



NEWS RELEASE

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Heritage Crafts looks to the future by announcing Jay Blades MBE and David Clarke as Co-Chairs

The national charity set up to celebrate and safeguard heritage craft skills has announced that David Clarke and Jay Blades MBE will be leading its Board of Trustees as Co-Chairs over the next three years.



Jay Blades' journey has taken many twists and turns. From growing up on a council estate in Hackney and leaving school at 15 with no qualifications, he got back on track by studying for a degree in criminology and philosophy at Buckinghamshire New University (BNU), before finding his true vocation in restoration and supporting vulnerable people through former charity Out of the Dark.

It is through BBC One's extraordinarily successful *The Repair Shop* that he has become a household name, known for championing the revival of both heritage crafts skills and individual journeys through life, his own included. He was awarded the MBE for services to craft in 2021 and was appointed the first Chancellor of BNU in May 2022. He has served on the judging panel of the President's Award for Endangered Crafts since 2021, set up by Heritage Crafts President HRH The Prince of Wales.

David Clarke is a heritage and cultural sector consultant who has served as a Heritage Crafts Trustee for the past three years. He moved into the cultural sector from education management in the mid-1980s and from 1987 to 1995 was Director of Chapter, a major centre for contemporary arts in Cardiff. In 1995 he set up DCA Consulting specialising in the development of cultural buildings, sustainable business planning and innovation.

David is a fellow of the RSA, an RIBA Client Advisor and a member of the Heritage Trusts Network, the Museums Association and the Theatres Trust. He has led the Heritage Crafts fundraising subcommittee since 2020.

Co-Chairing is a novel but increasingly popular form of Board leadership, combining the complementary skills and expertise of two exceptional individuals, and has been pioneered by organisations such as Age UK and the British Fashion Council. **Heritage Crafts** believes that the Co-Chairing approach will serve it well as it enters a new strategic period from January 2023 responding to a country undergoing rapid social, financial, political and environmental changes.

Heritage Crafts Director **Daniel Carpenter** said:

“The profile of heritage crafts has been rising steadily over the last few years, thanks to the work of our dedicated staff and Trustees, and through wonderful programmes like ‘The Repair Shop’. We are absolutely thrilled to welcome David and Jay as Co-Chairs; their skills and expertise are the perfect combination to help push forward a revolution in the recognition of heritage crafts as a vital part of our collective cultural identities, social lives and individual wellbeing.”

Co-Chair **David Clarke** said:

“It has been a huge privilege and great fun to have been involved with Heritage Crafts for the past three years, and it’s tremendously exciting to be asked to work alongside the inspirational Jay Blades over the next three. It’s a time of huge growth and opportunity for craft, but also one of serious challenges and concerns for craftspeople. We look forward to all the work ahead.”

Co-Chair **Jay Blades** MBE said:

“I am delighted to be appointed Co-Chair of Heritage Crafts alongside David Clarke; a man I have huge admiration for who shares my passion for the Association. Together we have big plans to further raise the profile of Heritage Crafts and ensure pathways for a new generation of craftspeople.”

As the charity that publishes the influential *Red List of Endangered Crafts*, Heritage Crafts encourages anyone who supports the continuation of

traditional craft skills, whether or not they are makers themselves, to become Heritage Crafts members via its website www.heritagecrafts.org.uk.

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Photo caption:

- Jay Blades MBE. All rights reserved.
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About Heritage Crafts

Founded in 2009, the Heritage Crafts is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered as the 'Heritage Crafts Association', the advocacy body for traditional heritage crafts. Working in partnership with government and key agencies, it provides a focus for craftspeople, groups, societies and guilds, as well as individuals who care about the loss of traditional crafts skills, and works towards a healthy and sustainable framework for the future. Its aim is to support and promote heritage crafts as a fundamental part of our living heritage.

www.heritagecrafts.org.uk

About the *Red List of Endangered Crafts*

The Red List of Endangered Crafts, created by Heritage Crafts, was the first to rank traditional crafts in the UK by the likelihood they would survive the next generation. The 2021 edition of the Red List, funded by the Pilgrim Trust, assessed 244 crafts to identify those which are at greatest risk of disappearing, of which four have been classified as extinct, 56 as critically endangered, 74 as endangered and 110 as currently viable.

The Red List shows that the craft knowledge, skills and practices that form an important part of our shared cultural heritage are – for a number of reasons – at risk of being lost. Heritage Crafts believes that these cultural assets are as important as unique heritage buildings and ancient beautiful landscapes and could provide future generations with fantastic opportunities to enrich their lives and the lives of others.

<http://redlist.heritagecrafts.org.uk>