence can only be reflected by how well people live in the work that I design. Only time will tell, as it did recently.

Previous clients of mine invited me around to their apartment as their home needed a refresh after 15 years of living there. I must admit that despite it being a penthouse overlooking Tower Bridge it was the least favourite of my projects. I had never photographed it as it lacked any colour or pattern, and to me felt a little dull. However, on arrival and being invited in I was taken around and told how much they loved living there. They enjoyed the flow of family and private spaces and thankful that I convinced

them to place their son's bedroom as far away as possible from theirs. Their teenage son was delighted too. As I poked around, I could see that the finishes, fittings, and the joinery were all still in good condition, I had unwittingly achieved sustainability through longevity. Good design and good construction had paid off, so much so I was beginning to thank my earlier self.

I realised that I had spent too much time comparing myself to other designers, being impressed with good photography and fancy finishes. Excellence is not skin deep; it embodies the entire design. Sadly, it is not possible to show through a photograph how liveable a space can be. Instead this family, my clients happily living in their home, had shown me what true excellence is all about.

It had taken me a long time to discover that I had unknowingly achieved excellence. But for you my fellow designers and designer-makers, I would like to take that pain and wait away. You will always be critical of your own work, seeing only the flaws as you vainly search for perfection. You need others to recognise that you have in fact attained excellence. An accolade even more so, if that message is conveyed by a group of established and respected people in our industry. That's why the livery's Bespoke Guild Mark exists.

The Bespoke Guild Mark jury consists of some of the best designer-makers in the country and they are dedicated to encouraging others to achieve that most ideal and intangible of accolades. It's called? Yes, you know, excellence. ● danielhopwood.com



Bespoke Guild Mark Celebrating sublime British craftsmanship

THE BESPOKE GUILD MARK RECOGNISES EXCELLENCE IN design, materials, craftsmanship and function for exquisite pieces of furniture and, new for 2023, fitted furniture made as single items or a limited run. In 2023–2024, 11 exceptional pieces met the stringent criteria to be awarded the Mark. ● bespokeguildmark.org.uk | @bespokeguildmark

- BGM 485** The Gemini Cabinet by Clare Ng
- BGM 486** Arches Desk by Hugo Egleston
- BGM 487** Phoenix by Richard Williams
- BGM 488** Harpsden by Duncan Doig
- BGM 489** Old Kings College by Alex Beaugard and Lanserring
- BGM 490** Two Rising Suns Cabinet by Marcus Hopf
- BGM 491** The Flooded Fens Console Table by Elliott Butterwick
- BGM 492** Marshlands Drinks Cabinet by Elliott Butterwick
- BGM 493** The CALLUM Lounge Chair by Ian Callum CBE
- BGM 494** 1988 Sideboard by Samuel Attard
- BGM 495** Axis Table by Mark Thomas



BGM 490



BGM 491



BGM 488



BGM 485



BGM 495



BGM 489



BGM 493



BGM 492



BGM 487



BGM 486



BGM 494





ABOVE Hamish Low being presented the Christopher Claxton Stevens Prize by Alderman Alison Gowman and Amanda Waring, Master of The Furniture Makers' Company
LEFT The Jubilee Oak Table

Profile Jubilee Oak Table

BURIED TREASURE OFTEN CONJURES UP

the idea of a chest filled to the brim with gold and jewels. However, a different kind of hidden riches – a 5,000-year-old sub-fossilised black oak tree – found over a decade ago gave new meaning to the term. The unique discovery became the impetus for a once in a lifetime project, the creation of a magnificent 13-metre-long table, the Jubilee Oak Table.

The project was a venture 10 years in the making that saw a team of furniture makers, led by Hamish Low, chairman and lead craftsman of the Fenland Black Oak CIO; Mauro Dell'Orco, lead designer; craftsman Steve Cook; and many students from the Building Crafts College, to collaborate on an inimitable 'table for the nation'.

This incomparable example of black oak – one of the rarest forms of timber in the world – was discovered during routine cultivations on a farm in the Wissington Fens of south-west Norfolk.

Speaking on the discovery of the timber, Hamish said: "I have been processing black oaks for over 30 years but when I saw the oak it took my breath away. It was not just its size but the degree of preservation.

There was no evidence of insect infestation or fungal disease, and large areas of bark remained intact.

"It was not until I was asked which end was the canopy and which end was the root ball that we began to fully appreciate what we were looking at. This branchless tree was so parallel that we realised it was only a small section of a much, much bigger tree.

"This explained the very unusual degree of preservation. When it fell, this vast tree would have smashed and crushed everything in its way before burying itself deep into the peat – where it lay, undisturbed, for the next 5,000 years."

Hamish continues: "We could not find a mobile sawmill in this country capable of milling such a huge tree, so a generous Canadian company via their UK agent loaned us a brand-new one. It proved easier to build the sawmill on site in the field rather than move the tree itself.

"Since the jubilee oak had been buried for over 5,000 years it was impossible to predict what this tree might gift to us when 'opened up'. Nothing could have prepared us for what this extraordinary tree yielded. Ten magnificent, breathtakingly beautiful, consecutive planks quite unlike anything ever seen before."

Hamish explains that once the timber had been milled, drying the wood proved to be the biggest challenge for the collective.

"Black oak needs to be dried artificially and very slowly as traditional air drying is too aggressive. Over a period of nine months, 1,795 litres of water were extracted from the planks in a purpose-built dehumidifying kiln. Staggeringly, this equated to two thirds of the planks sawn volume. The planks shrank to almost half their thickness, a quarter of their width and even 150 millimetres in length. The challenge is to extract these huge amounts of water and incur this degree of shrinkage while maintaining flat and split-free planks. Once dry, the planks became very valuable and were a unique creative opportunity to give a fascinating insight into the scale and majesty of the ancient high forests."

A multi-disciplined design team was assembled under the direction of Mauro to decide how best to use such rare planks and eventually consensus was reached on a table.

Hamish said: "With a table, the oak planks could be kept at their full length and at the perfect height to be seen and touched in their entirety. Black oak is the perfect material for a table top, it's very dense and dark so patinates beautifully with the minimum of routine maintenance.

"As well as existing as a sculptural object in its own right, a table has many practical functions, such as for dining, meetings and display. A table can also be of huge symbolic value at important summits, traditional ceremonies and state events.

The design team had to come up with innovative and creative solutions to meet the various challenges of the design brief – not least that the table should be able to fold-down to mitigate its huge size, and that it should satisfy all the conservation concerns relating to the historical buildings in which it is likely to be housed.

The table has only two pairs of narrowly shaped pedestals joined by a long and slender curved spine which cantilevers by more than three metres each end. Fourteen ribs are fixed each side of the spine to support the planks. The material is bronze, chosen for its embodied permanence and archaeologists refer to this period in history as transitional between the Stone and Bronze Ages.

Hamish said: "The table's under structure can be dismantled in various sections to ease installation, help hugely with transportation and the engineered components allow the two outer planks to be folded down. This reduces the width of the table to just 900 millimetres and the entire structure can then be wheeled effortlessly and silently by just two people to the side of a room for use as a serving table when the space is used for other activities. In short, we've made a gigantic drop leaf table.

"The river joints are a unique detail reflecting an obvious fenland feature and their shapes are dictated entirely by the

AS WELL AS EXISTING AS A SCULPTURAL OBJECT IN ITS OWN RIGHT, A TABLE HAS MANY PRACTICAL FUNCTIONS, SUCH AS FOR DINING, MEETINGS AND DISPLAY. A TABLE CAN ALSO BE OF HUGE SYMBOLIC VALUE AT IMPORTANT SUMMITS, TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES AND STATE EVENTS

tree itself, demonstrating at a glance the extraordinary parallel nature of these original temperate rain forests. The joints are not glued and is a rare instance of when the construction of a stunning detail is actually much easier than it looks. They are spectacular, unexpected and worthy of comment when the two outer planks are folded down.

"The bridge construction of the understructure is both functional, to support the top with the minimum number of parts, and metaphorical, to cross 5,000 years of history."

The project was completed in 2022, the year of Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee, and unveiled at Ely Cathedral by HRH The Princess Royal on 17 May 2022, where it was in residency for 10 months. It is currently housed in Rochester Cathedral where it has been for over a year. In April 2024 it will be moving to Lincoln Cathedral for a year. It is unusual for an object to be in residency within these magnificent spaces for such a long time, but it's proved successful not just as a functioning table but also simply as a sculptural visitor attraction. The table is accompanied by its own educational exhibition, has its own website and its own comprehensive range of merchandise.

"When the table leaves Rochester, it will have been visited by 500,000 people most of whom have run their hands

down the live edges, so they are now beautifully burnished."

In 2022 the table was awarded our Bespoke Guild Mark, which recognises excellence in design, materials, craftsmanship and function for exquisite pieces of furniture and fitted furniture made as single items or a limited run. In early 2023, the Bespoke Guild Mark committee deemed the table the most outstanding piece awarded a Bespoke Guild Mark in the 2022-2023 livery year, and it was subsequently awarded the Christopher Claxton Stevens Prize.

Hamish was presented the prize by Alderman Alison Gowman, who was representing the Rt Hon The Lord Mayor Nicholas Lyons, and Amanda Waring, Master of The Furniture Makers' Company, at the latter's Installation Dinner at the Mansion House, London, in May 2023.

Commenting on the award, Hamish said: "This project is very unusual in that it has been a collaboration between so many independent designer makers coming together to create one object. We are all hugely honoured to receive the Christopher Claxton Stevens Prize as one of the highest accolades in recognition of everyone's extraordinary contribution and expertise".

Daniel Hopwood, Bespoke Guild Mark chairman, said: "The Jubilee Oak Table is such an incredible achievement and such a fitting celebration of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. We are proud to award a Bespoke Guild Mark and the Christopher Claxton Stevens Prize for such exemplary work." ● thefenlandblackoakproject.co.uk



Design Guild Mark

Recognising excellence in British industrial design

TWENTY-NINE OUTSTANDING DESIGNS FROM THREE

categories were awarded our coveted Design Guild Mark in 2023. The award was established in 2008 to raise the profile of British industrial design and recognise excellence in the discipline.

The winning designers – some newcomers as well as previous holders – were celebrated at a special awards ceremony during Clerkenwell Design Week 2023. The awarded designs – representing the domestic and contract markets – benefit from increased industry and consumer awareness, press and social media coverage, with the designers and companies behind them also receiving enhanced brand recognition.

The Brutalist Collection and the AD11 Lounge Chair were named the best designs of their category and were awarded the 2023 Jonathan Hindle Prize for outstanding design. ●

designguildmark.org.uk | [@designguildmark](https://www.instagram.com/designguildmark)

INTERIOR DESIGN ELEMENTS

- DGM 284** The Brutalist Collection, designed by Claire Canning and Lindsey Hesketh for Granite + Smoke
- DGM 285** Main Line Twist, designed by Hayley Barrett and Jane Marks-Yewdall for Camira

LIGHTING

- DGM 286** Oslin Collection, designed by David Irwin for Luum
- DGM 287** The Muse Portable Lamp (Solid Brass), designed by Tala for Tala
- DGM 288** Solid Rechargeable Light, designed by Terence Woodgate for Case Furniture

FURNITURE

- DGM 289** METRO, designed by Alex Blondek and Rodney Kinsman for OMK Design
- DGM 290** Bilbao, designed by Tim Rundle for Morgan Furniture
- DGM 291** Utility Shelf, designed by Rachael Heritage for WOULD A/S
- DGM 292** Edge Free, designed by Luke Pearson and Tom Lloyd for Modus Furniture
- DGM 293** Omada, designed by Mark Gabbertas for Gloster
- DGM 294** Metis, designed by Gabbertas Studio for TrabÀ
- DGM 295** Jump, designed by Gabbertas Studio for TrabÀ
- DGM 296** Gemla Open, designed by Samuel Wilkinson for Gemla
- DGM 297** Ooty, designed by Jack Smith and Gemma Matthias for Allermuir
- DGM 298** Bastille, designed by Patrick Norguet for Allermuir
- DGM 299** Plum, designed by Mark Gabbertas for Allermuir
- DGM 300** Hideaway Wall Desk, designed by Chris Fowler for Bisley
- DGM 301** Hideaway Swing Desk, designed by Chris Fowler for Bisley
- DGM 302** Amity Seat, designed by the Gaze Burvill Design Team for Gaze Burvill
- DGM 303** Uniun Bench & Planter, designed by Furnitubes for Furnitubes
- DGM 304** Syd, designed by Aaron Probyn for Another Country
- DGM 305** HM48 Tarn, designed by SmithMatthias for Hitch Mylius
- DGM 306** Domus Desk, designed by Matthew Hilton for The Conran Shop
- DGM 307** Iris Lounge Chair, designed by Huw Evans for The Conran Shop
- DGM 308** Mag Table Collection, designed by Daniel Schofield for The Conran Shop
- DGM 309** AD11 Lounge Chair, designed by Huw Evans and Campbell Thompson for The Conran Shop
- DGM 310** Cross Task Chair, designed by Pearson Lloyd for TAKT
- DGM 311** Marlow Table, designed by Matthew Hilton for Case Furniture
- DGM 312** Slot Shelving, designed by Terence Woodgate for Case Furniture







LEFT The Design Guild Mark judges inspecting the Brutalist Collection

Profile The Brutalist Collection

INSPIRATION CAN COME IN MANY FORMS,

whether it be the wonders of nature, the infinite mysteries of the cosmos or the vast back catalogues of film and music.

For designers Lindsey Hesketh and Claire Canning, lifelong friends who make up the design practice Granite + Smoke, they draw inspiration from their multi-disciplinary backgrounds.

Lindsey is an architect who runs an award-winning Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) practice in Aberdeen, and Claire, in London, has a Masters in Textiles from the Royal College of Art and works in interiors and fashion textiles, previously for Paul Smith & Alexander McQueen.

Combining their creative passions, the duo designed the Brutalist Collection of blankets and cushions, inspired by London's bold and graphic brutalist architecture and modernist colours.

Woven in Scotland and England on Jacquard looms in short runs, each creation tells an uplifting story influenced by the pair's backgrounds, in carefully considered and unapologetically optimistic colour combinations. Each item from the collection is made with premium and sustainable materials from ethically sourced cashmere

to recycled wool, hand finished by British specialists to the highest standards.

Discussing the collection, Lindsey said: "Our 'Dash' design was inspired by the fenestrations of the Balfour Tower, an iconic brutalist building in East London. The 'Brutalist' and 'Grid' designs are a continuation of our earlier wall tapestries and blankets inspired by the Barbican building. Our vision was to create a sustainable and high-quality collection of large-scale graphic patterns in joyful colours that work equally well as a blanket or wall hanging.

"The blankets are woven using contrasting yarn weights and thickness to create a soft, yet graphic irregularity. A specialist double-sided weave technique was used adding depth and giving the fabric a three-dimensional quality, as though it was hand quilted."

As with all creative processes, Lindsey and Claire had to overcome some challenges along the way to achieve the stunning end result.

Explaining, Claire said: "After the first trial, there was pouching in some of the fabric, due to the large graphic scale of the design, resulting from not enough structural interchange. There was also some unforeseen weft slippage issues in areas. This was resolved by adding the quilting/stitching-in effect from the face of the blanket to the reverse, to provide extra support to the weave structure.

"The most challenging aspect of the design was achieving the balance of the soft handle while retaining the graphic sharpness of the designs. After the first trials, the finishing was tweaked slightly."

It has been around 16 years since the Design Guild Mark was founded by Past Master Jonathan Hindle with the late Cherrill Scheer. The Design Guild Mark recognises the highest standards in the design of furnishings in volume production by the finest designers working in Britain, or British designers working abroad.

Over the last six years, the Design Guild Mark has been expanded from a Furniture

category to include an Interior Design Elements category, which extends to textiles, floorcoverings, surfaces, carpets, and wallcoverings with innovative finishes and materials, and a Lighting category.

In 2023, the Brutalist Collection was one of just two submissions awarded a Design Guild Mark in the Interior Design Elements category, demonstrating the exacting standards that the judging panel employ when inspecting the pieces in person.

“What really sets the Design Guild Mark apart from other awards is the focus on raising the profile of British design and innovation,” said Lindsey, before continuing: “For our work to be recognised and praised by the esteemed judges for excellence in British industrial design is a real honour.”

Receiving a Design Guild Mark is a notable achievement, deserving its own celebration, but each year the judges are also asked to choose the best or perhaps most innovative design in each of the categories for the Jonathan Hindle Prize. Last year that honour went to the Brutalist Collection.

Claire said: “We are so delighted to receive this prestigious award for the Brutalist Collection. It is an honour for our work to be recognised by the renowned judges and awarded as demonstrating the highest standards of originality and innovation in British industrial design.” ●

graniteandsmoke.com



Lindsey Hesketh and Claire Canning – Granite + Smoke



Manufacturing Guild Mark Celebrating Great British manufacturing

THE PRESTIGIOUS MANUFACTURING GUILD MARK has been the mark of excellence, distinguishing Britain's top furniture and furnishing manufacturers, since 1993.

We award it 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, HR, financial stability, sustainability and sales & marketing. ●

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Roundhouse Campus by Simpson & Liddard



The Eden Bed by the Cornish Bed Company



OE1 by Herman Miller



Cavalli by Michael Tyler Furniture



The Rollaway RM80 with memory mattress by Jay-Be



Legacy Origins VI by Hypnos





ABOVE David Baldry
LEFT Legacy Origins V

Profile Hypnos

HYPNOS HAS A LONG HISTORY WHEN IT

comes to being an exemplar in the UK furniture and furnishing industry.

Founded in 1904, the Buckinghamshire-based manufacturer has been practising and perfecting the art of making luxury pocket spring mattresses and beds by hand since Edwardian days.

In fact, if you went to its workshops in Princes Risborough you would witness for yourself that its master craftsmen use the same traditional and time-honoured skills as they did back then, which have been passed down across the fifth-generation business's history.

It's therefore easy to see why the company has been a Royal Warrant holder – a supplier to the Royal households – for nearly a century, first obtaining the status in 1929 from His Majesty George V.

In more recent years, the business has added to its list of accomplishments with our very own Manufacturing Guild Mark.

Sponsored by Biesse UK, EMST, Intelligent Fixings and Microvellum, the Manufacturing Guild Mark has been the mark of excellence, distinguishing Britain's top furniture and furnishing manufacturers, since 1993. The Mark is awarded to



companies that demonstrate high standards across seven assessment criteria: design, product development, manufacture, human resources, financial stability, sustainability and sales & marketing.

Speaking with David Baldry, group managing director at Hypnos, he believes these accreditations give consumers a paramount level of confidence when purchasing a Hypnos product.

David said: "Coupled with our Royal Warrant, the Manufacturing Guild Mark enhances the level of trust and quality of our products. It is an independent audit of our production and testament to the care our team take in handcrafting our products at our Buckinghamshire factory. For those within our industry and our partners, it is a mark of trust and expertise, just as our association with and support from The Furniture Makers' Company is one way the team at Hypnos know we support their wellbeing and development.

"Aside from the confidence of the Mark and independent audit, it is another standard that holds the company honest to our values as an employer and manufacturer of luxury furniture, as it's backed by the Furniture Makers who represent the best in British furniture. This is supported by the access the Furniture Makers provides to other manufacturers to see best practices as well as manufacturing and design trends."

Over the past 11 years Hypnos has undergone a comprehensive sustainability journey that resulted in it becoming the first carbon-neutral bed manufacturer in the world, and more recently saw it receive the Queen's Award for Enterprise for Sustainable Development in 2020.

Today, sustainability is at the heart of the business and runs through everything it does. It therefore seems fitting that in 2024, its 120th anniversary, Hypnos is focused on furthering its green credentials.

David said: "We are celebrating our 120th year by building a legacy for the future with a programme of events and fundraising, new products and projects including our

newly launched Legacy and Eden Project Collections.

"Indeed, as a family business, based in the heart of Buckinghamshire since 1904, we are also creating environmental and community initiatives that will provide a legacy of support for our local area and beyond. Our charity partnerships, also with the Eden Project, give us the perfect excuse to have some fun fundraising, and putting in place staff volunteering initiatives."

Now in its fifth year, Hypnos's relationship with the Eden Project has influenced multiple areas of its business including sourcing, linking to local conservation and community initiatives and a dedicated collection of mattresses.

"We are lucky to have an experienced team that works closely with key partners and organisations keeping us at the forefront of product and trend design, materials, certification and auditing. We are committed, as a luxury home brand, to enable our customers to do the right thing for the future of earth, as our friends at the Eden Project have shown us. This includes creating a supply chain for new plant-based fibres, being carbon neutral for over 13 years, and actively monitoring our carbon footprint through Planet Mark – who we continue our partnership with to enable future reduction and community leadership."

Although Hypnos is focused on the future, the company still recognises the importance of paying homage to the people who paved the way to make it the successful business it is today.

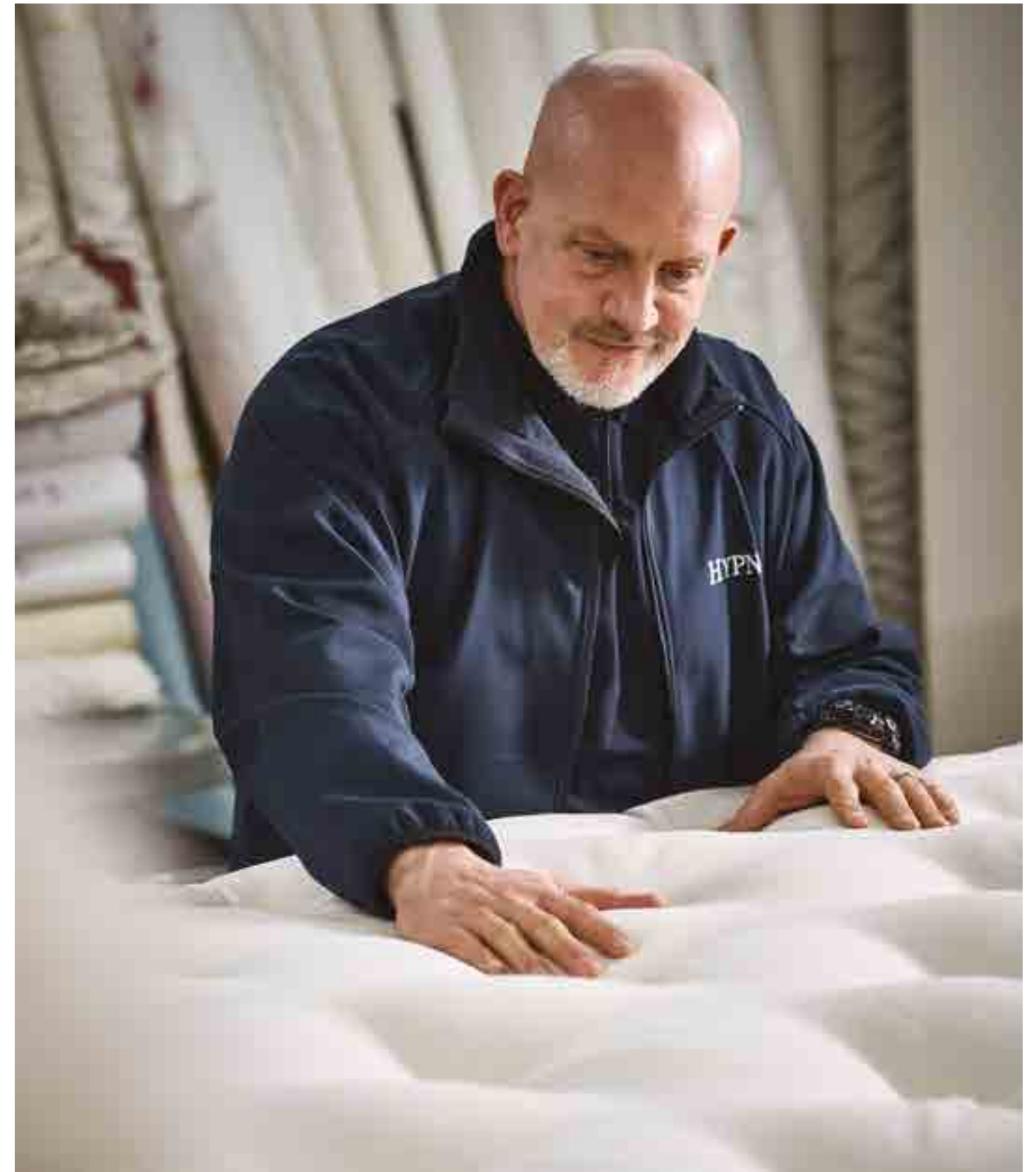
David concludes: "We will also be recognising Peter Keen's 80th birthday, as the fourth generation of his family to run Hypnos, before handing over to James. Peter has had significant influence within the bed industry, founding the Bed Show and driving focus on empowering the British bed and furniture industry through fun and laughter." ●

hypnosbeds.com



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

Eden; a Hypnos master craftsman; Hypnos at the 1935 British Industries Fair



The UK has a thriving furniture and furnishing sector that contains many world-class businesses. For the sector to continue to grow, it is essential for it to attract the very best school leavers and graduates.

That is why we have spent considerable time developing our educational programme of events and activities to influence, signpost and help connect young and new learners to incredible opportunities, while helping companies retain the best people already working in the trade.

Over the past year, we have taken the first important steps in implementing a new five-year educational strategy, starting with the development and launch of a new early career recruitment and training website, My Furniture Career.

At the same time, our new Apprentice and Skills Plus service, co-funded with the Furniture and Interiors Education, Skills and Training Alliance, is helping businesses to take on apprentices with ease.

All this combined with our existing prizes, tours, programmes, opportunities for professional development and our awe-inspiring Young Furniture Makers Exhibition, we feel confident that the industry will continue to flourish, root and branch.



Education

ABOVE Mia, a manufacturing apprentice at Ercol

Why Education Matters

Dr Lynn Jones manages a furniture industry recruitment service called Lynn Jones Associates and is also a furniture careers adviser



Dr Lynn Jones
Lynn Jones Associates



THE FURNITURE INDUSTRY IS BOOMING. Order books for many furniture workshops are full. Consequently, a skilled workforce has never been more critical.

People already working in the furniture industry know it to be amazingly rewarding, creative, fulfilling and inspiring. However, compared to other industries like the music, fashion, film, media or computer games industries, it can seem a bit dated, a bit uninspiring even. Yet you only have to visit a busy furniture workshop to realise how exciting designing and making furniture really is.

Currently, there are a great many training opportunities for roles in the furniture industry and some of the best I see are on-the-job training initiatives. Trainees can work and learn alongside skilled staff, which can be especially valuable when their staff are close to retirement with skills to pass onto a younger generation – skills which might otherwise be lost.

There are also great strides being made with apprenticeship programmes, short specialist furniture making courses and City & Guilds level courses, many of which are co-delivered with industry in partnership with local further education colleges around the country.

Supporting young people and inspiring them on their journey into employment post education is really important, and something more companies need to focus on.

Gone are the days when people will take the first job that comes along, especially now there is such a shortage of skilled people in the furniture industry.

Young people are being far more discerning about which job to choose, many being offered more than one job at once after training. They are also asking more questions about production ethics, sustainability of materials and safe working conditions, so companies are competing to attract the best employees.

Engaging young people in friendly, welcoming, non-intimidating dialogue from the very beginning and emphasising the

incentives of working for your company is a good start. For some roles, informal workshop tours and relaxed conversation can often be a better way to find out about people than a formal interview.

For employers, asking young potential employees simple questions over the phone prior to interview or first meeting, like where they live, how they will get to an interview, how much the train fare will cost, offering initial on-screen interviews, can be particularly helpful to both sides. You may want to consider proactively offering to pay travel expenses or offering a standard travel cost contribution for graduates travelling over 20 miles. Alternatively, offering to collect them from the station. Small incentives can go a long way and make people feel well supported from the start, instilling trust and respect.

Once in work, regular job reviews and appraisals are essential, making young employees feel cared for and valued both in terms of personal wellbeing and in terms of value to the team. The most common reason for staff leaving roles is cited to be due to appraisals not happening when promised, or at all.

IF THE FURNITURE INDUSTRY IS TO ATTRACT MORE YOUNG PEOPLE THOUGH IT NEEDS TO EMPHASISE AND EXPOSE THE JOY OF MAKING, DESIGNING AND CREATING FURNITURE – IT ALSO NEEDS TO BE SEEN AS GENDER DIVERSE, ESPECIALLY IN WORKSHOP ROLES

LEFT Lynn talking at the Bucks Skills Show in 2023

BELOW Lynn was part of the Talks Programme at the 2023 Young Furniture Makers Exhibition

The most attractive furniture industry employers are already on top of this and it's not only the big companies. Small workshops are increasingly attracting people with small but highly desirable incentives.

Whatever the size of a company, offering simple incentives can make the difference between someone choosing a job or not. Simply, the downing of tools at midday on a Friday for the team to eat together before leaving early, or supporting some extra training, can earn an employer a huge amount of respect from not only young people but from all employees.

If the furniture industry is to attract more young people, though, it needs to emphasise and expose the joy of making, designing and creating furniture. It also needs to be seen as gender diverse, especially in workshop roles, which tend to predominantly attract men. There needs to be an equal footing persona and pay wise, like-for-like with junior jobs in other industries. Finally, it needs to be perceived by the young to be an exciting, highly respected, fulfilling, rewarding, even cool, career choice. ●

lynnjonesassociates.com
@lynnjonesassociates



Young Furniture Makers Exhibition 2023

OUR MAGNIFICENT YOUNG FURNITURE MAKERS

Exhibition returned to Furniture Makers' Hall and the spectacular Dutch Church in Austin Friars, London in October 2023, offering guests the opportunity to see the future of our industry.

Around 70 designs from 60 emerging designer-makers were exhibited at the inspirational one-day event, which was principally sponsored by Tizo Limited and co-sponsored by Axminster Tools, Celtheath and NaughtOne.

We set up the exhibition over 15 years ago for school children, students and graduates to showcase their work to the design community and connect with potential employers.

In addition to the stunning furniture and lighting on display, guests and exhibitors were treated to five short informative seminars that formed a Talks Programme.

In the evening, hundreds of people packed out the Dutch Church to hear which pieces had been named top of their category, with special guest Tomoko Azumi announcing the 2023 award winners.

Amanda Waring, Master of The Furniture Makers' Company, said: "The Young Furniture Makers Exhibition yet again proved to be a wonderful celebration of the exceptional and remarkable design talent we have in the UK. We are profoundly grateful to our exhibition and award sponsors, whose unwavering support ensures that this inspirational event goes ahead each year. In particular, I extend my thanks to our principal sponsor, Tizo Limited."

Billy Quinn, non-executive director at Tizo Limited, said: "At Tizo Limited, we believe in the power of innovation and supporting the potential of emerging design talent, which is why we were delighted to be the principal sponsor of the 2023 Young Furniture Makers Exhibition. The exhibition gives a very important platform for young designer-makers to showcase their talent to key members of the trade and build connections with industry and peers. We look forward to witnessing these young talents shape the future of the furniture and furnishing industry."

The next Young Furniture Makers Exhibition will take place on 2 October 2024. ●

[furnituremakers.org.uk/
young-furniture-makers-exhibition](https://furnituremakers.org.uk/young-furniture-makers-exhibition)

PRINCIPAL SPONSOR



CO-SPONSORS



THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Archie Stevens; Gul Yasin; Chungyun Yi; Master Amanda Waring with Tomoko Azumi; Cayden Debrah; Sir Anthony Ullmann with Oisin Gallagher; the 2023 exhibition



BELOW Charlotte Woollard (right) with a guest



Young Furniture Makers Awards 2023

Young Furniture Makers Awards 2023

YET AGAIN, WE RECOGNISED SOME OF THE BEST

emerging designer-makers of furniture and furnishings at our annual Young Furniture Maker Awards, which were announced at the Young Furniture Makers Exhibition in October 2023.

Every year we receive a huge number of entries from students and recent university graduates for these highly competitive awards. The designs go through an initial judging day with a crop of the very best pieces invited to be showcased at our inspirational Young Furniture Makers Exhibition where our judges can review the designs in person and select the winners.

For 2023, we introduced several new awards and prizes, which were made possible by our generous sponsors. ●



BESPOKE AWARD

Sponsored by Axminster Tools

BEST IN SHOW PRIZE

Sponsored by Blum

Lines Puzzle Cabinet
by Josey Garbutt

Josey Garbutt, a student of Rycotewood Furniture Centre, was awarded both the Bespoke Award and Best in Show Prize for his striking Lines Puzzle Cabinet.

Made from English rippled ash and 5,000-year-old bog oak, the Lines Puzzle Cabinet uses texture and pattern to disguise 24 drawers. Each drawer features hand-cut dovetails and was fitted by hand. The locking mechanisms were custom designed and manufactured from brass and stainless steel.

Josey said: "Looking at the standard of work, I was hugely honoured to win first prize for the Bespoke Award. To then discover that my Lines Puzzle Cabinet had won Best in Show was incredible and I am absolutely delighted. It was also very satisfying to see the experts and other visitors having fun, playing with my cabinet and watching their reactions to the surprise elements."

DESIGN AWARD

Sponsored by NaughtOne

Baileigh Chair by Eden Bunce

Eden Bunce, a product design and furniture student at Kingston University, was awarded the Design Award for the Baileigh Chair.

The Baileigh Chair is a stacking chair constructed from a simple ash hardwood frame with a rolled and beaded aluminium seat with an ergonomic spring. Its simple design is modest and functional, making it versatile for both the home and public spaces.



TEXTILES AWARD

Sponsored by Parker Knoll

Sculpt by Emily Cross

Emily Cross, a graduate of Birmingham City University, was awarded the Textiles Award, which recognises a piece of furniture or furnishings incorporating textiles, for her innovative shelving solution, Sculpt.

Sculpt adds a tactile experience to putting away pocket items, using felt as an alternative to typical shelves and bowls used as storage in the hallway. Inspired by gallery exhibitions, it uses the adaptable nature of the material to create an attractive and easy-to-use piece of furniture.

SCHOOL DESIGN PRIZE

Sponsored by KI

Orbitron by Charlotte Woollard

Charlotte Woollard, a student at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, won the School Design Prize for her impressive stool, Orbitron.

She said: "I wanted to create an unconventional shape that would make it unlike any other stools and chairs I'd seen before and spent a long time choosing a design. The legs are laminated plywood with a plywood seat top and base. I wanted a sleek design so I made joints flush with the bottom and chose not to include a central support. I chose to reuse a fabric that I found in a scrap bin. This choice of fabric directed my choice of paint colour inside the legs and the base, and it gives a strong personality to the stool."

"I really enjoyed my time at the Young Furniture Makers Exhibition as it gave me a chance to meet industry professionals and peers who I otherwise would not have had the chance to talk to and learn from. The experience was wonderful, and I was very proud to win the School Design Prize."

BEST CHAIR IN SHOW PRIZE

Sponsored by Sitting Firm by Gaze Burvill

Crescent Chair by Archie Goundrey

A new prize for 2023, the Best Chair in Show prize was introduced to recognise the most outstanding chair as decided by experts at sponsor Sitting Firm by Gaze Burvill.

Rycotewood Furniture Centre student Archie Goundrey was selected as the winner for his beautiful Crescent Chair, a curvaceous lounge/dining chair hybrid which was crafted from white ash and contrasting ebonised ash to great effect.

Speaking on the experience, Archie said: "Winning the 'Best Chair in Show' accolade reinforces this even further because as a result, I have received a work experience opportunity. I am excited to be able to liaise with experienced designers and makers within a professional space about their work. Overall, the exhibition experience has made me feel confident starting my career in the industry as an assistant marquetry artist and has also helped me think about my future in furniture making in a much broader way after seeing all the exciting options available for me."

THE FAST TRACK PRIZE

Sponsored by Malcolm Walker

All Seeing Chair by Maria Gil

Maria Gil's throne-like chair was something of a showstopper at the exhibition and selected by furniture industry expert Malcolm Walker as the winner.

Inspired by former Young Furniture Maker Award winner, the Iris Chair by Huw Evans, the All-Seeing Chair is a collaboration with fashion company House of Errors and takes inspiration from their signature all-seeing eye graphic. It's designed to capture the bold essence of the brand and engaging with it aims to leave the same impact as wearing House of Errors clothes.

Maria said: "Hearing my name as the winner of the Fast Track Prize was very emotional for me. After how big of a challenge it's been to complete the design and construction of my chair, it was so moving and rewarding to see it recognised. The prize itself involves some exciting activities and opportunities which I simply cannot wait to take part in and get the most out of."

THE LEATHER PRIZE

Sponsored by the Leathersellers' Company

The Hide Armchair by Holly Preece

Sponsored by fellow livery company the Leathersellers' Company, this new prize was introduced to celebrate a piece of furniture with an excellent use of leather or material that could be replaced by leather.

Holly Preece's Hide Armchair, a beautifully handmade chair, was selected as the winner. The chair's frame is made from walnut with aeroply lamination to form the seat and upholstered using full-grain, Italian leather and finished with brass details.

Holly said: "I was honoured to have been part of the Young Furniture Makers Exhibition 2023. It was an incredible opportunity to connect with inspiring makers, designers and industry professionals, while showcasing my piece."

"I am delighted to have received the Leather Prize, sponsored by the Leathersellers. Thank you to everyone who helped throughout this project."

THE IDEA PRIZE

Sponsored by Colebrook Bosson Saunders

25 Degrees by Harvey McKellar

Sheffield Hallam product design student Harvey McKellar was awarded the IDEA Prize, a new award for 2023 to recognise an outstanding piece of furniture or furnishings which has been designed and created with Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) at the forefront of its user experience, for his 25 Degrees bench.

Harvey said: "When two strangers sit on a bench, they almost instinctively sit as far away from one another as possible. This design creates an environment where the further apart you sit, the more likely you are to interact, as users can see each other in their peripheral vision."

"Hopefully, my design can give someone suffering from loneliness the push to make a first interaction."

My Furniture Career Recruitment and training support

AS PART OF OUR MISSION TO SUSTAIN A

thriving British furnishing industry with a talented workforce, last October we launched a new early careers website – My Furniture Career – offering businesses a specialist solution to recruitment requirements.

The website, which was developed with Get My First Job and The Talent People, is aimed at young people (15–24 years old) who are still choosing a career path, while signposting those looking for industry specific training and connecting those seeking a job with employers.

My Furniture Career's comprehensive features include:

- A free jobs board for industry to register and upload early career vacancies in minutes. All the posts uploaded will gain additional exposure on the Get My First Job website which receives 10,000 new registered users every month.
- The option of creating a 'Featured Employer' page to shine a spotlight on an organisation and advertise their vacancies at a small cost.
- A comprehensive directory connecting users to hundreds of established and recognised providers of educational courses and training programmes, including everything from short upholstery courses to advanced degrees in product design.
- Regularly updated content catering to a young audience, motivating and informing them about the rewarding career prospects available within the furniture and furnishing industry.

Jonny Westbrooke, CEO of The Furniture Makers' Company, said: "We have developed My Furniture Career to offer businesses a specialist, dedicated platform to promote and fill job vacancies as well as research suitable training from established providers to upskill their employees. We encourage businesses to utilise My Furniture Career as part of their recruitment strategy." ●

myfurniturecareer.org.uk



↑↑
**my
furniture
career**

The Frederick Parker Collection and Archive

By Wendy Shorter-Blake, chairman of the Frederick Parker Collection

OWNED BY THE FURNITURE MAKERS' Company since 2013, the Frederick Parker Collection of almost 200 historic chairs, plus an extensive archive of furniture history and design, forms a key part of our educational and outreach work. Since 2016 the collection has been housed in purpose-designed and climate-controlled galleries and stores at London Metropolitan University's Special Collections building in London's east end.

A key event in September 2023 was the long-awaited launch of the online catalogue of the chair collection. The culmination of several years' research, writing and photography, the catalogue enables an even greater number of students, furniture historians and enthusiasts to access the collection. With high-res digital images of each chair complemented by in-depth, newly researched descriptions, the online catalogue provides a high-quality accessible resource for those who are not able to visit the collection in person.

In-person engagement with the collection reached its highest-ever level in 2023, with a growing number of group visits to the collection by students and furniture professionals, many of whom have already booked return visits for spring 2024. In October, a selection of chairs were displayed at the busy and vibrant Young Furniture Makers Exhibition. Participation in this event proved a great opportunity to introduce the collection to a new generation of furniture makers and designers.

Spring 2023 saw the schools and colleges touring exhibition return for the first time since the pandemic with a well-received visit to Rycotewood College. A selection of chairs from the collection were displayed at the college for two weeks, supported by a day of specialist furniture history and design talks delivered by members of the Frederick Parker Collection committee.

The knowledge and expertise of the committee members who attend events on behalf of the collection throughout the year is a valuable resource. The committee, chaired by Wendy Shorter-Blake, continues to oversee and guide the collection, and has welcomed new members from the livery who bring with them diverse contacts and new ideas to promote and fundraise for the collection.

Further broad engagement with the Frederick Parker Collection continues through the distribution of the collection newsletter. In 2023 this was sent electronically to an extensive mailing list. The newsletter keeps friends and supporters of the collection up to date with events, education and outreach and fundraising activities. These include the 'Sponsor a chair' scheme, which has proved a popular way to raise funds for the collection. Supporters of the collection can also keep in touch by becoming a 'Friend of the Frederick Parker Collection' and by attending the annual Frederick Parker Lectures and Dinner. ●

To view the chair catalogue, go to frederickparkercollection.org.uk. For any enquiries about the annual lecture and dinner, to arrange visits to the collection, to sponsor a chair or to become a friend of the Frederick Parker Collection, please email specialcollections@londonmet.ac.uk

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT
The collection on display at London Metropolitan University; students visiting the collection; the collection being photographed as part of the archiving project; six chairs on show at the Young Furniture Makers Exhibition



We're delighted to report that membership to the livery continued to grow in 2023, particularly the number of new and returning corporate members. Every new member strengthens our message and helps us further our work in the areas of education, excellence and welfare.

Twenty twenty-three marked the 60th anniversary of our establishment as the 83rd livery company of the City of London. To celebrate this significant milestone, we organised a special anniversary campaign, 60 for 60, honouring 60 outstanding young people who are demonstrating exceptional dedication to their careers. Through 60 for 60, we were able to shine a much-deserved spotlight on some of the remarkable people under 35 who are not only the future of the industry but also the future of our livery company.



Membership

ABOVE Liveryman
Stuart Anderson



MY ENTHUSIASM FOR ART AND DESIGN

stems from my school days where I was extremely lucky to have an inspiring and energetic art teacher, Mr Thomas, who taught me how to draw, paint and sculpt in a way that channelled my energy and grabbed my interest. It was an experience that shaped my life and for which I am immensely grateful and led me to want to follow a creative career.

My induction into the furniture industry started at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University where I studied Furniture Design and Craftsmanship from 2004–2007, or 'Fine Craft' as we affectionately knew it.

After my degree I worked for a furniture manufacturer for two years and that gave me an invaluable insight into the industry. I had always wanted to work for myself, so I took the plunge and set up my own business in 2009. At first, I was working on my own and rented a bench space in a shared cooperative workspace in Brighton. However, after a few years it became apparent that I needed more space and an assistant cabinet maker to be able to fulfil all my projects. In 2014 I moved to my current workshop in Bosham near Chichester after being awarded a 'Be the Business' match funding grant and have now grown to a small team of seven.

I now run my own bespoke furniture and specialist joinery business, designing and manufacturing high-end bespoke and limited-edition furniture for private and

TOP TO BOTTOM Ripples chest of drawers; Edward Johnson in workshop (credit: Alan Frost); Luna key cabinet; Family Tree memory box

THE SMALL-SCALE BESPOKE HIGH-END MARKET IS A TOUGH PLACE TO MAKE A LIVING. IT IS NOT AN EASY INDUSTRY TO SURVIVE IN AND CERTAINLY NOT FOR THE FAINT HEARTED - YOU NEED TO HAVE AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF DETERMINATION

commercial clients. Having spent over 15 years on the bench making, I now focus my efforts on designing, project managing and steering the business, leaving the making to my skilled craftsmen and women.

There have certainly been times when I've questioned having to work 80-hour weeks to maintain a successful business. Tongue in cheek, I'd like to say that the industry broke me not the other way around. The small-scale bespoke high-end market is a tough place to make a living. It is not an easy industry to survive in and certainly not for the faint hearted – you need to have an enormous amount of determination.

I became more involved with The Furniture Makers' Company in 2018 when I was asked to join the Bespoke Guild Mark committee as a guest member. There was an aura around a Bespoke Guild Mark when I was a student and I set my sights on winning an award as soon as I set up my own business. My first award was a certificate of merit, given in 2010 for my Ed, Edd and Eddy nest of tables, which was followed in 2011 by my first Bespoke Guild Mark, awarded for my Perpetual Bloom dining table. I have since gone on to be awarded three more to date. I think it's important to say that plenty of my applications have not met the high standards set by the committee.

During this time, I had several people encouraging me to join the livery, and in 2023, I officially joined as a freeman.

My personal interest with what the Company does lies with excellence and education, and the belief that in supporting and promoting these you enable people to thrive when they might otherwise struggle. Working with your hands is a very rewarding

experience but it can be a challenge to find the motivation and means to forge a career doing so. It took me five years at the bench before I felt comfortable and in control of my making ability and another eight years before my business was stable and thriving. I now feel a huge sense of achievement and excitement with my work, and I enjoy what we create as a team. I'm keen to encourage other designers and makers to keep motivated, to keep learning and find success in a skill they love. We must remember that without skilled craftspeople we cannot turn wonderful ideas into tangible items!

I thought that the 60 for 60 awards at the end of last year was a great way to celebrate the 60th anniversary of The Furniture Makers' Company, which awarded 60 young people in the wider furniture industry for their incredible work and achievements, including one of our own young cabinet makers, Finlay Champion.

If we want to support and inspire the thousands of designer-makers around the country, then it's crucial to continue to shine a light on them. I've experienced firsthand, the trials and tribulations of trying to design and make industry-leading pieces of furniture while earning a living. I can assure you that you don't do it for the money. The Bespoke Guild Mark award provides the inspiration and recognition that helps drive you forwards as a person and a business. Whether I have won or lost the award it has always motivated me to be a better, more astute designer-maker. The award gives bespoke designer-makers both a fabulous platform and the visibility they require and deserve. ●

edwardjohnsonstudio.co.uk



Freeman Profile

Edward Johnson is a designer-maker of bespoke furniture



I STARTED MY CAREER IN COMMERCIAL management with Marks & Spencer, initially in their retail stores, and later moving into buying, in clothing, homeware, furniture and soft furnishings.

In 2001, I joined Christie Tyler group – later Sofa Brands International – initially working on the launch and development of Content by Conran, a joint venture. I was then asked to set up and develop Parker Knoll, the leading consumer brand which the group acquired in 2005. I built that up from the acquisition of the intellectual property to a scale business, supplying into over 300 independent retailers and several multiples nationwide. In 2014, I was made chief executive of Parker Knoll, and subsequently chief executive of the newly acquired Collins & Hayes brand, and the Duresta luxury upholstery business.

It was around this time that I first became involved with the Furniture Makers, as Parker Knoll became corporate members. This is an excellent route for companies and their management to be introduced to the many benefits of the Company. After a couple of years, I was invited to join the Court – the Company's board – and became more actively involved in the strategy and activities of the charity as a result.

I left Sofa Brands International in early 2023 and joined Shackletons as chief executive that summer. Shackletons is a leading supplier of quality upholstery and

THE YOUNG FURNITURE MAKERS EXHIBITION IS ALWAYS A MOTIVATING AND INSPIRATIONAL EVENT, BRILLIANTLY ORGANISED, AND SHOWCASES THE MOST PROMISING TALENT



TOP TO BOTTOM Donna at the Young Furniture Makers Exhibition; Donna at the Routes to a Stronger Workforce event; Donna at the Royal Charter Dinner

cabinet furniture to the senior living sector. In 2022, I became a liveryman of the Company in my own right and continue to sit on the Court.

I believe the Company's unique combination of welfare, development of future skilled talent, combined with the promotion of excellence in design and manufacturing puts it in a unique place in the sector. I am deeply committed to helping develop initiatives that will attract the next generation of people to enjoy successful and rewarding careers in the sector.

The Young Furniture Makers Exhibition is one of my highlights in the calendar. It is always a motivating and inspirational event, brilliantly organised, and showcases the most promising talent, many of the exhibitors are at the start of their furniture careers.

Over the past year, I've been actively involved in the development of the Company's new website, MyFurnitureCareer.org.uk, and the 60 for 60 anniversary campaign, which culminated in a superb networking event.

The opportunity to meet and learn from leading businesses across the industry is a real benefit to those who join. I never fail to be impressed by the breadth and calibre of individuals who work in the sector.

The Company also organises a series of meetings and networking events throughout the year that facilitate collaboration and shared learning with others. Last year's included a Climate Change Sprint Challenge and Routes to a Greater Workforce conference. Both were well attended, and the discussions were led by high-calibre experts and leaders.

As a business leader, it is always interesting to hear from other people in a similar position and learn from their experiences. It's also great fun.

I am very proud to be part of The Furniture Makers' Company. If you work in the industry, enjoy learning and are vested in supporting a prosperous future for both the industry and those who are part of our community, then you should absolutely give it a go! ● shackletonsltd.co.uk



Liveryman Profile

Court assistant and liveryman Donna Bellingham is chief executive of corporate member Shackletons



I WAS APPOINTED TO LEAD THE Furniture & Home Improvement Ombudsman in 2008, which at the time fell under the umbrella of the Furniture Industry Research Association (FIRA). The service assists furniture businesses with consumer law, training and independent dispute resolution services. It was through my work here that I first became aware of The Furniture Makers' Company.

Jonny Westbrooke, CEO and clerk at the Company, had been working with me at FIRA immediately prior to him taking the reins at the livery. He explained what an incredible institution it was and how it was working hard to help those in need while inspiring excellence and the next generation to come and work in the industry. It was – and still is – at the heart of the furniture industry and I have always found it to be the most welcoming of organisations.

It wasn't long after that initial conversation with Jonny that I was admitted as a freeman. I've since progressed on to being a liveryman and – when we joined as a corporate member – a corporate liveryman. I saw value in the livery immediately and have introduced several colleagues to join as freemen and corporate members. Soon enough other people I knew in the industry became members too. The late Vince Linanne, a dear friend for many years, Billy Quinn, Phil Reynolds, Kevin Morgan and Jon Coulson



I HAVE BEEN INSPIRED BY MANY OF THE OTHER BUSINESS LEADERS THAT I'VE MET THROUGHOUT THE YEARS, EACH OF WHOM HAVE BEEN GENEROUS WITH THEIR TIME AND ADVICE – I BECAME A CEO AT 30, AND THE LIVERY GAVE ME A SAFE SPACE TO ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INDUSTRY AND TAKE LEADERSHIP ADVICE FROM MUCH MORE EXPERIENCED INDIVIDUALS



an incredible knowledge pool. Many of the best minds who have been successful in the industry across retail and manufacturing are among the members and that gives rise to an incredible sense of fellowship and support. Dinners and events are always congenial affairs, both relaxed and enjoyable and are a great way to build relationships and learn about what is going on within the industry.

I have been inspired by many of the other business leaders that I've met throughout the years, each of whom have been generous with their time and advice. I became a CEO at 30 and the livery gave me a safe space to ask questions about the industry and take leadership advice from much more experienced individuals.

It's a bit of a cliché to say that people don't know what they don't know. I certainly wasn't sure what exposure the Company would provide me before I became involved – but I can say with certainty now that both my career and my social life have been enriched by the knowledge and companionship that the Company has helped to provide me. It has also been a tool that I have used to help my colleagues grow their own networks and experience with. ●

fhio.org

joined and in turn their networks helped to introduce others.

During our time as corporate members, we have been a huge supporter of the educational activities, including the Young Professional Industry Experience, and have been a sponsor of the Young Furniture Makers Exhibition, which showcases the next generation of talent that is coming through.

In addition to its charitable status and all the good that the Company does, the livery's membership base and the calibre of those individuals make it unique in our industry.

Corporate membership provides access to

TOP & ABOVE The team at the Furniture & Home Improvement Ombudsman

Corporate Liveryman Profile

Kevin Grix is the chief executive and chief ombudsman at the Furniture & Home Improvement Ombudsman

Thank You

Our highly valued corporate members and supporters





THE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD IS presented annually to a leader who has devoted their life to the furtherment of the furnishing industry and left an indelible mark on the trade.

After studying furniture design at Kingston, Edward joined the family furniture company, Ercol Furniture, in High Wycombe in 1973. Edward was appointed a director of Ercol in 1986 and then chairman in 1994, a position he held until July 2022, when his son, Henry, succeeded him. Today, Ercol remains a private and family owned and managed company.

A staunch supporter of the Company, Edward joined the livery as a freeman in May 1979 and was elected to our Court in 1990. In 2005, he became the fourth member of his family to be Master of the Company. Edward is also a former chairman of the board of directors of the Furnishing Trades Benevolent Association (FTBA) and was in post at the time of the merger of the FTBA and our charitable fund in 2012. He went on to be our chairman of trustees for 12 years.

Edward was presented the award by Alderman Alison Gowman, who was representing the Rt Hon The Lord Mayor Nicholas Lyons, and Amanda Waring, Master of The Furniture Makers' Company, at the latter's Installation Dinner at the Mansion House, London on Thursday 4 May 2023.

Edward collected the award to rapturous applause from the near-180 people who attended the dinner, including Edward's wife, Tamsen; sons William and Henry; daughter Bea, their partners and the directors of Ercol.

Master Amanda Waring said: "Edward joined Ercol in 1973, working his way up from the factory floor to managing director, until he succeeded his uncle Lucian Ercolani as chairman. Edward was a careful and caring guardian of the family business, overseeing the legendary move to a new state-of-the-art factory at Princes Risborough in 2002, until he stepped aside in 2022.

"Throughout his career he has been a champion of furniture makers, designers and apprentices and always maintained close links with local schools, colleges and universities to inspire people to join the industry and value craft.

I AM DELIGHTED AND PRIVILEGED TO BE RECEIVING THIS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD. OVER 50 YEARS IN THE BUSINESS AND THE INDUSTRY, YOU OFTEN WONDER IF YOU ARE DOING THE RIGHT THINGS, SO IT IS VERY REWARDING AND REASSURING TO BE RECOGNISED BY ONE'S PEERS

"Edward is widely known as a kind, warm and unassuming man whose commitment to our industry, livery and charity has been outstanding and we are proud to recognise this by presenting a Lifetime Achievement Award to him."

On receiving the award, Edward said: "I am delighted and privileged to be receiving this Lifetime Achievement Award. Over 50 years in the business and the industry, you often wonder if you are doing the right things, so it is very rewarding and reassuring to be recognised by one's peers. Of course, awards like this are not achieved on one's own. It is the huge support of all the people around me, family, and colleagues, that has been so valuable and helped me make my contribution to the industry and to my company, Ercol." ● ercol.com



ABOVE Edward with Gul Yasin at the Young Furniture Makers Exhibition

RIGHT Edward being presented the award by Alderman Alison Gowman, who was representing the Rt Hon The Lord Mayor Nicholas Lyons, and Master Amanda Waring



Lifetime Achievement Award
In 2023, we presented our Lifetime Achievement Award to Past Master Edward Tadros, recognising his 50-year career in the furniture industry

Membership Livery events

AS ONE OF THE 111 LIVERY COMPANIES OF the City of London, we encourage our members to find out more about and get involved with some of the Square Mile's amazingly unique events and traditions.

Our livery dinners and other occasions promote camaraderie among members, fostering a sense of community while upholding centuries-old customs. Between grand events such as the annual Installation of the new Master, which is followed by a banquet at Mansion House, the residence of the Lord Mayor of London; or the historically significant United Guilds' Service at St Paul's Cathedral; or the whimsical annual Sheep Drive over London Bridge, there is something to delight all.

A particular highlight in 2023 was the Lord Mayor's Show, which sees a grand procession through the streets, symbolising the close relationship between the Crown and the City. We were thrilled to support our honorary liveryman, Lord Mayor of London, Alderman Michael Mainelli, by having a float in his procession that promoted our new My Furniture Career website.

All these events not only honour the past but also strengthen the enduring cultural tapestry of the City of London. ●



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT
The directors of Easy Rest Beds at the Royal Charter Dinner; Carla Barnett and Kate Wright; Lizzie Shaw, Nigel Phillips, Peter Harrison, Agnes Xavier-Phillips and Past Master Jonathan Hindle at the Installation Dinner; Chris Hyde in the Lord Mayor's Show procession; Dancers in the Lord Mayor's Show procession; Senior warden Brian Ahern, Master Amanda Waring, liveryman Tim Gosling and liveryman John Conroy at the Sheep Drive



Membership

Networking and fellowship

OUR MEMBERS ENJOY A ROBUST network that extends beyond professional boundaries, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange. We organise exclusive networking opportunities, allowing members to connect with industry leaders, fellow craftsmen, and business professionals. Regular events, conferences, and workshops create an environment where members can share insights, discuss trends, and explore potential collaborations. The sense of fellowship within our community is palpable, creating a supportive platform where members can socialise and forge lifelong friendships, ultimately strengthening the fabric of the furniture and furnishing industry. ●

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT Guests at the Confederation Lunch; the Land of Beds team at the Confederation Lunch; delegates at the Routes to a Stronger Workforce event; Simon Williams, Tristine Hargreaves, Master Amanda Waring and second assistant Jessica Alexander at the Bed Show gala dinner; a Mixer event at Furniture Makers' Hall



Membership

Regional events and activities

OUR REGIONAL COMMITTEES CONTINUE TO

play a pivotal role in fostering a sense of community and engagement with our members and industry colleagues around the UK. Our eight committees organise a myriad of local events, ranging from seminars and workshops to social gatherings, tailored to the unique needs and interests of members in each region. These events serve as platforms for networking, knowledge-sharing, and socialising among professionals in the furniture and furnishing industry.

Our regions:

- East of England region, chaired by liveryman Joanna Knight of the Knight Partnership, covers Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire and Suffolk.
- Midlands region, chaired by freeman Gina Thompson, includes Derbyshire, Herefordshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands and Worcestershire.
- North East region, chaired by liveryman John Conroy, includes Northumberland, Tyne and Wear and County Durham.
- North West region, chaired by freeman Phil Hopkins, of Essential Soft Furnishings, includes Cumbria, Lancashire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire.
- South West region, chaired by Past Master David Dewing, includes Cornwall, Dorset, Devon, Gloucestershire and Somerset.
- Southern region, chaired by liveryman Lizzie Shaw of Celtheath, includes Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire.
- Yorkshire region, chaired by liveryman Jessica Alexander, includes East Riding of Yorkshire, North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and West Yorkshire.
- South East region, chaired by liveryman Graham Marley, includes East Sussex, Greater London, Kent, Surrey, and West Sussex. ●

furnituremakers.org.uk/regional-association



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
 Guests at the New Makers Conference; the Yorkshire region once again organised a bowling night; the New Makers Conference, organised by Artichoke and the South West region; a golfer at the South West region's Axminster Golf Day; shooters at Northern Big Shots; Paul von der Heyde at the Teesside Golf Day



60 for 60 Honouring future leaders

FOR OVER 60 YEARS, OUR LIVERY HAS brought together some of the most influential people and recognised brands with the purpose of cultivating bonds of fellowship and fortifying the industry through charitable endeavours.

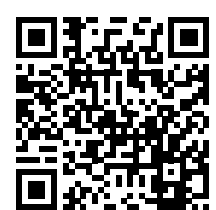
With 2023 marking the 60th anniversary of the Furniture Makers as the 83rd livery company of the City of London, we wanted to use this important milestone to focus on the future and celebrate some of the young individuals who will shape the industry going forward.

60 for 60 was launched to recognise 60 exceptional young people working in the UK furniture and furnishing industry who are demonstrating dedication to their careers and show promise as future leaders in their field.

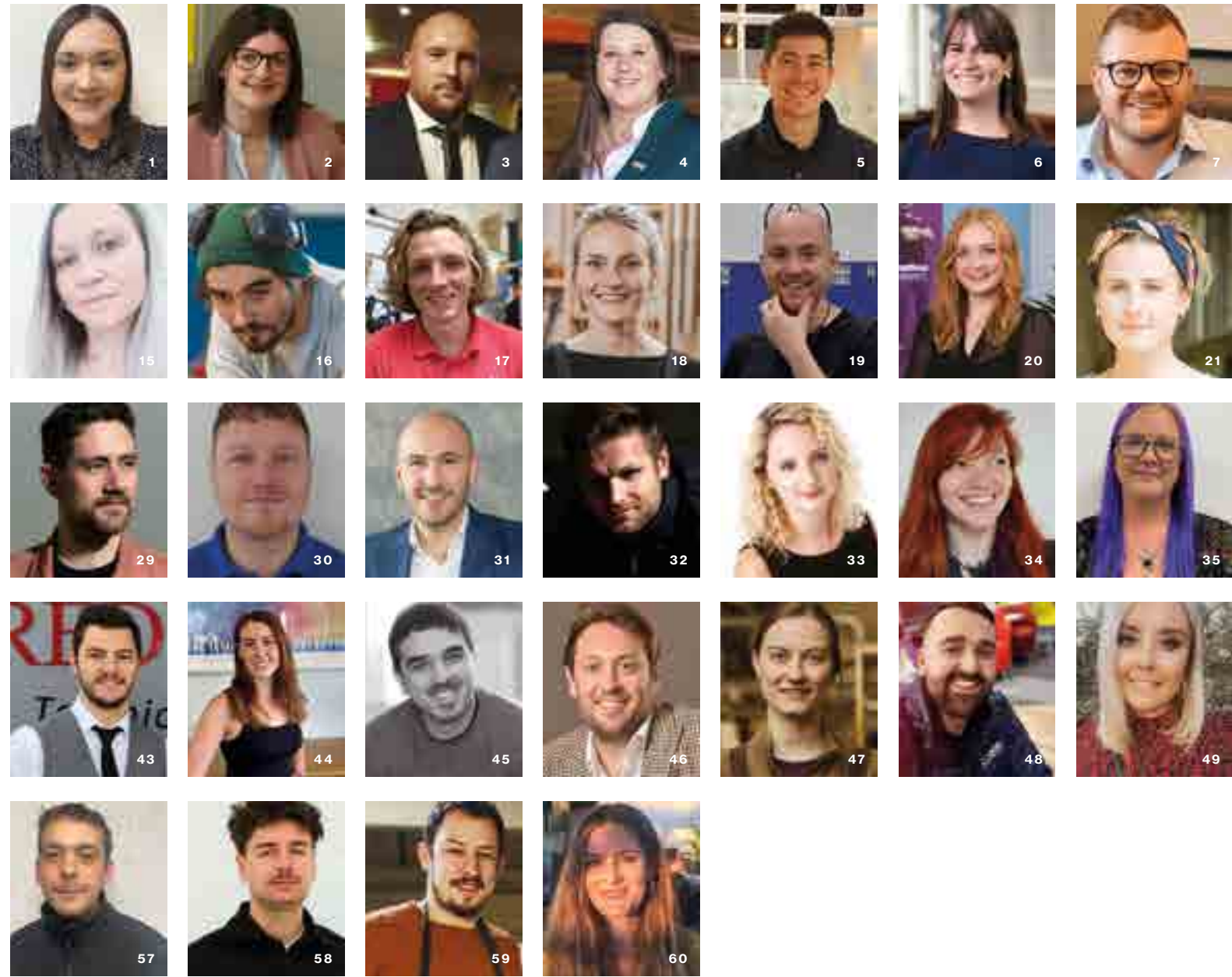
Launching the call for entries in June 2023, we were overwhelmed by the positive response to the campaign. The 60 people in the following pages were selected by an expert panel of judges from hundreds of applicants that showed interest in the award.

The campaign culminated in a tremendous ceremony at Carpenters' Hall, London where we were thrilled to honour the achievements of these talented individuals. ● furnituremakers.org.uk/60for60

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS



Scan this QR code to watch the ceremony highlights video



THE WINNERS

- 1 Abby Baker, customer care manager, Furniture Village
- 2 Amy Curtis, head of marketing, Sleepyeeze
- 3 Andrew Gofton, contracts manager, Damian Cronin
- 4 Anna Parkinson, operations manager, Make An Entrance
- 5 Anthony Goodwin, technical manager, Hypnos Contract Beds
- 6 Audrey Fasquelle, bespoke wood specialist/marquetarian, Rolls Royce Motor Cars
- 7 Ben Waters, operations director, HSL
- 8 Charles Byron, designer-maker, Byron & Gomez
- 9 Charles Dedman, head of design, Gaze Burvill
- 10 Chelsea Appleford, head of commercial, AMX Design
- 11 Daisy Lula Brunsdon, furniture designer-maker and tutor, Lula James – Woodworking Creative
- 12 Daniel Mesecke, sales and account manager, Microvellum

- 13 Duncan McGrath-Simpson, cell leader – machinist, Ercol
- 14 Edward Hornsby, director and workshop manager, Tom Maxwell Furniture & Cabinetry
- 15 Emilia Marekwica, head of purchasing and sourcing, Ocee & Four Design
- 16 Etienne Pierre Cauley, lead maker, Inglis Hall
- 17 Finlay Champion, cabinet maker, Edward Johnson Ltd
- 18 Freya Whamond, designer, J Carey Design
- 19 Greg Stone, production lead & lead maker, Matthew Cox Ltd
- 20 Hannah Shore, sleep knowledge and research manager, Silentnight Group
- 21 Hattie Speed, occupational therapy technical instructor and designer-maker, This Girl Makes
- 22 Helen Ciastek, operations director, Karpet & Furniture Kingdom



- 23 Henry Gardner, director, Edmund & Co Ltd
- 24 Huw Evans, product developer, The Conran Shop
- 25 Jade Farthing, managing director, Haskins Furniture
- 26 James Eddy, HSEQ manager, Ercol
- 27 Jarrad Belton, furniture maker/tutor, Aidan McEvoy Fine Furniture/ Farnham School of Furniture Making
- 28 Jason Perry, senior cabinet maker, Artichoke Ltd
- 29 John Gulian, founder/maker, John Gulian Design
- 30 Jordan Hargadon, new product development team leader, Silentnight Brands
- 31 Joseph Ullmann, commercial director, Shackletons
- 32 Josh Stancer, sales manager, Mundy Veneer
- 33 Kathryn Hall, marketing manager, Crofts & Assinder
- 34 Katryn Furmston, PhD student/head of design and research, Nottingham Trent University/Design Conformity
- 35 Kayleigh Anderson, transport and logistics coordinator, Jay-Be
- 36 Kieran Moore, group head of logistics, Harrison Spinks
- 37 Lauren Taylor, design manager, Guild Anderson
- 38 Louisa Gao, UK financial controller, Tempur UK
- 39 Lucy Bradshaw, senior technical developer, Camira Fabrics
- 40 Mark Denby, head of sales, Saxon Furniture
- 41 Matthew Hill, product designer, deVOL Kitchens
- 42 Meg Redman, administration and project manager, Momentum Contract Furniture

- 43 Nathan Whiffing, design and technical manager, Redwood TTM
- 44 Nicolle Hockin, managing director, Devonshire Living
- 45 Paulo De Vasconcelos, Fine Woodwork Tutor, The Building Crafts College
- 46 Rollie Attard, chief executive officer, Panaz
- 47 Rosie Hodgson, cabinet maker and workshop coordinator, Artichoke Ltd
- 48 Sam Coggin, company director, Coggin SOS
- 49 Samantha Foster, distribution manager, Furniture Village
- 50 Sean Evelegh, designer-maker, Sean Evelegh
- 51 Tab van der Lande, designer-maker, Sebastian Cox
- 52 Thomas Acland, furniture craftsman, Richard Williams Furniture
- 53 Thomas Cornick, senior cabinet maker and apprenticeship mentor, Simon Thomas Pirie Ltd
- 54 Thomas O'Neill, senior projects and design engineer, Race Furniture
- 55 Thomas Winfield, operations controller, Blum UK
- 56 Tom Addison, designer-maker, Tom Addison Fine Furniture
- 57 Tom Kaye, manufacturing manager, Global Doors and Interiors
- 58 Will Hudson, commercial designer, Habitat
- 59 William Purves, director, David Lawrence
- 60 Wilma Wyatt, self-employed cabinet maker and designer, Studio Wilma

Fundraising Events

Fundraising for the future

EVERY YEAR WE ORGANISE A VARIETY OF fundraising events around the country that play a pivotal role in sustaining our mission and impact within the furniture and furnishing industry. Fundraisers, such as the Big Shots clay pigeon shoot, sponsored by Furniture Village; the Tim Bloyce Memorial Cup five-a-side football tournament, sponsored by Ocee & Four Design; and the National Golf Day, serve as crucial platforms for fostering community, industry networking, and raising vital funds to support our charitable activities.

For the first time ever, we organised a month-long Online Christmas Charity Auction in December that had over 20 exclusive lots and ended up raising a tremendous £11,000 for our charity.

We would like to thank everyone who supported these events throughout the year, whether you were a sponsor or supporter. ●



CLOCKWISE FROM FAR BOTTOM RIGHT HFD Limited were the winners of the 2023 Tim Bloyce Memorial Cup; guests at Big Shots; around 150 people attended Big Shots; the action underway at the Tim Bloyce Memorial Cup; the 28th edition of Big Shots raised an enormous £35,000 for the charity

Furniture Makers' Hall

Discreet, professional and beautifully catered events

FURNITURE MAKERS' HALL – SITUATED in historic Austin Friars, conveniently close to Liverpool St, Bank and Moorgate London Underground stations – offers an outstanding choice of beautifully furnished rooms complete with first-class AV facilities, professional customer service and excellent catering from our venue partners, Life's Kitchen. Whether you're in need of an intimate meeting spot, a central location for a board meeting or looking for a venue to host a function for up to 120 people, Furniture Makers' Hall is ideal. ● fmhvenuehire.co.uk | 020 7248 1163 sales@furnituremakers.org.uk



British Furniture Confederation

By Jonathan Hindle, British Furniture Confederation chairman



Jonathan Hindle
British Furniture
Confederation chairman



BFC MEMBERS

- British Furniture Manufacturers (BFM)
- Carpet Recycling UK (CRUK)
- Commercial Interiors UK (CIUK)
- National Bed Federation (NBF)
- Furniture Industry Research Association (FIRA)
- The Furniture Makers' Company (WCFM)

And associations with many others, including Anti Copying in Design and the Association of Master Upholsterers & Soft Furnishers.

THE BRITISH FURNITURE CONFEDERATION

(BFC) is an executive body made up of representatives from the UK's leading furniture, furnishing and bed trade associations. It meets to discuss developments within the sector and strategies to further its aims and communicate these to government. The BFC also provides a secretariat to the All Party Parliamentary Furniture Industry Group (APPFIG), chaired by Mark Eastwood, MP for Dewsbury in West Yorkshire.

The BFC continued to have close dialogue with government throughout 2023 on several matters.

Review your SIC Codes

Collation of the latest official industry data – showing that our sector contributes over £42bn to the UK economy and employs more than 265,000 people in 26,000 companies – underlines the size and importance of the sector and is a message the BFC consistently pushes to government. We are asking all

member companies to check what SIC codes their businesses are registered under. SIC codes are used to identify sectors for selected grants or support, so having the wrong code could mean missing out.

New Faces

The past year has seen several challenges and changes both in government and at the BFC, with new ministers at the Department for Business & Trade (DBT) and at the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) all focused on economic growth. There has also been a changing of the guard at our member associations, with new faces representing the BFM (Phil Spademan), CIUK (Sean Holt) and NBF (Tristine Hargreaves) on our executive board.

In July 2023 we were delighted to welcome a new member to the BFC – Carpet Recycling UK, an association dedicated to tackling better end-of-life solutions for their wares. Managing director Adnan Zeb-Khan has joined the BFC team.

BELOW LEFT
Mark Eastwood MP talking with delegates at the 2023 Confederation Lunch, co-organised by the BFC and Company



Environmental Concerns

The government's Waste Prevention Programme for England was published in July. Its contents did not provide the progress the industry wanted and saw future action on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for our sector being delayed until a new government is elected. EPR is not the only environmentally related issue we are keeping a close eye on. Other interventions, such as product passports and eco-design rules are being developed apace in Europe, with the UK government keeping a close eye on what they come up with.

Flammability Regulations

Another much delayed issue of major concern has been the publication of the proposed new regulations for fire safety of domestic upholstered furniture. Once again Mark Eastwood kept the pressure up on the government to publish their consultation, which was released in August 2023. The industry has been extremely active in its response to the proposals, which included changes to their scope, essential safety requirements, conformity assessment, labelling, technical documentation,

implementation timeline, and measures to reduce chemical flame retardants. All the trade associations affected held briefings, got feedback from members and submitted their own responses; while the BFC also provided a collated response. The Office of Product Safety & Standards (OPSS) is now working through more than 600 responses and we expect there will be much more engagement needed in future, as reactions have been very strong and disparate.

Apprenticeships

A notable success for the BFC during 2023 was in unlocking a logjam over the development of some of the level 2 apprenticeship standard updates for furniture manufacturers. Following briefing from the BFC, Mark Eastwood wrote to Baroness Ruby McGregor-Smith CBE, chairman of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IFATE). Jennifer Coupland, chief executive of IFATE, responded confirming that the three standards concerned could be progressed and as separate standards, subject to them meeting occupational criteria and progression opportunities. Development of the standards is now progressing well.

The Future

Whoever wins the next general election, the BFC is determined that the industry's voice is heard. In preparation, a new Public Affairs Advisory Committee (PAAC) is being set up to support the BFC and its input into the APPFIG. A series of position papers are being drawn up to focus on and drill down into the detail of those issues of most concern to our sector.

New governance rules for every All Party Parliamentary Group are coming into force in 2024 meaning that the group needs new parliamentary officers elected and new parliamentary members recruited. After the general election, the group will again need to be reconstituted, this time in the context of a potential change of government and multiple new MPs being elected across the UK. Your support will be needed in this endeavour so we are strongly encouraging all companies in our sector to reach out to their local MPs and candidates standing for election to brief them about our industry and seek their involvement with the APPFIG. ● britishfurnitureconfederation.org.uk

Sharing knowledge to drive change

By Joanna Knight, chairman, Climate Change and Sustainability Committee



CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW
Climate Change Sprint Challenge; guests at the Routes to Greater Sustainability event; the moderators at the Climate Change Sprint Challenge

MOST ORGANISATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

recognise the imperative need for greater environmental responsibility. The weather events over the past few years have highlighted the devastating impacts of climate change and focused attention on the drive for positive action to halt environmental damage. Sustainability does, however, embrace so much more than protection of our planet – it demands a difficult balance between three key factors: the environment, society, and the economy.

The furniture and furnishing sector is evolving and transforming to meet these challenges. There is not simply an ethical responsibility, but buyers and corporate investors are increasingly demanding tangible demonstrations of 'green' and social value commitments.

Our Climate Change and Sustainability Committee was formed with an ambition to support our members and the industry as a whole. Comprising sustainability champions working within leading manufacturing companies, suppliers and trade associations, the committee has already hosted two major events. Our activities are designed to provide opportunities for colleagues from the furniture, bedding, kitchen & bathroom, fabrics, and floorcovering sectors to come together to network, describe initiatives and learn more about routes to greater sustainability.

The first one-day conference, held at Furniture Makers' Hall, was extremely well attended with feedback applauding the

opportunity for learning and engagement. Speakers outlined their experiences and how their organisations were approaching this difficult subject. Each break period was humming with discussions and highlighted the appetite for knowledge. Following this success, the committee decided to push boundaries and create an innovative and truly interactive event. The result was the Climate Change Sprint Challenge.

Originally scheduled for July 2023, it was unfortunate that there were many false starts due to the disruption caused by the train disputes. Nevertheless, the Sprint Challenge was finally held in November 2023 and, once again, proved to be extremely popular.

The concept for the day was to provide an opportunity for greater participation and collaboration. Attendees were invited to join four concurrent round-table discussions with a rotation between each. The sessions were hosted and moderated by members of the committee with everyone contributing to the debates. Topics included: avoiding harm to people and planet; standards & certification; measuring & reducing carbon emissions; material selection; and the circular economy. We actively encouraged participation and reminded everyone that we are all at different stages of learning and development. It's important that we share knowledge and support each other to question the status quo and look to identify opportunities for progress.

As a further demonstration of the commitment to knowledge sharing, a report, outlining the observations and issues raised during the sessions, was produced and available for everyone to download from the website.

We are focused on being a force for good. As a committee, we want to maintain our industry's relevance through harnessing our influence and experience to support positive transformation. Working collaboratively throughout the industry as a whole, we can make our contribution to the global quest for greater environmental responsibility and overall sustainability. ●



2 Rifles

Our affiliation with 2 Rifles continues

THE BATTALION STARTED 2023 WITH

plans afoot to get after much of what was missed in 2022, but was instead marked by a variety of challenges and rewards that culminated with the battalion delivering against the army's top priority – this time training Ukrainian soldiers for the front.

In February 2023, C Company found itself deployed on Salisbury Plain, as the opposing force for 4th battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (4 SCOTS) on their validation exercise. The thinking, fighting riflemen of C Company, supported by elements of A & I Company were well up to the challenge, and keen to demonstrate the forward thinking and innovative characteristics that define us as a regiment. C Company used lightweight drones, digitised situational awareness systems on smartphones, remote trap cameras, and satellite networking to ensure connectivity in otherwise communications blackspots. The new technology allowed them to see further, understand better, and react faster to 'the enemy' – 4 SCOTS. We ensured 4 SCOTS worked hard to achieve their validation.

Shortly after, A Company had their chance to demonstrate their operational prowess when they deployed to Valladolid, Spain on Exercise IBERIAN SUN alongside the 'Isabel la Catolica Battalion'. The riflemen were visited by His Majesty's Ambassador to Spain, Hugh Elliott, and conducted a demonstration attack alongside the Spanish forces. Once training had finished, A Company visited the battlefield of Salamanca (Peninsular War 1812), a place that holds deep significance to the Rifles. Silence fell at the top of the Greater Arapiles as A Company conducted an act of remembrance for all those lost, punctuated only by the sound of the bugle as the last post was sounded.

From April to July, a team from C Company were deployed to Zambia to assist with the training of a Zambian battalion prior to deployment on the United Nations Mission to the Central African Republic. The battalion were mandated with the protection of civilians. The training audience was made



The Master and clerk (middle and right) at a 2 Rifles' function



up of over 1,000 Zambian soldiers, ranging in rank from private to lieutenant colonel and varying in experience. The team delivered a package covering patrolling, navigation, counter-IED, and first aid. While in country, they also briefed UN under-secretary-general for peace operations, Mr Jean-Pierre Lacroix, on the UK's contribution to peace Support Operations throughout Africa. The enthusiasm and willingness to learn from the Zambian soldiers made the experience highly enjoyable and humbling for the team.

A Company with elements of I Company were also in the southern hemisphere but slightly cooler climes with a deployment as the Falkland Islands' 'resident infantry company'. This three-month deployment included engagement with Falkland Islanders, working with the Falkland Islands Defence Force and training on some extreme live firing ranges. HMS Medway also provided a rare opportunity to operate alongside the 'senior service' providing lifts to remote areas of the islands. It was a universally popular deployment, with plenty of volunteers for 2024.

In July, and this time with only two weeks' notice, summer leave was again cancelled. For the second year, the battalion not already deployed, was sent to Longmoor on Operation Interflex to train Ukrainians for

their fight. The operation was humbling, and allowed our junior commanders to demonstrate the expertise that makes us a reference army. They worked to improve the lethality, survivability and fighting spirit of our Ukrainian partners, the latter of which did not need much encouragement. Although based in Hampshire, the six-month deployment felt expeditionary being separated from Northern Ireland. The battalion was honoured to host furniture makers Gil Carter, John Irwin, Martin Jourdan, and Roger Wates at Longmoor Camp in December 2023. They got to see some of the training in action, and walk through elements of it themselves. Debates continue as to who was top shot on the range, however.

A raft of other activity continued alongside 2 Rifles' various deployments. In a humbling opportunity, B Company were asked to assist with the burial service for rifleman Frederick Thomas Adams of B Company 2nd battalion The Rifle Brigade, KIA 19 November 1917 at Passchendaele. A bearer party, firing party, bugler and chaplain all made the journey to Belgium to ensure the First World War soldier was finally put to rest by fellow riflemen. In March, the battalion trained a host of novice to expert alpine skiers in the Tyrol Region of Austria. Meanwhile, our Nordic skiers achieved great success in the male and female individual and team categories at the Divisional and Army championships earlier this year, including 1st Novice Team (in every event), and 1st Overall Individual Female.

The battalion completed its task in Longmoor in December 2023, allowing for a well-earned rest after another hectic year of highs, lows, adventures and fantastic opportunities. No doubt 2024 will bring more exciting challenges – for now the battalion is planning promotional and heavy weapons selection cadres, a battalion-level exercise, deployments to central America, and another rotation through the Falkland Islands. ●

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RAF XXV (Fighter) Squadron



IT HAS BEEN ALMOST TWO YEARS SINCE our affiliation began and 2023 has further cemented our relationship with the Furniture Makers. We have enjoyed hosting several visits to RAF Valley and graciously accepted invitations to the City of London throughout the year while we continue to deliver fast jet pilots to front line units in what has been an interesting year at home and abroad.

Last year's article focused on XXV (Fighter) Squadron's history from its formation in 1915 until present. This year we will look at RAF Valley, Anglesey. The station has been present since 1940 and opened for operations in February 1941. It provided day and night defence cover for England's industrial north-west and shipping in the Irish sea. This included the Hawker Hurricane as the primary day fighter and the Bristol Beaufighter for night ops. It also saw the formation of 456 Squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force in June 1941 flying Boulton Paul Defiants.

As World War Two progressed Valley evolved into a hub for the arrival of thousands of United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) bombers and many thousands of US airmen before departing to their front-line units by air or rail. This ferry role was reversed as the European War ended and over 2,600 bombers passed back through the airfield on their way home, each carrying up to 20 passengers.

The 1950s saw the dawn of the jet age and Valley became the home of Number 7 Flying Training School (FTS) training fighter pilots to fly Vampires and Meteors. Number 7 FTS was renumbered in the 60s to Number 4 FTS which is still based here to this day. Since then, it has very much been the centre of advanced fast jet training operating the Folland Gnat, Hawker Hunters, Hawk T1 and now the modernised Hawk T2. RAF Valley was previously the home of 22 Squadron Headquarters, part of the RAF Search and Rescue (SAR) Force. This was widely publicised when Prince William was assigned there before leaving in 2013. The SAR

Force was privatised in 2015 and the SAR capability is now run by Bristow Helicopters at nearby Caernarfon Airfield.

Fast forward to 2024 and Valley is now the base of 202 Squadron, part of Number 1 FTS, which operates the Airbus Jupiter helicopter and trains RAF and Royal Navy aircrew on maritime and mountain flying. 72 (Reserve) Squadron also falls within 4FTS flying the Texan basic fast jet trainer. If a pilot is successful on 72 (R) Squadron, the pilot will be awarded the coveted wings brevet before advancing to the Hawk T2 on XXV (F) Squadron and IV (AC) Squadron. A pass on these two highly demanding courses will mean the trainee has earned a right to train in a front-line single seat fighter that being the Typhoon or F35B.

Outside of the high tempo training sorties, XXV(F) proudly supported local events including fly pasts for July's Freedom of Llandudno Parade and a Remembrance Day fly-past over Wrexham Football ground. Both events were supported on the ground by several RAF Valley personnel in the respective ceremonies.

We have greatly enjoyed being hosted by the Master in two events in the City of London, including a dinner where the Hayes Trophy was presented to this year's 'Pilot of the Year', squadron leader Mark Payne. He was genuinely surprised at the honour and the other pilots are now eyeing up the impressive silver trophy for this year's event. It was also a privilege to host Past Master Tony Smart MBE and guests twice throughout the year including a Squadron Dining In Night in September where members witnessed RAF tradition first hand. Another highlight was the invitation to gather a team to shoot in the Big Shots charity event where XXV (F) Squadron somehow managed to outgun the army. However there is still work to do to equal the Furniture Makers' team this year! *Ferrens Tego - Striking I defend.* ● raf.mod.uk



RIGHT
Flight lieutenant Mark Payne being presented the 'Pilot of the Year' trophy by Master Amanda Waring

FAR RIGHT
Past Master Tony Smart MBE at RAF Valley

Fundraising for our future

Gary Smith, fundraising chairman

LAST YEAR I MENTIONED THAT THESE WERE

challenging times. Well, that remains true. The cost-of-living crisis, inflation and energy price rises have severely impacted businesses and individuals – making the fundraising landscape difficult.

Despite these challenges, we have persevered and I'm proud to report that we have been proactive in exploring several new or extraordinary initiatives to capture the imagination of donors, while organising our calendar of popular, long-running events.

One of the special initiatives was our 60th anniversary campaign, 60 for 60, which in addition to recognising 60 exceptional young people working in our industry generated considerable funding for our charity thanks to the generosity of 28 businesses signing on as principal partners or sponsors.

From virtual events to online campaigns, we have embraced digital platforms to connect with our community and raise vital funds for our causes.

Meanwhile, our regional activity, with key events being organised by devoted members across the country, continues to grow steadily, with two new regions in the Midlands and South East recently formed. Our regions provide opportunities for members and non-members to make valuable connections, gain understanding of our aims and work, while also fundraising for our charity at a local level.

With our new education and training strategy now in full swing, we really are fundraising for the future of our industry, and your support is needed more than ever. Of course, our benevolent fund remains on hand, supporting current and former workers through times of financial crisis. Every donation we receive makes a huge difference to helping us support the past, present and future of the trade.

If you supported one of our fundraising campaigns, volunteered your time or attended one of our events over the past year – thank you.

It is thanks to the continued support of our liverymen, freemen, corporate members and supporters as well as companies and individuals backing our many fundraising campaigns that we are able to achieve so much.




The following companies and individuals mentioned are some of our most generous donors and I want to say a huge thank you.





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