



Gareth Irwin, green woodworker (photo by Gavin Hogg)

# Getting into heritage crafts

Pre-apprenticeship first contact opportunities for young people and heritage craft businesses

*A theory of change advisory document*

*from an Ernest Cook funded pilot project in South West England*

Tracy Hill, The Creativity Chamber

November 2017



Heritage Crafts Association





Basket maker Sarah Webb and a participant of the West Somerset pre-apprenticeship pilot project

## Foreword

*“Since the **Heritage Crafts Association** was formed in 2009 we have become increasingly aware that the issues faced by heritage crafts businesses have meant that they find it difficult to invest even the modest amount of time and money necessary to identify the next generation of practitioners who will ensure succession within their businesses and survival of heritage craft skills. If you are one of the 78 per cent of sole traders or micro-businesses that make up the sector, chances are you are working all hours of the day on production just to stay afloat. Taking the equivalent of a week or so to assess a potential trainee or employee is a big ask... especially as there is no guarantee that the young person in question will be suitable.*

*“Our pilot project, generously funded by the **Ernest Cook Trust**, allowed us to work in a trial area in West Somerset to overcome this otherwise insurmountable obstacle, by providing remuneration to craftspeople while they assessed the young people who came to their workshops to see what life would be like as a heritage craft professional. What we discovered was a huge gap in the support needed in order for this kind of activity to happen on any kind of scale in the future, to bring together stakeholders – businesses, education providers and other agencies – who are increasingly working in silos whilst shepherding promising young people away from niche occupations. This document, expertly researched by Tracy Hill (t/a The Creative Chamber), details what is needed to fill that gap and to help ensure the continuity of this important part of our local economies and shared culture – our craft heritage.”*

**Daniel Carpenter**  
Trustee of the Heritage Crafts Association and project originator  
November 2017

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## Executive summary

- Young people would like more bespoke opportunities and to learn more about self-employment, and heritage craft businesses need to pass on their skills in order to have succession and survive.
- An initiative to support young people into work with heritage craft businesses needs a constant presence to support both the businesses and the young people. The economic and community development of areas in rural isolation could benefit greatly from such a long-term initiative.
- This presence must engage with the education system, provide support to both parties, and provide an awareness of and link into national organisations and representative bodies.
- Young people require signposting to additional opportunities, their hands held through the initial stages, and their eyes opened to those possibilities.
- Working within an area of rural isolation requires a bespoke approach. It also creates logistical challenges for young people; a relatively short commute can become impossible without a car.
- The relationship with local colleges can be a challenge. While there is interest from apprenticeship leads to deliver a 'try before you buy' experience for apprenticeships, that interest dissipates considerably through the department heads and down to tutors.
- An area of frustration is the Further Education plan to create more generic accreditations – a 'one-size-fits-many' approach. In conversation with colleges, it is all about numbers.
- Apprenticeship standards are in place for *some* bespoke business types. However, they are often accessed through remote colleges with no understanding of the local business sector. For example there is a bespoke saddler standard created in August 2017, but no businesses in Somerset are registered to offer this opportunity.
- There are good business relationships in place with the larger employers in the South West such as Mulberry, Clarkes and Pittards, but a lack of time and interest to create bespoke opportunities for students.
- We have been in discussion with the Paper Industry standard through the Trailblazers Apprenticeship scheme, and there could be potential to assess this model for other heritage skill business networks.
- There is a frustration within Further Education that the Creative Craft Practitioner Apprenticeship standards framework is still in existence in Wales until 2020, whereas it was pulled early in England to make way for the Trailblazer Apprenticeship framework.
- An initiative to support these kinds of opportunities has the potential to stand alone as a social enterprise, but would need seed funding to create the package of support required and the 'buy in' from all parties initially.

**If you are thinking of developing first-contact or apprenticeship-style training in heritage crafts, and would like advice based on our experiences gained through this project, please contact us at [info@heritagecrafts.org.uk](mailto:info@heritagecrafts.org.uk).**

## Introduction

**This document provides guidance to any organisation or agency considering setting up 'first contact' opportunities for young people who wish to embark upon apprenticeship-style training and employment with heritage craft businesses.**

It explores the challenges to small heritage craft businesses in delivering these types of training and career opportunities, interrogates the pros and cons of accreditation, and advises on best practice in relation to stakeholder engagement – specifically how businesses, education providers and young people can work together to ensure succession and sustainability for the heritage craft business.

The education system (from primary through to Higher Education), economic development agencies and cultural identity initiatives all have a role in addressing the complicated issues surrounding apprenticeship-style training in heritage crafts.

This document collates learning from the **Ernest Cook Trust** funded pilot pre-apprenticeship project delivered by the **Heritage Crafts Association** (HCA) in West Somerset, alongside interview and survey data gathered from businesses, young people and education providers. It reviews current delivery of apprenticeship-style training and includes proposals for a Theory of Change model.

**Theory of Change** is a methodology for planning, delivering and evaluating a project or scheme that helps frame and define a strategy based on an understanding of impact. It is an evolving model that lays out long-term goals and a plan for how those goals might be achieved.

The craftspeople we worked with were chosen from those who had had considered taking on apprentices in the past, but been dissuaded from doing so due to the prohibitive cost of the time spent away from their own production.

This project planned to overcome the financial barrier by providing basic-level compensation for the craft practitioners' time, reducing the financial risk of engaging young people at this critical early stage during which their potential for further development can be assessed.



### The regional context

The South West of England has a rich heritage of traditional craft businesses linked both geographically and culturally.

Whilst the Gross Value Added (GVA) of the craft sector in the region is high on a national scale, in recent years district councils and business-led initiatives in the South West have leaned towards inward investment, tending to focus on the food and drink sector, and supporting an infrastructure that will encourage larger employers to move to the South West.

West Somerset has recently been identified as bottom in the country for the social mobility of young people.<sup>1</sup> Its rural location and lack of access make for a beautiful holiday destination, but there is a real lack of physical and social infrastructure for young people.

Among the issues the district council is struggling with are the reduction/lack of public transport, the merger of West Somerset College, and the potential loss of its agricultural training centre. The local job clubs and job centres are reporting more young people dropping out of education and looking for work-based training and opportunities.

There is however a strong representation of craftspeople who would be keen to share their knowledge and potentially take on an apprentice if the circumstances were right.

Despite the challenges, there is some support available to both employers and potential employees, though mainly in the tourism, hospitality and leisure industries. The West Coast 360 initiative – a new training programme in West Somerset to equip people with the tourism, hospitality and leisure skills needed. The initiative is part of Enterprise Minehead which is looking to improve the visitor experience to the area.

There is also an Access to Employment fund available to those looking for work in West Somerset to support travel to, and work-related equipment costs for, the Hinkley Point C nuclear power plant in neighbouring Sedgemoor.

The above initiatives provide excellent opportunities. However, by stretching the remit slightly to support heritage craft businesses as part of the visit programme, and to offer the access fund to young people looking for an apprenticeship in a local heritage craft business would contribute greatly to overcoming the barriers met by both the young people and the businesses.

The South West Rural Productivity Commission has been established as a partnership by four Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in the South West to explore the issues around rural productivity and growth.<sup>2</sup> At the time of writing, the Commission is set up to hear and review evidence from a range of sources and stakeholders. Its report is due to be published in the late Autumn of 2017 and will inform future strategy for business growth in rural settings.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.somersetcountygazette.co.uk/news/14245733>

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<sup>2</sup> The Heart of the South West (HotSW LEP), Dorset LEP, Swindon & Wilts (SWLEP) and Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly (CloS LEP).

### National apprenticeships

At a time when regional provision is sporadic and fluctuating, we turn to the implications of the present Government's apprenticeship agenda for the heritage crafts sector within the rural context.

The government National Apprenticeship scheme is offered through various routes.

#### Traineeships

Traineeships are available for young people aged 16 to 24. They are intended to give young people skills and vital experience needed to compete successfully for an apprenticeship or other job. At their core is a high-quality work experience placement with an employer, work preparation training and English and Maths for those who have not achieved a GCSE Grade C or equivalent.

#### Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are full-time paid jobs with training, with the employer picking up minimum wage for the apprentice. They are designed to give young people the chance to fulfil their potential and gain the workplace skills employers want and need.

The Government is committed to reaching 3 million apprenticeship starts in England by 2020 and is doubling the annual level of spending on apprenticeships between 2010–11 and 2019–20 in cash terms to £2.5 billion.

#### Degree apprenticeships

Degree apprenticeships allow you to study for a full Bachelor's or Master's Degree while working. Designed by employers, universities and professional bodies, they deliver the high-level skills businesses need and offer young people an alternative to a traditional degree.

Sixth form, specialist and Higher Education colleges offer fully-paid apprenticeships to 16–18 year olds from the list of approved standards.<sup>3</sup> Apprenticeships are also available to those aged 19 and over, but the funding is reduced.

If a company is a micro-enterprise with fewer than 49 employees, the apprenticeship is fully funded for a 16–18 year old.

An average apprenticeship standard is funded at £9,000 and involves 30 hours of contact time a week over two years. The wage offered to the student is minimum wage; however the employer is welcome to contribute more.

If an apprentice is over 19 there is a business levy contribution of 10% of the total cost as a commitment from the employer; the actual cost will vary dependant on the value of the qualification.

#### Trailblazer apprenticeships

Trailblazer apprenticeships offer the opportunity for employer networks (with a minimum of ten employers) to develop their own apprenticeship standards.

Though many Trailblazer schemes have been tabled for heritage crafts, few have been brought to completion. This is due to a number of reasons, not least the administrative challenge and cost of coordinating large consortia for relatively niche trades, without a funded agency overseeing this process.

Of those that have been successful, the most relevant for this report is the paper industry, of which hand-made heritage craft businesses are but one end of a spectrum that encompasses large industrialised manufacture. Because of this, capacity exists within the industry to develop the standard.

The network of paper making businesses involved in the Paper Making Trailblazer encompasses the large organisations such as Arjo Wiggins through to Two Rivers Paper Mill in West Somerset.

Gen2, which is now part of City & Guilds, is the independent assessors of the Trailblazer.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/>



Participant of the West Somerset pre-apprenticeship pilot project

Although the standard has been approved, the framework struggled to obtain the level of funding band required to deliver the modules. Though they requested £14,000/year to deliver a Level 3 qualification, they were initially awarded £6,000/year, and are now in the final stages of negotiating 12,000/year.

The paper industry will be the approved training provider with an independent end-point assessor. The course includes a technician level qualification to be delivered through college and a business improvement module.

### **Specific creative industries apprenticeships**

Other providers within the creative industries include Creative Skillset. Their remit is as a signposting organisation to specific apprenticeships falling under the following groups:

- Content creation, production and post-production
- Visual effects, animation and games
- Broadcast engineering
- Craft and technical

In addition, there are land-based and leather working accreditation and apprenticeships offered through specialist agricultural colleges.

However, many of the bespoke opportunities are offered by national accrediting bodies that do not have a regional presence, which makes engagement difficult and time-consuming for both young people and heritage craft businesses.

### **Accreditation**

The challenge for developing accreditation is the diverse nature of the heritage crafts sector, and hence the difficulty in pulling together consortia with enough in common to create a standalone qualification.

One proposal is that generic accreditation of training and observation could be supported by bespoke modules specific skills – such as in the new Paper Maker Trailblazer apprenticeship.



Outside of formal qualifications, there is also the potential for heritage craft businesses to roll skills development into their business model to provide a training programme that is recognised nationally and internationally.

**Williams & Cleal** are a furniture company based in West Somerset that were approached in conjunction with the Heritage Crafts Association pre-apprenticeship project. They have been making award winning pieces of furniture since 1990.

The approach to training at Williams & Cleal has become their business model. The Williams & Cleal Furniture School was created to share the passion, enthusiasm and to continue the legacy for future furniture designers/makers. Their tailor-made furniture, design and woodworking courses allow students to select both the duration and content of their own course. They believe strongly that the chance to learn from a team of leading 'designer-makers' in a professional environment is a unique experience.

Williams and Cleal have an interesting model. Their only 'accreditation' is the reputation of the course and the references they provide for their students. Students range in age and ability, and most go onto to be self-employed or work for high quality makers throughout the world. Williams & Cleal also have a partner incubation unit for local furniture makers who are developing their business.

However, the training provided by Williams & Cleal is costly, with the costs borne by the apprentices in the form of training fees, meaning that opportunities are limited to those who can afford it. To subsidise it by drawing down of funding would be a complicated process involving more formalised accreditation.

The challenge for heritage craft businesses in facilitating this process would be immense and would require a national presence and network for quality assurance, assessment support and marketing.

### Accreditation in the pilot project

The initial plan for our pilot pre-apprenticeship programme in West Somerset had been to offer a six-week accredited Supporting Employability and Personal Effectiveness (SEPE) programme. This is an NVQ Level 1 entry certificate, accredited by Edexcel.

The craftspeople were trained to understand the assessment requirements of this programme, and yet had a mixed reaction to the prospect of delivering an accredited programme. It was felt that it was of no benefit to the businesses to assess a young persons' employability (i.e. confidence, time keeping, contribution, team work). The craftspeople were keener to impart their skills and requirements to the young people.

As an ex-teacher, Sarah Webb was the only practitioner who felt comfortable with training and assessing the young people for the 'softer skills' of employment. She was confident with her planning and attainment goals for the young people.

We met a stumbling block with Further Education colleges. If the students were still registered at the college and looking for work experience linked to their courses, we could not duplicate registration with Edexcel.

It was decided that an accreditation such as this was not after all suitable for a pre-apprentice pilot programme. It is more suited to disengaged young people or those removed from the working environment for a period of time, such as through the justice system or ill health. An employability accreditation is focused on the young person's suitability for employment and their personal development rather than the learning of new skills.

However, the training day was of worth to the craftspeople professionals to gain a better understanding of assessment requirements for educational accreditation.

### Challenges to heritage craft businesses

Heritage craft businesses are often micro enterprises with one or two employees picking up a multitude of roles and responsibilities.

They are sometimes working in rural isolation focusing on making and selling their products. The sector lacks the expertise, time, capacity and financial resilience to deliver high quality work experience and apprenticeships. However, many heritage craft businesses are in danger of disappearing.

The sector needs succession and a higher profile to enable support to deliver apprenticeships and training in a modern and accredited context.

In recent research by the Heritage Crafts Association, *The Radcliffe Red List of Endangered Crafts*,<sup>4</sup> the following were cited as the main areas for concern in relation to continuation of heritage craft businesses:

- lack of training;
- inability to recruit;
- an ageing workforce;
- loss of craft skills;
- market decline;
- supply of raw materials, allied materials and tools; and
- generic small business issues.

From our work on the Ernest Cook funded pre-apprenticeship project, we found the main obstacles facing heritage crafts businesses were as follows:

- The financial constraints of employing an additional person before they are contributing financially to the business.
- Rural situations often impact on the ability of young people to engage, if they lack their own means of travel and the public transport infrastructure is poor.
- The risk associated with committing time to a young person before a conclusion has been reached that there is a potential working relationship.
- Maturity is needed on behalf of the young person to understand the work and time commitment necessary to dedicate themselves to a craft skill. Full government funding is only available for 16–18 year old apprentices. 19 year old and over do

not attract the same level of funding and support.

- Specific activities linked to skills training constitute an additional workload for a small business – e.g. marketing, engagement and assessment.

The paperwork involved in taking on an apprentice was an oft-cited obstacle. In a report published by OFSTED in 2015, entitled *Engaging small and medium enterprises in work experience and apprenticeships in London*,<sup>5</sup> indicated that many small and medium-sized enterprises cite bureaucracy as a reason why they do not want to be involved.

However, the government has recently cut down on bureaucracy in the following ways:

- Employers do not need to carry out an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services check on members of staff supervising young people aged 16 and 17.
- Employers' liability insurance now covers work experience students, providing insurers are members of the Association of British Insurers. More information is available on the Association of British Insurers website.
- Simplified health and safety guidance makes it clear that if organisations already employ young people, risk assessments will not need to be repeated for work experience students. Employers with fewer than five employees do not need a written risk assessment.

Another challenge cited in the OFSTED report was the number of competing organisations, sector skills councils and awarding bodies that deliver and promote apprenticeships. There was confusion over how to differentiate between these competing organisations which appeared to lead to employer apathy.

The OFSTED report did make the following recommendations, which are relevant to the kinds of opportunities we are considering here. These included:

<sup>4</sup> <http://redlist.heritagecrafts.org>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/engaging-small-and-medium-enterprises-in-apprenticeships>



Participants of the West Somerset pre-apprenticeship pilot project

- Identify niche areas that you specialise in and find employers who work in those areas.
- Small and medium-sized businesses may offer part-time apprenticeships, as long as they are for a minimum of 16 hours a week and the overall time is extended. However, these arrangements are approved on a case-by-case basis and you would need to apply to your regional Skills Funding Agency team.
- Micro-businesses can add additional units to meet specific needs in businesses with fewer than 10 employees. The Skills Funding Agency recognises that in these micro businesses, a productive worker is frequently expected to be more flexible in their work and undertake a wider range of business activities. You can apply for this through your regional Skills Funding Agency team, and each request is decided on a case-by-case basis.<sup>6</sup>

The following insights and thoughts have been provided by heritage craft businesses.

<sup>6</sup> <http://nas.apprenticeships.org.uk/employers/steps-to-make-it-happen/units-for-micro-enterprises.aspx>

### Coates Willow

P H Coate & Son was founded by willow grower and merchant Robert Coate in 1819, and still run by the Coate family today. The business combines willow growing, basket making, sales and a museum, making up the Willows and Wetlands Visitor Centre in Stoke St Gregory, Somerset.

*“We have only had one apprentice and the apprenticeship was run/administered by Bridgwater College. We took a very long time to find someone suitable and truly eager to do the course work and the weaving. Some liked the idea of weaving, but were not so keen to do the college work and vice-versa. We also had several parents who were keen for their sons/daughters to become apprentices, but in reality the youngsters were less keen. In the end we decided that we would only go through the registration process if a person completed at least two weeks trial period.*”

*“The apprenticeship scheme was two years long which in reality is not long enough to learn to become a competent willow basket maker. It’s long enough to learn the mechanics*”

*of how to weave, but not to work unsupervised. Jayde still gets quite a bit of advice and help from the other basket makers around her.*

*“Based on our experience (not just with Jayde) I would suggest an apprenticeship for basket making would be good for people over 20 years old as opposed to school leavers. This is because at school leaving age people do not seem to have the staying power that basket making requires. There is a lack of appreciation that it takes time to develop skills, but that appreciation does develop a few years later.*

*“Financially it was a huge investment for our business to take on an apprentice. It’s only in the last few months that we have been able to sell her work at full price. Until recently we have sold all Jayde’s work off at reduced prices because they have not been good enough quality to warrant full prices. In the shop we made an area where we put all her work (and that of another trainee) so we could explain about the apprenticeship and promote the items that had been made. That got a great response; visitors definitely were interested to know that we had an apprentice and they were happy to buy the items even though they were mis-shaped. They seemed to feel they were supporting and were happy to have a bargain.*

*“We did not pay the minimum rate, we felt it was unfairly low and bordering on insulting. So maybe we could have reduced the financial impact, but we didn’t feel comfortable paying so little. I can’t remember what the pay rate was, but I think it was way beneath the minimum wage for a person of 19.*

*“It would be very difficult to calculate the number of hours and, therefore cost of the time spent teaching Jayde. At this stage (six months after finishing the formal apprenticeship) I would not say that Jayde could support herself financially as a basket maker. But that might be due to her personal situation and restrictions.*

*“At this moment in time we have enough work to keep Jayde employed full time, so she has the opportunity to improve her skills and get quicker and more confident. Hopefully things will stay that way.”*

The following case studies are from craftspeople who directly took part in the Heritage Crafts Association pre-apprenticeship project funded by the Ernest Cook Trust.

### **Sarah Webb, basket maker**

We had three students commit to the six-week mini apprenticeship with Sarah. All came through Bridgwater College and were on different courses. Basket making proved to be the most popular craft with young people.

As an ex-teacher Sarah was the only crafts person comfortable with the accreditation assessment requirements. However, the college were not interested in the project providing accreditation, just work experience.

Sarah put together an excellent study/work plan for the students, and they all completed their notebooks beautifully, outlining their new skills and designing their own baskets for an exhibition at the end of their time with Sarah.

*“During the process of planning and delivering this apprenticeship I have learnt some valuable lessons.*

*“The bits that worked:*

- *“Six days was just enough time to discover if the candidates wanted to continue or had the aptitude.*
- *“The level of funding was good even with the extra admin etc.*
- *“The people behind the orchestration were very helpful and supportive.*
- *“The overall outcome was a success for the students and supporting team.*
- *“I would happily run similar or more advanced projects for people wishing to learn and potentially make a career out of this ancient art.*

*“The bits that didn’t work:*

- *“Candidates did not have transport, which inevitably lead to me picking up and dropping home each day adding to my time commitment.*
- *“Funding was dependent on whether the candidate chose to turn up. This meant I had to chase candidates all the time to get the full funding, giving me more work to do. I felt that this put me at the mercy of the student’s commitment.*

- *“Participant recruitment was the toughest nut to crack. If it had been open to a wider age range it would have given me a greater number of people to choose from and possibly resolved the issue of funding as the more mature candidates generally appreciate the opportunity more and tend to have their own transport.”*

### **Stefan Jennings, green wood worker**

Stefan was initially unsure about taking part in the project. His concerns included his own time management and workload, and whether he could occupy two apprentices on a regular weekly basis. He also had general concerns about involving young people in his working practice.

His concerns soon disappeared after the first session with the students. He found them enthusiastic and hard working. It was obvious from the start that they were ready for work and needed more than formal education.

Stefan soon realised that he took for granted the intuitive way he worked, and that he would have to breakdown his methods to enable the young people to keep up with the work.

In their short time with Stefan the students produced a basket, handmade wooden spoons and two pieces of chunky furniture. The pieces were created using green woodworking techniques and the apprentices were involved in the finding of the raw material and were encouraged to problem solve and make design decisions. Although very different people, the apprentices worked well together.

Stefan felt the project worked well in the timescale as it reduced the pressure on him for a full working week. The time between each session also allowed for confidence to grow and for Stefan to assess and plan the next session.

*“I think the project is an excellent way for an employer to get a taste of the apprentice experience, the timescale allowed for reflection and doesn't cause unwanted tension. For me it was a very positive experience”*

### **Two Rivers Paper Mill**

Jim Patterson runs a successful and very busy hand-making paper company. He was the most sceptical about taking on an accredited training programme. However, he is also the most in need of an apprentice and a plan for succession.

The paper mill is in a very rural location and therefore a challenge for a young person to logistically manage to attend.

We approached the local Further Education college, Job Centres, local newspaper and employment and skills board of West Somerset and had only one young person interested. The young man initially interested had left college due to personal reasons. He was of Polish background and told us paper making is a respected industry in Poland. We discussed the possibility of him taking on a full apprenticeship, but his college persuaded him that returning to complete his A Levels was his priority.

The local college however were very interested to 'visit' as an experience! They brought along three young people from their special educational needs group to see the paper mill at work.

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### **Additional support for heritage crafts businesses**

The Crafts Council have a new bespoke training offer for day-long or half-day learning opportunities throughout the country. Whilst focusing on the Crafts Council's remit for contemporary, artistic crafts, classes cover a wide range of topics including:

- application writing and presentation skills;
- business visioning;
- finances for craft businesses;
- fundraising skills;
- international practice;
- intellectual property and copyright (including employment law);
- product photography;
- reaching your market (including social media);
- relationship management with galleries and commissioners; and
- working with manufacturers.

Of the 121 sessions advertised, none are currently available in the South West of England.

The craft sector requires a constant business support presence on a localised level, offering bespoke workshops and a central point for referral advice.

## The perspective of young people

It is not only the obstacles facing businesses that prevent these opportunities from taking place, but those facing young people too. Much of this stems from schools providing no context with which to allow them to understand creative work as a viable career path.

We asked the participants of the pilot project, and those of a similar age currently in Further Education for their thoughts and knowledge of opportunities to develop a career within a heritage skill business.

Zoe aged 19 was a participant on the Heritage Craft Association pilot pre-apprenticeship in Somerset. She has completed her course at Bridgwater College, a Foundation Diploma in Arts, Media and Design. This is Zoe's reflection from her six weeks spent working with Stefan Jennings, green woodworker.

*"My time with Stefan was wonderful. Time really does fly when you are enjoying yourself, despite spending full days with Stefan they only felt like a couple of hours.*

*"Working with Stefan has opened my eyes to new skills, and more interests. I thoroughly enjoyed using the tools to carve the bench, stool and spoons into shape, manoeuvring the blades and created sleek streamlines into the wood. Since the placement I have bought myself a knife of the same make as Stefan so I can continue to refine my skills.*

*"When it comes to careers, finding a job in the craft sector is like trying to capture Bigfoot! There are never any opportunities in this country for young people to lasso, even less so for those who want to do apprenticeships. But when they do appear, they come up once every two blue moons. Even then, you're not guaranteed to be taken on due to high demand or unrealistic expectations from the employer. Maybe the under-funding of arts and crafts in this country is to blame for not fuelling the crafts sector, I don't know. Maybe it is also the stigma of taking on creative skills rather than implementing academics such as Maths, Science and Engineering.*

*"Having done 20-25 hours of job searching per week for four weeks, only two graphic designer jobs have shot up in my area; one of which I have enough qualifications to do. I'm often scrolling down the page of art and design jobs wondering how people get the experience and qualifications to get that job in the first place. Things need to be done about it, because I know for fact that I am not the only person*



*around here struggling to find a job that I genuinely want to do."*

Kye, aged 18, also worked with Stefan. He has just finished Level 2 furniture making and is going on to study Level 3. Kye is unable to drive and therefore found attending the sessions a little challenging, but he stuck with them. He was not able to use this pilot time towards his course work experience.

*"I really enjoyed learning more traditional crafting methods and the experience has shown me how to look at projects from a different angle and perspective. I found it to be more creative than how we are shown to make projects in modern education. It has made me rethink my career path and hope to eventually start making tradition furniture as well as modern in the future. I'm doing well and have started two more courses in college."*

We worked with the head of apprenticeships at a local sixth form college to send out a questionnaire to young people aged 16 to 18. This college is renowned for its academic emphasis, in contrast to the town's other college which traditionally provided more vocational courses. We were interested in their plans for the future and their awareness of heritage skill business locally. Notable results included:

- When asked to pick three words that best described their learning style the two most popular were 'practical' and 'creative'.
- Eight out of 19 respondents said they would like to run their own business one day. Three more said they would possibly like to.
- From a list of heritage crafts that are practised in the South West we asked the respondents which they thought it was possible to make a living. The highest responses were dress making / tailoring (84%), thatching (83%) and pottery (68%). The lowest were green wood working (26%), wood turning (26%) and wheel wrighting (5%).
- Only 21% of respondents knew anyone running a business in any of the 18 crafts listed.
- When asked if they would be interested in knowing about opportunities in any of these crafts, respondents chose thatching, paper making, book binding, pottery and dress making / tailoring.

- Only 45% of respondents said that they would be confident about approaching heritage crafts businesses about career opportunities, though this rose to 62% with the help of a general careers advisor and 67% with the help of a specialist heritage crafts apprenticeship advisor.

### Heritage crafts in schools

Throughout our research and experience with the pre-apprenticeship pilot, the deficiency of a joined up approach to craft education from primary to Further Education has surfaced again and again in relation to the lack of preparedness of young people for heritage craft apprenticeship-style training.

In light of successive governments' narrowing of the curriculum to focus on so-called 'core' subjects, here we look at some initiatives that have tried to buck that trend.

#### Agencies working with primary education

In the South West of England the education arts agencies that evolved out of local council management are **SPAEDA** in Somerset and **DAISI** in Devon.

These agencies interact directly with schools, supplying artists who will work in the school environment to support or deliver art projects. It is the role of the agency to manage safeguarding, quality and the collaboration of external organisations. They also have a role in delivering continual professional development to teachers and artists.

**InspirED** is a consortium of four award-winning arts producers and promoters in Somerset. They bring extensive experience and links with national partner strategies such as Arts Award and Artsmark to deliver cross-curricular and subject specialist support. However, this is very arts based and not aimed with a business or entrepreneurial approach.

A conversation with SPAEDA, the Somerset agency, highlighted the following points:

- They have an aspiration to deliver professional development for teachers to enable them to have a better understanding of where heritage craft skills can be utilised across the curriculum.
- There is a feeling that teachers are not being trained with a sufficiently broad

approach to meeting mainstream curriculum subjects.

- Heritage craft businesses do not always see themselves as artists, so would not immediately offer their expertise within a school environment.
- The cultural identity of an area is often viewed as a history experience within education, with little imagination as to its place in a modern world.
- The concept of self-employment and entrepreneurship is not introduced to young people at an early enough age.
- There are schools keen to pilot new ways of working.

With regard to heritage craft businesses being more than a history lesson, Coldharbour Mill in Devon is home to some entrepreneurial micro-businesses and Fox Brothers textile mill in Somerset, whilst holding a place of historical importance, is an innovative supplier to Saville Row tailors and a partner with contemporary fashion suppliers such as Jack Wills.

In Devon, DAISI sets out to create and promote inspiring artistic and cultural experiences to enable more children and young people to access the transformative and inclusive power of the arts. It works with over 7,000 children and over 100 artists annually.

As well as initiating and managing artist partnerships with schools and other young people's settings, it also develops specialist action-research projects to explore innovative approaches to arts education, sharing and influencing best practice across the region.

DAISI has examples of working in partnership to engage young people in heritage through the arts. Its project models have spanned a wide range of locations, and a diversity of partners including voluntary sector partners, and those from culture, heritage, formal and non-formal education sectors, and wider community and inter-generational groupings including older people and families.

In Cornwall, **Krowji** is a physical building that houses artists, art organisations and art weeks. It is home to a vibrant creative community which currently includes painters, jewellers, furniture makers, ceramicists, textile artists, web designers, theatre companies and musicians as well as several of Cornwall's key creative sector agencies such as Creative Skills Cultivator, FEAST, Carn to Cove, Cornwall Music Network, Cornwall 365 and Cornwall

365 What's On, all of which are part of umbrella organisation **Creative Kernow**.

This working environment and central base allows for creative activity from school through to employment and entrepreneurship.

### Regional/national initiatives for primary education

The **Forest School Association** is the professional body and UK voice for Forest School. It offers a specialised learning approach that sits within and compliments the wider context of outdoor and woodland education. It takes place in a woodland or natural environment to support the relationship between the learner and the natural world, and aims to promote a learner-centred process of holistic development to support confidence, independence and an opportunity to take appropriate risk.

The **Woodland Trust** has a well laid-out School engagement and family activity schedule aimed at supporting the curriculum at Key Stage 1 and 2. They have volunteering opportunities, but do not currently appear to offer training and work experience.

The **National Trust** offers a comprehensive package of educational links for families, schools, volunteering and training opportunities; including an internship programme for post graduates. This is currently managed on a localised basis with generic material. Each property manages its own programme of activity and Volunteer management.

### Other primary education projects

The Ernest Cook Trust has supported initiatives in the South West such as the Heritage Craft Association's 'Getting Crafty in the Classroom' and Superact CIC's 'Crafty Schools'.

The 'Getting Crafty in the Classroom' project developed resources for non-specialist teachers to deliver heritage craft activities developed by professional craftspeople. More recently the HCA has been delivering a pilot apprenticeship scheme for both young people and the traditional heritage businesses wanting and interested to learn more about potential apprenticeship opportunities – a "try before you buy" scheme.





Participants of the West Somerset pre-apprenticeship pilot project

The 'Crafty Schools' project engaged both teachers and children, showing them how traditional skills such as textile weaving, felt making, natural dyeing and willow weaving are relevant in a modern context. It demonstrated how they can be used to support delivery of the modern mainstream curriculum in areas such as Maths, History and Geography.

*"The children involved often struggled to engage with their usual work, and we enjoyed watching them feel that they could do something new and do it well. The session linked well with Maths and we talked to the children afterwards about how people use the skills of weaving for more than just arts and craft, and reminded them of the maths skills that they were using throughout the day."*

**Huish Primary School**

This project specifically showed the lack of training for primary teachers to understand the practical value of cross curriculum activity in a modern context, such as a science lesson on a willow farm or a maths lesson setting up a weaving loom. When tested practically on trips to the businesses, the teachers struggled to

put maths and science into a working concept, and instead the craftspeople found themselves taking the lead on the lesson. Trainee teacher sessions were offered to Somerset College of Art and Marjon University, who welcomed the sessions for students due to lack of their own funding to stray away from core module delivery.

### Secondary education

Within Secondary education we start to see the shrinking of creative subjects. The Education Policy Institute released a report entitled 'Entries to arts subjects at Key Stage 4', analysing entries to arts subjects between 2007 and 2016.

Key findings from the report are:

- Entries to arts subjects by Key Stage 4 cohorts have declined over the past couple of years, following several years of gradual increases. The 2016 entry rates are the lowest of the past decade.
- The average number of arts entries per pupil changed from 0.8 in 2013 to 0.7 in 2016

- Provisional data relating to 2017 exam entries indicate that the decline observed in the most recent years is continuing.

The report looks at the likely causes of the changes in entries, using the data as well as surveys and interviews with teachers. Evidence indicates that various factors are placing pressure on arts subjects, including the EBacc, Progress 8, and financial issues. However, the extent to which this pressure impacts on a school's arts provision depends on the precise combination of these factors within the school's specific context, and the extent to which school leaders are able or willing to prioritise arts subjects under these circumstances.

It goes on to say that in cases where the school had maintained or expanded its arts provision, this was often because the head teacher had decided to prioritise a strong art offer over maximising EBacc entry rates.

This is an important report for the cultural learning sector, highlighting the importance of school leadership, parental support and key regional, gender and ethnicity gaps, as well as the trend for higher attaining students to move away from taking arts subjects.

GCSE entries	2010	2016	2017
Art & Design	172,504	170,114	162,348
Design & Tech	270,401	172,728	153,929

## The Crafts Council

In 2014 the Crafts Council published *An Education Manifesto for Craft and Making*<sup>7</sup> addressing concerns at the demise of craft-related GCSEs and HE courses.

More recently they have launched a crowdfunding project to leverage charitable giving in an attempt to address the lack of craft education in schools.

*Make Your Future* is a hands-on learning programme connecting traditional craft skills with science and digital technologies in secondary schools. It sets out to bring together secondary schools and makers to 'mash-up' traditional and digital making skills in the classroom, to give young people a passion for craft and teachers the confidence to pass on these skills.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/education-manifesto/>

## Arts Council England

Until recently, Arts Council England has not been directly involved in work with heritage crafts in education, as crafts education has been devolved to the Crafts Council, which in turn has focused primarily on the contemporary, artistic end of the spectrum.

However, the cross-curriculum potential of crafts and links to sense of place, have led to a pilot Arts Council England crafts-in-education project being discussed in Devon and Somerset.

The idea is to develop an initiative that could potentially stand alone as a social enterprise for the schools, exploring traditional and contemporary heritage crafts practice and livelihood development through learning the craft of using hand tools to work green wood, the aim being to work with five different types of woods and create practical products for sale at local markets.

Key Stage 2 pupils and above will work with a master greenwood maker and a range of specialist heritage craftsperson's students. They will learn how to use tools and make beautiful contemporary objects to sell. The children will connect with nature, explore woodland management, learn practical skills and develop enterprise.

This project is still in development, and only partially funded, but will offer a programme that will connect primary and secondary schools with HE students and master craftspeople. The students will experience designing, making and selling and the schools will be offered the opportunity to develop the idea into a badge of excellence and a social enterprise initiative.

Education has become distanced from learning in a practical environment and practical work-related activity. Education policy focus on 'core subjects', funding cuts and fears around risk all combine to reduce creative learning.

We are starting to see a return to outdoor learning at pre-school and primary level, only to be reduced again at secondary. Interestingly, however, young people continue to take creative subjects at further and higher education. It is at this point that they need signposting support to make career choices that are relevant to their interests and skills. Opportunities are on offer on a local basis, but the stakeholder partnerships are not always in place to support a bespoke approach.

## Other models of engagement

Cornwall has enjoyed the ability to access European and government funding that other parts of the South West have not, allowing more time and flexibility to develop their own models of engagement. There is a real desire to link education, community, training and business through their latest initiative Cultivator and Creative Skills.

Traditional skill businesses appear to feel empowered in Cornwall; there is a strength in their cultural heritage and a sense of place that seems missing in other areas of the South West. The small and medium-sized businesses network, collaborate, jointly market and offer skills development and apprenticeship opportunities.

A notable example of this is the collaboration between SeaSalt clothing and John Leach Pottery. This takes the form of a 24-month placement at Foundation Level aimed at someone with little or no previous experience of ceramics and with priority given to those based permanently in Cornwall.

Founded in West Cornwall in 1981, Seasalt is a family firm with its roots firmly embedded in the community where it began. Since the Leach Pottery's restoration and reopening as a charity in 2008, Seasalt has enthusiastically supported its work as a museum, pottery production studio and training centre. In 2013 Seasalt's Joint Managing Director, Neil Chadwick, came up with the idea of the Seasalt Bursary to support a new trainee at the Leach Pottery and in 2014 the search began. Applications from as far afield as Spain and the USA, but in the event the first apprentice came from just a few streets away from the Pottery.

Callum Trudgeon, Seasalt Apprentice 2014–15, said:

*"I always wanted to be a 'maker' but I thought I would have to leave Cornwall to have any chance of a meaningful career. I was born in St Ives, so being able to work and study here is fantastic. Opportunities to work at a pottery with this kind of history and reputation are hard to come by. It's a special place and I feel very lucky so I've put my all into this apprenticeship."*

### The Sussex Trug Company

*"As I am sure you are aware, there is no government funding for craft based apprenticeships and none of the offered apprenticeships from government last more than about one year, which is patently inadequate for craft and heritage based businesses. With over £4.4 billion pounds being contributed to the U.K. economy from traditional English craft businesses this is a nonsense."*

*"Engaging apprentices is an issue for me and I have had to fund two apprentices through their three year apprenticeships myself. I have one office based apprentice at the moment for whom I have received £1,500 towards his costs from government through Lifetime Training. He spends three days a week in the office and two in the workshop so that he understands our craft from a hands-on position in order to achieve a high level of knowledge when dealing with our customers around the world. The apprenticeship scheme for him lasts for one year."*

*"Accreditation is possible only through me. There is no external body capable of accrediting our craft as far as I am aware."*

*"Young people seem to like the sort of work we do, but the wages that I pay are not conducive to finding the right people. As I am self-funding my apprenticeships I find it hard to pay much above statutory minimum wage. I sacrifice my own wages in order to promote the apprenticeships and that is not ideal."*

*"However, the Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust has indicated their interest in perhaps offering funding for a new apprentice next year, over a three year period, which is much more realistic than the government schemes! I hope that they will agree funding for one or, perhaps, two new apprentices next year."*

*"The Sussex Trug Industry will be dead within ten to fifteen years... fact!... unless what I am doing to encourage apprentices into my company works."*

## Theory of Change

Theory of Change is a methodology for planning, delivering and evaluating a project or scheme that helps frame and define a strategy based on an understanding of impact. It is an evolving model that lays out long-term goals and a plan for how those goals might be achieved.

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### Education

- Teacher training lacks introduction to cross curriculum activity through creative engagement.
- Leading to a lack of value placed on heritage skills in modern context.
- In Secondary and Further Education we see a demise of creative subjects and missed opportunities for training, self-employment, lack of employer links on a localised level.
- In Higher Education we see a re-engagement with creative subjects, but a lack of time and knowledge by the tutors to offer bespoke career advice or signposting.
- Employers state that degree students lack the basic skills and understanding needed for employment, these skills are usually developed through related work experience, on the job training and apprenticeships.

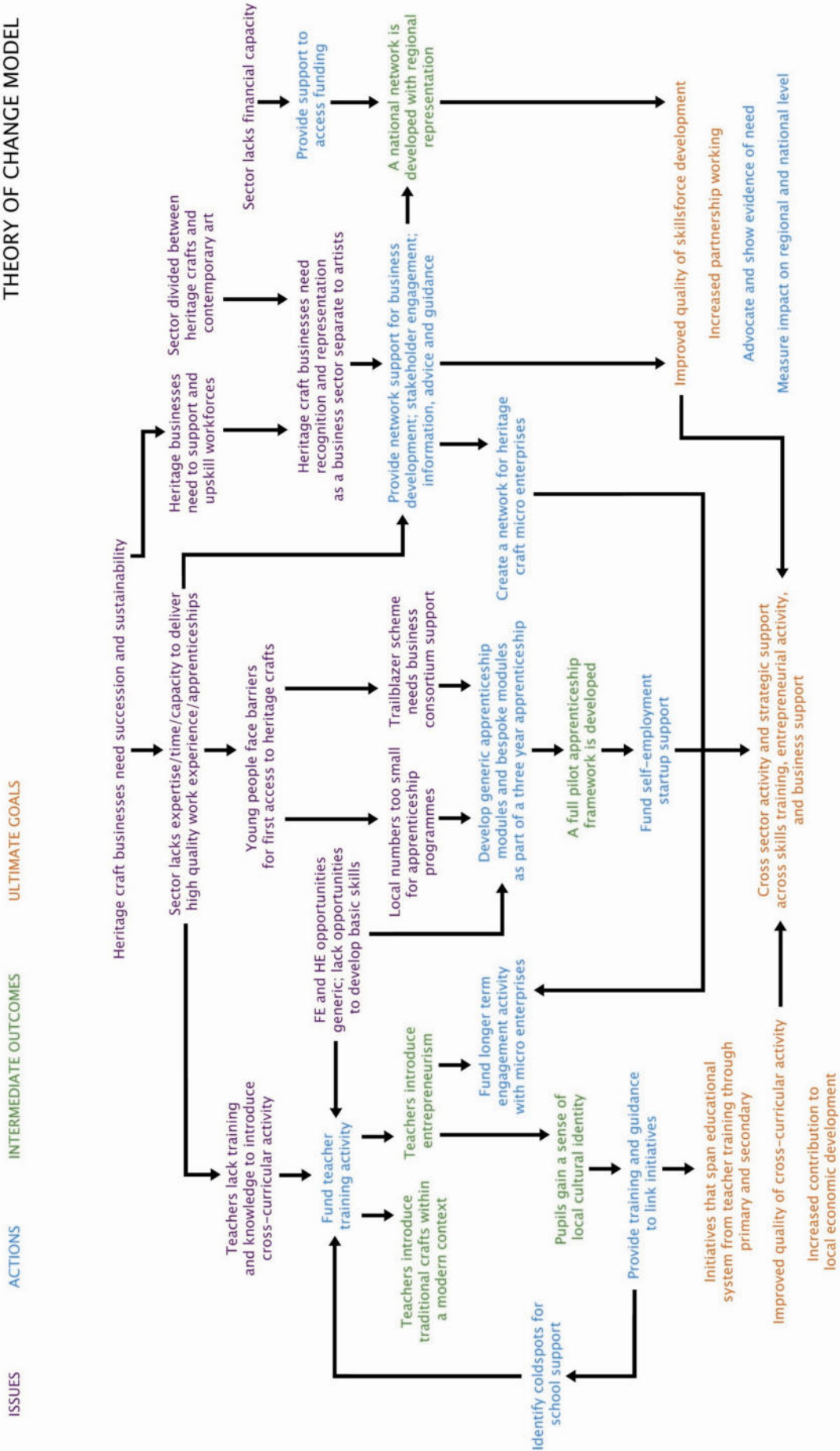
### Heritage craft businesses need succession

- Heritage craft businesses are often micro enterprises working in rural isolation, focused on making and selling their products.
- The sector lacks the expertise, time, capacity and financial resilience to deliver high quality work experience and apprenticeships. However, many heritage craft businesses are in danger of disappearing.
- The sector needs succession and a higher profile to enable support to deliver apprenticeships and training in a modern and accredited context

### Heritage craft businesses need training, representation and recognition as a business sector

- The demise of the art sector and the blurred line between heritage business and arts activity has led to a lack of recognition and respect for traditional craft businesses as a viable sector.
- As one national or regional group; there is a large contribution to GVA. However, on a localised level the individual businesses become lost due to their rural isolation and lack of engagement activity.
- These micro enterprises need bespoke support packages for business support, networking, skills development and succession.

THEORY OF CHANGE MODEL



### Conclusions

Young people would like more bespoke opportunities and to learn more about self-employment, and heritage craft businesses need to pass on their skills in order to have succession and survive.

An initiative to support young people into work with heritage craft businesses needs a constant presence to support both the businesses and the young people. The economic and community development of areas in rural isolation could benefit greatly from such a long-term initiative.

This presence must engage with the education system, provide support to both parties, and provide an awareness of and link into national organisations and representative bodies.

Young people require signposting to additional opportunities, their hands held through the initial stages, and their eyes opened to those possibilities.

Working within an area of rural isolation requires a bespoke approach. It also creates logistical challenges for young people; a relatively short commute can become impossible without a car.

An initiative to support these kinds of opportunities has the potential to stand alone as a social enterprise, but would need seed funding to create the package of support required and the 'buy in' from all parties initially.

**If you are thinking of developing first-contact or apprenticeship-style training in heritage crafts, and would like advice based on our experiences gained through this project, please contact us at [info@heritagecrafts.org.uk](mailto:info@heritagecrafts.org.uk).**



# Getting into heritage crafts

## Pre-apprenticeship first contact opportunities for young people and heritage craft businesses

*A theory of change advisory document  
from an Ernest Cook funded pilot project  
in South West England*

**Tracy Hill, The Creativity Chamber**  
on behalf of the Heritage Crafts Association



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