

ENDANGERED BASKETS IN THE UK

Report of the Endangered Baskets Survey and Symposium

September 2020

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1 CONSULTEES

1.1 ENDANGERED BASKET SYMPOSIUM

Speakers

1	Anne Donovan	Prime Warden, Worshipful Company of Basketmakers
2	Hilary Burns	Basket maker and Basketry & Beyond
3	Mary Butcher	Basket maker and cane seater
4	Geraldine Poore	BA Chair
5	Dr Stephanie Bunn	Anthropologist - Woven Communities project
6	Jenny Crisp	Basket Maker and Willow grower
7	Julie Crawshaw	Heritage Crafts Association
8	Ollie Douglas	MERL, Reading
9	Mary Lewis	Heritage Crafts Association

Attendees

10	Bunty Ball	Basket maker – BA member & Worshipful Company of Basket Makers
11	Clare Revera	Traditional Welsh Baskets
12	Mark Nesbitt	Ethnobotanist, Kew Basket Collection
13	Ruth Stungo	Ethnobotanist, Kew Basket Collection
14	Felicity Wood	Basket Maker, Road map of baskets in Oxfordshire
15	Selena Chandler	Basket maker - Oyster Tendles
16	Lois Walpole	Basket maker - Kishie Baskets, Orkney Chairs
17	Alison Dickens	Basketmakers' Association
18	John Cowan	Basket maker - Herring Crans
19	Sue Morgan	Basket Maker - Crab pots
20	Maurice Bichard	Researcher
21	Robin Tuppen	Trug maker
22	Charlie Groves	Trug maker
23	Sarah Hatton	Basket Making
24	Justine Burgess	Willow Grower and basket maker
25	John Page	Rush basket maker
26	Malcolm Seal	Basket maker
27	Ben Nicolson	Apprentice Trug Maker
28	Nicola Coate	Willow Grower
29	Jonathan Coate	Willow Grower and basket maker
30	Cat Beaumont	Basket maker
31	Janet Sampson	Basket maker
32	Connie Flynn	Research
33	Peter Dibble	Basket Maker
34	Gail Romanes	Basket maker
35	Greta Bertram	Basket specialist
36	Dave Evans	Researcher – Coates basket collection
37	Erica Adams	Basketmakers Association Editor
38	Eleanor Morgan	
39	Marian Rudd	

40	Annette Mills	
41	Doon Brooks	
42	Carole De La Pole	
43	Andrew Walker	
44	Sarah Cocks	
45	Lucy Bampton	
46	Issy Wilkes	Apprentice Basket Maker
47	Daniel Carpenter	Heritage Crafts Association
48	Rachel Hutton	Basket Maker and Heritage Crafts Association Trustee

1.2 SURVEY RESPONDENTS

	Name	
1	Helen Campbell	Basket maker
2	Lee Dalby	Basket maker
3	Sarah Le Breton	Basket maker
4	John Page	Rush basket maker
5	Catherine Beaumont	Basket maker
6	Joe Gregory	Basket maker
7	Lin Lovekin	Basket maker
8	Nicola Coate	Willow grower
9	Brigitte Graham	Basket maker
10	Jules Wagstaff	Basket maker
11	Dr Maurice Bichard	Researcher
12	Julie Livesey	Basket maker
13	Jackie Sweet	Basket maker
14	Anita Vozik	Basket maker
15	Geoff Travers	Basket maker
16	Lorna Singleton	Swill Basket maker
17	Clair Murphy	Basket maker
18	Selena Chandler	Basket maker
19	Lynn Hammersley	Basket maker
20	Joanna Frost	Basket maker
21	Maggie Cooper	Basket maker
22	Lois Walpole	Basket maker
23	Robin Tuppen	Trug maker
24	Jenny Crisp	Basket maker and willow grower
25	Christiane Gunzi	Basket maker
26	Musgrove Willows Ltd	Basket maker and willow grower
27	Sarah Hatton	Basket maker
28	Clare Revera	Basket maker
29	Rebecca Oaks	Basket maker
30	Justine Burgess	Basket maker
31	Geraldine Jones	Basket maker
32	Lewis Goldwater	Basket maker
33	David Brown and Ruth Pybus	Basket makers
34	Eddie Glew	Basket maker

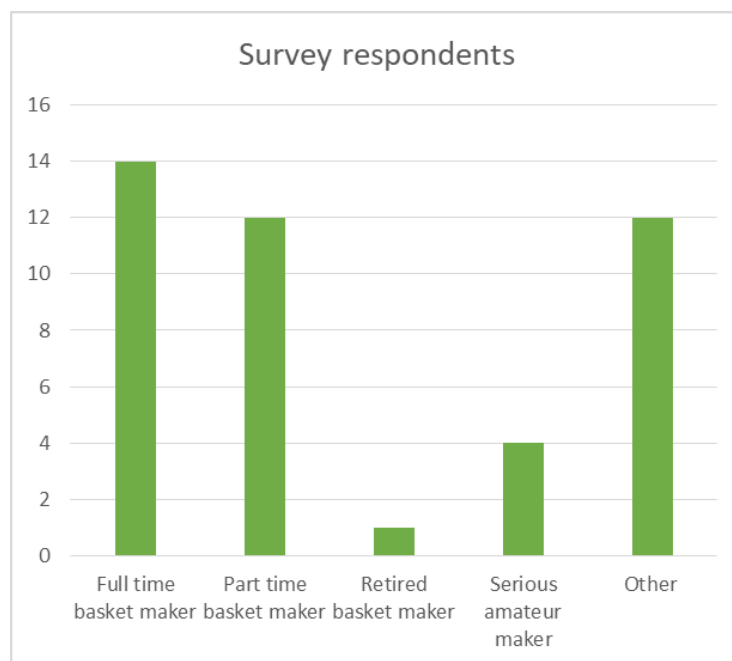
35	Elizabeth(Bunty) Ball	Basket maker
36	John Cowan	Basket maker
37	Liz Balfour	Basket Maker – Northumbria Basketry Group, researcher of traditional baskets including the Fish Wife’s back creel
38	Daniel Carpenter	Heritage Crafts Association

2 SURVEY RESULTS

Survey respondents - There were fifty eight responses to the survey. However, a number of people responded more than once in order to include different basket types, so the actual number of individuals who responded was thirty eight.

Of the thirty nine people who responded, nineteen were members of the Heritage Crafts Association and thirty five were members of the Basketmakers' Association.

Twenty six respondents (68%) describe themselves as either full-time or part-time basket makers. This demonstrates that the level of skills and knowledge of the respondents is likely to be high.



2.1 Q. PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY ISSUES AFFECTING THE VIABILITY/SUSTAINABILITY OF THIS TYPE OF BASKET IN THE UK.

This is an edited version of the survey comments to capture the main points raised.

The market for baskets

The market for baskets generally appears to be steady or growing, but it is limited for some traditional baskets

Basket makers report that the market for some baskets, such as Sussex Trugs and traditional English willow baskets, is steady or growing. This is not always the case, however, for the more unusual or endangered baskets as their significance is often only appreciated by fellow basket makers or a regional audience and they tend to command a higher price.

“Traditional baskets do have a limited market. They generally require advanced basket making skills and as a result be priced into a speciality market arena. Their historic significance is often only appreciated by fellow basket makers or a historic/museum or regional audience.” Helen Campbell

“The demand for well-made English willow baskets is definitely growing, which is great.” Coates

The amount of time involved in making endangered baskets is not always appreciated and it is physically hard work

Many of the endangered basket types tend to be more time consuming and physically demanding to make than the more common basket types. They may also use materials other than willow and so require a wider or different skill set to those used by most basket makers. This, combined with a low commercial demand, makes them less viable way to make money.

“The managing of woodland and making of baskets is extremely physical & labour intensive & therefore baskets are expensive. It balances out as they are durable but the price can be off-putting to customers.” Lorna Singleton

Some of the traditional basket types are just not relevant any more, whilst others have found new uses or remained viable

Some endangered baskets, such as the Sussex Trug have retained a market, even if it is much reduced from that of the past. A rush frail maker commented that they find it difficult to sell a lot because it ‘is little known and perhaps not attractive to modern buyers.’

“They have to have relevance today, be useful and practical otherwise people won't want to learn them or have them in the home” Maurice Bichard

Many makers find that teaching unusual or endangered basket making skills is more financially viable than making them for sale

“For many basket types, the only way to make the craft sustainable is through running training courses. There is a lot of interest in learning about split hazel work precisely because so few people have been doing it” Ruth Pybus

Training and Skills

Basket makers have to invest their own time in learning higher level skills and will not be earning a viable income during this time.

Skills needed to make unusual or endangered baskets can be difficult to master. When there is a long process of making and learning it makes the baskets even less financially viable. Many of these skills have become reliant on the passion and commitment of a particular person or group who want to learn and pass on skills.

“This takes me away from my core activity of basketmaking, both of teaching basket making myself to others, taking on commissions and exploring further opportunities. My aim is that having learnt [traditional]... techniques and improved my oval and square work basket making ability I will create a market for which I can charge a higher sustainable price for my shopping baskets.” Sarah Le Breton

There is very little training available for basket makers

Training is a significant issue both for new entrants and in ongoing training for basket makers. There are no apprenticeships or ongoing training to upskill younger people who might have an interest in becoming a basketmaker.

“I am certainly struggling to fund my ongoing training and well as running a business and I've been willow weaving for 11 years. I think a younger person would find it an almost impossible task and that is concerning.” Sarah Hatton

“Very few basketmakers in the UK are now teaching at this high skill level and any training that exists is at most sporadic.” Sarah Le Breton

Professional and commercial basketmakers don’t have the spare capacity to take on trainees.

Despite a willingness to train new entrants and pass on skills, this is often very difficult in a business that operates on a narrow profit margin. It is even more difficult for self-employed basket makers who have very little spare capacity in their business. Currently there is very little funding available to make it viable to take on a long term apprentice or trainee.

It was also raised that good training should include sales and marketing skills that may not be available in the host business.

“We do have experienced basket makers who are willing to train, but it does have huge impacts in the fact it takes up so much time which costs the business a lot of money. Generally we are able to sell the trainees work to help recoup costs. For our company training basket makers is a very big investment and a risky one. It is risky if we find we do not have work for them and also if the trainee decides to leave.” Coates

“Training has to be in-house and the only finance available is from organisations such as QEST. Apprentices need to include someone who will be taught sales and marketing techniques as well as the skills needed in making Trugs.” Robin Tuppen

Lack of business support for basket makers

It was also pointed out that a lack of business support means that some people may not feel confident in starting a business or adding a new product to their existing business.

“Perhaps the main hurdle to people starting to sell them more is their confidence. Maybe some guidelines on setting up and running a basketmaking business could be useful?” Ruth Pybus

Recruitment

Recruitment is becoming increasingly difficult for the companies that employ basket makers.

As rural areas become the preserve of the wealthy, there are fewer people living locally who want lower paid jobs such as withy work. There is also a gap between those people who want to be creative, self-directed basket makers and those who are prepared to do repetitive work on a piece-rate.

“[There is a] lack of good young versatile basket makers. Recruitment is difficult because of our location and because of people’s perception of the work. Lots of creative people think it is for them and then realise commercial basket making does not allow for much creativity beyond making the items customers want.” Coates

Raw materials

Some baskets makers have found it difficult to source raw materials

Many basket makers have reported that they have had problems buying basketry willow of a good enough quality for what they need and that growers are selling out early in the season. A large quantity of willow is being bought by willow sculptors and coffin makers who need large quantities but for whom top quality material is less of an issue. For example, white willow is increasingly

becoming incredibly difficult to source in the UK and commands a much higher price than buff willow.

There are also issues surrounding other materials such as hazel and rush. It was commented that high quality rush from Somerset, which is one of the main materials for the seat-weaving craft, is disappearing from rivers and becoming difficult to source.

The relationship between growing and using basketry materials is widening

Willow is the most widely used material but this also applies to rush, straw and other raw materials used in basketry. It was commented that there is a need for the expansion of local community willow beds and hazel coppice to supply the materials for making.

“The relationship between managing materials and skills to use materials need to be restored, over the whole of UK in every community.” Clare Revera

Willow is becoming less viable as a commercial crop

Coates English Willow, who are one of the biggest commercial growers identified a number of issues that are affecting viability and sustainability of willow growing:

- Land prices continue to increase
- Water management – there is an increasing pressure to raise water levels to benefit wildlife and conservation, which would make harvesting willow difficult
- Brexit could have a huge impact on farming and on subsidies available to farmers
- Restrictions of chemicals to control pests - the range of products available to use to control pernicious weeds, rust (fungal infections) and insects has been hugely restricted over recent years.
- Foreign competition- labour costs in the UK are higher than those in places such as Poland, therefore it is cheap to import willow.
- Recruitment- it is difficult to compete with other businesses offering higher wages and the rural location makes access difficult for those without a car

Marketing and promotion

Heritage and traditional baskets need to be promoted both locally and nationally

It was pointed out that there is often a lack of awareness around regional types of basket and their links to local culture. Traditional baskets need to be celebrated and promoted both locally and nationally in order to raise demand.

Recording skills

Film has been a useful way of recording endangered basket making skills

Several respondents mentioned films that had been made to record the skills of makers as they get close to retirement. These include Terry Bensley’s film on herring crans and DJ Davies’ film on cyntell.

2.2 Q. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT ANY PROJECTS OR INITIATIVES THAT YOU KNOW OF THAT HAVE HELPED TO PROMOTE BASKET MAKING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

This is an edited version of the survey comments to capture the main points raised.

Groups and Associations

- Basketmakers Association - This has been part of the purpose of the BA and other local groups.
 - Videos diligently made by Rae Gillott
 - courses run by BA and local groups
 - BA bursaries and support for traditional baskets
- Basketry and Beyond.
- Funding from HCA/NADFAS to undertake training.
- Northumbrian Basketry Group - After researching this basket (Northumbrian back and donkey creel) and others they produced a booklet describing the fishing baskets of Northumberland. The local groups continue to promote these baskets
- The New Craftsmen – exhibitions and retail
- Heritage Crafts Association – research and funding

Museums

- The National Museum for Wales at St. Fagan's
- Boyne Curragh Centre, Newgrange, Eire
- Weald and Downland Museum – demos and courses
- The MERL's online catalogue and photographs – this has been cited as very useful and accessible by the BA and basket makers
- Anstruther Fisheries Museum

Education and training

- Many basket makers are self-taught
- Many basket makers are now running their own courses to teach specific basketry techniques (within the survey these include Sarah Le Breton, Cat Beaumont, Eddie Glew, Clare Revera, Mary Butcher etc. but there are many more)
- City Lit Creative Basketry Course
- BA Bursaries - BA gave Ruth Pybus a bursary to research the welsh baskets. Ruth has taught many people and it has spread from there. I was awarded a BA bursary to learn from Ruth
- Rush at Warwick - a weekend course dedicated to Rush basketmaking BA courses My own basketmaking courses specialising in rush Basketry
- The BA's Traditional Basketry Project bursaries. The inclusion of a traditional basket module in the C&G course run by Clare Revera (perhaps this could be a 'heritage' basket rather than 'traditional').
- City and Guilds Levels 2&3 at Westhope College

Projects

- Climate and Community (registered educational charity) are running a Willow Craft Community Project, aim is to build a volunteer community which manages a willow bed in their community, meets regularly to make baskets and exchange skills.
- Serfenta in Poland are doing a very good job of promoting traditional Polish basket making to a younger audience and have succeeded in getting one of their baskets onto the intangible cultural heritage list.
- The Sussex Trug Heritage Centre Limited to create a centre of excellence for the teaching and promotion of our craft upon my retirement in a few years' time, thus ensuring the future of our industry.
- The various projects of Hilary Burns and Annemarie O'Sullivan
- Gower Landscape Partnership ran a project in 2017/18 to revive local heritage and rural crafts. <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/glp> this enabled me to research this basket and devise a series of courses which developed skills of local folk enough to enable them to participate in recreating this basket. The basket was then made for the first time since 1963 (as far as we know) - and for the first time by a woman (as far as we know). A bursary from the BA helped towards some of my costs in researching the basket
- Stakeholders Project
- Woven Communities – an initiative and collaboration between a group of Scottish basketmakers, the Scottish Basketmakers Circle, and Dr Stephanie Bunn. The aim was to collect together and document all the diverse research conducted about Scottish vernacular basketry.

Awareness raising

- Demonstrations at fairs and festivals
- Demonstrations at the Weald & Downland Living Museum

2.3 Q. WHAT ACTIONS COULD BE TAKEN TO ENSURE THAT BASKET MAKING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ARE PRESERVED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS?

This is an edited version of the survey comments to capture the main points raised.

Transfer of skills - two different points of view...

"Whilst one recipe in a book, or studying old willow chairs in museum collections or exhibitions has certainly advanced my knowledge, this has paled into comparison to being able to question and learn alongside a commercial basketmaker...I believe that one of the most important actions that can be taken to ensure that willow basketmaking skills and knowledge, especially of traditional English techniques, is to support those who have innate knowledge, who have themselves learnt from generations before them, especially in a commercial context" Sarah Le Breton

"We already have quite an efficient system for teaching skills, but mainly to hobby makers... I believe that if the basic skills are kept alive (as they are being) then all traditional types can be reproduced from illustrations, recipes and films. But it is not realistic to expect to keep alive the regular making of basket types for which there is no commercial demand" Maurice Bichard

Training and education

For commercial/professional basket makers....

"I believe that action should be taken to teach traditional basketmaking skills but then also enable makers the means and provide support to take their learnt skills and knowledge forward so that they can use their ability to explore and create baskets that offer gratitude to the past and are relevant and in demand in the present." Sarah Le Breton

- Proper apprenticeships with makers and growers
- Making opportunities for teaching skills
- Specialist workshops with teachers who know about passing on skills
- Paid apprenticeships or even an official accredited apprenticeship similar to the Bhamat scheme. Support for the professionals who are keen to pass on skills but don't know how to go about it. I would love to pass on skills to the next level but I've previously had a negative experience with a potential apprentice and now feel like I can't financially afford to consider it.
- Basket making needs to be seen as work, not only a leisure activity. And as such there needs to be publicity of basketmaking as a viable work choice, with courses available in further / higher education colleges. And this which would include issues around marketing, pricing, etc.
- Bursaries for courses including reviving traditional skills.
- Start up a qualification and courses to promote traditional basket making
- Training should include pricing/marketing/PR etc.

...but also for cultural benefit, awareness raising and the wider benefits of participating in craft.

- Basket making in schools, primary and secondary, also structured learning at reasonable cost local to each community. Also use out door learning in forest school settings.
- Funding opportunities for national basket makers to take on apprentices and make links with schools, colleges, museums and art galleries to offer training/workshops and qualifications.
- Take basketry to school/youth groups. Apprenticeships that allow new makers to be funded to train with makers of various less common baskets.

Awareness raising

- Helping and supporting basketmakers to enter a wide range of exhibitions.
- Engagement with museums to increase their and the public's awareness of regional / heritage baskets that they have in their collections.
- More demos in schools and colleges
- More support to help me get the message across about very specific styles of basket which are English
- The basket makers association are very good at highlighting unusual or endangered baskets but perhaps their work could be disseminated more widely.
- Subsidised workshops offered to public National Weaving Day
- An annual UK heritage baskets event. - Highlighting the range of baskets that there are, how to read the signs of an English basket, and teachers that are available to teach these baskets.
- Museums can lead the way locally but need a bit more encouragement to engage with local makers

More promotion of basketry for its wider benefits

- Better promotion of the craft and how great it is to weave
- Heritage professionals valuing skills as local intangible heritage.

..and its role in the future

- Involving young generation in harvesting materials and different teaching methods can help to gain more youth.
- Basketmaking should be a desirable vocation for the extinction rebellion supporting youngsters. Perhaps it needs an image overhaul and some PR work.
- Banning of single use plastics will help make basket making more viable, and the desire for a back to the earth lifestyle that a lot of the younger generation are becoming increasingly interested in as a counter to environmental disaster will save many craft skills.
- Maybe encourage people to ask more questions about the mass imported ones, i.e. how much did the maker receive? What are their working conditions like? What impact has the growing of the material had on the local environment? What is the environmental cost of importing the basket from the Far East? What pesticides are used to treat the crop and the basket prior to shipping? Maybe if people were better informed they would make different choices....
- Basketry skills need to be promoted in context of the climate emergency in so much that it is a sustainable skill capable of replacing some plastic containers.

Markets

"...nothing is going to preserve basketmaking skills and knowledge for future generations unless basketmakers can make a decent living wage now and in the future. Skills and knowledge can, I believe, be preserved if at present there is a focus on creating high end markets for baskets and willow work that involve basketmakers having a higher skill set and ability" Sarah Le Breton

Sourcing raw materials

- Regarding willow growing and processing. The biggest driver for keeping it going is simply demand, whether the demand is for willow in baskets or for charcoal or any other use that might appear.
- Actions that could help ensure willow growing skills are preserved: -ensure there is a market for the willow and the willow baskets, not just coffins...change Natural England's attitude and perception of willow growing on the Somerset Levels. This is a major factor!
- Television exposure helping public to see the work in a basket and understand the conditions and input needed to grow raw materials

Research and documentation

- Continued research/documenting skills.
- Being funded to write a book
- A web site for traditional British basket forms would be very helpful.
- Grants for teachers to pursue research
- Research, remake, teach, demonstrate
- The baskets held in UK collections should be photographed and the dimensions taken and put online for us makers

- Research into specific basket types e.g. 'gypsy' bramble baskets, whiskets, split hazel baskets, Southport boat basket, herring swills etc.
- Well-made videos for any types of work which have not already been filmed

3 SUMMARY OF SYMPOSIUM TALKS AND Q&A

Symposium on Endangered Baskets, 5th October 2019 - morning session 10.30-12.30

Introductions were given by Ollie Douglas (MERL), Julie Crawshaw (HCA), Geraldine Poore (BA) and Ann Donovan (Prime Warden of the Worshipful Company of Basketmakers).

Introduction to project and methodology – Mary Lewis, HCA Endangered Crafts Officer

3.1 SPEAKER 1: LOIS WALPOLE ‘THE KISHIE AS AN ICONIC BRITISH BACK BASKET’

The kishie developed in response to the materials or, more significantly, the lack of available materials on Shetland. Over many generations Shetland has been totally deforested by sheep and so kishies were made from limited available materials such as grasses, straw, heather, rush and dock. Kishies are back baskets for carrying peat that allowed the hands to be kept free for knitting. Kishies continued to evolve using available materials including the ‘willow’ kishies that were made of rattan, sisal, baler twine, plastic rota cane etc.

Straw was used for a wide range of crafts including roofing, cordage and guising outfits. Guising outfits are still used today but very people, if any, are making them anymore.

Kishie making - Lois’s kishies are a response to her Shetland ancestry. She moved to the island of Yell in 2000 and started learning about the basket history of the island. There were old kishies in the family, some made by her Uncle, one of which was made of ‘bent’ or marram grass that is no longer available as it is a protected species. She has experimented with a range of local materials and learned straw kishie making from Ewen Balfour. She has also interviewed people on the island who remember kishies or own them.

Simmans are the coiled ropes used to weave the baskets together. They are traditionally made from marram grass or rushes, but are now more commonly made from coir, jute or sisal. 22 fathoms of simmans are required for each kishie. The kishies are made from bundles of straw and the simmans.

Docken kishie - these were made from Dock, which is a rotten material to work with. There are very few examples, probably because they are so hard to make.

Remaining kishie making skills - Laurie Copeland and Ewen Balfour are the two remaining kishie makers. A film was made by Lise Bech of Ewen Balfour making a kishie, which is a very useful resource. Stephanie Bunn of Woven Communities has also run workshops with children in Shetland in kishie making.

Lack of raw materials - A lack of raw materials is a serious threat to the craft as both marram grass and black oat straw are no longer available to local people. Floss (field rush) is readily available but little else.

Kishies today - More modern kishies are made from readily available materials including washed up plastic, rattan etc. All the baskets have something to teach in terms of techniques. When kishies lost their traditional use the ‘willow’ kishies were mainly made for the tourist trade. They were not made of willow, but of rattan or cane. New uses can be found for traditional forms.

Weaving Ghosts - This was an exhibition that used the traditional, recognisable basket techniques of the islands using found materials from the island. e.g. 22 fathoms of simmans made from beach

ropes. She made a range of kishies that were in memory of her Shetland family members. They used different materials and adapting the techniques to those materials.

Finding a new use in life for ancient knowledge – *“With the growing international disenchantment with plastic and the increasing sense that life as we know it in the industrialised world must change, I feel that the time is perfect now to pass on this knowledge, which is essentially a survival skill, to a more receptive audience than has gone before.”*

3.2 SPEAKER 2: MARY BUTCHER — ENDANGERED BASKETS

Mary Butcher is a very experienced basket maker, artist and researcher. This talk reflected on her own experiences, the future of basket making and the aspects that she considers endangered. As her own basket making activities are now 'winding down', she spoke about the decline of the basket making trade in her own life time and that perhaps, with the devastating legacy of plastics now becoming apparent, we might be moving into a time when basketry again becomes relevant.

"Maybe we should take this moment to be very optimistic about the future of the basket. There is a real possibility for the resurgence of these really sustainable containers; more sustainable than wood, glass or ceramics. So perhaps we can be optimists."

She divided her talk about the maintenance of basket making skills into two main areas: the need for technical mastery and the role of basketmaking in our health and wellbeing.

The need for technical mastery

Mary has been recording and learning basket making techniques since the 1970s and has a wealth of written notes in her 'stack of notebooks'. These are resources that she still actively uses and passes on to learners.

She comments that *"...there were lot of methods that were tried and tested methods over generations. Looking at them and using them gives us a technical 'alphabet' with which we can do all sorts of things. And we don't know what we will need in the future, as life changes."*

These are some baskets and forms that she believes warrant further investigation, more recording and more recognition.

Kent Watercress Basket – skills held by Dominic Parrette

These are baskets that were made in Kent in the 1970s, unlike many baskets in the UK they are made of split willow poles. The delicacy of the baskets and the very sustainability of them was the appeal. They were made by settled traveller families living by the river, and they get their willows from the edge of the Stour. They supplied Canterbury with light weight baskets that were used for many purposes.

This is a basket that has been researched and relearned by Mary and Dominic Parrette, and deserves to be passed on. The technique of splitting the willow is a very special one that deserves to be remembered.

Jack West Basket - skills held by Cat Beaumont

This is an underfoot base basket where the base stakes form the sides and borders of the basket. The uprights come up in a curve from the base. It's a very efficient way to make a basket. The border ends up being a mixture of butts and tips, which basket makers usually try to avoid but with this type of wide border it works. It's quick, strong and nice to look at.

This is a basket that needs to be disseminated, it is a rarity and it has methods of work that are very different.

Fine Skeined Willow Work – skills held by Mary Butcher, Bunty Ball and Rachel South

This was used for silver tea pot handles, fine decorative work and skeined seating. It is very fine and time consuming work (can be done by Mary Butcher and Bunty Ball). Rachel South has started doing skeins and is ready to go with making traditional seats and new versions.

English Square Work – skills held by several basket makers but it is in steep decline

This is really very endangered. The traditional English skills are at risk and are perceived as difficult. They are no more difficult than some other techniques but they do need to be taught properly. The square corner is unique to the UK and some of the oval bases are almost unique to the UK.

The need for wellbeing in modern life

Mary considers this to be fundamental to the future of basket making and relevant in a contemporary context. Teaching and continuing learning play an important role, both in the preservation of skills, but in their wider social benefits and the benefits to the individual.

“As makers, we know that making has a huge impact on our state of mind and wellbeing. As Matthew Crawford says in his book ‘they make a man quiet and easy’. We become absorbed and focussed on what we are doing, and this is very good for us.

We need to know how things measure up to an objective standard. We need to be the best that we can possibly be and that also is good for us. It is good for our mental state. And we know that gaining an intimate knowledge of our materials is good, and this increases as you do it and you get more experienced. We also learn that this work can be intellectually challenging and rewarding as well; to succeed, to get better... It gives us all that feeling of being quiet and easy, which is something that we need to strive for. It is worth the effort.”

In conclusion these are some key points to think about:

- Do we have enough teachers to pass on these least used skills, the higher level skills? We have good ones but we need to provide more.
- We need the necessary access to a collective historical memory of these skills. We need to make sure that we have that collective historical memory.
- We do have strong, sharing basket communities, but they need active support. This needs to fall less on individuals.
- We are rich in community and activity, and we need to preserve it.

3.3 SPEAKER 3: HILARY BURNS - BASKET MAKER AND CO-FOUNDER OF 'BASKETRY AND BEYOND'

This presentation focussed on tradition and the part that museums and collections have played in her work. Hilary started from a position where she wasn't particularly focussed on the history of baskets, but was keen to explore what the wide variety of techniques on offer could be made to do. This developed into a keen interest in basketry traditions and in learning from traditional and professional willow workers, mostly through the BA summer schools.

Basketry and Beyond, organised by Hilary with Geraldine Jones, were festivals that brought together a wide range of basket makers from all over the world. With Geraldine, Hilary has travelled extensively learning basketry techniques and established links with makers.

When researching donkey baskets in the Azores, a comment from a museum curator was that "It takes someone from outside to open our eyes to what we have got and what we are losing". She goes on to comment that *"In connecting to other places and their traditions I have come to realise how much we rely on our own museums and private collections in order to understand our own basketry, both British and European."*

Hilary also points out that baskets are difficult things to look after; they degrade, they attract infestations and they are bulky. It is very often that curators are not aware of what baskets they have got. Archive pictures often have baskets in the background, but may not be mentioned in the catalogue. For example, to find out information on pigeon baskets searches were done on WW1 carrier pigeons in order to find images of the baskets.

There are some examples of good practice:

- Coates private collection at the Willow and Wetlands Centre
- Scottish Fisheries, museum of Arbroath
- WW1 Then and Now Project – a rich seam of learning including the WW1 Collapsible pigeon baskets
- Crafts Council collection of baskets
- Dorothy Wright's collection
- Stakeholders Project
- MERL Collection of agricultural baskets

Hilary is currently researching scuttle work with the aid of the Walmsley Bursary. This is a technique that has been described as 'lost'. She is using the few remaining examples of these baskets to remake and relearn the techniques. The fragility of baskets makes them difficult to research. Baskets were often used until they were broken, discarded and perhaps remade, and so what we see is just a fragment of the basket world. Baskets not made in living memory can be lost very quickly and getting a total picture of what is gone is very difficult.

She comments that *"Our understanding can be skewed by the single examples that we have: if we have two we can start making comparisons, if we have three we can perhaps draw conclusions, if we only have one we don't really know what we are looking at"* and *"We can help museums by helping them to be specific about what they have and documenting it."*

Hilary's approach is to be a 'magpie' of skills and techniques in making new forms and is fascinated in them all. But she is also conscious that she is leaning on skills and knowledge that have gone before and is careful to acknowledge those that she has learnt from.

3.4 SPEAKER 4: DR STEPHANIE BUNN, ANTHROPOLOGIST SPECIALISING IN HISTORIC BASKETRY

Making sense of baskets and their heritage today

This presentation started with an example of an extinct moth that has returned to the UK, and that this is a way of thinking about extinct or endangered baskets in the UK; they have a habit of coming back, even when the life that needed them has changed beyond all recognition. They still have something to teach us.

Anthropologist M Tomasello said *'the factor that makes us uniquely human is our ability to build on past skills whilst taking them forward with us. We do this because we have the capacity as human beings to cooperate and share knowledge'*

My stories of Scottish and English baskets are not romantic or nostalgic, they are a celebration of skill and the history of that skill.

Woven communities – a Scottish basketry project that catalogues a range of Scottish baskets and their cultural significance.

Baskets are so ephemeral, so biodegradable, that we don't have many examples of historical baskets. What is clear is how baskets were embedded in everyday lives and how inventive and skilled the people that made them were.

Some examples of the baskets were back creels adapted to a range of different materials, meal and bread baskets, fishing baskets, agricultural baskets made by travellers, other basketry artefacts such as plaited horse collars, mudags, twined puffin snares, skekkler costumes etc.

'It took a group of Scottish basket makers led by Liz Balfour, Dawn Susan Lois Walpole, Julie Gurr, Ewen Balfour and Liz Balfour to show me that that the way to bring attention to basketry as a celebration of human skill was to celebrate them in every way possible.'

We should do this now by bringing basket makers into museums, to look at collections, as they will have more knowledge of techniques and materials than curators are likely to, and to publicly demonstrate and teach workshops.

A website was created to record and gather information and history of baskets, and contributions came from all over the world and from a range of different groups.

Activities as part of the project included 'plant to basket' where marram grass was collected, dried and then used in schools and in care homes; and skills gathering activities – e.g. John Cowan making the quarter cran (video shown of John making a cran). The importance of hand skills was demonstrated through the plant to basket project– working with elders in a care home showed that hand memories can endure beyond other memories. A man who hadn't spoken in some months talked about his skills in net mending. The memories and the skills that we have in our hands extend us to be part of a community and encourages us to talk.

Baskets from the land and sea – project with Bunty Ball

An exhibition of different crafts and their relationship to the land. This included the herring swill, a basket that has fallen out of use but Terry Bensley could still make them. Peter Dibble was recruited to re-create the swill from a DVD. Some Dutch potato baskets were also re-created. Exhibition included work by Lois Walpole inspired by rush frails and an old frail lent by John Page.

3.5 SPEAKER 5: JENNY CRISP – BASKET MAKER AND WILLOW GROWER

Full transcript of talk

What is Endangered?

This symposium is to discuss the HCA's red list of endangered craft, specifically baskets. I have felt a need to take part not because I am concerned that we no longer know how to make a particular nineteenth century basket from a specific region with a precise function, but because I feel strongly about the loss of the fundamental knowledge of our link to the environment, its plants and materials and more specifically our professional willow growing and basket making skills.

For me it is this knowledge as a whole that is critically endangered.

The Basket Making Industry Now

We all know that basket making is the oldest craft known to man and we know that it has been practiced since before Mesolithic times, that's pre 7000BC, that's 9000 years of knowledge and experience. All over the world we have made things from the materials in our environment in order to survive. In my opinion, the fact that this knowledge was the key to survival meant that the makers would have had an intrinsic understanding of their environment, materials and craft, and would have understood that the transmission of this knowledge from generation to generation was critical.

A century ago in England there were thousands of makers and growers producing baskets for specific functions, with locally grown materials for both industry and domestic life. Both the willows grown and the baskets made varied from region to region according to what that area produced e.g. The Vale of Evesham was called the market garden of the country and was from where Covent Garden received most of its veg. Consequently one of the willows grown in that area was a fine, bright red willow and was used to tie asparagus into bundles to send to London. How beautiful.

That willow will still be there.

At this time apprenticeships were long and willow beds were many so these makers and growers were working with an intrinsic traditional knowledge that created a world renowned industry of highly skilled professional basketmakers.

Today, I think there are around 200 basket makers and 10 willow growers. Of these 200 makers I'm not sure how many are professional and of the 10 growers only 4 are long established businesses with any kind of heritage. As far as I know for both willow growing and basket making there are no long term apprenticeships available. Nearly all of our current generation of makers are untrained. They have gained their knowledge from books, short weekend courses and a lot of passion. The generation previous to us were the last to have had a proper training. The intrinsic link between environment, material, product and profession has been lost.

I am often asked what my real job is or what my husband does and have proudly replied that I have neither. For years these questions always surprised me and then the penny dropped. Most people don't consider that growing willow and making baskets as a real job! It is generally considered that this craft is performed purely for the sake of posterity or as a hobby or pastime. I'd like to challenge that.

Willow growing and basket making requires repetition, dedication and experience to gain competence. If we were given a violin and asked to perform Vivaldi we all know that this would be a ridiculous request and that we would need to do many hours of practise over a long period of time

in order to play anything that might resemble what Vivaldi had in mind. Why is it any different with basket making?

Currently, there is a terrific resurgence of interest and passion for growing and using willow. The lack of opportunity to learn the fundamental skills has meant that this enthusiasm has created an abundance of amazing willow sculpture. Basket making seems to have been left behind somehow. I feel that the temptation to be unique rather than skilled is a result of lack of training. I have met many sculptors who would love to have more technique.

The opportunity is there but we are not filling the gap, yet.

In my opinion highly skilled willow growers and basket makers are critically endangered, rather than an object, and unless we can create some kind of long term learning we will lose the fundamental links between growing and making and the knowledge necessary to perform basket making as a professional level.

Where Next?

Today, quite rightly, we are becoming more and more concerned about our impact on the planet. Sustainability is a buzz word and a popular concept. Many measures are being taken by large organisation and businesses and individuals to include sustainability in their practise.

Willow growing and basket making has hardly changed for centuries. The harvesting of willow has been mechanised, but the growing, processing and making is still un-mechanised. It has literally not changed. Maybe in a perfect world the practise of this craft holds many answers for the sustainability questions being asked today. The process of growing and making basket is a simple and perfect example of a sustainable profession. We should make use of this point of view.

To increase the amount of professional basket makers working to a high standard can only be achieved through training. We are already in a position where our current professional makers are a generation away from any kind of formal training. Another generation will widen the gap diluting even more our awareness of the fundamental knowledge of this profession. With this decline we will continue to make poor imitations of what was once a highly skilled practice.

3.6 Q&A SESSION WITH SPEAKERS

Q: What are we going to do now?

Jenny Crisp: Set up some system of training in addition to that happening at Westhope. It would be great to see baskets back on high street, but if we want people to produce at that rate, to be commercially viable, they have to train. We have all done that with a passion, but we are at risk of losing the skills of the last generation. People are going on the Westhope course and spending up to £4000 of their own money because they are desperate to learn and do it as a professional job. This is for 18 hours of training.

Clare Revera: Can I correct you. For £4000 they get 36 hours of training (Level 3) and guided learning in between. The £18 day Level 2 course is around £1800.

Comment from the floor: This is pricing out the 18 year olds and the younger generation. How do we make sure that the skills are passed on to younger people.

Jenny Crisp: I am currently training my 23 year old daughter myself, which is an expensive way to do it. It is tricky to find enough work for one basket maker, but to raise enough to support two is entirely different. We do need to attract the younger generation. Eddie Glew is a good example of that: he trained with Sally Goymer, and Sally trained in France, so it works when it is there.

Sarah Hatton: I started basket making in my 30s, which I thought was pretty young, I got a bursary and trained with Eddie. I would love to train with you Jenny, but I don't know how to go on from here. I can't afford to live and pay my mortgage and fund more training.

Jenny Crisp: At the other end of the scale is the question of whether there is a market for it. This is a question for the HCA. We can train people so that we don't lose the skilled craft, but is there a market for it? I can tell you that there is a market for it! I don't know how it is for other basket makers, but I can't make enough, there's more and there's more. So there is a market I think.

Malcolm Seal: I can't make enough, I can't get things out of the door quick enough and I have got to the stage where I would like an apprentice. But the trouble is, it would completely slow me down. It is really difficult, I did employ someone a couple of years ago for a couple of days a week, but that was all that I could afford and that wasn't enough for him.

Jenny Crisp: But it has been done before. People were trained so that they were skilled enough to produce things to sell. We are just at this point...

Jonathan Coates: We are in this crazy situation where we are looking for apprentices and the youngsters of today do not... it is repetitive, to get that skill is repetitive. We have loads of work and actually to set aside time, for four months, to train them... when they then decide it's not for them and walk away. You end up with baskets which make very little profit and someone who is losing time carrying out training. It is about finding the right people, and we can't find the right people.

Julie Crawshaw: We are looking to do something about this. We have realised that there is an opportunity here to match apprentices and makers. There are people who want to learn, there are people out there who want apprentices.

Jonathan Coates: But there are two types of people out there. There are the ones who want to come and learn as much as they can and then go off on their own, and we are taking the hit. We need to have that person for three years so that we can make our money back.

Julie Crawshaw: Every industry has this problem and there are ways around it, contract clauses etc. This is standard workplace problem.

Jonathan Coates: It's really hard when you spend 6 months with someone, and they are nearly there, and they decide it's not for them. The next thing you hear is that they over the other side of the country making baskets. We have the ability to train people, but if we can't find the people...

Julie Crawshaw: Well we want to help you to find the right people. There a few things we need to look at but this is one of our key aspirations over the next few years

Erica Adams: But there is a problem here with the salary scale. If you are an engineer you can expect a salary progression... where can we go. We need to increase that ceiling so that we can earn enough to keep a roof over our head and perhaps train the next person. Without government funding for companies like yours [Coates] you will only get the entrepreneurial people who want to go off and do it by themselves.

Julie Crawshaw: We are looking at different models for apprenticeships. We are looking at a model running in Scotland where apprentices are shared

Bunty Ball: Can I suggest that you talk to Felicity Irons, because I believe Felicity took on an apprentice for rush matting

Julie Crawshaw: I would like to see a system in England where apprenticeships are embedded into government processes, it is in Scotland, so that there is funding there for a microbusiness to have an apprentice or half an apprentice.

From the floor: Can I just say that I was very moved by the conversation that you had with the gentleman with dementia, it was very moving.

Stephanie Bunn: There is a lot in that one thing. I do think that there is lot about basketry and hand skills which... one the one hand we need to make a living, but on the other hand we need to fight for the right to make baskets on many fronts. The skills and the time that it takes to make something, those moments are still in that person's memory.

Jenny Crisp: This goes back to what Erica was saying about salary progression. I don't think that you can say that kind of thing in relation to this, because it is always linked to passion. It's never going to produce £50,000-60,000 a year. So I think that it needs to be presented in the way that, yes, you can earn a living but you can also have this amazing lifestyle too. There are other things that come with it.

Stephanie Bunn: There are also arguments to be made with government. In this economic climate it is difficult to get funding for someone to be a basket makers apprentice, they are more likely to give it to a department store or a supermarket to have an apprentice, because they don't seem to value hand skills. So you need to have all the arguments at your fingertips as to why hand skills are important to us as human beings. And it's not just about making a living, it is a part of our human intelligence, to work with our hands. This develops our intelligence and we wouldn't be the humans we are if we didn't work with our hands. This is why I wanted to make this point very strongly. It is very sad that in our education system at the moment, it is our hand skills that are being dropped.

Wellbeing won't convince everybody, but it will convince some people and it is a way of helping people to recover from things like strokes.

Jenny Crisp: Yes, perhaps we should say 'give us load of money and we can deal with dementia, just like that, repeat repeat repeat.....' (laughs)

Peter Yarker: we have just set up a course at HMP Isis, teaching some of the long-term inmates basket making with the aim of preventing reoffending. And that has backing from the prison service, so there must be something in it.

From the floor: There is also NHS social prescribing. But it's about forming those links...

4 NOTES FROM WORKSHOP 2 (FROM AUDIO FILES AND ANNOTATED SHEETS)

4.1 THEME 1: TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Mentorships – as an alternative approach to the standardised apprenticeship.

- A trainee could be shared between more than one basket maker
- Training could be more flexible e.g. sessions could be done in a block or spread over a period of time instead of being a full-time apprenticeship – make it less expensive
- There would need to be a structure that ensures continuity and progression – to ensure that all the skills learned are relevant
- More affordable, it would be a lower cost model
- Perhaps there should be a focus on less formalised routes
- Look at more best-practice models – BHMAT (Lorna Singleton), ‘Adopt a Potter’ scheme, Northumbria group (Liz Balfour) includes self-help groups that seems to work as a system, Shared apprenticeship model, QEST model
- On-going skills groups and long term mentorship can benefit basket makers through their whole career
- Create a mentoring bank

Apprenticeships – A standardised, funded apprenticeship would be an effective way forward but there have always been problems with this model.

- There are lots of barriers to taking on apprentices – legal constraints, health and safety, funding, capacity within the business, fear that they will move on to another business or set up their own business, time, space.
- Finding ways around these boundaries.
- Shared apprenticeship model – Applied Arts Scotland
- Whilst there may be businesses for whom this would work, this is possibly not the answer for the sector

Qualifications

- What would make an effective set of qualifications for basket makers?

Networks

- Makers to get together to network and standardise training in this way.
- Online networks
- Diversity – this could be a good way to appeal to a wider range of people

4.2 THEME 2: BUSINESS SUPPORT

Raise the profile of basket makers

- Part time marketing person to ‘tell the story’ of basket makers, get them out there and promote them at a high level to increase awareness and the value (media, magazines etc)
- Travelling exhibition

- Possibly National Trust places – get information out there about the making process and seeing the baskets
- Basket makers could approach their local heritage places, national trust properties etc., to establish relationships
- Idea about ‘basket maker in residence’ who could use local materials and raise awareness of local basket making skills
- Promotion of the concept of buying an English basket, provenance etc.
- What could be done centrally and then handed over to be delivered locally?
- Attending fairs and exhibitions
- Curating images online – becoming a ‘face’ in the basket making world
- Importance of being diverse as a person as well as pushing a product – responding to opportunities etc. Getting involved in community projects, education projects etc.

Sharing success stories

- QEST funding for trug making apprenticeship (Robin Tuppen)
- Prince’s Trust

Distance learning business support and mentorship programme

- Cockpit Arts – they are keen to work with other organisations, train the trainer session that could be disseminated out to local groups

4.3 THEME 3: SUSTAINABILITY

Basketry as a sustainable product

- There is a positive move towards sustainable products and the skills needed to produce them.
- Bans on single use plastics and consumer awareness moving away from single use products.
- More people want products that will last longer, will be used again and again and they will treasure.

Challenges facing willow growing

- It is becoming less and less financially viable to grow willow
- Regulations on pesticides and fungicides are making it more difficult to be a commercial willow grower
- Land prices are high
- Basket makers are not taught about willow growing

Potential solutions:

- Organic ways to develop fungal resistance – working with partner organisations perhaps
- Developing new ways of working
- Best practice from other countries – e.g. Denmark
- Network of smaller willow growers including makers who grow for themselves
- Tax incentives for willow growing
- Knowledge and expertise will be needed to make this happen – this knowledge is currently held by only a few individuals.
- Courses in willow growing

- Cooperative system where small growers could work together to harvest and process materials
- Promote hedgerow basketry – encouraging councils to change hedge management routines so that basket makers could gather materials

Supply of raw materials

- Basket makers are finding it difficult to source the willow that they need.
- Long straw is getting scarce and difficult to source
- Indonesian embargo on importing cane and rattan products – this is having an impact on chair seating and cane work
- Potential climate change pressures on materials and growing methods
- Interesting to see what happens post brexit with supply of imported materials

Employment and skills

- Recruitment and retention of staff for willow growing and commercial basket making companies is a serious issue
- Companies are reluctant to invest in training when there is no guarantee that the trainee will stay with the company
- Where can trainees go to learn higher level skills?

4.4 THEME 4: LEGACY AND RECORDING

Digital media and film

- Best used in collaboration with other teaching methods, e.g. 1 to 1 training
- Single resource where basket makers can go to find resources, including best practice examples such as the Basketry on Film project (needs more resources)
- prioritise baskets that are endangered or on the critical list
- Perhaps use the data collected through this exercise to identify priorities

Index of museum collections that hold baskets

- Sandra Barker's has done a lot of work on this and it is held on the BA website, needs to be regularly maintained and updated.
- Mapping exercise as a resource for makers - would be a huge exercise and there would be a lot of barriers around standardisation, parameters etc. It would be a significant challenge.

Role of museums

- Opportunity to incorporate contemporary collections of baskets (e.g. as seen at the Ruthin Exhibition)

Best practice examples to build on:

- MERL, working on intangible heritage
- MERL's physical and online collection is a fantastic resource for makers
- National Museum of Wales' Gweithdy building – centre for craft skills combining the tangible with the intangible skills of making

Reviving extinct baskets as a way to bring basket makers together and developing skills and knowledge

- For example, the Eureka Beacon Basket – there is no photograph of this basket, only written instructions and it would be great to have a competition for 5 makers to recreate the basket and see what emerges.

Building on the Red List methodology

- Could we extend the methodology of the Red List to include more social and cultural aspects of baskets

5 BASKETS TYPES AND CLASSIFICATION

The survey, desk-based research and symposium identified the following baskets and basketry skills that are considered endangered or critically endangered.

This is not held to be a complete list and further information enabling this record to be developed is welcomed.

Critically endangered – at serious risk of no longer being practised.

Endangered – there are currently sufficient people to pass the skills to the next generation, but there is a concern about their ongoing viability.

Extinct – no longer being practised. For the purposes of this research, this only includes crafts that have become extinct in the last generation.

Specialist basketry skills under threat - This list identifies particular skills and knowledge that are necessary for making a range of baskets. These are of particular concern as the skills can be highly specialist and a loss of such skills could result in the loss of many specific basket types.						
Skill	Location	Materials	No of Makers	Makers	Challenges	Status
Lip work, coiled straw work (including lipwork chairs, cradles, baskets etc.)	UK	Straw	1-5	Anne Marie O'Sullivan Billy Fotheringhame	This was a widely used technique that is now very rarely used.	
Scuttle work	UK	Willow and ash	0 – Extinct	Skills are being researched and recovered by: Hilary Burns, Rachel Frost, Jenny Crisp	This is a very sturdy and closely woven basket. They are slow to make.	
Skeined willow work (seating, baskets, tea pot handles etc.)		Willow	1-5	Mary Butcher, Bunty Ball, Sally Goymer, Rachel South	This is a very fine technique, but very time consuming. The results can be stunning.	
Woven split wood basketry – oak, hazel	UK	Willow, hazel, oak	6-10	Oak: Owen Jones, Lorna Singleton	This category brings together three types of basket that share similar characteristics of frame basketry and using split wood. These can also be	

and split wood frame baskets				<p>Hazel: Ruth Pybus, Lorna Singleton, David Brown, Lewis Goldwater, Sue Ball, Dan Lawrence, Liz Balfour</p> <p>Willow: Lee Dalby, Mary Butcher, Dominic Parette</p>	<p>referred to as spelk baskets, swill baskets or whiskets.</p> <p>The materials used are commonly oak, hazel or willow.</p>	
English Square Work	UK	Willow	20+	<p>Issue raised by: Mary Butcher, Eddie Glew, Julie Livesey, Lyn Hammersley, Sarah Le Breton, Eddie Barnard</p> <p>Practised commercially by Musgroves, Coates and other companies.</p> <p>...there are many more makers!</p>	<p>There is a significant concern that this style of basketry is becoming less and less practised.</p> <p>Some techniques, like the English Square Corner are unique to the UK</p> <p>Many traditional baskets rely on this technique</p> <p>Basket makers working on piece rate are making a lot of things like coffins, and there is a concern that some of the higher level skills could be lost</p>	

<p>Specialist growing and harvesting skills</p> <p>This list identifies the growing, sourcing and harvesting skills that are fundamental to the basketry process. A loss of skills in producing materials could have a serious impact on the future of high quality basketry that has its roots in the physical and cultural landscape of the UK.</p>						
Growing/harvesting of Rush (English freshwater bulrus, Scirpus Lacastris)	UK	Rush	3 suppliers	<p>Rush Matters - Felicity Irons</p> <p>Waveney Rush</p> <p>AM & KM Handley</p> <p>Some other makers harvest rush for their own use</p>	<p>Rush is becoming scare in British rivers, with only very few people commercially cutting rush</p> <p>Many suppliers sell imported Dutch rush.</p>	
Growing heritage straw	UK	Wheat, oat and rye straw	20+	National Thatching Straw Growers Association (22 growers listed on website)		

				Rosemary Sault – long straw for corn dollies Kevin Gauld and Ewen Balfour grow oat straw for their own use		
Willow growing for basketry	UK	Willow	10 growers (4 commercial)	Coates, Musgroves, Somerset Willow Small growers: inc Jenny Crisp, West Wales Willows, Hatton Willows and more...	See Jenny and Jonathans' comments	

Skills associated with specific basket types

This list identifies the skills and knowledge that underpin specific local and regional baskets. Whilst there may be similarities and cross-overs in the skills and techniques used to create these baskets, they have an intrinsic social and cultural value in their individual forms.

Wales and Borders - Baskets						
Skill	Location	Materials	No of Makers	Makers	Challenges	Status
Welsh Shopper (similar construction to the Cyntell)	Wales	Willow	2	Clare Revera, Les Llewellyn, Mel Bastier	Design developed by DJ Davies	
Penclawdd Cockle Basket	Penclawdd in Gower	Hazel	1	Josephine McGaughey, Clare Revera	Hazel frame basket with unique knot to tie handle onto hoop. Extremely significant in this small village. Men made the basket which was then used by the Cockle Women. This was also a unique cottage industry run by women.	
Salmon putchers	Gwent Levels	Hazel/Willow	1-5	Made by local group on Gwent levels	Putchers are conical baskets that were set into a wooden frame and used to catch salmon on the incoming/outgoing tide.	

Tregaron Peat Basket	Wales	Willow	1	Helen Campbell	Made upside down by sticking stakes in the ground	
Llangwm Fisherwomans Basket	Llangwm, West Wales	Willow frame basket	2	Helen Campbell, Clare Revera	Unique frame construction	
Hazel spale baskets Worcester/Wyre Forest Whiskets/ Wyre Scuttle	Welsh borders, Denbigh, Hay-On-Wye, Radnorshire Wyre Forest	Hazel	6-10	Ruth Pybus, David Brown, Lewis Goldwater, Sue Ball, Lorna Singleton, Dan Lawrence, Liz Balfour	Split hazel baskets. These were virtually extinct but have been researched and skills relearned by several makers Ruth Pybus and David Brown have been particularly looking at the Wyre Scuttle which looks similar to an oak swill but uses a different weaving pattern.	
Cyntells/ Welsh frame baskets	Wales	Willow, hazel rims	6-10	Les Llewellyn, Clare Revera, Jules Wagstaff, Sarah Hatton, Melanie Bastier, Justine Burgess, Cassandra Lishman	Agricultural basket made in several sizes and designed to fit inside each other for storage.	
Welsh tea things basket	Wales	Willow	6-10	Helen Campbell, Sarah Hatton, Clare Revera, Mel Bastier, Justine Burgess, Musgroves	This basket was once ubiquitous to the Welsh tea time. It is designed to hold cups and saucers, and has a central compartment for tea spoons etc.	

England - Baskets						
Skill	Location	Materials	No of Makers	Makers	Challenges	Status
Basket work furniture	Somerset	Willow	1-5	Jonathan Coates Musgrove Willow	Use of tree sticks in construction	

Great Yarmouth Herring Swill	Great Yarmouth	Willow and Hazel	1-5	Terry Bensley, Bunty Ball	Unusual narrow shape – Weaving Connections project, Great Yarmouth	
Oak swill baskets	Cumbria Wales	Oak, hazel rims	1-5	Owen Jones, Lorna Singleton	Strong, durable baskets made from thin strips of coppiced oak around a hazel rim.	
Mersea Oyster Tendle	Mersea, Essex	Elm	1-5	Michael Frost (?) Hilary Burns, Selena Chandler	The use of elm for its construction and the particular way of holding the rim, handle and ribs together before weaving.	
Devon Stave Basket	Devon	Soft wood/ pine	1-5 3/4 part time makers, 1 trainee	Steve Tomlin, Dominic Parrette, Hilary Burns, Mark Snellgrove, John Williamson (trainee)	A very sturdy, heavy duty basket that is made from individually shaped staves that fit snugly together.	
Eel hive	Cambridgeshire	Willow	1	Nadine Anderson	Recorded and recreated by Nadine Anderson	
Split willow baskets (watercress basket)	Kent/East Anglia	Willow	2	Dominic Parrette, Mary Butcher	These are baskets that were made in Kent in the 1970s, unlike many baskets in the UK they are made of split willow poles. The delicacy of the baskets and the very sustainability of them was the appeal. They were made by settled traveller families living by the river, and they get their willows from the edge of the Stour. They supplied Canterbury with light weight baskets that were used for many purposes.	
Bramble basket	Cornwall	Blackberry and willow	1?	Tom Aldridge, Geraldine Jones	The willow is cleaved into smooth white laths and the blackberry stems need to be at least as thick as a thumb and have to be de-thorned before	

					splitting into four. Some of the bark remains as a feature.	
Northumbrian back and donkey creels	Northumberland	Willow	1-5	Liz Balfour This has been relearned by the Northumbrian Basketry Group	It is a frame basket originally of willow but latterly of cane, with a unique boxy shape	
Cornish Cawl, croust, broccoli crate, dropper	Cornwall	Willow	1-5	Lin Lovekin	The Cawl is made in a very distinctive way dissimilar to similar looking baskets from Scotland and Ireland...otherwise the baskets are distinctive in terms of sizing for the jobs they were intended for.	
Withy pots/Lobster pots	UK, South Coast	Willow	6-10	Dave French, Nigel Legge, David Harrison, Richard Ede, Sue Morgan Alan Lander, George Chambers, Porthleven, Steve Perham, Clovelly Joe Hogan	The baskets are an 'inkwell' shape and are held together with a spiral binding. There are a number of local variations.	
Rush frails	South England, East Anglia	Rush, Iris	6-10	Ruth Salter, Felicity Irons, John Page, Mary Butcher, Clare Murphy	Baskets/bags made from woven rush	
'Jack West' baskets making (made with an underfoot base)	UK	Willow	1	Catherine Beaumont	The base/ slate is tied and the weavers as part of the base become the stakes. The border is woven from both butts and tips. This is an unusual technique that is efficient and quite different from other UK basket styles	
Kentish Kibsey	UK	Willow	1-5	John Waller, Christine Llewellyn, Catherine Beaumont	Underfoot basket made with one distinctive flat side.	
Herring Cran	East Anglia	Willow, rattan	6-10	John Cowan, Joe Gregory, Terry Bensley, Adrian Charlton (based in France) Virgil Bauzys, Eddie Glew, Peter Dibble, Coates English Willow	Cran sizes were regulated and standardized as a legal measure	

Sussex Trug	Sussex	Cricket bat willow & sweet chestnut	10-20	<p>Makers are mainly in three companies: The Truggery, The Trug Store, Cuckmere Trugs</p> <p>Full time - Robin Tuppen, Caleb Pimm, Peter Marden, Charlie Groves, Sarah Page, Dominic Parrett Part time – Christopher Tuppen, Amy Leake Apprentices with Cuckmere Trugs - Mark Robinson (QEST Apprentice), Barney Garcia Apprentice with the Trug Store - Ben Nicholson</p>	Regional basket first made in Herstmonceux using sweet chestnut from the High Weald and willow from the Pevesey Marshes. Widely used in agriculture throughout the UK until after WW2. Now mostly used in horticulture and for corporate display purposes and gifts.	
Southport boat basket	Southport	Ash and willow	0	Lois Walpole (research)	<p>Frame basket woven top down – can be attributed to a particular designer, which is unusual in basketry - designed 1830 by a Mr. Cobham of Mawdesley in Lancashire.</p> <p>Could be replicated by a good willow basket maker</p>	

Scotland - Baskets						
Skill	Location	Materials	No of Makers	Makers	Challenges	Status
Creelagh (also mudag or murlagh)	Scotland	Willow	1-5	Liz Balfour, Rebecca Oaks	Basket for holding fleece whilst spinning	
Kishie	Shetland	Oat straw, wild rush, grass, available	1-5	Lois Walpole (research and contemporary interpretation) Ewen Balfour	Made from available materials in the absence of willow and other woody materials.	

		local materials			They were widely used by women in Shetland to carry peat whilst keeping their hands free for knitting.	
Skeklers hats, cloaks, leggings	Shetland & Orkney	Straw	6-10	Ewen Balfour, Lois Walpole, Robert O'Camb (and some community elders, names unknown)	Unusual straw use – specific techniques used in Shetland and Orkney for making 'guizing' (disguising) outfits	
Cuddy/Cuddie	Shetland & Orkney	Oat straw, wild rush, grass, available local materials	0	None known	Similar to a Kishie but smaller	
Willow Kishie	Shetland	Willow/Cane	0-1	Jackie Sweet	This is a version of the kishie that was made from rattan or cane, not willow. They are very different in construction from a straw kishie.	
Heather basket	Orkney	Heather	0	None known – last baskets date from the 1970s Knowledge held by Mary Butcher		
Fisherrow and Newhaven fishwives' back creels and head creels (a pair of baskets)	Scotland	Willow	0	Liz Balfour Scottish Basketmakers' Circle and Northumbria Basketry Group members	Back creel and a basket that sits on top made originally of willow but laterly of cane	
Ciosan	Western Isles, West Coast	Marram grass / straw	0	Dawn Susan of Lewis and until recently by Jimmy work of Shetland. Quite a lot of basketmakers are using/trialling this material.	Coiled basket made from locally available materials	
The Arbroath baskets, rip, merlin, scull	Arbroath	Willow, rattan	0	Liz Balfour	Beautifully designed, distinctive frame baskets. Particular design and construction, probably willow formerly but latterly cane	

Northern Ireland – Baskets N.B. This covers data from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland						
Skill	Location	Materials	No of Makers	Makers	Challenges	Status
Irish creel	Ireland	Willow		Joe Hogan		Insufficient data
Irish Skiathog (potato basket)	Ireland	Willow		Christiane Gunzi, Mary Butcher, Joe Hogan		Insufficient data
Irish Skib (potato sieve)	Ireland	Willow				Insufficient data

Related Crafts						
Skill	Location	Materials	No of Makers	Makers	Challenges	Status
Boyne Curragh	Ireland	Woven hazel	3 in England No data for Ireland	Rebecca Oaks, James Mitchell, Sam Ansell		
Straw backed chairs - Orkney chairs, Fair Isle chairs	Scotland	Oat straw	Orkney 6-10 Fair Isle 1-2	Orkney: Robert Towers, Kevin Gauld, Fraser Anderson Fair Isle: Stewart Thomson, Eve Eunson (trainee)		
Whole willow seating	UK	Willow	1	Sarah Le Breton	Construction methods chosen by the maker to enable the chair to perform as an everyday seat or for occasional use e.g use of 3 rod wale over chain pairing for strengthening the seat or increasing durability by using the coiled/cranking willow technique around the front rail of the seat rather than scalloming.	

Hat plaiting	UK	Oat, wheat, rye straw	1-5	Veronica Main, Heather Beeson, Anne Dyer, Rachel Frost		
Corn dolly making	UK	Straw	No data available	Veronica Main, Elaine Lindsay, Heather Beeson, Anne Dyer, Peter Shelley, Antony Gay, Dorothy Seedhouse, Gillian Nott		
Bee skeps	UK	Straw	6-10	Chris Park, David Chubb, Tina Cunningham, Martin Buckle, David Wright, Scotland, Julie LeFevre Nick Mengham, Paula Carnell, Diana Robertson, Bryce Reynard		