

### *Editor's note*

*This edited version of the original manuscript is considerably shorter than the original. Sue Lauzier in particular put a huge amount of work into it and the Guild is indebted to her. It seemed to fall into two distinct parts, the first part being a history of guilds in Britain dating back to Roman times and the second part the history of the Worcestershire Guild itself. For the sake of brevity I have omitted the history of guilds from the first part as this had been suggested by Sue herself as a possible edit. Alison Dupernex also put in a lot of work, dealing with the events in the Guild after Sue had finished. The section after the title 'An Era of Funding' is a combination of Alison's work and my own. For the sake of clarity, rather than taking things in chronological order, I have arranged the different aspects of the Guild into short separate sections.*

*The original manuscript is available to anyone who wishes to read it.*

*The records of the Guild are far from complete, but Sue and Danek Piechowiak arranged for the large amount of material they had gathered to be kept in the Worcestershire County Records Office, where it can be accessed.*

Judith Price  
March 2021

## **HISTORY IN THE MAKING**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Worcestershire Guild of Designer Craftsmen was founded on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1952 by nine people dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in the creation of designer-made work.

There have been Guilds almost as long as there have been craftsmen, dating back to Roman times in Britain and the Guilds of today follow similar principles. They are a check on the quality of goods and provide a structure and support for craftsmen who often work in isolation.

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a strong reaction to the methods of mass production which had resulted from the Industrial Revolution, with leading figures such as William Morris seeking for a return to good craftsmanship. The Arts and Crafts Movement was born, which continued and grew through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thousands of gifted artists and craftsmen were involved and many of them have left an indelible mark on art and homes in Britain. Their ideals and creations have become part of our everyday lives – in our furniture, wallpaper, jewellery, pottery and buildings.

The movement was particularly active in the Cotswolds, led by figures such as the silversmith, Charles Robert Ashbee, who had created a Guild of Handicraft while he was working in London and which he bought to Chipping Camden in 1902. The Birmingham Guild of Handicraft had been established in 1890 by an Architect, Arthur Dixon, which was based firmly on Ashbee's model and in 1898 the Bromsgrove Guild of Applied Arts was founded by Walter Henry Gilbert, who had become Headmaster of the Bromsgrove School of Arts. He managed to gather a group of superb designer-craftsmen and to combine their talents with proficient business acumen. This Guild was extremely successful, undertaking many important commissions from all over the world, including the gates of Buckingham Palace, and continued until 1966. More can be read about this Guild in Bob Pancheri's book 'The Rise and Demise of the Bromsgrove Guild'. Bob was founder member of the Worcestershire Guild and an enduring influence. The Bromsgrove Guild name carried on with Terry Simons at Puddle Wharf, Stoke Heath, who sold concrete garden statuary, some using the original Bromsgrove Guild moulds, which were obtained, with the Company name, in the 1970s. It was a rather sad end to a great institution, which had survived for almost a century in spite of two World Wars and the Great Depression.

There is a list of past and present members of the Worcestershire Guild at the back of this history and although it is as comprehensive as possible, there are gaps in Guild records. No one has been left out intentionally, and the Guild would be grateful if light can be shed on any members not mentioned.

### **Founder Members of the Worcestershire Guild of Artist Craftsmen**

The powerful influence of the Artist-craftsmen from the late 19th and early 20th centuries rekindled a whole new generation interested in hand-made work of every kind. The best craftsmen became the focus of public attention and their work was collected. By the mid-1950's, there were dozens of guilds but one of these grew from the mainspring of artistic talent based in the same county as the Bromsgrove Guild - Worcestershire.

**Alan Vernon Knight (1911 – 1995)** was born in Birmingham and was the son of a gifted cabinet-maker who died when Alan was only three years old. Fortunately, his mother realised he had talent, and she encouraged him to take an apprenticeship at Blackgate Forge in Devon with Master Blacksmith George Bossum, working in metal and silver. During these early years he did mainly church work – crosses, screens, candlesticks etc., but he also made fittings for the yachts which he could see through his forge doors - a view that started his love of the outside world and the changing seasons. After qualifying, he became a Journeyman for two years, and spent time with the great German Blacksmith Fritz Kuhn in Berlin, learning some of the European traditions of metalwork. On his return Alan and Alice Barnwell, already a renowned and gifted craftswoman, started courting. They were married in Holy Trinity Church, Lickey in 1936, the same church in which they were both confirmed. Within a short time he had

opened his first workshop in Bromsgrove and took commissions including some for the Bromsgrove Guild.

Alan loved his forge and over the years he took on many apprentices who he taught in the traditional way, gradually earning for himself a good reputation as blacksmith, silversmith and teacher. The Second World War was an interruption but he returned to Bromsgrove in 1946 and continued his metalwork, exhibiting as a member of the Red Rose Guild, a well known guild which had been founded in 1920 in Manchester by Margaret Pilkington (its last exhibition was in 1985).

At this time, a great debate regarding what constituted “hand-made” was going on. Alan, undoubtedly one of the ‘old school’, disagreed with the mechanised work which was creeping into the Red Rose Guild’s ethos more and more, and this was probably one of the reasons why he, his wife and some close friends decided to found the Worcestershire Guild in 1952.

By this time Alan was starting to make his mark locally and was regularly commissioned. He also worked in copper, silver and brass, and his Parish Church of the Holy Trinity at Lickey has two pairs of Memorial altar vases and candlesticks in beaten brass as well as a fine pair of entrance gates. He preferred, if possible, to visit the place where the metalwork was to be sited before he started the design, as he liked to create a piece that would be in harmony with its surroundings. By 1952 he had exported some work to America, and was invited to exhibit a candelabrum in a show of craftwork in Florence, Italy.

In 1955 he opened a rural workshop in Hampton Lovett. He occupied one half of the building, while the other half was used as a pottery by Geoffrey Whiting and later, by Vicky Mullins, also a member of the Guild. In 1974 Vicky introduced Judith Price, one of the friends she had met at Art College, to Alan and he let her rent a small space to make her jewellery. She stayed with him for several years, not as an apprentice, but gaining experience and benefiting from Alan’s encouragement. She also became a member of the Guild.

Judith has fond memories of the forge, the strong sense of rhythm and pattern to the days, with coffee at eleven o’clock and lunch at one followed by a walk. She says that everyone was conscious of the passing of the seasons – the cold winters when they huddled round the paraffin heater in the workshop, and the warm days enjoying lunch in the sunshine. The sounds and smells of those days will always remain in Judith’s memory – “the ring of the hammer, the roar of the forge, and Alan’s steel-tipped boots on the brick floor”. Apparently, Alan made his own wholemeal bread, and was rather scathing of white, which he believed would addle the brain. In the spring he would tell everyone when he had seen the first Snakeshead Fritillery, his favourite flower. The fruits and vegetables which he loved cooking were also reminders of the passing of the seasons and he and Alice always had bottles of fruit in the pantry at Mullion Cottage – their home which Alan had built in Lickey Square..

Alan's work was popular with clergy throughout the country and examples of crosses, altar screens, and candle sconces can be seen in churches and many English Cathedrals including Worcester, Hereford, Gloucester, Chelmsford and Truro.

In 1976 he and Vicky moved their forge and workshop to Hanbury, where he continued to teach apprentices and hold small workshops, and over the years he made close friends with some of his pupils. One of these was Peter Bennett who later became Guild Treasurer and was a huge support to the running of the Guild for many years. Peter did a beginner's course with Alan but continued to go to the forge for friendship's sake for a long time afterwards. He remembers the peaceful evenings he spent with Alan with great fondness, sitting outside the workshop with a good bottle of wine.

Harry (Bunny) Brown was also a close friend who was a regular at the forge and became a blacksmith and a Guild stalwart, along with his wife, Peggy. Alan left his half of the forge jointly to Peter and Bunny and Bunny ran it in the same spirit, as Alan wished, with Peter as a "sleeping partner". After Vicky moved to the Isle of Wight, she rented her half to various craftsmen, including a maker of rocking horses and Guild members Bridget Drakeford, followed by Belinda Gilbert and Richard Goodwin-Jones. One way or another, the forge has been important to the development of many designer-makers over the years, and a number are long-standing members. The forge now belongs to jeweller Belinda Terry, also a Guild member.

Alan lectured extensively, and did television and radio broadcasts. He was a member of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, and the Crafts Centre of Great Britain, and amongst numerous accolades was awarded Fellowship of the Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths. He left the British people a legacy, not only of fine metalwork, but also of highly trained apprentices, who have, in turn, become Master Craftsmen in their own right. As well as Harry Brown, these include **Alan Evans**, an internationally known Artist Blacksmith of ecclesiastical and domestic metalwork, who lives and works in Gloucestershire, and is the son of Peter and Joy Evans, both long-standing members.

Whilst Alan was developing his forge and his reputation, his wife **Alice (1910–1980)** was doing the same, and exhibited at a wide variety of venues.

Alice was a glass engraver, etcher, illustrator, and miniaturist from a wealthy Birmingham family, and could remember wanting to draw and be creative from an early age. She was lucky to be sent to Edgbaston School, which encouraged artistic talent. In 1928, the Royal Drawing Society was asked by a number of distinguished schools, including Edgbaston and Cheltenham Ladies College, to institute an exhibition of accredited work by their pupils. Some of Alice's work was entered, and she was awarded the Bronze Star. She was constantly painting,

drawing and experimenting and went on to the Birmingham School of Art, where she excelled in several media.

Over the next few years she exhibited with many societies including the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists, the United Society of Artists, the Royal Bristol Society of Artists, the Royal Society of Miniature Painters, the Society of Women Artists and the Royal Cambrian Academy of Art. She also exhibited at the Royal Academy and the Paris Salon.

Alice excelled at miniature painting more than any other medium. One tiny picture could take three months or more to complete, as the work was so detailed it could only be undertaken for a certain length of time before it became a strain on her eyes. She took commissions for miniatures of people, landscapes, dogs and other animals, and in May 1933 at the age of 26, had one of them, "Mrs. Reynolds in a brown dress", accepted for exhibition at the Royal Academy in London. Olive Knight, Alan's second wife, has a number of pieces by Alice including a miniature of a spaniel, believed to be Alice's Cocker Spaniel Copper, with wonderful detail showing the texture of his fur, and the expression in his eyes. One of Alice's dearest friends, the Reverend Peter Chippendale, remembers how he would sit with Alice while she was working. There was always great excitement when she bought a new paintbrush. She would painstakingly trim off one bristle after another until she was left with a choice half-dozen or less, the shape, length and thickness being of paramount importance.

Alice was also an accomplished glass and slate engraver, and exhibited and sold small bowls, paper weights and glasses. She was approached one day by Godfrey Basely, the creator of the Archers, who asked if she would engrave a set of brandy goblets for a presentation. It turned out to be engravings of a Prize Herefordshire Bull that was being shipped out to America. Godfrey suggested it might be safer for her to engrave it from a photograph, as she wouldn't be able to run fast enough if the bull took a dislike to her!

She and Alan were the principle founders of the Guild and the two worked tirelessly and selflessly towards its development. She continued to support and visit the members until well on in years, giving encouragement and friendship to everyone, and many of the exhibiting members of the Guild undoubtedly owe their continued success and standards of loyalty to her example. Textile artist Anna Yelland remembers meeting Alice for the first time at the Pershore Millennium Festival in 1972, where she had an exhibition stand. Alice liked Anna's work and asked her to consider joining the Guild and even though Anna was heavily pregnant at the time Alice made her feel she would be welcome, a rare attitude in those days. She was accepted as a member soon afterwards, and was never made to feel awkward arriving at a show, even when she arrived with exhibition material plus carry-cot!

Some time after the sudden death of Alice, Alan met his second wife Olive. She had gone to the forge to commission a piece of work and over the following months, she and Alan struck up a firm friendship. Two years later they were married and she was a devoted and supportive wife to Alan and a staunch supporter of the Guild, although not a designer-maker herself and was made a Life Member. She was a welcome visitor to the Guild's exhibitions and it is thanks to a generous contribution from her to the Guild and the donation of articles and photographs from many years passed, that the idea for this history of the Guild was put into action.

One of Alan's and Alice's neighbours, and a colleague in the world of Designer Craftsmanship was **Robert Pancheri** A.R.B.S (1916-1996). He was born in Bromsgrove, the descendent of a long line of Italian woodcarvers and had started to work with his father at the age of nine, carving wood (and apparently sometimes his fingers) between school hours. The workshop of Messrs. Pancheri and Hack was in a building adjoining the old Dragoon Hotel near Bromsgrove Station, where the old Stage Coach and its horses were once stalled, and it was here that his love of carving and sculpture was born and nurtured. Partly due to his father Celestino's contacts through the Bromsgrove Guild, he was lucky to be surrounded by talented craftsmen of all kinds. When he left school in 1934 at the age of seventeen, he began five years training with the distinguished sculptor William Bloye at the Birmingham School of Art.

After War service with the Royal Indian Army Service Corps, he returned to the family business and began to specialize in ecclesiastical work. His strong Christian faith and his belief in William Morris's philosophy were the strongest influences on his work.. As with all craftsmen of that postwar era, he would have been constantly in contact with friends involved or interested in the arts and crafts, through societies, the Red Rose Guild and the Bromsgrove Guild, and he and the other Founder Members met in this way. Robert married and had four children. By the 1970s his past apprentices were already opting to work in local factories rather than pursuing a career in stone or wood carving as it was already becoming difficult to make a living that way. In a newspaper interview in 1973 Robert commented that he was still approached by any number of young people wanting to become apprentices. He said, however, "you have to send them to a day-release school once a week ....where they unteach them all you've taught them".

The sites where Robert's work can be seen, and the type of work varies - for example he did the alter rail in Dodford Church, an organ screen in Leicester, and a pub sign at Port Sunlight. He carved for many churches, including his own parish, and also did a lot of work for the National Trust. In 1969 he restored the wooden gables of the Feathers Hotel, in Ludlow, and was awarded a commendation from the Civic Trust for his work. Although most of the work he did was within a fifty-mile radius of Bromsgrove, he would go and look at a potential commission hundreds of miles away if it appealed to him. One such commission was for the carving of the Georgian coat of arms over the proscenium

arch at the Theatre Royal in Bristol. He was also commissioned to do the carving for the reconstruction of the Great Hall of Bristol University, which was destroyed during the war, and the work took him from 1959 to 1963 to complete. The quality of the linenfold panelling, organ screen, doors, and spectacular timbered roof under which students receive their degrees every year is impressive, and well worth visiting.

Robert believed there was a future for young craftsmen and that co-operating and working together on commissions was a way of achieving a good finished article as the Bromsgrove Guild had done successfully for so many years.

He was in demand as a teacher, and travelled all over Britain and the continent doing commissions and giving lectures. Although he didn't exhibit with the Guild in later years due to the demands on his time nationwide and abroad, he regularly visited the shows and was a staunch supporter and adviser.

One of **William Fowkes'** (18?? – 1973) hobbies was the collection of old written records, and some show that his ancestors were woodworkers as far back as 1750. He and his wife lived for over 44 years at Number 23, St Andrew's Street, Droitwich, and his workshop, reached via an outside staircase by crossing his back garden, had been in existence for over a hundred years, originally used by a builder. Under the workshop were his circular and band saws – the only concession to using machinery - and his timber store, where he seasoned the planks in stacks.

He was born in an era when people put time, thought and personal effort into anything they felt was worthwhile, and was brought up in an environment where the beauty of craftsmanship was highly valued. He was a cabinet-maker of exceptional talent, and this attention to detail and quality can be seen in his intricate boxes, and in the inlaid marquetry in some of his furniture. Nothing was hurried, everything measured and restrained, and he used a wide variety of tools, many passed down to him and aged by time to a smooth satin sheen.

He was, like Robert, one of a few craftsmen remaining whose work was known and respected by churches in and around Worcestershire, and who still followed traditional methods. A lot of his work can be seen in Droitwich, including the War Memorial Chapel at Doddershill, the interior of which he designed, constructed, carved and installed entirely on his own. Quite late in life he was still making large heavy pieces including staircases weighing several tons. For example, he replaced the staircase at Harvington Hall and at the Elms at Abberley - once the home of Sir Richard Brook - he carved a replacement staircase in English Oak in the Queen Anne style to match the period of the house. By contrast and particularly in his later years, he made small items sometimes involving detailed marquetry such as clock cases, cigarette boxes, dressing table mirrors and occasional tables. By this time he favoured mahogany over oak, as it was lighter and required less strenuous work.

William believed, like Robert, that at that point in time there was a more discerning public who were choosing to buy quality hand-made work again, and that the future of the craftsman was secure. He was already an elderly gentleman when he helped found the Worcestershire Guild. It is not clear how he met the Knights or the other founders, but he regularly exhibited with them until 1959. His work is mentioned by L T C Rolt in his book “Worcestershire”, and in “The Wisdom of the Fields” by Massingham.

Although strictly speaking he was not actually a Founder Member of the Guild, **Geoffrey S. Whiting (1919 – 1988)** was the first person accepted as a member by the founders. As he was invited to be a full member so soon after the inaugural meeting, and was at all subsequent meetings and took a very active part in the guild’s administration, he is considered to be and has always been called a Founding Member. He was born in Stocksfield, Northumberland to Arnold and Margaret Whiting on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1919, and was introduced to pottery when he was very young and made his first pot at the age of four. Unfortunately, at one point, his enthusiasm got a bit out of hand, and he managed to wreck his mother’s oven by trying to fire a pot in it made from garden clay!

Visits to Poole Pottery and Royal Worcester Porcelain fueled his interest, and by the age of fourteen he was so keen he had built his own kiln at home. His real desire was to be a designer-maker of fine pottery, but unable to see how to achieve this dream either financially or geographically, he gave up the idea and instead, in 1937 he went to the Birmingham School of Architecture, where his studies were curtailed by war.

He held a commission in the army, and was posted overseas to India Command. While he was in Signals Intelligence in Delhi he met a family of Indian potters in the nearby village of Nurgaou. Working with them in his spare time, he rediscovered his joy in making pots. He learnt the Indian method of throwing, which was by squatting on the floor, and spent many happy hours with them making cups and saucers, bowls and plates. These were items to be sold for every day use, but made with care and precision in a steady rhythm that gave great meaning to him – he had returned to his calling.

By this time the horror of what was happening around him was affecting Geoffrey’s peace of mind. He was greatly distressed and appalled by the hatred and violence of the Partition Riots, and in 1948 he left the army and returned home, where he soon returned to throwing pots, drawing on the experience gained in India. Inspired by Bernard Leach, and encouraged by his cousin Herbert Read, the distinguished art historian, he started a pottery and teaching workshop at Avoncroft College near Bromsgrove. The influence of Song and Indian pottery kept his insight into his work pure and disciplined. He designed and built his own brick kiln there, which had an open flame burning solid fuel, and which took about



eighteen hours of almost constant stoking to raise the temperature to the required level for firing stoneware.

His workshop had windows the length of one side, a wide bench and rows of shelving on the other, and two potters' wheels, one at each end of the workshop, operated by foot pedals and flywheels. To begin with, he had worked in earthenware as well but eventually chose to work entirely in stoneware as he found it gave him a wider field for expression and technique as well as a finished product that was more durable for the general public to buy.

In 1952 Geoffrey was elected as a full member of the Red Rose Guild, and the following year as the very first new member of the Worcestershire Guild. From the beginning he was actively involved in its organisation and promotion. Within three years of opening the workshop, he had already sold his work abroad and examples of his pots had been chosen for an exhibition of contemporary British pottery in Amsterdam. In 1955 he married Anne Heath, with whom he had three children. He was invited to move Avoncroft Pottery out to Hampton Lovett in the country by Alan Knight, where he took on apprentices from Britain and abroad. From 1959 he was one of only seven British potters whose work was exhibited regularly worldwide by the British Council, and this secured him international respect. Geoffrey augmented his income by teaching pottery at Bromsgrove Technical College.

Although he displayed his work throughout Britain and became a respected and well-known craftsman. His philosophy and way of life had an austerity that helped him to achieve purity in even the humblest pot and he actually preferred to live the quiet life of a potter.

He left the Guild in the early seventies when it was going through difficult times. He was missed as he had put a lot of time and energy into it as well as having made many close friends.

**Albert Edward Lemmon (1889–1963)** was born in Ladywood, Birmingham, and was the son of William Lemmon, a carpenter and joiner. Albert trained in stained glass at the Birmingham School of Art, in Margaret Street, and by the age of nineteen was already working as chief assistant to Mr. A. Webster at the Stephen Andrews Studio – an achievement at such a young age. He became a member of the Bromsgrove Guild through being a member of the team in Archibald J. Davies' workshop and by 1914 had already done a lengthy commission for the Bromsgrove Guild in Scotland, whilst still maintaining a career in freelance work.

At the beginning of the Great War, he had enlisted and served with the 5<sup>th</sup> Cameron Highlanders. After the war, Albert returned to Davies' workshop and did many local commissions for the Bromsgrove Guild, including a stained glass window for the Lady Chapel in St. Godwall's Church at Finstall near Bromsgrove. Some years later the guild was called in again and Albert was asked to design and

make a stained glass window in the Lady Chapel in memory of Barbara Palmer who died at twenty-one. There is a St Godwald banner in the church, designed by Albert and in the same year he also made a stained glass window in All Saints Church to commemorate Aneurin Evans, a school master killed in action in 1917.

Albert stayed with the Bromsgrove Guild until 1927, when he resigned after a dispute with Davies. He went on to become Headmaster of the Bromsgrove School of Art, had his own studio in the Strand, and lived at 47 Birmingham Road. He was at the first Worcestershire Guild Meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1952 and though little is known of his personal life, he was obviously already friends with the Knights.

At the Midland Institute Guild Exhibition of 1953, he exhibited cartoons for stained glass to show how they were made and a design for a window he was in the process of making in Birmingham. On sale he had a miniature window of St Aidan for £22 and a miniature of St Christopher. Albert also did enamel work and showed a miniature enamel of a byzantine Madonna for £21, an incense boat and spoon made of oak with enamel panels, a jewel box with Limoge panels, and coats of arms in enamel for Lichfield School, Eton School and Lancing School.

Other work executed by Albert includes a signed panel of stained glass at The Perry Hall Hotel on the Kidderminster Road, Bromsgrove. St Peter's Church, Bengeworth, Nr Evesham is also well worth a visit, with three windows by him. These show Mary and Joseph, the Good Shepherd with sheep, the Good Samaritan giving water to the traveller, and Mary and the swineherd Eoves by the River Avon.

By this time Albert had had his own studio for years but it is thought that he probably did these commissions on behalf of the Bromsgrove Guild which, though on a strong downward spiral, was still used widely for ecclesiastical work.

Albert was already 63 years of age at the inaugural meeting of the Worcestershire Guild. He exhibited with them for several years, and was joined by his son as he became frailer. He usually had a cartoon of a window on display to show how he made them and also made and sold lanterns and enamel work at the Guild exhibitions.

Albert died at his home in Birmingham Road, Bromsgrove, at the age of 73.

Another founder member of the Guild was one **Anthony Barham**, a furniture maker, who was fortunate to be apprenticed to the great A. Romney Green (another connection with the Red Rose Guild) at Christchurch. By studying and working alongside him, he came to believe that in time a man's work would stand out amongst other designer-makers if he had studied and been disciplined by a great Master. When he eventually set up as a furniture maker in his own right, like most of the few true craftsmen left, he never hurried a job, preferring to take weeks on one piece in order to achieve a thing of beauty. This is undoubtedly one of the

reasons why craftsmen and women often scratch a living, as they not only undervalue their own worth, but the public can never be charged realistically for the number of hours put into making a piece.

Anthony lived at Stoke Heath and had his workshop in his garden, hidden by high hedges and surrounded in summer by beds of brilliantly coloured flowers. The workshop was a long wooden structure with windows all along one side, and whenever possible he would fling them wide open. At the back of his workshop stood another building that was just a roof on tall posts with no walls, where he kept his timber seasoning. He bought the wood "in the trunk", had it sawn to his requirements and then put the planks under the roof to season for several years, varying on the thickness of the timber. He worked mostly in English Oak and at that time there was still plenty of it available, but English walnut, which he also used, was already becoming harder to find.

Anthony enjoyed designing furniture as well as the actual making. Eventually his skill was noticed and in 1945 he was elected as a member of the Red Rose Guild, a fact he was extremely proud of and he exhibited with them for many years.

He liked making chairs most and said he never fulfilled his ambition to make a chair design that would totally satisfy him. The most outstanding piece of furniture he felt he had made was a bureau, which he exhibited with the Guild at the Three Counties Show in 1952. That year he also made a long bench in figured elm for indoor or outdoor use, with solid, pegged ends, and a simple decorative design along its edges. When they were not being displayed at shows, his fine pieces of furniture would stand in his workshop in a pile of shavings, surrounded by off-cuts and the tools of his trade.

He was a quiet man who found it difficult to put his feelings and views into words but it was clear he felt that the public showed little appreciation for the amount of work put into the making of a piece and found that fact disheartening. He was pleased to be involved in the founding of the Worcestershire Guild as he felt perhaps it would re-ignite and fan the flame of single minded diligence necessary in anyone involved in designer-made work.

**Leslie Ladell - Furniture Maker**, trained at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London in the traditional way but, as with all true designer-makers, developed his own individual style, which was influenced by his interest in and study of anthroposophy (a science of mankind).

He lived at Hill View, Bromsgrove Road, Clent and rented a workshop in the grounds of the Sunfield Children's Home in Clent. It was a big airy room with windows all along one side and housed his band saw, circular saw and planing machine. He bought his timber from local suppliers, as he could see and choose the trunk and have it cut to his requirement. He then stored and seasoned it himself.

Leslie worked in a variety of different woods and made book-racks, trays, bowls, breadboards, lamps, bread knives, salad bowls and servers, sugar bowls - even toast racks. He also made larger pieces such as standard lamps, cupboards and desks, but the items apparently most in demand in the 1950s were bookcases – of all different shapes and sizes. These could occasionally be a challenge, as the customer would want them colour-matched to the rest of the furniture in the room.

He would make any item in the customer's preferred wood and the varieties he used included walnut, cherry, beech, yew, and sycamore.

Leslie Ladell believed that Science, Religion and Art should progress hand in hand, and that young men should be encouraged to become apprenticed to a craftsman, even though it meant accepting a much lower wage for a time. Without apprenticeship he said, culture and the art of true craftsmanship would disappear. It was for this reason that he was happy to be involved with the Worcestershire Guild from the beginning, as the members' standards were so high.

There were two other founder members - **Howard Bissell, a Slipware Potter** who had a studio at Old Swinford in Stourbridge (there are many examples of his work on the internet, but there is little other information about him) and **John Firth, a Furniture Maker**.

### **The Worcestershire Guild of Artist-Craftsmen**

#### **The early years**

The inaugural meeting of the Worcestershire Guild was instigated by Alan and Alice and was held in Bromsgrove Library, on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1952. The minutes, a testament to a by-gone age, are recorded in beautiful writing in an old exercise book. According to a typewritten note in the Archives, there was a photograph taken at the inaugural meeting, but ,unfortunately, it is not with the rest of the early material.

The founder members present at the meeting were

Anthony Barham – Furniture-maker (elected Treasurer),  
Alice Barnwell(Knight) – Artist and Glass Engraver,  
Howard Bissell - Potter, slipware,  
John Firth – Furniture-maker,  
William Fowkes – Furniture-maker,  
Alan Knight – Black- and silversmith (elected Honourary Secretary),  
Leslie Ladell – Furniture-maker,  
Albert Lemmon – Stained Glass Maker,  
Robert Pancheri – Ecclesiastical woodcarver and sculptor (elected President).

It was apparent at this moment in time that certain sections of the craft professions wanted to ensure high standards were maintained. Alan, Alice and their colleagues

must have discussed the issue many times in the late 1940s and early 1950s, especially in the light of the Red Rose Guild and the start of many other guilds across the country. A very simple provisional constitution had therefore already been drawn up and at the first meeting amendments were discussed and accepted.

“1) That the Artist Craftsman earns a substantial part of his income by making and selling his work.

2) That they live and/or work within the geographical boundary of Worcestershire.”

A membership selection committee was chosen to safeguard the quality of workmanship, and members of the public were invited to become Lay Members of the Guild. For a small fee, they would have exclusive right to buy at previews, be given a small discount on purchases and be kept informed of forthcoming exhibitions. A list was also drawn up of the Fine and Applied Arts from which members could be selected, which in the early days included painters.

Over the next few meetings the nitty-gritty regarding the administration of the Guild was agreed, such as the authorisation of signatures for Guild cheques and the Treasurer was granted the grand sum of 30/- (£1.50) to be used as petty cash! The selection committee also approved and accepted the first new member, Geoffrey Whiting. As has been mentioned, he is usually counted as a Founder Member as he was there from the second meeting and became a driving force and great ambassador for the Guild.

Plans were discussed for their first exhibition, which was held at the Bromsgrove Technical School in September of that first year.

There were no computers, printers, or mobile phones to rely on, and few of them had the use of a car, so arrangements had to be thoroughly discussed and agreed at meetings so that individual members could act on behalf of the Guild. John Firth put forward many ideas during the first few meetings and it is sad that he left the Guild within a year, as he was undoubtedly a great “ideas man”. He suggested asking a representative from the Phoenix Assurance Company to come to a meeting and give the Guild advice on insurance cover for exhibitions. He also suggested sending invitations to members’ friends, respected dignitaries, local officials, and representatives of various local organisations in Worcester, to help the Guild achieve recognition. In June and July of that summer, one of the Bromsgrove reporters had done a series of detailed articles on local craftsmen and women by visiting their workshops, most of them members of the Worcestershire Guild. These helped to promote the Guild. In addition, they advertised the exhibition in the Bromsgrove Messenger and posters were put up. In 2003, Michael Grundy from the Worcester Evening News wrote a double-spread feature on the Worcestershire Guild, which is a modern-day echo of those articles. It shows how little the beliefs, methods and structure of the Worcestershire Guild

have changed over half a century, even though life has changed in Britain so much.

The first exhibition was considered a success and although the minutes are very formally written, between the lines the excitement of those early days can be felt. At the fourth meeting held at 1, New Road, Bromsgrove, the Treasurer gave his first financial report. £3.0s.6d was spent on costs, which included 17/6d (87.5p) on printing, 14/6d(72.5p) on posters and the princely sum of 13/6d (67.5p) on advertising! Sales and orders, by comparison, totalled £126.17s.6d, and the Guild took 5% in commission. The insurance had not been arranged at this point and so the first exhibition was held without any. It is astonishing to think that work by some of these artist-craftsmen, now worth thousands of pounds, - a teapot by Geoffrey Whiting, a bureau by William Fowkes - was being exhibited without any cover.

Some early members were undoubtedly introduced through previous contacts; for example Rosemary Dugdale-Bradley, and Grace Digby both exhibited with Alice Barnwell in the 1930s with the Cambrian Academy of Art in Conway. But new members did not come thick and fast and by the time of the first Annual General Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1953 at Avoncroft College, where Geoffrey had his pottery and workshop, there were only four new ones.

Miss Grace Digby was a jeweller and water colour painter, who lived in Edgbaston, and had known Alice for several years and already exhibited with her at other venues.

Jessie Hoyland was another new member who lived in Rednal, the same village as Alan and Alice. She exhibited water-colours, oils, pastels, and weaving.

Rosemary Dugdale-Bradley was a remarkable woman for her time. She studied at the Birmingham College of Art and in 1933, whilst still a student, helped as a nurse at the Sunfield childrens home for eighteen months, followed by two and a half years cooking in the kitchens. Sunfield was and still is, a home and school for children with a variety of social, emotional, physical and learning difficulties. Due to her college training, she and another girl were invited to start a pottery in 1937 and though the other girl left a year later, Rosemary carried on running the pottery until the end of the war. During the Munich Crisis she decided weaving would also be a helpful contribution to the home and a loom was purchased. By 1952, in her pottery at Sunfield she had 4 electrically driven wheels, an electric spraying machine, and a pug mill for preparing clay. The gas fired kiln held about 2000 mixed sized pots, all of them domestic pieces – teapots, jugs, cups and saucers etc., and all the pottery used in the home was made by her pottery. It was also sold in Sunfield's own shop at Clent Grove and marketed and sold throughout the country. In the weaving room, also by the early 1950s, there were five foot power looms, a spinning wheel, and a warping mill, all of which Rosemary used and taught the more able girls to use. Most of the nurseries in the Home had their own

blankets and curtains, woven by the Sunfield mill. She only exhibited with the Guild for a short time because she wanted to be able to exhibit the pottery as well as the cloth and woven articles made by her, but was only allowed to exhibit in one medium. A remarkable lady for her time.

At the AGM the Treasurer reported that after its first year the Guild had cash in the bank plus petty cash amounting to £13.2s.1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d, the accounts having been audited by Mr. R Evans. Officials were elected for the year - Alan Knight as President, Geoffrey Whiting as Secretary and Anthony Barham offered to stay on as Treasurer.

Well-preserved letters and documents show that Geoffrey Whiting was very industrious, and extremely well organized. Although he was prepared to do any job required of him as Guild Secretary, listings in early catalogues prove that he always seemed to have time to create an astounding number of pots! It is a great shame that subsequent Secretaries and Officers of the Guild have not always kept important paperwork, as there are many gaps in the Guild's history, which have been covered where possible by memory. Thank you Anna, Peggy, Harry, Ray, Judith, and other long-term members. It has also been frustrating to discover how many letters and documents have no date on. Future Secretaries please note!

Another sensible early addition to help with the smooth running of the Guild was an Exhibition Committee, created to select works for exhibition by the members, maintain high standards, design the floor plans and arrange transport. For many years this was largely dealt with by Alan and Alice.

The first insurance cover was arranged from 25<sup>th</sup> March 1953 to protect the Guild for public liability and the cost of replacing exhibits. At the AGM Alan showed the members a letter from the Phoenix Assurance Co. Ltd. giving quotes for cover of goods in transit and at exhibition. They accepted a premium of £2.5s.0d. for an indemnity of £5,000 for any one accident. The first insurance policies of the Guild are in the archives - elegant documents with their grand phoenix logo and lovely print.

Important contacts formed early in the Guild's history were achieved remarkably easily. Alan Knight reported that he and Godfrey Barely of the BBC had had informal talks regarding the possible televising of a number of the craftsmen at work. The members were asked to consider it but as the broadcast never got off the ground, they obviously decided against it. What a missed opportunity.

By the time of the first Annual General Meeting, with its constitution and Guild rules in a very simple form, present members can see that the basic structure of the Worcestershire Guild was already formed and that the execution of the officers' duties have changed very little. Although there are many more officers and sub-committees to deal with the large membership and its associated issues, the running of the Guild remains the same.

It was at this time that the Lynmouth floods happened in Devon with the loss of many lives and homes. The members were asked to consider contributing some of their work for auction to be held at the National Farmers Union Dance, to help raise funds for those involved in the tragedy and this they did readily.

By April 1953 there were still only eight Lay Members, and Alan encouraged the members to do their best to interest as many people as they could in the activities of the Guild. It would be a good way of having an automatic guest list of people known to be interested in the arts, and the small membership payment would help funds.

At a meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1953, John Firth told the meeting that for economic reasons he had had to abandon purely hand-made furniture in favour of furniture designed for and made largely by machine. He could have said nothing but being an honourable man, asked the committee whether they felt he should remain a member of the Guild. Many views were aired, but not all members were present, so Geoffrey Whiting sent a letter to all the members informing them of the issue so that a vote could be taken at the next meeting. During the interim, Alan Knight wrote to Edward Barnsley and Harry Norris, to ask their personal opinion. The letter that came back from Barnsley said in effect 'I think that you already know in your own minds what the answer should be'. It was decided therefore that the Constitution should be amended and have a new paragraph inserted:-

“In the case of a Craft Member, his work shall be handcraftsmanship and he shall maintain an individual approach in his work. The term “handcraftsmanship” does not here preclude the use of machines PROVIDED their use is confined to the function of avoiding unnecessary drudgery and they are not used when pure handwork only will produce the best results and ensure the personal feeling of the work. Where the craftsman’s work is deliberately designed so that it can be executed as much as possible by machine and where, therefore, the machine may be said to dictate the design, the craftsman shall not be entitled to Craft Membership”.

As he was making multiple reproductions in his workshop, even though most of the machinery was simple and mostly hand-held, it *was* designed to be made that way and so with regret Mr. Firth was asked to leave.

The Constitution of the Worcestershire Guild still gives officers the right to disallow unacceptable work from being displayed, and all members are still expected to abide by the rules of the Constitution, which is regularly checked, discussed and updated.

The next exhibition was held at the Midland Institute in Birmingham, and was officially opened by Dr Mary Woodhall, Keeper of Birmingham City Art Gallery. The Guild had fifty handbills and five hundred invitations printed, and posters



were made and put up over what would have been quite a wide area for the day. In his capacity as Secretary, Geoffrey Whiting wrote out seven slightly different drafts for inclusion in the local papers. He sent them to The Messenger, The Evesham Standard, The Worcester Evening News and Times, The Redditch Indicator, The Kidderminster Times, The Malvern Gazette and The Stour Press and Gazette - an impressive publicity-drive, especially as they were all typed and carbon-copied on an old-fashioned typewriter. He also arranged for the erection of display units through a company called Street and Son, at a cost of £10.5s.0d.as in those days the Guild had no stands, tables or exhibition equipment. As the logistics of getting everyone's work to Birmingham was quite complicated, Geoffrey arranged with Avoncroft College, to use their recreation room as a temporary store. All members had their work taken to the college, and Neath Brothers of Bromsgrove transported the entire exhibition's work to Birmingham by lorry, a method that was used until the 1960s. Lay members were sent 6 invitation cards each to invite select friends to the preview and asked to act as voluntary stewards, since not all the members were able to get there every day due to lack of transport.

On a more personal note, there is a hand-written letter from Rosemary Dugdale-Bradley to Geoffrey, asking that stewards be made aware of an error in the exhibition catalogue – some of her tweeds had been offered for sale at 2gns per yard instead of £1.2.0d!

That summer Jessie Hoyland wrote to Mr. and Mrs. Knight expressing her regret at having given a “non-committal” promise of 7/- (35p) per week. Although not recorded in any of the Minutes, this was apparently regarding the proposed funding of a shop for the Worcestershire Guild to use as a window for their work on a permanent basis. It is clear that she felt it was the way forward for the Guild, but was concerned that it would be too much of a financial burden for her. Many of the early members, though from genteel backgrounds, were not very well off, and to Jessie, 7/- would have been too much to spare. Even this early in its existence, the Guild was already looking at the idea of a permanent showplace or workshop.

The members decided it would be fun to have an annual social outing, so they approached the famous architect Oliver Hill FRIBA and asked if they could visit and be shown round his home, Daneway House in Gloucestershire. His hand-written reply said they were welcome to go at any time – “If I'm not there the gardener will show you round”. The following year they went to the Barber Institute. The social side of the Guild has carried on until today.

By the end of 1953, because Mr. Firth had left, there were only 10 full members and 1 associate member, but lay membership had gone up to 26.

In April 1954 the Guild held an exhibition in the Art Gallery in Worcester, with a new member called **Hugh David Grisdale Birkett** (1919 – 2002). Hugh was from

a fairly privileged background and had been born in Solihull to Thomas and Anne Birkett, both gifted designer-makers who had been actively involved in the Arts and Crafts Movement. As a young man he began an engineering apprenticeship, but war broke out. As he was strongly opposed to war, he became a conscientious objector and went abroad to do international relief work. After the war ended, he decided his calling lay in wood not metal and spent eighteen months with Oliver Morel and a similar length of time with Edward Gardiner, both well-known cabinet-makers of the Cotswold School. He set up his own workshop at his parents' home in Lapworth, then in 1966 bought a house and workshop in Moreton-in Marsh, where he built up a strong following of collectors. He also became a capable bookbinder in the style of his celebrated aunt, Kathleen Stubbs. Hugh was a shy, retiring man who enjoyed his craft, and found pleasure in exhibiting and spending time with his close friends and family. Although he was not a founder member, he became a full member in the Guild's early days and stayed with the Guild for 48 years, to the end of his life. In fact, at the time of writing, he was the Worcestershire Guild's longest serving member.

In September 1954 the Guild held another show at the Midland Institute, where Peter Lemmon started to help his father Albert and Mrs Keep, a handloom weaver from Broadway, exhibited as a guest. The accounts for the exhibition showed total sales of £132.8s.2d., a slight improvement on the previous year and not a bad result from just thirteen exhibitors. By this time they had compiled a list of over 90 people to whom invitations could be sent, which improved their attendance figures. In the first few years the guild kept a visitors book at every show and it is surprising how far some people travelled and how loyal they were over those first years.

The Committee decided to hold a series of lectures to encourage local people to take an interest in the arts and crafts. The first three were Ironwork by Alan Knight, Weaving By Rosemary Dugdale-Bradley, and Goethe's Colour Theory by Michael Wilson. They seem to have been fairly well attended and set a pattern that was to be repeated in the seventies. By this time at the end of 1954 there were 3 associate members, 13 full members and 32 lay members.

Until the early 1960s members filled out a list for the exhibition secretary before each show, itemising, describing and pricing all their exhibits. This information was then sent to the printers and a catalogue made which included the name and address of each craftsman and woman exhibiting. The catalogues make fascinating reading fifty years on. In 1955 Howard Bissell was selling a large coffeepot in slipware for £1.12s.6d., Grace Digby's agate and silver collar was £7.7s.0d., William Fowkes was selling a panelled oak chest for £8.10.0d., and Geoffrey Whiting a stoneware teapot for £2.2s.0d. ( they sell nowadays for some hundreds of pounds). His teapots are in the collections of Cheltenham Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Albert Lemmon made lanterns out of stained glass, which he sold at exhibitions to supplement his income and to show the standard of his work and these were on sale for £5. (Amongst early hand written

papers is a note from Edward Barnsley saying that he had “nothing he should be happy to send for exhibition” and conveying his regrets.)

A members directory is still produced every year giving the names and contact details of every member and giving the exhibition dates for that year.

### **1955 – an important year.**

1955 was a very important year for the Guild. As well as the continuation of the lectures, which brought the work of the Guild to the attention of the public, the Officers started to make contact with other Associations, Societies, and Community Councils.

On 9<sup>th</sup> June Alice Barnwell attended a Conference of County Guilds, which was convened by the Master of the Herefordshire Guild.

Present were representatives from:

The Guild of Herefordshire,

Guild of Gloucestershire,

The Somerset Guild of Craftsmen,

The Worcestershire Guild of Artist-Craftsmen,

The Leicestershire Rural Craftmen’s Association,

The Welsh Guild of Rural Craftsmen,

The Norfolk Rural Craftsmen’s Guild,

The Guild of Many Crafts Norfolk,

The Board of Trade for Birmingham,

Warwickshire Rural Community Council,

The Rural Industries Bureau from London and its area officer(later known as COSIRA)

The Chairman of the Conference, Captain Bengough of the Hereford Craftsmen was delighted at the keenness and support shown by all the Guilds, as only two of the nine in existence were not represented. They had called a conference in order to promote and improve the market, because export orders were being lost. This was mainly due to Craftsmen being unable to produce the work required in the specified time. He felt that if all the Guilds pulled together, supported each other, and the individual members got to know each other better, they would have the confidence in each other necessary to promote hand-crafted goods and work together to increase productivity and improve awareness. As we have seen this was one of the strengths of the Bromsgrove Guild.

The representative for the Board of Trade explained that it was responsible for the wellbeing of industry and commerce in Great Britain. It also had commissioners throughout the Commonwealth, who managed all the information necessary for would-be exporters. The Board of Trade also arranged introductions for anybody going abroad who wished to find their own market. Anyone wanting to avoid the

paperwork or necessary nitty-gritty of overseas commerce could sell their work to the National General Export Merchants Group, who would sell the work on for them. It was suggested that if a federation was formed, a Rural Industries Exhibition could be staged in London as a shop window for foreign buyers. The only one to voice concern about selling abroad and the commercial and professional attitude this would need was Colonel Garten of Somerset. He felt that the Guilds should not try to compete with modern methods of commerce or manufacture, and that the one outstanding thing that they had to sell was individual craftsmanship. He did, however, favour the idea of a Federation of County Guilds. The question arose as to where the money would come from. Few Artist-craftsmen made a lot of money, so who could fund it? It was decided that a report of the meeting should be sent to all delegates who should think long and hard on the matter and then another meeting would be held.

Unfortunately, many artists still lack the courage or confidence in their own work to promote it commercially. William Morris, Charles Voysey and Walter Gilbert were exceptions, especially in their time. These days in many ways it is easier to advertise and raise the profile of craftsmen in a Guild, as they can benefit from the internet as well as the exhibitions they put on, although some still seem to find self-promotion difficult – almost embarrassing.

Everyone did think long and hard on the issues raised at the County Guilds Conference, and on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1955, a report was sent with an accompanying letter from the Master of the Herefordshire Guild. He had been in consultation with the Development Commission and the Rural Industries Bureau regarding possible grant aid towards the establishment of a National Guild of Craftsmen. The questions of finance, administration, staff and office accommodation were apparently felt too costly and awkward to implement, and the Master of Hereford suggested that the “time was not ripe”. However, in time, the Federation of British Craft Societies was formed and held exhibitions in London at the British Craft Centre. Although initially nothing came from these meetings, it actually put all the different Guilds in contact one with another, and created a competitive edge.

On a more personal note, in November William Fowkes, who was fairly elderly, wrote to Alan and Alice and apologised that he would not be able to attend meetings in the damp and foggy weather and would see them when it was warmer. Guild activities must have been curtailed considerably in winter months during these early years, as most of the members were not young, not many of them had cars and fog and cold weather would have made travelling more difficult.

1955 also involved many letters being passed backwards and forwards between Worcestershire Rural Community Council, the Rural Industries Bureau and various Guilds throughout Britain to their local Members of Parliament, regarding Purchase Tax on non-metal products. In 1955 the exemption limit on Purchase Tax was £500 and the Guilds were asking for a modification, as it was affecting the ability of craftsmen – potters in particular – to make a living. Although it

ended up on Sir Anthony Eden's desk, the Worcestershire Guild received a letter from the House of Commons saying that, unfortunately, if a concession was made to makers of hand-made goods, there would be a backlash of complaint from manufacturing companies saying that the Government were showing favouritism.

December 5<sup>th</sup> saw the beginning of a very profitable and important phase in the Guild's life, as the members held the first of many exhibitions at the Royal Birmingham Society of Artists' Galleries in New Street in Birmingham, which was opened by Sir Eric Clayson of The Birmingham Post and Mail. John Adams of John Adams (Photography) Ltd. took pictures of the members and their work and he exhibited these with them at this first R.B.S.A. Show, although unfortunately few of the photographs have survived except in faded newspaper articles. The Guild went on to hold an exhibition at the R B S A's galleries in New Street for over fifteen years. In the early years the Guild clung tightly to its belief that the old ways were the best and particularly encouraged crafts that were starting to disappear. In June 1956, a new member called Miss Brown was introduced who sewed hand-made gloves and she exhibited with the Guild for several years.

### **The next few years and the start of inter-guild cooperation**

In 1956 Hugh Birkett was trying on behalf of the Guild to further relations with Worcester Rural Community Council and received a rather pompous apology from them for not going to an arranged meeting. An amusing letter from Hugh to Howard Bissell states that the Council's excuse was "hardly satisfactory"! It must have been particularly irksome, as the Gloucestershire Community Council had been so supportive and helpful to the Gloucestershire Guild in their early years. The Worcestershire Guild and the Guilds of Devon, Gloucester, Hereford, South Wales, Somerset and Wiltshire finally got together and held a craft exhibition and market at Lewis's in Bristol in 1957, organised by Basil Roberts. Sales were not brilliant by all accounts but it was the beginning of co-operation between some of the Guilds, which has now developed in this area of Britain to regular liaison and shared exhibitions. The most long-lasting of these have been the Three Choirs Festival and the exhibitions at the Three Counties Showground.

Minutes of every meeting follow much the same pattern year in year out. Planning of the exhibitions for the year, followed by reports on how well (or badly) they did, new potential venues put forward for appraisal, work by new applicants judged. But every now and then a major issue comes up which has the potential to change the path of the Guild. In 1958, having become aware of the possibility, officers of the Guild drew up a list of questions for its members on a proposal to exhibit in America. Again, as with the chance to be televised by the BBC, nothing came of this for the Guild as an association. The members were too entrenched in their beliefs, and, as most of them were well into middle age, perhaps too scared to take the plunge.

Throughout the fifties and sixties the membership grew, but only slowly and their numbers fluctuated. Members continued to exhibit together, as well as separately within their own field but some of the original impetus had waned, especially as much of the workload fell on Alan, Alice and Geoffrey. Several times in the Minutes Alan remarks on how he would appreciate more help in setting up the exhibitions, a problem which our more recent Exhibition Secretaries have often experienced.

In 1959 a young woman called Ruth Andrews applied for membership. She was a woodcarver, and was accepted into the membership at the next meeting. At the RBSA exhibition of November 1960 she had 29 wood-carvings on show, mostly of animals, with some dishes and salad servers. Gwen Brown, the glove-maker, was still with the Guild and sold ladies and gentlemen's hand-made gloves in washable leather in a variety of colours, as well as in hog skin and lamb suede. These could be bought unlined or lined, from £1 17s 6d. to £2 10s 6d depending on size. She also specialised in gloves for unusual or injured hands.

Other members at this time were Frances Wilkes, sculptor, Nancy Buckley and Vera Miles, both weavers and Harry Brown, a silversmith and jeweller. Vera Miles went on to become a staunch and rather intimidating member.

**John Makepeace Smith** (the Smith was dropped later) became a member in 1961. He exhibited with the Guild for several years and has become one of the most well known cabinet-makers of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. He was actively involved in the administration for a while and in 1962 was acting as assistant to the Guild Secretary. In a routine letter sent out to all the members, he asked for an alphabetical list of all those they would like to invite to shows, as he was compiling a Guild mailing list. Apparently, some of the best patrons of the Guild were being bombarded with invitations in duplicate and even triplicate.

Little paperwork exists from the 1960s, but John's mailing list shows how supportive the "Worcestershire Worthies" were to designer craftsmen, perhaps because many of the members were from the same social background.

After he had left the Guild, John became interested in ecological concerns and attempted to combine them with the practice of craftsmanship. In 1983 he raised funds to buy Hooke Park, 330 acres of woodland near Parnham House, his home and workshop.

Shows continued to be held at the RBSA throughout the sixties, as well as in St Andrew's Parish Centre, Pershore. Unfortunately, there is a considerable gap in the archival material during the 1960s and what little we know now has been passed down by word of mouth from member to member.

**Peter and Joy Evans**, long-term inhabitants of Whiteway in Gloucestershire were members of both the Worcestershire Guild and The Craftsmen of Gloucestershire (now Cotswold Craftsmen).

Peter and Joy were early members of the Gloucestershire Guild, which split into two in the 1960s. They then helped to found and stayed with, the Cotswold Craftsmen until the early 1980s when they left at the same time as Danek Piechowiak due to a huge rift between some of the members.

Peter was born at Rhiwbina near Cardiff, and educated in Cardiff and London. He served in the army during WWII and ,on his return, went back to college to study architecture. Like Geoffrey Whiting, he realised that he preferred creating with his hands, so he gave up his architectural course and became apprenticed to Master Craftsman Oliver Morel, with whom he trained for several years. His furniture was made to an exceptionally high standard and he exhibited with the Guild taking regular commissions until his retirement in the late 1990s. In the archives is a photograph of Her Majesty the Queen signing a document seated at one of Peter's desks.

His wife Joy originally trained as a nurse and worked until she had children to look after. She had discovered the enjoyment of working with wood when she was still a student at the Rudolph Steiner School in Gloucester as a girl, and one day Peter showed her some of the lovely off-cuts of wood left over from his furniture making. Joy started carving again and ,after a few years, had developed a unique style. Her items were popular and sold well and included bowls of varying sizes, plaques, and animals. Before long she was also exhibiting with the Guild. Peter and Joy became Life Members.

On and off from the 1950s the Guild had been exhibiting at the Three Counties Show, which had moved from Gloucester to Malvern. This developed into a mutually satisfactory relationship between the Three Counties Guilds (Worcestershire, Herefordshire and the Cotswold Craftsmen of Gloucestershire) who all exhibited in the same marquee. During the early years, the Guilds were not charged any ground rent, as the Society valued the added kudos that the Guilds brought to the show, which was a splendid county fair with animals of every breed on show, shiny farm machinery and beautiful plants for sale, a brass band playing, and cream teas as only Britain can make. It was a social high point of the year, and people visited it from all over the country. This changed over the years as a more commercial approach developed and the Guilds were required to pay a fee, although this was subsidised. For many years it was the major show and the one show that all members were eager to be part of.. Eventually, in the early part of the new millenium, it was dropped as an official Guild Show, as it was felt that it no longer attracted the right audience, although some members have continued to exhibit there.

### **A temporary but powerful influence**

Public awareness of the merits of hand made products was already limited and Alan and Alice realised that the Worcestershire Guild needed to become more professional in its approach. Throughout the sixties, Guild members had become more and more entrenched, funds were low, and the Knights found they could not galvanise everyone on their own. Then a turning point came in the Guild's history.

In 1971 Cosira (the Rural Industries Council) contacted Miss Margaret Walford and asked her to organise a Mediaeval Millennium Festival, which Pershore wished to put on in 1972 to celebrate a thousand years as a community. She persuaded the Guilds to exhibit, partly because Guilds had been a large and active part of a community in mediaeval times but also as she had a love of the Arts and believed that the artist-craftsman should be helped and encouraged. She contacted Leslie Govier, a painter and printmaker who lived at Bricklehampton and taught at the Birmingham School of Art and Design and he did the design for the poster advertising the Festival and the tea towels that were sold on the day. Shortly afterwards he became a member of the WGDC.

The Worcestershire Guild enjoyed the Festival, which was a great success. After it had all been cleared away and things were back to normal an extraordinary Officers Meeting was convened on 17<sup>th</sup> November 1972 to which Mrs. Walford was invited.

Alan reported that membership was stronger than it had ever been but went on to say there would be no exhibition at Birmingham that year, due mainly to 'prohibitive costs', a sure sign that finances were not healthy. The amount in the bank at this point in time was a mere £190. With no sinking fund and the only assets a few tables and some exhibition equipment, there was little financial protection in case of emergency. Either the members were not paying high enough subscriptions and commissions, or they were not selling enough work – it was no wonder they felt the need for advice. They would, however, be exhibiting at the Three Counties Show and for three days at the Three Choirs Festival. By this time the Guild had a mailing list of over 1000 people, and there were 21 members, but there were no longer any Lay Members. The membership subscription was still only £1 and Alan felt it should be raised.

Alan advised the Officers that the Guild needed help to promote itself, raise the public's awareness of its designer-made goods, and perhaps find a workshop. Mrs. Walford's administration of the Pershore Festival had been professional and effective, so he felt she might give them helpful advice on marketing and publicity and he had invited her to speak at the meeting.

Mrs Walford (Tibi) introduced Frank Mundy who had been Treasurer of the Festival, and who had agreed to give his support. She had already had lengthy



discussions with Alan, and so she outlined in some detail her own ideas for a Revision of the Rules and Objectives of the Guild. After a detailed debate she was invited to submit a report by the end of December outlining a 'new proposed form' (Constitution) for the Guild. New officers were voted in but would not take up office until the new form had been submitted and accepted at the AGM at the beginning of the following year. They would be: -

Alice - Chairman,  
Alan - Exhibition Secretary,  
Tibi - Honorary Director, and  
Frank - Treasurer.

Alan said that the Three Counties Show of 1972 had been the Guild's best show ever and the fifteen members exhibiting had taken over £690.

The Officers retired for the Christmas period, and Mrs. Walford drew up the proposed revised rules as agreed, which were sent to all the members on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1973, along with the date of the next meeting, so they could think them over ready for discussion.

Before Tibi gave her report, Alan reminded those present they had full voting power and control over their Guild and were not obliged to agree to anything they did not like.

The report started with a suggestion that the Guild should adopt the design of an emblem in the form of a bird called "Bringer of Joy" representing 'joy in the freedom of expression in work'. It could be used as a logo on their stationary, posters and invitations and the members could all have badges. Largely at Tibi's suggestion, Alan had designed the emblem and made one as a test piece, which was shown to the members present. Tibi went over her suggested amendments to the Constitution and it was obvious from the start that things would be tightened up considerably. She was firm regarding the standards of workmanship, administration and organisation of finances and suggested that the Constitution of the Guild be altered as follows: -

- 1 New members - associate members for 12 months, subscription £3
- 2 Full members – £4
- 3 Lay members - £2
- 4 A high profile local dignitary should be invited to be Patron.
- 5 The Hon. Director and the Hon. Treasurer would be ex-officio members on all Committees.
- 6 There would be a Selection Committee chosen at every AGM of three Full members.
- 7 If the annual finance stood at a loss, members would pay up to but not more than an amount equal to the annual subscription, in order to nullify that loss. (It

is possible, though not documented, that Alan and Alice had been covering any shortfall up to this point.)

- 8 The definition of artist-craftsmen would be changed to exclude painters.
- 9 Lectures should be brought back as they were a good means of publicity.
- 10 There would be four full meetings per year which all members would be expected to attend.
- 11 There would be an 'Organising Committee' made up of those voted in who would meet more regularly (Officers' meeting).

In addition to the revised Constitution, Tibi also advised on the eventual addition of a Craft Centre incorporating a gallery and workshop paid for through a Trust Fund or other funding, an idea which had been discussed in the past and considered too costly for the members to afford.

The rules and aims were amended and passed by the membership, but two issues were left on hold. Although the emblem was discussed at length, not all members liked it, so a decision was not reached. The members also clearly found the idea of the prospective centre concerning in terms of financial responsibility and were perhaps concerned at the risk of losing control of their guild to outsiders or professional businessmen. Peter Evans, good at discerning the feelings of the membership and diplomatic in speaking for them, proposed that the membership should accept the concept of the aims and objectives for a centre, but that no decision on it should be made for the time being. All the members agreed to this. Finally, a new financial arrangement was agreed and the Guild changed from the Midland Bank to Lloyds, with cheques no longer signed by Alan but jointly by Tibi and Frank Mundy. It was agreed that there should be a financial report at every General Meeting from the Treasurer, and Tibi would give a report on the "revision of the revision" at the next meeting.

At the next General Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> March, which was followed by the AGM, all the members were present and met Tibi and Frank for the first time and they were accepted as Honorary Members.

Officers obviously did not telephone members much between meetings and even at this late date not everyone knew that Geoffrey Whiting and Penelope Gibson had left the previous year. They were saddened by the news, particularly as Geoffrey had been a member for twenty years but on a positive note, five new members were welcomed. (One of them being Anna Yelland who was mentioned earlier. Her husband John, an accountant, faithfully audited the Guild accounts 'pro bono' for many years, until 2017.)

The members were not keen to accept the emblem, so it was decided that Tibi would contact a few graphic designers to come up with some designs.

In April, there was another major change, as it was agreed that all information and paperwork would be sent directly to Tibi. She would deal with all routine matters,

and report to the General Committee; decisions of major importance would be put before a full Guild meeting. She would also receive all applications for membership from the public and call a Selection Committee Meeting when several had been received. In effect she was doing the jobs of Publicity Officer, Membership Secretary, Company Secretary and President.

As everyone thought the idea of public lectures a good one, names were put forward of people suitable to give them, and suggestions included Edward Barnsley, Osmond Webb, Sir Gordon Russell, Sir Hugh Chance and Fred Archer. The local branch of COSIRA would be informed of the lectures and they would be advertised in church newsletters and Women's Institute circulars.

Tibi put forward ideas on how to get funding for the proposed Craft Centre for the Guild, but was asked to make preliminary investigation into costs only. At each meeting she brought up the issue of the emblem, but even with professional designers giving input the members were not in favour of either an emblem or a logo. In the archives there is a pencil cartoon on tracing paper of a tree with spreading branches - an idea that Alice Barnwell had for a Guild emblem, which was never accepted or taken any further either. It is not clear if she actually put the design forward for review or if it was simply a private concept she had.

The Guild exhibited at the Three Counties Show from 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> June 1973, followed by an officers' meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> which was held at Tibi's house, The Old Rectory at Naunton Beauchamp. Alan reported on an insurance claim regarding damage done to an exhibit at the show, which Phoenix had agreed to pay for. Items had also been stolen at the show (three pin trays), but could not be included in the claim due to the limitation of the policy.

Tibi put forward the names of the lecturers and suggested that VIPs should be invited to introduce them, which was thought a good idea. It was decided that a programme of the lectures would be printed and used as a Membership Card, and three of these are in the archives. Though small, they are smart and neat, and a handy size to keep permanently in a wallet. Although undoubtedly he had never seen them, Brian Maiden, when he was Guild Secretary, started cards for all the members in 2003 with all the dates of the shows and meetings for the year, and everyone found them very useful.

As the last lecture was in March, Tibi advised changing the financial year to end on 31<sup>st</sup> March in 1974, another major change, which would have to be put to the next General meeting. She also asked and got permission from the Officers to have stationery printed with the Guild name and it is surprising to think that it actually took over twenty years to get around to something so basic but which immediately gave the Guild a more professional image.

The Officers had been thinking of holding one other big annual exhibition and decided to find out if St Andrew's Parish Centre, Pershore was available in

November. It became a venue that proved popular and successful for many years. Members of the public were expected to pay for admission to St Andrew's Hall, but it did not stretch the purse too badly, as they only had to part with 10 pence in the early days! Admission fees were stopped in the 1990s, mainly because the Guild changed the venue of the exhibition to the Guild Hall in Worcester and being a public access building, admission charges are not permitted there. It was probably also felt that charging the public might put them off coming in.

At this point the Minutes record that Tibi was dissatisfied with the attitude of some of the members and felt it necessary to define the Aims and Objectives of the Guild more clearly. She insisted that any information given to the press should go through her first. She also pressed the Officers present on the issue of her idea for a Centre, stating that the idea had been outlined in the new rules as agreed by all the members. She wanted to know that the committee was behind her on the issue before she went to press, and so they gave their agreement. From the high-profile newspaper articles and photographs that have survived, it is clear that Tibi charmed the journalists into giving good press coverage.

At another general members meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> June, Tibi said that, as they had sought the professional advice of graphic designers, it should be taken. She asked everyone to reconsider accepting the bird design – perhaps they would prefer it if it were tilted to represent a right hand rather than a left hand holding a bird? Alan proposed that the whole idea of an emblem should be 'left in abeyance' and this idea was seconded. A show of hands showed the voting was equal, a fact that proves Tibi's idea was not disliked by everyone, but obviously those against the idea were forceful in making their views felt. As the voting was equal, the Chairman (Alice) exercised her casting vote – and the emblem idea was dropped. Tibi expressed disappointment that members would not give her the support she needed to carry out her policy of improving the Guild's image. Her dogged determination had not reckoned with the equal stubbornness of the members!

Mr. Watts the President of COSIRA was retiring, and Alan suggested he be made an Honorary Member. Tibi said she had already dealt with the matter and he had agreed to be a Lay Member. Alan, probably irritable after yet another session on the emblem idea, was obviously quite angry and said it was a matter for the members to vote on and that Honorary Members had "no say in the matter and no vote". Tibi felt her authority was being undermined and even though jeweller Harry Brown supported her view that making Mr. Watts a PRO would intrude on the duties the Guild had asked her to carry out, a heated argument followed. The Chairman closed the meeting with everyone feeling very uncomfortable.

Generally speaking, because of the slow nature of their work, artists and craftsmen are resistant to change. Reading the Minutes at this time, the inference given is that changes were simply happening too fast.

Alan and Alice were not present at the meeting in September so Robert Pancheri acted as Chairman. A confirmed list of the forthcoming lectures was given as follows :-

Lecturer	introduced by
Edward Barnsley	Lord Sandys
Dr F C Warlock	H John Podmore
Sir Hugh Chance	George Elliot (George actually gave the lecture on Glass Blowing instead)
Leslie Harris	Leslie Govier
Sir Gordon Russell	Admiral Sir Derek Holland-Martin (actually replaced by Peter Inchbold)

The first Lecture, given on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 1974 by Edward Barnsley, is described in the minutes as ‘an interesting exposition on “Things Men Make” and his views on Art against Craft’. The lecture had an audience of 64, with ten of the Full Members present. There were five new applicants for membership, three of whom were accepted as Associate (now called Guest) Members, one as a Full Member. A corn dolly maker was turned down.

At this point as there was a selection committee of only three, most members did not get the chance to give their opinion on a new prospective member’s work, which occasionally led to the feeling that sub-standard craftsmanship was being allowed in. As a result of this, the members asked Tibi to bring examples of the applicants’ work to meetings so they could see it before they were asked to ratify the Selection Committee’s recommendations. Nowadays, all full members are entitled to vote on new candidates’ work and ,in the event of a tie, the Chairman has the casting vote.

Tibi told the meeting that due to her press contacts six articles would be appearing in the Evening News on Vera Miles, Anna Yelland, Elizabeth Smith, Robert Pancheri, Alan Knight and Martin Pierce. She had read all the articles and said that not one of the members interviewed had mentioned or claimed membership of the Worcestershire Guild. It was a fair comment and should perhaps apply today just as much, as the Guild needs constant publicity to keep it in the forefront of the public’s mind.

Tibi worked tirelessly for the Guild for two and a half years and during that time, she and Frank married. As it had been decided that membership should be opened to applicants nation-wide, the numbers grew. Her written report as Honorary Director of the Guild for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 1974 states that there were eighteen members at the beginning of the year, 26 at year end, and 37 Lay members. The lectures had been attended by over 400 people, and although they had made a loss of £20 over all, were felt to be a worthwhile project showing the Guild in a good light and giving it wider publicity. She reported that her efforts had given the Guild good Press coverage both in magazines and newspapers and

the various exhibitions were showing a gradual increase in takings. At the 1973 Three Counties Show, there was a net profit of £60. At the St Andrews Annual Show in November, total sales were over £1100 with a net profit of nearly £170. 1300 people had passed through the doors during the week – 500 on the Saturday alone. Her report also gave figures for the 1974 Three Counties Show, which had sales over £1200 and a net profit of over £70. There is no doubt that the guild showed a considerable financial improvement. With Tibi's help and enthusiasm, the Guild was getting the marketing boost it needed and the Officers were being encouraged towards a more professional and commercial approach.

From the 10<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> August 1974 the Guild exhibited at Lifford Hall in Broadway with the Craftsmen of Gloucestershire and held their exhibition in St. Andrews Parish Centre in November, by then an annual event. Cash in Hand at the end of March 1973 had been £167 and at the end of 1974 was just under £500.

Ironically, even though funds were greatly improved, in Tibi's report she remarked on the need for a new typewriter and a filing cabinet to cope with the increase in correspondence. The Guild was finally given a second hand filing cabinet in 2003 by the Archivist Sue Lauzier's ex-husband M. Jean-Marie Lauzier.

Nowadays, the Worcestershire Guild has far more officers, all responsible for their own area – publicity, membership applications, exhibitions, fundraising, web-site, and so on, and all the members are encouraged to take an active part in its administration. Perhaps the most important lessons learned in the 1970s were the need to spread the workload and the art of delegation.

The lectures continued and were annual winter events for a time at the St Andrew's Parish Centre in Pershore. On 6<sup>th</sup> March 1974 Sir Gordon Russell gave a talk on "Craftsmanship Today", and a lecture given on The Bromsgrove Guild by Robert Pancheri on 6<sup>th</sup> November showed the first set of posters printed by The Oak Leaf Studio run by Leslie Govier.

In April 1974 the Guilds of Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire met at the Three Counties Showground, in order to try and arrange facilities for them all. The early shows of the three Guilds were called the Rural Crafts Exhibition, and Harry Williams of the Herefordshire Guild had been successful in obtaining a grant from the Crafts Advisory Committee (CAC) towards staging costs. Various ideas were put forward on what the money could be used for, which included buying and dyeing butter muslin to line the walls of the tent, lighting, extension leads and posts topped with the county crests. A sub-committee of the three Guilds would make a final decision on how to use the money. In those days they exhibited in a marquee, not an ideal way of showing due to poor security, diffused lighting (terrible for all glassware) and risk from damp and flooding. A marquee is still occasionally used at other venues, but during the 1990's all Arts and Crafts were moved into the Wye Hall, part of a complex of enormous permanent barns, which are excellent for exhibiting purposes.

Owen Swindale, a new jeweller with the Guild, had agreed to be Guild representative of the Federation of British Craft Societies (FBCS) but had nothing to report from his first meeting, as he was still learning what the Society's roll was and how it might be beneficial to the Guild.

Surprisingly, in spite of the drain on finances, the lectures continued, with Alan Knight giving a lecture called Art in Iron on 5<sup>th</sup> February 1975, and F.W.B. Charles F.R.I.B.A. a talk on Mediaeval Craftsmanship on March 5<sup>th</sup>.

The Guild was becoming more and more aware at this time of the importance of various craft organisations, of which there were many.. For a while, contact was maintained with various councils and societies but enthusiasm gradually waned.

Lay Membership had by this time started a steady decline; there were only 28 compared with 37 the year before and within a few years there were none at all. Although Lay Members did not pay a huge amount in subscriptions, money was short and their decline was, to the members, a sign of disaffection by the public.

Although a proposed Craft Centre with showrooms, workshop and administration devoted to Artists and Designers was continually suggested by Tibi, Alan, Alice and some of the other founder members, most were very cautious in their way of thinking and afraid of change. Reading between the lines, they were also very stubborn, and did not like the feeling that they were 'being managed'. Tibi eventually wrote a letter, stating that as the members did not want to accept her ideas or follow her advice in order to improve the Guild's standing, she wished to bow out of involvement with them. Understandably, Frank also resigned as Treasurer. In the archives is a letter, dated May 1975, which was sent to Peter and Joy Evans from Tibi, explaining her decision to resign as Director of the Guild. She said she had been proud to be given the opportunity of trying to help the Guild but that many of the members "no longer upheld the principles set out in the Rules and Objectives unanimously agreed two years ago". She found their inward looking attitudes and restrictive views inhibited her ability to work. In fact, her ideas and plans for the Guild, whilst sensible, were not practicable at that time due to the very nature of the members and their artistic approach to life and to business. Her drive and professionalism, her plans and ideas, were comparable with those of Walter Gilbert, but the speed with which she wanted to implement them was at variance with the members' wishes. Nevertheless, she was instrumental in making permanent changes and undoubtedly affected the attitude of the Officers and the membership, as the present administration shows and she should be applauded for this.

An Extraordinary Meeting was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> May and letters from the Mundys were read out to the members, who officially accepted their resignations as Honorary Director and Treasurer. Ray Key was elected as Treasurer, and Owen

Swindale took over in the position of Honorary Director, both motivated men who kept the wind of change blowing, and continued to tighten up the administration.

### **A Stronger Guild**

As Tibi had changed the year-end to March, it stayed there, so the next meeting in June 1975 was the AGM. The new Officers were Robert Pancheri as President, Alan Knight, as usual, as Exhibition Secretary, with Vicky Mullins as his assistant. Robert told the meeting that the Mundys had done an enormous amount of the work which would now have to be shared out by the Guild members as it could not all be left to the Officers. Sounds familiar! As a result, Vera Miles was elected as Lecture and Guild Secretary, Alan Knight as Vice-Chairman, and Peter Pritchard as the first official Publicity Secretary.

They made the important decision to buy twenty trestle tables for the Guild's permanent use, to save on hire charges and Hugh Birkett offered storage facilities. They were the Guild's first large equipment expense and were eventually purchased by Alan Knight, who found some in Somerset.

Throughout the sixties and seventies, hessian was used to cover the tables and stands, a coarse natural fabric that was popular at the time. As with all trends it had its day and by the late seventies had earned a reputation for and was associated with "second-rate, amateur, bearded, muesli-eating, sandal wearing, craftspeople". Ray Key was a young, gifted, modern, entrepreneurial wood-turner, already making a name for himself and desperate to avoid this image. For several years he struggled to persuade the members to drop hessian and Alice Barnwell was the one he had to work on most persuasively, as she had been using it for longest! One day he appeared at a show with some smart pure white show stands - melamine had arrived - and all the members were impressed with how the exhibits stood out against the white background. Although the trestle tables were still used they were covered with a neutral grey fabric which draped well and was easy to launder. So hessian was dropped and the Guild moved to another level as it strove to present itself in a more professional way. Ray, President for many years, was a pivotal member of the Guild until his death in 2018 and kept it moving forwards in its approach. With other strong members such as Owen Swindale, Martyn Pugh, who we shall meet shortly, and others, he has ensured that the Worcestershire Guild has grown in strength, quality and professionalism.

Back to 1975 and everyone was delighted to see Alice at the October meeting.

Ray reported that the lectures were still draining funds, and Vera Miles said attendance figures were terrible and suggested they should stop. They discussed ways of increasing income and decided to change the commission on sales to a sliding scale of a basic 12.5% decreasing to 5% on more expensive items. No final decision was made on the lectures but again the need for new Lay Members was broached and George Watts was elected as a Lay Membership Secretary. More



and more Officers were being brought into action, which spread the work load still further and helped to knit the group as a team.

Owen suggested Malvern Hills College as a possible new venue for the lectures, which might be cheaper and draw on a fresh audience. He also said perhaps the members themselves could give the lectures..

As examples in the archives show, at this time the Officers had not developed a well-designed members list and often the paperwork produced was cheap owing to lack of funds. The Guild was no longer having catalogues printed, presumably because they were too expensive and anyway, there were too many members to be able to itemise each piece. Nobody had a computer in those days so the minutes were still being produced on a typewriter but photocopiers had arrived on the scene, which helped with duplication. They did however, have 5,000 leaflets printed with the members names and crafts, and a list of the exhibitions for the year.

The members did agree to give the next set of lectures, so those for 1976/77 were:-

6 <sup>th</sup> October 1976	Craftsmen of Worcestershire by Alan Knight
3 <sup>rd</sup> November 1976	Wood and stone carving by Robert Pancheri
1 <sup>st</sup> December 1976	Wood and the Craftsmen by Ray Key
5 <sup>th</sup> January 1977	The beginning of Batik by Margaret Hallmark
2 <sup>nd</sup> February 1977	William Morris – Poet, artist and craftsman by Owen Swindale
2 <sup>nd</sup> March 1977	Open Forum – questions, discussion and an exhibition of recent work.

The annual Christmas exhibition was held again in 1976 at Pershore from 6<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> December.

By this time the Guild had acquired two very valuable friends who not only attended exhibitions and bought work, but also became actively involved by helping with the moving of equipment and later with storage. They were Harry(Bunny) and Peggy Brown. Originally loyal supporters of the Craftsmen of Gloucestershire and friends of Peter and Joy Evans, they both eventually became designer-makers themselves. Peggy first with her leather work (eventually she specialised in bellows making) and later Bunny as a blacksmith, making firescreens, pokers, curtain poles, wall light brackets etc. They gradually took on more and more responsibility for the storage and transport of the equipment, and Peggy acted as exhibition secretary for a number of years. .

In 1976 the Guild approached the AA and the RAC to find out the cost of using their signs for shows which were easy for the public to follow and were being used by many organisations all over the country.

Various people applied for membership during the year but several were turned down, as they were considered “ineligible”. They included a reed organ builder, and an antique clock repairer. They were probably the kind of members that the Bromsgrove Guild would have welcomed, due to the need for craftsmen in old-fashioned trades. If the standard of their work was good, perhaps it is a shame that the Guild did not take such diversity on board at that time, if for no other reason than to boost flagging funds. The Guild maintained a firm stance on constitutional ethics, however, and even though every subscription counted, one member was asked to resign that year as he did nothing for the Guild and had not shown his face at exhibitions for some time. This attitude towards apathy and laziness is still held and there are very few members who do not attend shows at least once or twice a year. Most of them enjoy the exhibitions, muck in, and pull together as a team.

The Guild couldn't seem to make up its mind where to hold meetings that year; in

February they met at the Jenny Hill Gallery at a cost of £4, in June for the AGM at the Three Counties Showground, and in October they had a general meeting in the Commandery in Worcester. Eventually it was decided that for the time being the Jennie Hill Gallery would be a regular meeting place, and Jennie Hill was invited to be an Honorary Lay Member.

Mr Downes, the Chief Executive of the Three Counties Show asked for financial support towards the cost of the marquee for the show in 1977, and the members were asked for £3.00 each, so this was obviously the first year that the Guild had to start paying.

The Guild celebrated its Silver Jubilee at a special dinner at the Falconry Restaurant and the evening was a great success. The summer exhibition was not held in Clent but at Elmfield School Hall, Stourbridge, and crafts were demonstrated to the general public including weaving, batik, jewellery, pottery and wood carving. Margaret Hallmark, a new member specialising in Batik work, knew a journalist at the Evening News in Worcester and the Guild was approached by the paper, which was interested in doing an article on all the craftsmen, to include photographs. It was a helpful contact with the paper which has led to excellent coverage over the years.

Unfortunately, Owen Swindale's idea for a change of venue for the lectures at Malvern did not work well. The publicity was inadequate which did not help and members opted to return the lectures to Pershore.

Though she was not with the Guild for long, Tibi had set certain standards which the members recognised were important and so, throughout 1976/77, a new Constitution was drawn up and after some modification it was accepted by the membership. Since then, the Constitution has been checked and amended regularly, for many years a job that was taken on by the Treasurer Peter Bennett.

One of the issues brought up at the next meeting was the title of the Guild. It appeared some members of the public were confused by the term "Artist-Craftsmen" and after much discussion the name of the Guild was changed to Designer-Craftsmen.

As the dinner at the Falconry had been a great success, Alan Knight suggested the idea of an annual Guild dinner, which was immediately agreed to, as the Guild was gradually developing into the warm, supportive and friendly group it is today. The Commandery was thought a good place to go and was booked.

Owen Swindale was Secretary in 1977, and organised the printing of posters to advertise forthcoming exhibitions and said each member should be responsible for putting some up in their area, as it was crucial to improve publicity.

Meetings of the Guild continued at the Commandery and three main annual exhibitions were held: the Three Counties Show in June, another at Elmfield School Stourbridge in August where demonstrations would be given and the usual Winter one at Pershore. In fact the Stourbridge show did not fulfil its early promise and was discontinued in 1978, a shorter summer exhibition being felt more sensible. Due to the Guild's long links through its winter exhibitions, St Andrew's Hall Pershore was booked for five days in August 1978, the Winter one being held at the beginning of December as usual.

Ray Key, still Treasurer in 1978, said that funds were running lower than in previous years, mainly due to capital expenditure on tables and other equipment. Other expenses were still due and it was time to increase the membership fee. He also said that he wasn't sure the Guild was doing enough for the Lay Members to justify their fee.

In April the lectures were finally dropped as there was not enough public support. Instead there would be three special meetings per year, one a social evening, the other two as circumstances dictated, perhaps a film evening or an outing. The first was a visit to Erdigg Castle where Alan Knight had been restoring ironwork for the National Trust.

In June the Three Counties Show was reviewed and Alan commented that it was getting very crowded and this was not necessarily a good thing. Reading between the lines, it is inferred that a different kind of public was attending the shows, perhaps less educated, who did not appreciate Guild craftsmanship and even if they did, could not afford to buy anything. However, it was decided it was still worth doing. In fact, similar discussions have taken place at Guild meetings every year ever since and in 2004 the Three Counties Show was almost dropped due to inadequate space and unhelpful showground officials. In those days there was no huge catering facility next door as there is today, so the guild did its own. In their early years with the Craftsmen of Gloucestershire, Peter and Joy Evans usually

stayed on site as security was minimal and later Anna Yelland took her caravan when necessary.

In spite of Ray's concern, membership subscription was kept at £4 per annum, but commission was changed to 10% on sales up to £100 and 5% thereafter.

Ray remarked on the poor stewarding at exhibitions and Alan Evans agreed with him that it was important for the public to be able to discuss things with the craftsman. His father Peter agreed and offered to do a duty rota so that all the members would do set times on duty.

In 1979/80 there were 25 members.

Although the officers have become far more professional in their administrative skills largely due to the advent of computers, there is actually very little difference between the officers' discussions of the 1970s and those of today. New signs to be made, better publicity needed, erection of exhibition equipment, representatives needed for various local councils and authorities, members moving away, new members coming on the scene. The life of a busy Guild does not change much, and the dedication of true designer-makers stays the same.

Owen left the Worcestershire Guild in 1979 when he moved to Scotland and was made a Life Member. He recommended Ray Key as a possible replacement for himself, as he said he was already doing some of the paperwork and was qualified to take on the duties. Kathleen Tucker agreed to take on the responsibility of printing leaflets and posters, yet another of Owen's many responsibilities.

At the 1979 AGM held at the Commandery in Worcester, Hugh Birkett was elected as Chairman, with a vote of thanks to Robert Pancheri for many years' service in the chair. Alan Evans was made the new representative to the Federation of British Craft Societies, Ray Key elected as Secretary, and Alan Knight re-elected as Exhibition Secretary. The position of Exhibition Secretary, more than any other, seems to keep the same officer for many years, probably because it's such a daunting task no one is brave enough to take it on. Until 1979 the Exhibition Secretary had done a lot of the erecting of the stands including the exhibiting of the members' work. Owen suggested at this, his last meeting, that members should be responsible for erecting their own stands, and that Alan's role should be principally advisory. Unknown to the members, this was to make a major difference to the Exhibition Secretary's job – imagine having to erect the entire exhibition on their own today! Alan told members there was an offer of storage space for exhibition material, and the use of workshops by a Mr Guestwood of Oldhouse Farm, Hanbury, but in fact Bunny and Peggy Brown started storing the equipment at their house instead, and have done so with a break of a few years, ever since.

Eric Tucker was elected as Treasurer (subject to consent as he wasn't there), a post he held for many years, and his wife Kathleen was formally accepted as publicity Secretary.

Malcolm Sutcliffe was offered Guest Membership, his wife Jean offered Full Membership.

There was an excellent article in the Evening Mail in August 1979 on the summer show at Pershore, with mention of Joy Evan's wood-carving, Alan Evan's silver work and a photograph showing a bearded Peter Evans with two "chools" (combination of chair and stool). There is also a picture of Nora Florence with samples of her rush baskets and of clocks made by Hugh Birkett. The article was undoubtedly instrumental in bringing the public into the exhibition, but it is a fact that at that time in the history of the Guild Pershore had a very strong section of society that was interested in fine craftsmanship.

In spite of a successful first summer show in Pershore it was decided in 1980 to cancel the next one. Members did not like to be away from their workshops too long so the winter exhibition in Pershore was also cut to five days but with a Preview Evening held for invited guests, preceded by a supper for the members exhibiting. More money would be spent on advertising this event to try and boost sales, but the members felt that though the Guild had been holding shows in Pershore for 7 or 8 years, the response from the public had not grown. For this reason the Tuckers were asked to look into venues in Worcester, and to report back at the following meeting. They discovered that the Guild could use the Commandery free of charge for a summer show but the members felt it was not the right place. Guild funds were slowly increasing as each show made a little more profit, but this was used to buy yet more equipment and the professionalism of the Guild grew. Kathleen Tucker was a good publicity secretary and arranged for the Worcester Evening News to insert an advert in each paper every month which she changed each time to include any individual exhibitions the members were doing on their own.

At the June meeting before the AGM of 1980, Martyn Pugh, silver and gold smith was accepted as a Guest Member, and very quickly became a driving force in the Guild, later acting as Chairman for several years. His powerful personality and hilariously voluble sense of fun have made him a hugely popular member, (although apparently the Guild meetings used to go on rather a long time!) and although he is now very well known and exhibits all over the country and abroad, he is still a regular exhibitor with the Guild, and much appreciated as a result. He and his wife Veronica became involved in Guild social life and his business partner Julia valiantly cooked a meal for the entire membership for several years.

In 1980, twenty-eight years after founding the Guild and at the age of 69, Alan Knight was still acting as exhibition secretary and doing a lot of the work. He firmly told everyone that he did not feel able to continue unless he had more help. In fact at the next meeting he said he was not prepared to stage the next Three

Counties Show so someone else would have to do it. His hard work paid off in 1980 as the takings at the Three Counties were up by 20%.

Ray's wife Liz comes into the picture at this point as she offered to provide the Guild meal before the preview. Ray was beavering away to persuade the members to change/improve the Guild's image and offered to make some new display stands. The publicity posters and preview invitations were given a new format, and wine and glasses were organised. This was the first preview of the Worcestershire Guild. It was showing a more professional approach each year.

### **1981**

The Income and Expenditure details for 1981-2 make interesting reading. The members' gross sales amounted to £5,946.33, with an excess of expenditure over income of £296.25. With only £203.36 in the two bank accounts they obviously needed to be careful. It is amusing to note that in spite of this, although the entire cost of hall hire for the year was £57, and printing for the year £117.56, they spent **£86** on wine at the preview. The members obviously enjoyed the wine as much as the guests!

### **Moving On**

In March 1982 the meeting was held at Margret Hallmark's house, Grange Cottage Whittington.

The Treasurer Eric Tucker reported that the Pershore Exhibition of the previous winter had made a loss of £54 despite sales and door receipts being up on the previous year. He said the cost of staging the exhibition had been higher due to wine, electricity and advertising. His wife Kathleen, at that time still responsible for advertising and publicity, felt that the small press ads had not been very effective and perhaps they should be reviewed and possibly scrapped. The committee made several proposals to help rectify the finances. They would take 10% commission from all sales, which would be reviewed after the next Pershore Show. Guest Members would pay £4 in exhibition fees and the entry fee would go up from 20p to 25p. It was also thought that guests at previews might be invited to make a contribution towards the wine. Ray, Guild Secretary, said that although the show had been of a high standard it was a shame that so few exhibitors had been prepared to steward the show, as it had fallen to a few dedicated people to cover the opening hours. It was decided that each member should steward for a full two days and if unable to, should try and send a deputy or at least inform Ray so adequate cover could be arranged. Ray's wife Liz had provided the meal for all the members prior to the Pershore Show and was thanked formally for her hard work.

The Pershore Show for 1982 was to be from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> December incl. By including the weekend it was hoped the stewarding problem would be solved.

It was now well recognised that poor stewarding reduces sales, a key reason why they made a loss. Ray was finding the burden of work quite heavy and it was suggested that perhaps Malcolm Sutcliffe (not present) could be asked to take on some of the responsibility for arranging the Three Counties Show.

The Three Counties Show dates for 1982 were 15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> June incl. and the Worcestershire Guild were the hosts for that year. Even as recently as the eighties full members were only paying £5 show fee, which meant that with only twenty or so members exhibiting, exhibition fees only totalled about £100.

A representative of the guild was now regularly attending meetings of the Federation of British Craft Societies. The Federation was a means for Guilds and other craft groups to “talk shop” and for national lobbying on behalf of the craft movement and had its roots in the aftermath of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The British Craft Centre, based in Covent Garden in London, had itself evolved from a former exhibiting Society of which Alan Knight and Hugh Birkett were both members for a time.

Ray remembered representing the Worcestershire Guild at an earlier meeting held in the Folk Museum at St Fagin’s Castle on the outskirts of Cardiff in the 1970s. Present was a man who founded and ran the Rural Craft Society, which bought and let space in all the major agricultural and country shows in Britain. He employed ten people who made mice out of yew wood and sold them at every show. Ray made a point of complaining that the quality of some exhibitors work was not up to the standard he felt requisite as representative of the Federation. David Canter, founder of the Craftsmans Potters Association (and founder and boss of Cranks Health Foods which became a big nation-wide company) thanked Ray for making a point of the need for sub-standard work to be kept out of the Society. The Federation in fact gradually went into decline in the mid- to late 1980s.

The Three Counties Show in 1982 turned out to be the most successful for many years, according to the minutes of the June meeting, with a profit of £368. Malcolm had helped with the setting up of the Show and Ray was very grateful for the extra help. As the Worcestershire Guild had been the host that year it was apparent how inadequate the facilities were, so it was decided that the other guilds should be contacted to share the cost of improving them and later that year the guild acquired its first tea urn. Tea and coffee is so important at shows and the larger the membership grew, the more inadequate using a kettle became. Basket maker Russell Rogers not only found one at a reasonable price, he offered to pay for half himself as a gift to the Guild.

Hugh Birkett resigned as chairman at the AGM for that year and Alan took over.

It was decided that the Mayor of Pershore should be asked to open the next Pershore exhibition. RAC signs were used again. Anna Yelland arranged wine and

squash for the preview and tea and coffee was sold to members of the public. The Guild had been concerned about the inadequacy of the show equipment, so Malcolm found display equipment which could be borrowed from Stourbridge College but would have to hire a trailer to collect it, which was agreed. There was, as now, a work party who set up the exhibition equipment for each show. As usual it would almost invariably be the same people as they were nearest to the site and either looked after the tables etc or lived nearby. Liz Key provided the meal – a cold buffet for about £3 per head. Kathleen suggested that the small press ads should be dropped as they were expensive and fairly ineffectual, which was agreed. The press release she prepared for that year with the local papers and radio was impressive, as usual. She had also arranged for the Women's Institute and West Midlands Arts to distribute 200 notices each, and the Jinny Ring and Ombersley Galleries to distribute 50 each. She also had 1000 membership lists, 1000 exhibition notice cards, 200 preview invitations, and 100 posters printed. She had publicity well in hand. Anna was invitation secretary. Margret Hallmark reported that year that she had attended a meeting of the Worcester Arts Council. She felt that the Guild ought to apply for help towards exhibition costs, as the Guild seemed to be one of the few organizations that were not benefiting from the Council grants.

One of the Guilds oldest members, Claude Price, who had been with the Guild since the 1960s, resigned his membership in October at the age of 78. He was made an Honorary Life member.

Jeweller James Pearse was made a member that year. He became very active and was Guild Secretary for a number of years and a regular exhibitor for over twenty, until he retired in 2004 and was made an Honorary Life Member. James and his wife Phyllis were always present at shows and were much missed when they had to stop exhibiting for health reasons.

Margret Hallmark had suggested that the Guild should apply for a grant from Worcestershire County Council, as other organisations benefited from these. The Guild did apply for a grant but were told later that year that "assistance would only be considered for craft activities in the immediate area of Worcester". They were invited to reapply the next year. They also applied to Wychavon District Council for help to buy lighting equipment and/or the printing of more detailed membership lists and were turned down.

The Three Counties Show was June 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> incl that year. Anna took her caravan and stayed on site to keep an eye on things. Martyn took over the staging of the exhibition for the Three Counties. Owen Swindale had written from Scotland, to ask the Guild if he could exhibit with them at the Three Counties Show that year. This was repeated for a number of years, which was a lovely way for friends to keep in touch.



1983 was an interesting and important year regarding the discovery of new venues. The Commandery in Worcester, where the Guild were holding meetings at the time, asked the Guild if they would be interested in staging an exhibition there and asked again later that year. Another new venue was found at Hartlebury Castle, the home of the Bishops of Worcester, which was booked and used for the first time in spring of the following year. Kathleen Tucker also looked into possible display sites in Worcester during the Three Choirs Festival. Although it took many years to develop into the present situation, where the three County Guilds take it in turns to organise and host a shared exhibition every year, it was Kathleen who started investigations into what was to turn into a regular major annual show.

Unusually that year corn dolly maker Susannah Russell-Jones became a member. For a number of years, corn dolly-making had been considered too basic and rural a craft to be considered for membership. Martyn Pugh took over officially from Malcolm as Exhibition Secretary, a role which he resumed in 2017. It was minuted that from that time onwards Martyn would deal with all exhibition matters, so the role became better defined.

The meal on the evening of the Pershore preview at the beginning of December could not be made by Liz Key that year, so Anna and Kathleen offered to do it with puddings made by other members. The Mayor was to be approached to open the exhibition.

White fibreglass display units which were being made for the Guild had not been ready in time for the Pershore 1985 exhibition but would be ready for Hartlebury. Eric, still Treasurer, reported that sales including door charges for the Pershore exhibition amounted to £4,934. With total outgoings of £4,664 this left a profit of £270.

Exhibition Secretary Martyn Pugh was as strong, positive and professional as Ray Key in his desire to improve their exhibitions' impact on the public. Largely due to the two of them, the members were encouraged to invest in better display equipment and Martyn explained the estimated costs for the proposed equipment. The items listed were epoxy coating for the display leg stands, spot-lights, Nexo board feet and electric wire at an estimated cost of £425. The committee agreed to all but the epoxy coating and only £70 of the cost on spotlights but said further expenditure would be considered after the Hartlebury Show. In fact, the expenditure exceeded the agreed amount by £139 but, fortunately, by the next meeting Eric was unperturbed, as the exhibitions were doing well and the Guild had the funds to cope. Regularly from this time onward, new items of equipment were bought and renewed and, in view of the equipment value, Eric was asked to arrange insurance for it, which he did at a value of £3,000. By October so much more equipment had been added that the insurance value was upped to £5,000.

By comparison with the Pershore Show, Hartlebury, held from 14<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> March, did not give such high sales figures but there was still a profit of £144 and

everyone thought it was a success. 500 show notification cards had been sent but members felt more R.A.C. signs were needed to direct the public and that signs should be put up in the entrance to the show in future to make it clear that all work was for sale. Members of the public were obviously prepared to travel there to admire the work but obviously some did not realise they could actually buy it.

The Three Counties Show in June 1986 had its highest sales ever at £4,672, with a net profit of £363, with twenty members exhibiting. The display equipment was a success except for a slight shortage of green material to cover tables. By now, green had become established as the Guild colour. Martyn Pugh thanked everyone for their help but particularly the Eric and Olive (Knight). With each passing year the Guild was becoming more professional, members becoming braver about making innovative decisions which would improve Guild's image.

Having said that, some members still seemed determined to have their own agenda and everyone was asked if they could ensure their stands 'were opened and closed at the same time as the cash desk'!

The Pershore pre-Christmas Show was from 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> November with a preview for invited guests on the 26<sup>th</sup>. It was decided to hire the upstairs room at St Andrew's Hall for Lectures to run concurrently with the exhibition on the Thursday and Friday. They hoped that by doing this they would attract more Friends of the Guild. James Pearse, the Lay Membership secretary at the time, said numbers were not good – there had only been three new Friends that year. Members made an effort and by July there were already a few more. James then asked for interesting exhibition news so he could set up a news letter to send out to the Friends.

It was in 1986 that the Guild applied for and received a grant for exhibition equipment of £700 from West Midlands Arts.

The Guild took a great deal of trouble over advertising Pershore, which was a very successful show for many years. Anna Yelland, who had been in charge of the mailing list and of sending out invitations for some years, had stepped down and her role was taken over by Elizabeth Smith. 300 preview cards and 1600 exhibition notification cards were sent out. A press release was written by Julie Davies and Margret Hallmark and the following paragraph made punchy reading:-

“Work by members of the Guild has been produced for both very special people and famous places. For instance, Princess Margaret owns a pair of bellows by leatherworker Peggy Brown and engraved glassware by Danek Piechowiak; Kathleen Tucker – calligrapher, has produced a large scroll for the Loyal Address to the Queen at the wedding of the Prince and Princess of Wales; and Alan Evans – blacksmith (son of Peter and Joy Evans), produced a large pair of gates for St. Paul's Cathedral”.

New Guest lists and membership rule lists (constitutions) were needed and the members decided to change the front cover which had been the same for a number of years, adding that the Guild was formed in 1952 – a fact they were becoming proud of. Kathleen was still publicity Secretary and dealt with all the reprints. Martyn Pugh was proving, like Ray, to be a “mover-shaker” and continued to develop the role of Exhibition Secretary. He introduced exhibition booking forms for the first time in 1986 and the officers found them an immediate help in determining each individual’s needs, in terms of lighting, work and exhibition space, tables etc. He also looked into new sign boards to advertise the Guild shows, which were very helpful in directing the public to venues, especially if the hall was down a side street.

Ray Key stepped down as Secretary after seven years and thanked the members and Officers for all their help and support. It didn’t stop him from being incredibly active on behalf of the Guild, however and he was always ready to offer help with exhibition details. His role was taken over by jeweller James Pearce.

Alan Knight, ever dedicated to the Guild he founded, continued as Chairman and Martyn, Kathleen and Eric also continued in their respective roles for another year. The Exhibition Committee of Kathleen, Anna, Elizabeth and Julie was re-elected, with the addition of Margret Hallmark.

Everyone was used to the routine preparations for exhibitions by now, particularly the Pershore Show, and plans were well under way. R.A.C. signs were booked for £72 (including vat) and dates in the Hall booked for November. Ray Key organised the glasses and wine for the preview, and Elizabeth, Kathleen and Liz, Ray’s wife, took responsibility for overseeing the buffet meal which by this time was provided by the members. Tissue paper and bags were ordered for the cash desk. Robert Pancheri, gave the lecture in the upstairs room on his own craft to Friends of the Guild and members of the public. Alan, like Robert, had been a member for over thirty years, and was invited as a founder member to open the show, and agreed.

At this point in time, the Guild were only exhibiting once a year at the Three Counties Show-ground, but that Autumn they learned that another exhibition hall had been built there. They received a letter from A Halls, the Showground Manager, stating that a company called Exclusively Crafts from Kent would be staging a ‘crafts fayre’, which they thought the Guild should take part in, “on the grounds that it needs to accept this sort of booking. However, it should be pointed out that before Exclusively Crafts are granted an annual fixture, we wish to give our local Guilds the opportunity to look at this new exhibition hall”. In other words the Guild were invited to look at the August Bank Holiday Fayre to consider whether they would be prepared to hold an annual show in August, presumably as well as the show in June. Worcestershire Guild decided against it. After the summer show they received a charming letter from Lyn Downes the Chief Executive of the Three Counties Committee, thanking them for the splendid

contribution they had made to the show. In the same letter, they were also told that there would be a possible increase in showground charges to the Guilds so James, Martyn and other representatives of the other Guilds arranged to meet Lyn to discuss the matter. Charges had only been introduced a few years earlier, but already the showground expansion was having to be paid for by those who could least afford it (the Guilds) and who had been one of the main pulling powers attracting the public in the first place. The respect shown to the Guilds was gradually being diluted by the showground's need to be commercially viable.

The Guild was invited to participate in the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester for 1987 with a position in College Green and all agreed to go ahead. Kathleen had strong contacts in the Christian community in Worcester and as she was publicity Officer anyway was involved in the Guild's participation in the event.

It was also in 1986 that Overbury, the village where glass engraver Danek Piechowiak lived, was considered as a possible location for a regular show. The village is part of the private estate belonging to the Holland-Martin family and a perfect example of a healthy working farm estate, the properties being in a superb condition. The village hall was a lovely structure, fully lined inside and with leaded windows. It had a large well-equipped kitchen, which Danek felt would be very useful for preview evenings. It was also, he felt, a very wealthy area, and could have good potential for Friends of the Guild. Martyn and Danek were commissioned to look into it.

The Treasurer reported that funds were a little down so far on last year. Sales had been £4380, and on the door £227 and after costs there was a profit of £153.

An exhibition was held at Hartlebury again in April 1987, with the very civilised opening time of 11 am – 5pm and 2pm – 6pm on the Sunday. The three Counties Show was in June as usual opening at 9.30 – 5.30. The Three Choirs Festival was in Worcester in August and was situated in the Choir School in College Green which proved to be a very good venue. The Pershore Christmas show would had its usual preview evening on the Wednesday, followed by daytime exhibiting from Thursday until Sunday. A lecture was given in the upper room and a charge of 20p. made. The County Council's Press Office prepared a press release advertising the Pershore show, and circulated it to all newspapers (including free ones), magazines and local T.V. and Radio Stations free of charge. Eric had been "in despair" during the first half of the show as takings were more than £1100 down on the previous year. However, things miraculously improved and he said they were run off their feet at the cash desk, finishing about £400 up, not including a £650 table made by Peter Evans which was still to be paid for. ( this table had been bought by member Judith Price and at the time of writing is still a much prized piece of furniture. She did pay for it!)

It was at this time that access to Guild funds was tightened up so that only the Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer were authorised to act for the Guild or spend from Guild funds

In 1987 Frank Mundy died and a letter of deepest sympathy was sent to Tibi, who had kept in contact through visiting shows throughout the year.

Sales went up for both Hartlebury (sales £331 with profit of about £45) and Three Counties (sales of £4849 with profits of £263).

The social evening that year was organised by Russell Rogers and his wife Rhoda and was held at the "Round of Grass" at Badsey near Evesham in September.

In 1987, the new Secretary James Pearce attended a meeting in Worcester Guildhall arranged by the City Council concerning the twinning of Worcester with Kleve in West Germany. A friendship week was to be organised to encourage the development of cultural and sports activities between the two towns and anyone interested was invited to attend. James reported back to the Guild members and was asked to write to the Chief Executive of Worcester City Council to say that the Guild were interested in holding a sales exhibition in Kleve in Germany. The Chief Executive gave James a contact name, one Herr Henry Michalski. A letter was duly sent at the end of June introducing the Guild and explaining its desire to establish a link with the town and form a contact with Kleve craftsmen and women with a view to staging exhibitions in each others' towns. By October the Guild had not received a reply so it was decided to take no further action unless there was a response. Eventually Kleve wrote to say they were holding a friendship week from 9<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> September 1988, and members were told to make their own arrangements if they wanted to go and be part of it. It is not recorded whether anybody did go.

An important event in this year was the acquisition of more professional equipment. The Guild had purchased lightweight display screens and tabletops of melamine, which needed a weatherproof trailer for transportation and storage. £600 was put aside for this purpose. This was the beginning of the trailer era. A letter from James in July to trailer manufacturers describes the Guild's requirements of a fully waterproof trailer, either new or secondhand. Martyn Pugh as Exhibition Secretary agreed to apply to West Midlands Art for a grant of £250 for the purchase of the trailer.

At the AGM in 1988, the Treasurer said assets amounted to £947 of which £521 was in the deposit account, and £426 in the current account; plus the equipment and furniture. Monies paid to members for exhibition sales amounted to something over £8000. The Guild finances had come a very long way since the early days.

The officers of the Guild now were:-  
Chairman Alan Knight

Secretarty James Pearse

Treasurer Eric Tucker

Publicity Secretary Kathleen Tucker

Exhibition Secretary Martyn Pugh with help from others when necessary.

The post of Secretary to the Friends of the Guild was held jointly by Belinda Gilbert and Richard Goodwin-Jones. The Exhibition Committee was abandoned.

It had been confirmed that a show would take place in Overbury from 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> September 1988.

It was discovered that £600 was insufficient for the purchase of a trailer, so the committee approved up to £950 for a second-hand “Load Lugger”, “Tow-a-Van” or similar.

At this meeting four Officers of long-standing reported well in advance that they had decided to stand down at the next AGM to be held in June the following year, to make way for younger people to play an active role. These were James Pearce, Eric and Kathleen Tucker, and Alan Knight.

The following year the first meeting was early in March, again at the Friends Meeting House.

Eric gave his report on Sales for Pershore - £4726 including door takings, but as expenses and payments to craftsmen were £4400, net profit was a bit down on the previous year, but it was still a successful show.

The Three Counties Committee were now into raising the price annually to the Guilds, and it was raised this year to £172.50 + vat.

Worcester Arts had contacted the Guild to see if they would participate in an exhibition at the Guildhall from 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> July, and the Guild decided to go ahead as there would be no charge and they would have half of the main hall on the ground floor. Margret Hallmark was involved in the arrangements and application forms for this show.

The Guild was now the proud owner of a brand new Ivor Williams trailer, which had cost the Guild a very reasonable £644. It still needed a waterproof top, but the equipment could now be transported much more easily. In due course a top was acquired, and the final cost of the trailer was £954.

Eric gave his Treasurer’s report – supposedly his last one – and it seems that Hartlebury never made the same sales figures as the other shows. Danek remembers that members tried everything to draw people to the show, but it never really took off. Its sales of £1445 showed poorly against the £5076 from the Three Counties; even though the expenses were higher at the Three Counties, the members sold more and got more commissions. The refreshments were, at this

point in the Guild's history, always arranged by Belinda Gilbert's mother Carolyn and she was thanked again in writing for the excellent meals and refreshments she had provided, recognising the time and hard work this entailed.

St Andrew's Hall, Pershore, put its prices up and the Guild accepted the rise with no quibbles. The cost of hiring the hall was still about half the cost of the Three Counties Showground and takings were still very good at Pershore.

The Overbury Show was to have the same opening times as the Pershore one. As Eric would be on holiday and again unavailable to oversee the cash desk, Olive Knight and James's wife Phyllis were asked if they would be prepared to be in charge of it, as a one-off arrangement.

It was suggested that the Guild social evening be held at the Jinny Ring Craft Centre in October and this was a happy occasion.

Jackie Trott ceramist and a member since 1976, had written a letter to the Committee asking if she could exhibit embroidered pictures. The letter was read out to the members and it was agreed she could exhibit her embroidery, without the ceramics on show as well. This was an important decision as it was then minuted that if a member wished to show a different craft from the one they were accepted for, they needed to reapply as Jackie had done.

The AGM followed, and Eric reported assets amounting to £1171, £547 in the deposit account, and £624 in the current account, and furniture, equipment and trailer, with no value for these given. Monies paid to the members were £13,633 compared with £8223 from the previous year, a healthy increase.

Regarding the positions held by Officers, the resignations were formally accepted from Alan Knight, James Pearce and Kathleen Tucker. Eric said he would agree to stay on if he could have some help. They also decided to create some new posts. These were Guild President, Assistant Treasurer, Assistant Exhibition Secretary and Equipment Officer (to assist the Exhibition Secretary). In addition it was agreed that the Chairman be elected for a limited period of three years and other Officers should be elected annually but could serve for an indefinite period. This rule has not always been operable, as it has not always been possible to get someone to take over the position of Chairman. Danek, for example, was Chairman from 1999 to 2006.

John Yelland was elected an Honorary Life Member, in recognition of the hard work he had done for the Guild over the years.

As the equipment and the overall approach to exhibiting was now much more professional, a letter was sent out from the new Chairman which informed members that all Exhibitions would be viewed by at least three Officers before it opened "in order to effect any changes to the display thought necessary". If a

member wanted to alter their display later they would have to seek committee approval, a rule which ensured that no one could lower the professional effect of the display.

The Treasurer gave his usual report, and it was clear that the Worcester Arts exhibition in the Guildhall had not been hugely successful financially. Expenses were £212 which, for sales of only £982 were quite high and after the monies were given to members there was a profit of £52 – not a lot to put aside for future costs. Having said that, Martyn Pugh thanked all the members for their help, in particular Margaret Hallmark, Belinda Gilbert and Richard Goodwin-Jones, and the members still decided to hold another show in the Guildhall the following November. This was the start of the annual Guildhall exhibitions which finally stopped as previously mentioned in 2004. Unfortunately Overbury did not give very good takings either with costs of exactly the same, so a loss of £14 was made. Again Martyn thanked everyone for their time and help, in particular Danek Piechowiak, Belinda and Richard.

An assistant Treasurer for Eric was not forthcoming from the membership so it was decided that the friends of the Guild should be approached at the Pershore Show, which always attracted a good turnout. The Guild decided not to offer a talk to the public at the show in 1988 and so the top room was cancelled,

It was agreed to make a provisional booking for the Pershore show for 1989, but the Hartlebury Exhibition, planned for 13<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> April, was not discussed, and left until the next meeting in early Spring.

The use of the trailer was evolving and it was felt that a partition was needed so £50 was allocated from funds, and Bunny agreed to carry out the work and have it ready for the Hartlebury Exhibition. In addition the members voted in favour of a float fund for the electrics at shows.

It is very interesting to see how differently the Secretaries write the Minutes. Some put in an enormous amount of detail which has been very helpful in the writing of the Guild history but means wading through pages of small script and sifting out superfluous data. Others are so succinct and to the point that there is only information relating to future show dates and who was accepted or rejected as a member. Some occasionally produced the Minutes or letters to various bodies in handwriting and ,depending who it was, it could be quite a challenge trying to decipher what they had written. And in the early days, although usually produced on a typewriter, the letters were inclined to be a bit higgledy-piggledy and faint if the typewriter ribbon was running out of ink!

### **Building on firm foundations 1989 - 1997**

By the late 1980s bigger exhibitions were popular, professional display equipment was becoming more available and membership was growing. The Guild already had its first trailer, and had found a company called Nexo, which made display



systems, from which they bought 'Nexo boards', white display boards made of melamine, (which in fact chipped quite easily and by July 1989 were already needing to have the edges repaired). Clamps, connector pivots, adjustable feet and Allen keys were also bought – all incredibly technical sounding but which all helped to create a higher level of professionalism in the way the Guild set up and displayed their work. The old chipboard was then cut up and used to make smaller table tops. The Allen keys were inevitably lost in between shows and often the first task of the exhibition secretary was to organise the purchase of new ones as very little could be done without them. The cry of 'Where's the Allen key?' became a familiar refrain at the start of putting up a show!

Meetings continued at the Friends Meeting House in Worcester. A lovely venue which eventually had to be changed as the meetings went on for longer than the owners appreciated.

The Treasurers report showed that the Pershore Show was, as usual a success, and made a profit after expenses of £354 but it was decided to shorten the next show by one day. It would run from 4<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> December. A provisional booking would also be made for 1990, presumably as the Hall was a popular venue. It was obvious by now that the public were starting to use credit cards on a regular basis to make purchases wherever businesses or traders had a card machine. The Guild did not have this facility so it was discussed, but as new terms and conditions were changing nationally regarding all credit cards, it was decided to put this possibility on hold.

The Hartlebury Show plans were arranged, with set-up on 13<sup>th</sup> from 10 am and the exhibition to run from 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> inclusive.

The Three Counties Show now needed more time for the display equipment to be erected and would be set up on 11<sup>th</sup> June and the members' work put in on 12<sup>th</sup> ready for the show from 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> inclusive. The cost of renting space at the Three Counties Showground had obviously started to concern the members, so the Guild Chairman Ray Key gave a run-down of show costs which had been given to him by the Three Counties Chief Executive Mr. Downes. Belinda's Mother, Mrs. Gilbert, very kindly offered yet again to see to the arrangements for food and drinks for the members.

Other possible venues were often brought up for discussion as members were always keen to find new places to attract the public to their work.

A summer barbecue was suggested as a change for the social event that year, and Russell Rogers offered his workshop and gardens, and it was held on the 1<sup>st</sup> July, and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

In the files for 1989 there is a letter to Bunny Brown the Secretary from Vera Lockyer of the Guild of Herefordshire Craftsmen. She said that she had been talking to Mr. Downes at the Three Counties Showground and he was very keen

for the Three Counties Guilds to exhibit at the Food and Farming event to be held on 30<sup>th</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> October that year (what is now known as the Autumn Show). Were we interested, and could we all get together and let him know if there would be enough interested for him to book a marquee for the Guilds to use? The charge to each exhibitor would be £18 per 6 feet of frontage, but he wasn't sure if that included tables or not. A high price, considering it was 17 years ago.

Another interesting letter in the files was from an American woman called Sally Ann Steuk, International Buyer for a company called Shire Classics Inc, in the U.S.A. She was to be in England from 20<sup>th</sup> April – 17<sup>th</sup> May and was looking for new gifts to import from England, and invited the Guild members to forward photographs, samples, or brochures showing their work to her for consideration. It is not known whether any members took up this offer.

The Minutes of the next meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July are recorded very touchingly by Bunny Brown as follows:-

“A Silence was observed, to mark the passing of Vera Miles, one of our founder members. Bob Pancheri, a fellow founder member, spoke a few kind words of appreciation.”

Vera was not, strictly speaking, a founding member but she was certainly a very early one and a ‘character’, held in high esteem by established members and viewed with some trepidation by new members.

Profits from Hartlebury for 1989 were £39.98, and Three Counties £327.25, a considerable difference. The proposed Food and Farming day at the Three Counties Showground at the end of Sept was discussed at great length and it was considered “politically important” that the Guild give its support to the event, so Martyn as Exhibition Secretary contacted the Showground Management.

The Guild also now counted The Three Choirs Festival as one of its annual exhibitions and although they had been told that the Worcester Arts Council would not sponsor events outside the City, the Guild could apply for funding to help with this event as it was to be held that year in Worcester.

The AGM followed on the same day with the usual thanks to John Yelland for compiling the Balance Sheet, and reports from the various Officers. The same Officers were elected for another year, with Richard Goodwin-Jones moving from publicity to assist Martyn.

Little detailed information is recorded about the paperwork or printing done for the year, but by this time the Guild was having 2,000 members lists printed for distribution at the shows.

The only other issue arising was whether to change the status of or reprimand in some way, members who did not show up at exhibitions. It was decided no action

should be taken, but that a list of exhibiting members should be displayed at the entrance to each show.

The Crafts Council contacted the Guild to inform them of a meeting to be held in November with reference to its proposed amalgamation with the Arts Council. Martyn Pugh as Exhibition Secretary agreed to go and investigate.

By this time in the Guild's history it was, from time to time, being contacted by various organisations, businesses and venues with invitations to take part in exhibitions, pageants and such like.

A report was made by the Treasurer on the Food and Farming event at the Three Counties Show which 12 members had supported. It was agreed that it had been a well organised and extremely pleasant event which had attracted a lot of people and so was good publicity for the Guild. Members were told that as a one-off situation, the show would be subsidised and they would only have to pay £10 each towards their stands, as it was felt this particular exhibition had been primarily for the benefit of the Guild.

Badges were discussed and Belinda agreed to investigate the cost of better quality ones.

The life of the Guild flowed on with the usual pre-Christmas show at Pershore, and the special friendships and relationships continued.

The usual apologies recorded in every set of Minutes showed the members who were winding down slowly, most notably the Evans. The Tuckers did not attend so many meetings although Eric, considering he was not a designer-maker himself, was a stalwart support and always prepared to man the cash desk with help from members. Alan Evans was making a serious name for himself as a designer-metalworker, and was rarely able to attend meetings, and Martyn Pugh was also building a very successful silver-smithing business and was often absent, but they kept in touch as and when they could, particularly Martyn as he was still Exhibition Secretary and took the job very seriously.

In March 1990 there was some interesting correspondence to report to members. The Berrows Journal (part of a big newspaper group in the Midlands) were compiling a Craftsmen's Guide. The idea was discussed at length and it was felt further consideration should be given to it as it could be a draw for the Pershore exhibition. Why the members did not immediately take the opportunity to have this free form of publicity is remarkable but perhaps it was in a format that did not give a good image to the Guild.

The Three Counties Show Executive had written to give their usual price quote for facilities for 1990, which was £189 plus VAT for the three days. It doesn't sound a lot in 2006 split between twenty-five members, but probably seemed so then.

The Treasurer's Report showed that the Pershore Show, for the first time in several years, had not given the Guild such a good profit. (£109.42) This does not mean, however, that the individual members did badly, but it seems to have been a turning point in the future of shows held at Pershore. Perhaps older supporters and Lay Members from the past were too old to venture out; perhaps the population had changed with more commuter residents, who were not so involved in town life. They decided to have a photographer to take professional shots of the show, and Danek Piechowiak offered to arrange for one to be there.

The value of Hartlebury as a venue for 1991 was also a question that the Officers raised with the membership and consideration on whether to continue showing there was deferred to the next meeting. Of all the shows, Hartlebury seemed to have had the least interest from the members. It was hard to attract the public there and for that reason, it was decided to have an extra £30 worth of advertising.

The Three Counties Show needed new arrangements regarding the food, as Belinda's Mum could not be the sole provider. The members were invited to offer ideas.

Some new members, as still happens, stayed on the periphery of Guild life, most of them contributing when necessary but keeping it as a secondary part of their lives. Others took the Guild and its development to their hearts and played a more active role, either taking a turn as an Officer, or because geographically they were close to the nucleus of Guild life in Worcestershire, turning up to lend a hand in setting up the equipment before every show, something which took longer and longer with all the new equipment. A few members, however, used the Guild more selfishly, paid their subscription so their name would be on all the literature but rarely exhibited or turned up to help and never turned up to meetings. Because feelings amongst the Officers started to rankle about this issue, a simple questionnaire was sent to every member at the end of June 1990 and was as follows:-

“Due to the lack of support at recent shows and the loss of direction experienced within the Guild, will you give some consideration to the enclosed questionnaire and, if you are unable to attend the next meeting in July, please fill in your comments and return to the Secretary. The questions and the feelings of members were discussed at a meeting on September 6<sup>th</sup>.

The next meeting was on 5th July at the Friends Meeting House, with the AGM afterwards as usual. A letter from the Three Counties' Chief Executive was read out to the members, congratulating them on their excellent display. The Treasurer gave out copies of his report on Hartlebury and Three Counties' Show and the

question of whether to show again at Hartlebury was talked through with many diverse opinions being given. So many of the members were not prepared to exhibit there again, and it was felt there would not be enough support to give a show to Guild standards. Members were asked to look out for alternative venues.

A problem had arisen with the trailer. The plywood on the roof and sides was flaking – delaminating – and something needed to be done before it got any worse. The decision was made to ask the body builder himself, considering the type of ply he had used in the construction.

The Three Choirs Festival set-up was discussed in detail as it was an important show giving the Guild prominence in Worcester and it was important to get it right. The timing was crucial too as they only had one day in which to set up the equipment and all the work. As it was a long show it needed stewarding, so members were encouraged to be available to give cover. Belinda, as Publicity Officer, was given £150 – a lot of money for advertising in 1990 – to use at her discretion.

With regard to the questionnaire, it was generally felt that more meetings were needed, that three per year wasn't enough to keep enthusiasm going. As the issues on the questionnaire needed to be talked about in detail another meeting was therefore arranged for the 6<sup>th</sup> September.

At the AGM the lack of a Treasurer's assistant was still very much an issue and it was suggested that perhaps some form of payment might be an inducement to someone to help Eric. However as the entrance fee to the Pershore Exhibition had been lowered to 50p and show expenses were always rising, it was felt it would be hard to find the money and no decision was taken.

The Chairman Ray Key gave a serious Annual Report and after summarizing the year's events, gave the opinion that it was necessary to take a long look at the future of the Guild to decide on the direction it might take. They had, in fact, come to a similar situation to the one Tibi had found them in, only with a higher membership and with Officers determined to raise its image with drive and enthusiasm. The same Officers were elected, prepared to serve for another year, and the members went away to think about the future.

At the September Meeting the usual matters were dealt with first and, as the Three Choirs Festival had been in the second half of August, it was discussed, and was considered a success, with gross sales of £4,644 and a final profit to the Guild of £232.58. The membership voted to donate £100 to the Festival charity but included in a letter raising the problem of parking. Those with invalid exemptions were fine but the jewellers had had a problem loading and reloading as, for security reasons, they had to dismantle their displays at the end of each day.

The problem of a Treasurer's Assistant was resolved at the September Meeting. Eric read out a letter from Mrs. Gilbert who was interested in joining the Guild as assistant to Eric with a view to becoming Treasurer in due course when Eric felt it was right. The members were understandably happy with the generous offer and if was left to Eric to make arrangement with her.

The answers to the questionnaire were then talked through and the following agreed by the membership:-

1. Which venues would encourage you to show more often?

Answer. Venues where the Guild has not exhibited - one-off shows.

2. Should Hartlebury be in the calendar?

Answer. No. Has been withdrawn.

3. Should members have to qualify for Three Counties by attending other shows?

Answer. When calendar is full yes. More than once, other events must generate interest. Must cover cost at other shows. Pershore more important than the Three Counties. Understand both points of view. (This is a bit hard to follow!)

4. How do you see the role of the Guild?

Answer. It is to encourage craftsmanship and design. Special events in libraries and building society windows as a pre-show advertisement. Small shows such as Ombersley of interest to some members. The Guild should hold a permanent photographic display for advertising and press releases and for display at entrances to exhibitions.

5. Do you think the large commercial shows and craft fairs have changed the roll of the Guild taking into account that major events can attract our principle exhibitors from our own events?

Answer. No. This is down to promotion.

It was agreed that a venue having other events should be avoided. So far as the shortage of suitable new members coming along is concerned, this could be due to the fact that Craft Fairs are available to get newcomers started and they may not think it worth the effort to join a Guild.

6. Should we invite a guest of some prominence to promote our major events?

Answer. No we could invite ex-members and local guests.

7. Should we go for larger shows with guest exhibitors?

Answer. Yes to fill a gap when our own members create a shortage. Private views can be the best part of the show. Small high quality shows would be better.

8. Should we extend our guest system to include promising newcomers?

Answer. Make a special feature of work such as:- Alan E. Evans, R. King and others.

Some new promising young craft people could be invited at times to fill gaps.

Potential venues and comments regarding them as discussed at the meeting were

- a) Botanical Gardens, Edgbaston, who had forward bookings for the next two years.
- b) Avoncroft Gueston Hall appeared to be the most promising venue, possibly in conjunction with some other event to draw people in (which went in direct opposition to the members original suggestions in point 5 of the questionnaire). Alan Knight made progress in finding out information on Gueston Hall and the quote turned out to be £150. On Minutes in the archives, either Bunny or Ray has written 'Great' next to this option.
- c) Lifford Hall Broadway was also suggested as a possible venue.
- d) Harvington Festival looked promising, organisers had problems at that time but it may be a future possibility.
- e) Guild Hall Worcester also had a 'Great' written next to it on the archives' copy of the Minutes. The Hall charged £130 + £50 + 20% per day and it was thought to be an attractive venue if discount could be arranged. There was not very much parking behind the Hall, however, which could cause setting up problems.
- f) Quilts UK – The Three Counties Showground, from 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> May. This was considered to be the right sort of show but too close to the Three Counties Show.

Another long-term idea that was aired, was sharing other possible venues with the Gloucester Guild for 1992. The Three Choirs Festival was a suggestion that has come to fruition in recent years, as will be described later, and another idea was the Cheltenham Gold Cup. There is an asterisk against this and 'v. interesting' in the margin but nothing ever happened.

At the end of the discussion, the membership expressed their belief that the Guild was holding its own, with good exhibitions and sales, but that it needed to 'watch where it was going', particular problems being venues and the loss of exhibiting members. This led to further thoughts on publicity, updating the Guild logo for use on carrier bags and badges and the use of colour in brochures and posters, ( if past members lists and brochures are looked at, they seem very drab compared to the latest versions). The meeting was an important one for the Guild and finished late, but the members must have gone home feeling they had reaffirmed their affiliation and loyalty to the Guild.

The October meeting, held at the Commandery in Worcester as the Friends Meeting House was already booked up, had a lot of absentees, most of them long-standing members. Ray being absent, it was chaired by Alan Knight, and the first matter to arise was the repair to the trailer. It turned out that the builder had used a

lighter gauge of plywood than usual to fulfil weight and cost issues. He said that if there had been a complaint within six months he would have been able to take the matter up with the manufacturer but, unfortunately, the length of time precluded this. The Secretary put the necessary repairs underway but the Guild had to foot the bill. A valuable lesson learned, the repairs were arranged and the trailer was ready again for use for the April Show at Avoncroft.

Quotes for the important decision on a new venue for spring 1991 were put forward. Russell Rogers had looked into putting on a two-day show at Broadway Community Hall, which would cost £61 per day. Jackie Trott had established contact with Hanbury Hall but had no price and Alan confirmed that Guesten Hall, Avoncroft would cost £150 for one week. This was such a good price that the members opted for a show at Avoncroft, from 8<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> April, with an evening preview for invited guests.

The Worcestershire Guild was the ‘host county’ for the Three Counties Show for 1991 and the relative correspondence was read out. Details for Pershore Show, quite early that year, from the 22<sup>nd</sup> November – were mulled through. The food for the Guild supper held the evening before Pershore was dealt with by a sub-committee made up of Peggy Brown, Anna Yelland, Phyl Pearse (James’ wife), Elizabeth Smith and Olive Knight. As Ray was absent he was volunteered as the wine waiter and the final detail was the confirmation that the Mayor would open the Preview Exhibition at 7.00pm.

The only other issue brought up was a request for members to return equipment they had borrowed as there was a shortage.

The Treasurer’s report was a small cameo in the Guild’s history, as Eric, who had been such a supportive and hard-working Officer for eleven years, explained that the handing-over to the new Treasurer Mrs. Gilbert would take place on the 31<sup>st</sup> March. He would run the desk as usual at the Avoncroft Show, present the report at the next meeting, then he would be Assistant Treasurer at the Three Counties Show.

The Pershore Show was reported as being successful with gross sales of £4,774 and after the members and all expenses had been paid there was a profit for the guild of £162, not as much as in past years but acceptable.

Plans were completed for the Avoncroft Exhibition, and the Guild decided to charge an admission fee as at Pershore, as it was a small amount for the public to pay but boosted funds; 50p, with concessions of 25p for OAPs and children. Members were asked to bring flowers to decorate the Hall.

Belinda had worked very hard and had arranged a venue at the Worcester Guildhall in August. Several previous attempts had been made, but as the Guildhall wanted to charge £200 for a Saturday, she had booked it from 12<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>



August avoiding the Saturday, and had applied for the Mayor's Concession, which brought the cost down to £40. It was hoped that the Mayor would open the preview evening. The preview would be on the 12<sup>th</sup>, after setting up and Ray organised the wine and glasses. This exhibition took place but was not deemed to be very successful for the Guild.

At the meeting in May the Avoncroft Show was reported as a success, with gross sales of £5,065 and an income at the door of £390. After all expenses, the profit for the Guild funds was £560, the highest for some years. Members felt so upbeat about it as a venue that there was even a suggestion that it might be staged twice a year on alternate years. On the other hand, it was apparently cold and the security of the doors and the booking office needed improvement. Due to its success, Alan had already booked it for April 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> 1992 at a cost of £200.

This was to be Eric's last meeting as Treasurer and he presented the accounts for the last time, with thanks once again extended to John Yelland for preparing them. Carolyn Gilbert was appointed as Treasurer, which took effect from the date of the meeting.

Mrs. Gilbert was also still helpful in the catering role and offered to supply equipment to tea and coffee making for the Three counties Show and some of the members volunteered to bring cakes. Martyn, still Exhibition Secretary, pleaded with members to book their exhibition places in good time to enable pre-planning, and said members would be provided with plastic badges for the show. He also thanked members for their help during the Avoncroft Show, particularly Alan Knight, now in his eightieth year and Eric. On the Agenda for the next meeting Eric was recommended as an Honorary Life member for his generous time and dedication to the Guild.

Mr Lyn Downes Chief Executive of the Three Counties Show Committee was due to retire shortly and the Guild members discussed the possibility of making a seat for him in honour of his hard work.

With at least three regular shows per year and individual members occasionally borrowing Guild equipment for other personally arranged venues, items needed continually assessing for appearance and safety. Martyn Pugh pointed out that if the Guild applied for a grant from West Midlands Arts for help with publicity, it would release funds to pay for equipment. He recommended that the Guild should look into the cost of halogen lighting, and the cost of new tables and backboards also needed to be investigated. Army supplies were considered worth looking into for these.

The final item in 'any other business' was to inform members that there was a set of photographic slides to be distributed to them. These were black and white images of their work that Ray had arranged to be taken by a professional photographer and were a useful source of publicity for the Guild.

That year the Treasurer reported a profit from the Three Counties Show of £472.57.

Martyn thanked everyone for their work, especially the cake-makers!

The cost of the marquee, it is interesting to note, was still a mere £260.40 including contributions to grass mowing and electricity. The difficulties of holding a summer exhibition every year were discussed at some length. Finding enough exhibitors to fill a hall could be a problem, as people liked to go on holiday and attend other large shows, individually, in different parts of the country during the summer months. It was eventually decided that for 1992 Alan would try to book Avoncroft College for the first week in August and the Exhibition Secretary would use his discretion in inviting selected Members of the Gloucestershire Craftsmen if necessary to fill the hall.

Everyone stayed for the AGM and Ray said in his chairman's report that the results of the various shows were good 'bearing in mind the current climate'.

By now the Minutes were very professional. For many years Bunny had been at the hub of Guild action and because the equipment was kept at 'Grayston', his and Peggy's home, he was very well informed about all matters. In fact, he and Peggy were beginning to be looked upon as the 'Mother and Father' of the Guild, with Alan, of course, as the Great Patriarch.

At the October meeting, Ray Key stated that Guild was running into capital problems which could have been avoided if the membership fees had been raised years ago. Raising the percentage of sales taken at shows was considered but no decision was made. Carolyn Gilbert felt that a raise in Membership Fees alone would not be sufficient to solve the Guild financial problems. Martyn pointed out that official grants from bodies like West Midlands Art had pretty well dried up.

The Pershore Show had gone decidedly pear-shaped. Thus, there was to be no show on the Sunday. Carolyn offered to contact the mayor to find out why the Council was being so unhelpful and how the problem started, although it was thought it might be because it was a church hall. Here in the Minutes it says that the show was to be put up in one day "Martyn included". Danek chuckled when asked about this as apparently Martyn and Julia were famous for laying out a large picnic and tucking into it with gusto, therefore taking three times as long as everyone else to set up. A show in Avoncroft was planned for April 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> 1992 - the following year. It would be shared with a group of painters called Octavon which included Vicky Mullins, the ceramist who had been with the Guild but was now a painter. Members were generally in favour though the painters were to arrange their own insurance and stewarding.

The offering of Honorary Life Membership to Alan Knight was agreed at this meeting, a well-earned privilege for a man who had dedicated much of his life to the Guild. The new Treasurer, Carolyn, was doing a good job and was trying at that time to improve banking facilities in the face of the Guild's finances. The Guild wanted to set up a credit card system on the current account. Lloyds were being difficult and wanted to charge for it. Barclays would extend the card system to the Guild as well but would want the current account too and would also charge for it! She said she would persevere.

The Exhibition equipment was, as usual, suffering from wear-and-tear and Martyn gave details on some tables and backs, suggesting white fibre tops with adjustable steel legs, the tables at £300 and the backs also about £300. Bridget Drakeford wondered if the fibre might dent, but said nevertheless she wanted the chipboard retired as it was so heavy! The Treasurer said there was £1000 in the Guild account, which would cover the cost of these. Martyn also commented that the lighting was starting to look worn and would have to be looked at in the future. He thanked everyone who helped put up the Guildhall Show in his absence.

The first meeting in 1992 was in February at the Friends Meeting House in Worcester. All the Evanses were absent. Peter and Joy were exhibiting less and Alan had taken off big-time as an artist-metalworker and his gates and sculptures were in demand. Due to the type and size of commissions and the long hours he needed to spend working, he found the meetings too far away to attend.

The Avoncroft Show plans were all in hand. The Octavon group joining in the exhibition had their own insurance cover and would have a share in door takings.

The Pershore Show venue was to be confirmed, and it was decided to book the Guildhall in Worcester for the November show in 1993, signaling the end of Pershore. Two other possible venues were also looked into in 1992. One was for spare shop space at Christmas at the Crown Gate Centre and the other was for a possible exhibition at the Heritage Centre at Droitwich,

The suggestion of Membership for people living and working outside Worcestershire was put forward. This would be a major change in Guild policy and would need careful consideration. It was put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Equipment was continually being replaced. The Guild only had £600 available and priority was given for six upright Nexo backs to replace heavy chipboard and clip on spotlights.

The 1992 three-fold listing all exhibiting members and the forthcoming shows for the year was still printed by Worcester Printing Services. Made of standard white A4 paper it had an abstract design (created by Richard Goodwin -Jones) on the front with the old Guild logo at the top, the members inside and the shows on the

back. The entire flyer was printed in one colour - green. The same design was used for 1993.

The exhibition to be held at the Heritage Centre in Droitwich was confirmed from 21<sup>st</sup> November – 24<sup>th</sup> December. Manned by the centre staff, it would only take 10% of sales and provide insurance cover of up to £40,000. Later, it was also confirmed that the centre would manage publicity and posters – a great boon to busy craftsmen. The Guild Hall in Worcester was confirmed as a booking for 10<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> November 1993 and the Mayor officially granted his concession for the exhibition to be staged there.

The Avoncroft Show had not been a profit- making enterprise for the Guild. Though sales, door takings and commissions came to £2,895, the profit to the Guild *including* a cheque from the Octavon Art Group, came to the princely sum of £32.13p!

The only other future show discussion centred round the Three Counties in June, and a Challenge was issued to see who could produce the biggest cake!

Martyn Pugh was unable to attend the July meeting as he was moving house that Friday, so he sent in the Exhibition Secretary's report, as usual thanking everyone for their hard work and reaffirming the importance of the moves the Guild was making to find new venues as a means of increasing its audience. He also tendered his resignation as Exhibition Secretary as he had "enjoyed ordering people about and spending someone else's money for about ten years". He recommended Richard Goodwin Jones as his successor.

Avoncroft next Easter was to be confirmed – available dates were 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> April 1993.

This meeting was followed by the AGM where it was minuted that the members had decided to accept new members from outside Worcestershire on a discretionary basis.

At this AGM in 1992 the present practice of electing members by paper ballot was agreed, but not the Officers – they would be voted on by a show of hands as usual. The Treasurer thanked everyone for their co-operation through a 'very difficult year'.

The members accepted the raise of the subscription charge from £10 to £15 per annum, a 50% raise which was long overdue and which would undoubtedly ease the worries regarding repairs and renewals to Guild equipment etc during lean times. The Exhibition Secretary's Report was read out as Martyn wasn't there and he mentioned the fact that as there was a recession, the Guild had done well. The

Meeting passed a special vote of thanks to Martyn for his hard work over ten years and his assistant Julia was also warmly thanked for her work on behalf of the Guild.

The following meeting was held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1992 at Bridget Drakeford's house – in Worcester. There were even more apologies – 15, but a number of the members were getting on in years and less able to make it to meetings. Members were asked to hand any exhibits for the Heritage Centre Exhibition by 21<sup>st</sup> November and to mark them clearly, ensuring the price covered the 10% that the Centre would take.

Belinda Terry had done considerable background work looking into funding and the Guild received a letter confirming a grant of £175 from Worcester Arts.

Pershore was on track for 19th November with a wine and nibbles preview to be opened by the mayor of Pershore. The Guild was still asking for an entrance fee of 50p with a concession of 35p.

The Three Choirs Festival was to be confirmed to the event organiser along with a request for a pass for daily loading and unloading.

The Treasurer reported that the Guild had at this time £1096.07 in the deposit account, and £554.47 in the current account. Insurance had doubled, going up from £100 to £200 which was now the minimum charge. A budget guide of £150 was given for publicity.

Peter Pearse read out an article which referred to rights of ownership of work on sale or return basis, which could present difficulties if makers were not vigilant and exhibition contracts. The Officers decided to write to the Crafts Council on this matter and sent copies to the local MPs.

A 'subscriptions' book lists the following members in 1991-2.

Hugh Birkett, Peggy Brown, Margaretta Bruce-Morgan, Julie Davies, Bridget Drakeford, George Elliot, Alan Evans, Joy Evans, Peter Evans, Belinda Gilbert, Richard Goodwin-Jones, Katherine Guerrier, Margret Hallmark, Timothy Hardy (Leather Handbags), Ray Key, Alan Knight, Victoria Louise (Piechowiak), James Pearse, Danek Piechowiak, Judith Price, Martyn Pugh, Russell Rogers, Elizabeth Smith, Jackie Trott, Kathleen Tucker, Sarah Jane Tyas, Anna Yelland, Graham Johnson, Victoria Mullins, Robert Pancheri, Annie Parker-Smith, Alison Dupernex, Elizabeth Jones, Belinda Terry, and John Williams, 33 all paid except for Timothy Hardy who was not renewing his membership.

In February 1993 the matter of unpaid membership was deferred until the AGM. It has always been a bit of a problem, usually involving the same few members. There were a number of letters of interest in correspondence to the Guild.

Evesham Library had contacted the Guild and invited them to put displays of craftwork in their showcases. Ray Key investigated, and reported back in June that it had “useful possibilities”, as there was no hire charge for the room, although the County Council would take commission on sales. The Show Secretary, Richard Goodwin-Jones also looked into the Hereford and Worcester Countryside Centre, but it was decided in June that the library would be a better venue. The Association of Woodturners (in which Ray was very involved) had asked if they could hire some show equipment and a fee of £100 was suggested. The Woodturners have since been regular hirers of Guild equipment which has been beneficial for both sides.

The Octavon Art Group wanted to join the Guild at Avoncroft again, but asked to exhibit upstairs. They were charged £80 for the space, plus preview expenses. Carolyn Gilbert would, as usual, be the stalwart organiser and provider of glasses, wine and nibbles for the preview. The publicity secretary was allowed £60 to advertise the Show.

Yet again some of the equipment needed upgrading and a budget of £100 was made available for this. At the following meeting the membership decided to arrange a future date as a ‘maintenance day’ for the Guild trailer and equipment.

The Three Choirs Festival arrangements were under way. The Guild had been offered one room upstairs and one downstairs and a discussion ensued on how the public could be directed upstairs. The Festival Committee wanted to charge the Guild 10% of sales,

Finally, the Treasurer reported that gross takings at the Pershore Show had been £4,937.13 and after expenses, the Guild had made a profit for funds of £122.84.

By June the Three Choirs Festival was looking easier to run, as the committee had agreed to give the Guild two rooms on the ground floor. It would be from 21<sup>st</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> August inclusive, open from 10 am until 7.30 every day. Members were asked at the July meeting to distribute leaflets to pubs, B&Bs, hotels etc.

With every year that passed the Guild was getting more and more correspondence, often offering facilities, or trying to sell space as well as attract members of the public and sometimes from the strangest sounding places. In 1993 they were contacted by “The Birmingham Custard Factory Arts and Media Quarter”. This has since become a well-known hub for arts activities.

Judith Price said she had been in contact with the new County Magazine, and was preparing an article to go with some advertising at an advantageous rate. This was thought to be an ideal place to advertise the Guild to its own county people. Richard said he would take some photographs for the article and professional photographer Ken Webb would also be approached to take some black and white ones.

The Treasurer told the meeting that the Avoncroft Show had, including the £80 from Octavon, made a profit of £114.50. The low profit margin provoked talk on funding which was deferred for the AGM.

New venues were discussed - the Custard Factory had invited the Guild to visit and view its facilities so Martyn offered to take this in hand. And Evesham Library was considered a good venue so Ray said he would find out the details and the dates available to exhibit there.

The AGM for 1993 followed and Guild Membership was discussed in detail. Regarding unpaid membership fees, members were told they would have one final reminder four months after the AGM. If payment wasn't made, the membership would lapse.

The following points were then raised regarding membership

- 1 There should be a good balance between different crafts.
- 2 There should be a membership officer to scout for the right members.
- 3 Everyone should scout for members.
- 4 The Guild should grow and not fade away.
- 5 The Guild should affiliate with a Warwickshire group for extra venues and membership.

The decision that membership for makers from outside Worcestershire (treated with discretion and not to include the Three Counties Show) was ratified. Members should qualify for the Three Counties Show by taking part in at least one other show.

The financial situation was explained and Martyn had done an analysis of the funding needed over the next few years regarding the repairs and renewals of equipment, the major source of expenditure.

Ray then talked about the Guild's financial management and made the point that advertising was a major factor needed to draw the public and boost funds and that perhaps more should be allotted to publicity. A rather controversial point of view was also put forward that funds should, if necessary, be spent for the benefit of the members and not put in the bank.

Various aspects of fund-raising were talked about and Martyn suggested the exhibition fee should be raised from £5 to £10, which would be affordable for everyone but help with costs. All members agreed.

The Chairman's report advised that, whilst building on the experience of the older members, the Guild should look forward, finding new members, and new venues to promote Guild work.

The Treasurer reported that the Three Choirs Festival had made a profit to the Guild of £102.26. Everyone thought the site was unsatisfactory and a letter should be sent requesting the old library as an alternative. It's obvious from the Minutes that some members hadn't stuck to the official opening and closing hours of business at the Three Choirs Festival. Perhaps because they were long days, closing as they did at 7.30 pm, they decided occasionally to bunk off early! However they were reminded that it appeared very unprofessional and that good sales had been made by some members both early on and later in the evening. If they wanted to change their hours, they should consult the Exhibition Secretary first.

Avoncroft had been offered as a free venue from April 30<sup>th</sup>-May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1994 and the members agreed to accept the offer, although there could be no door collection as it was a Bank Holiday Weekend. As other ideas for suitable new venues in 1994 had not been suggested and St Andrews Hall Pershore was available, that was booked for 24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> November. The Three Counties Show would be from 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> June inclusive.

Final details for the Guildhall Show in November 1993 were under way and the Mayor would official open it at 7pm. Anna Yelland had arranged for refreshments for the members at "The Steps", a refreshment bar attached to Huntingdon Hall nearby between 5 and 7pm for anyone who wanted to join in. There were three invited Guest Exhibitors - Hilary Laforce (ceramics), Anvil Pottery, and Carole Proctor (Lettering).

The first meeting of 1994 was on 10<sup>th</sup> March at the Friends Meeting House, with 12 apologies.

The Guild had approached the mayor to ask if they could have a permanent showcase in the Guildhall. The Mayor gave his approval and a showcase made by Hugh Birkett was used to exhibit member's work for some years.

The Treasurer's report on the Guildhall show was, to put it mildly, disappointing. Although sales were £4282.05, there was a profit for the Guild towards funds of £7.77.

Carolyn Gilbert tendered her resignation as Treasurer after the AGM that year for personal reasons and a vote of thanks was given to her for her hard work.

In 1994, the Three Counties Showground organisers had requested a "voluntary increase in charges". The Officers of the WGDC decided to discuss the matter with the other Guilds.

The Guildhall Showcase was discussed and members were asked to support this as it was considered by the Officers to be an advantage in reaching the public. The



first to exhibit in it was Margaretha Bruce-Morgan in July 1994 and in August it was the turn of Judith Price and Alison Dupernex.

A new show at County Hall called Skills Show had approached the Guild, asking the membership to stage a small representation of their work and it was felt it should present a corporate image amongst the diversity of other groups there, both for publicity reasons and for possible future membership. The exhibition was on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> October and open to the public from 11am- 6pm on both days.

It was in 1994 that the Government made it a legal requirement to have all electrical equipment certified. Graham Gilbert very kindly offered to do the work for the Guild at cost and was thanked for his generous offer.

At the next AGM the Chairman Bridget Drakeford thanked members in her report, for their help during her term of office, in particular the Treasurer Carolyn for her “shepherding of the Guild funds”. She also remarked that the extra activities which had been undertaken had been advantageous to the Guild and particularly mentioned the Guildhall showcase and the exhibitions in Evesham and Droitwich Libraries.

Carolyn gave her last report as Treasurer and the usual thanks were extended to John Yelland. She said that 1993 had been a good trading year for members and the Three Counties continued to show improved sales each year. She promised to continue as a friend of the Guild.

The Exhibition Secretary gave his report and thanked everyone, particularly Graham Gilbert for acting as electrician. Richard made it clear that he would need more help when Graham was not available, as he could not be expected to deal with both electrics and setting-up details on his own.

New Officers were elected. Martyn Pugh was elected as Chairman, Simon Dupernex as Treasurer ( who became famous as the pie-chart man!), Judith Price as Publicity Officer and Harry Brown as the Honorary Secretary.

Finally recorded at this meeting at the friends Meeting House, the Guild Officers announced that a new system for sales would be tried for one year. The new treasurer, Simon, explained that a central desk would be retained for wrapping, publicity material and entrance fee when applicable. Members would be issued with a triplicate invoice book and take their own money. This was a major change in the organisation of sales and soon became the norm, minus the triplicate invoice book!

As the working party hadn't happened on 18<sup>th</sup> September, another one was planned. The party would be split, as special materials were needed for the edging of the lightweight panels. The certifying of the electrics had been carried out thanks to Graham Gilbert, assisted by Belinda Gilbert and Graham Johnson (the

furniture maker). Judith had put in several hours of work on the trailer and Graham Gilbert was also making replacement leads for the equipment which had not received certification.

Details for the Skills on Show at County Hall were finalised, with reminders that handouts about the Pershore Show would be available.

Details for the Pershore Show were also underway. Elizabeth Smith (Enamellist) was responsible for the central mailing list of names and addresses of customers who were sent invitations to the preview. She asked for an up-dated mailing list from members who each provided 10 names. It was felt that even though the cost of St Andrews Hall had gone up considerably, the exhibition fee would stay at £10. In principle, the members voted for future Christmas Shows to be held at the Guildhall in Worcester, due to the cost of the hall at Pershore. It was, however, only available in September 1995 and if the Guild decided to use that date in September it would be instead of Pershore.

The Guild had been exhibiting with the other two Guilds at the Three Counties Show in June for some years but the decision was taken to take part in the Spring Garden Show, also at the Malvern Showground on the same basis. It would cost much more than the Three Counties Show, and several options were put forward as to how it could be funded. The final decision would be taken at the next meeting after some thought.

Assistance with the electrics during the setting-up of the shows was mentioned again, as Graham Johnson was not always available to help and Richard could not cope on his own. In the margin of the Minutes it says here, "Someone help!" (A successful plea, as at the next meeting, help was indeed forthcoming.)

The Chairman suggested several items for future discussion.

The members needed to discuss methods of increasing new membership and decided that there should be a new post of Membership Secretary.

The meeting had to finish as it had overrun and, as this was the second time this had happened, it had made the Guild "unpopular as tenants" and they had look for an alternative venue.

The Guild found a new venue for their meetings at the Countryside Centre near County Hall, which has easy accessibility and parking and the Guild has been holding most of its meetings there ever since.

At the next meeting the Treasurer reported that there had been a shortfall of funds after the Pershore show amounting to £149.04, and suggested that there should be estimates for financing future venues so that any shortfall could be written in.

There followed a discussion about the Malvern Spring Gardening Festival, as the Guild had been invited to exhibit. The first Spring Show had taken place in 1986 and was well established and growing. The Guild has taken part since 1996 and it has since become the main show of the year in the Guild calendar, overtaking the Three Counties Show in profitability and the great majority of members being keen to take part. Originally, this and the Autumn Garden Show, which the Guild were to become part of in 1997, (after some initial reticence), were held in a marquee like the Three Counties Show. This was soon found to have disastrous consequences in bad weather, with streams of water and flooding at some shows spoiling members work, in spite of the organisers spreading ample amounts of straw on the ground. Furniture was a particular problem and the makers had to make sure that their work could be raised from ground level. Both the shows were soon moved to the large sheds where the livestock was kept at the Three Counties Show, where they have been ever since. Initially, the sheds were very bleak and it was all too evident that livestock had been kept there, but following meetings by Martyn Pugh and Heather Barningham (exhibition secretary) with the showground staff, things were soon improved and nowadays there is floor covering and covering for the walls.

The post of Membership Secretary was officially adopted at this meeting. The duties would be to record and deal with membership applications and to approach suitable craftspeople to go on an "Invited Guest" waiting list and to supply them with relevant information on the Guild and its exhibitions. Bhava Mitchell, a bead worker who had a warm and welcoming personality, agreed to be the first to take on the role which has become an important one for the Guild.

There then followed a working party rota, which shows the detailed work necessary to keep the Guild's shows 'on the road'. It reads as follows:-

- Replace edging strip on melamine boards
- Clean and polish melamine boards
- Renovate wooden tables
- Clean fibreglass boxes
- Electrical containers and brackets
- Paint all chipboard
- Sort Guild suitcase for contents and wrapping paper etc
- Finish painting trailer.

When detailed like this it must have drawn peoples' attention to just how much work Alan, Harry and Peggy had done over the years. Members were asked to inform the secretary what they could do from the list.

There was a new rule implemented regarding the AGM and it was resolved that the AGM would stand alone as a separate meeting in May of every year, and that a quorum would be 50% of the membership.

At the AGM in 1995, the new Chairman Martyn Pugh gave his report, thanking the members for their work and support, especially Harry Brown as Secretary and Peggy's supporting help. Without their joint support over the past few years the Guild would have 'ground to a halt'. There were thanks to Richard and Judith – without them the shows would not have gone on, to Simon for his new ideas and being such an excellent Treasurer. ( he became known as 'the Pie Chart Man' and everyone found his pie charts very helpful in understanding how the costs were split.) Janie was thanked for her enthusiasm in her new role, and John Yelland for his audited accounts.

Martyn announced that, sadly, Alan Knight had died in February that year. In paying tribute to him, he said that he was sure all the members would wish to see the great work that Alan did in encouraging new crafts people to be continued.

There was a discussion about creating some sort of memorial in honour of Alan Knight and members were asked to give suggestions at the next meeting.

At the next meeting, the Guildhall Show arrangements for mid-September were well in hand with the Lady Mayoress agreeing to open the Exhibition,

The show fee for the Guildhall in 1995 was £30 per member. It was at this show that a new standardised attendance form was designed – a sensible decision which continues to be used at all shows to this day. The Guild leaflet was to follow the same format as it had for several years and new ones were to be ordered. These had become a more professional looking three-fold leaflet with pictures of members work in, printed on high quality paper. It was still in black and white at this time as many members thought that black and white photographs were truer than colour. How this has changed!

An open discussion was then held for ideas for the Alan Knight Memorial Award, and the Chairman was asked to consult Olive Knight before any final decision was made. It is also reported in these Minutes that the Guild were to plant a tree in memory of Eric Tucker.

That year Brian Maiden - still a relatively new Member but very sociable and actively involved in the Guild - issued an invitation to all the Guild members to a Summer Picnic and BBQ to be held on his family's farm. Brian plays the trumpet in a jazz band which played at the party. This became an annual event for some years and was much loved by the members who went to it. They remember sitting around the fishing lake and seeing Brian punting his family and friends, including his elderly mother, around in his home made punt.

### **An era of funding 1996 - 2005**

At the next meeting in March 1996, the Chairman outlined the likely arrangement for the Alan Knight Memorial Award. It had been decided that this award should

be made to help a new maker at the beginning of their career. They could be any age and would receive free membership of the Guild, free exhibition space and pay no commission on sales, which when added up, amounted to a significant award.

It was agreed with Olive, who was present, that the final wording would be put before the AGM in May. This award has been given almost every year since, although on one occasion it was felt that there was no outstanding candidate. As is the Guild way, the whole membership have a vote on the decision.

Judith made an application to the Arts Council for funding under the Arts For Everyone scheme (A4E) for extra space at the Three Counties Show, to accommodate a good space for the first recipient of the Alan Knight Award as well as extra space for all members to set up the best show possible. A special wooden sign had been commissioned with carved lettering saying 'Alan Knight Award winner'. Bunny Brown made a wrought iron bracket to allow it to be hung from a screen. It was to be displayed on the recipient's stand along with leaflets explaining the Award. The application was successful and a grant of £907 was obtained in 1997 in time for the Three Counties Show.

The Guild had realised that they would need more funding to help with the cost of new equipment which was necessary to present the Guild in a more professional way and would maximise the effect of the superb work on show at exhibitions. The Chairman stressed that the Guild were looking at the years beyond 1997 and that the Members had to "think big", say £10,000 to £20,000. The details would come later. It was decided that a draft application for lottery money would be produced to be put before the next AGM.

All was in motion for the new Spring Garden Show and all that remained for the Secretary to arrange was the negotiating of Space with the other two Guilds, and to place the Member publicity details with the Show Administration for the Show Catalogue. The Show fee would be £35.

The Three Choirs Festival was also starting to shape up and Peggy reported to the members that a prime site – College Library on the Green – had been agreed. It was suggested that a gallery principle be adopted where members did not have individual stands but their work was displayed as though it was in a gallery. There would be a stewarding rota to cover sales, which was a good idea as the days were very long ( 10 a.m. - 7.30 p.m.). This worked very well.

Finally, Members formally noted the sad death of Founder Member Bob Pancheri; a number of members had attended the recent funeral. It was the passing of a great man.

Olive thanked everyone who had attended Alan's Memorial Service where Ray and Judith had each given a short address and said donations had reached £720.

She was made welcome to attend future meetings and would be sent the Agendas and Minutes.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 11.20pm.- very late!

At the next meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 1996 there was a report on the Spring Garden Show, which was very encouraging, and the Treasurer confirmed that this was one of the most successful Guild Shows to date. This has proved to be the case until time of writing. By contrast, profit from the Three Counties Show was decreasing.

The A.G.M. followed on from this meeting and the Chairman's report stated that the Guild was no longer held back by size and venue potential as both had grown. The Guild had 31 Exhibiting Members – 25 regular exhibitors, and 7 Guest Members so fresh blood was producing new work and variety and fresh ideas. The next challenge was to be the acquisition of new equipment. Everyone, he said, was contributing to the life of the Guild.

The Exhibition Secretary gave a report and confirmed that the equipment was now holding back the Guild's development. There was no longer a problem filling space at the shows.

The Chairman gave an update on the current state of the Lottery Funding application. The Guild was applying for a total of £55,345 to cover a new exhibition screen system, halogen lighting, 2 trailers and banners. There was also a commission for a display board for publicity leaflets and information which was to be made by Steve Smith. The equipment had to be as lightweight as possible to cover new towing regulations.

In the 1997 file there is a leaflet produced by the Department of National Heritage, giving details about Lottery Funding. Inside, one of the questions is "People say it's difficult to apply – is that true?" and then goes on to waffle rather a lot. The truth is, yes it is *very* complex and long-winded, and Martyn Pugh and Judith Price did a sensational job in securing funding, with the help of a sub-committee of other members. Martyn and Judith in particular gave many hours of their time reading through small print, and learning to grasp the meaning of some of the more convoluted terminology used in the reams of paperwork involved in the application process. It took 2 years to complete, but was successful. The excellent new equipment was duly purchased and is still in use.

It is worth mentioning here the dates for the Guildhall Exhibition for 1997, which were for Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December. It was unfortunate, but the show that year coincided with a fairly new show in Hereford called Hereford Contemporary Crafts, which had received substantial funding from Lottery and European sources with the backing of Hereford County Council. It was rivaling the Guild's own November show in popularity ( this was to increase over the years). To combat this, it was suggested that the WGDC have a late night on the Thursday until 9 pm

which would coincide with the Victorian Fair in Worcester. Sad to say, in the event, this just didn't work and the exhibitors were mostly rattling around on their own in the Guildhall. Toby, the Secretary, had booked the Hall for the following year (Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November, which didn't clash with Hereford) as the Guild preferred to have a Saturday included in the dates and if they didn't book well ahead, the various political parties booked it well in advance for their jumble sales! Later in the meeting the previous Guildhall Exhibition was discussed and it was agreed that it had been excellent. The display had looked great and the Preview, with drinks and nibbles organised by Anna had been crowded. Indeed, it was so crowded that somebody was despatched to get more wine! The Guild had made a profit of £884.76.

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Harry Brown – blacksmith and Catherine Matthews – textile artist, were discussed as contenders for the first Alan Knight Award and it was decided to award it to Catherine, as Alan had always encouraged all forms of Arts and Crafts. Also Harry was already more established in his career of black-smithing.

Ideas were needed for the Guild's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and it was decided to apply for another Lottery grant through A4E (Arts for Everyone) Express, which had a scheme for projects to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. It was a happy coincidence that it was also the Guild's Golden Anniversary. It would be a good opportunity to put on an extra-special show, involving as many members and guest members as possible.

Looking back at the Members Lists up to 1998, they look rather drab and utilitarian, compared with the elegant and colourful versions of today. In black, grey and white, they nevertheless had a very tasteful photograph of some work by Martyn Pugh - a silver topped claret jug and glass. These were the last leaflets printed in black and white as printing costs for colour had become much more competitive with the advent of computer technology.

A meeting was held on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1998 and several pieces of correspondence are in the file for this year which are worth noting as they illustrate how many opportunities were being created for makers at this time. There is a letter to Harry Brown, Secretary of the Guild, inviting him to a meeting of the Crafts Council at the new Lecture Room at their offices in Pentonville Road, Islington on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1998. The focus of the meeting was on the extent to which the Crafts can develop and benefit from Lottery funds.

A letter appears in the file for 1998 from West Midlands Arts regarding the Year of the Artist(2000). Consultation meetings which could be attended by artists and crafts people in order to “take the exciting project forward” were to be organised, and the Guild were invited to attend. Also in the file are booking forms for the Midland Game and Country Sports Fair, the Dulwich Country Fayre, and the Southwark Show. Field Events Ltd. in Somerset had also sent its list of shows for

the 1998 season. Another letter was from Town and Country Markets who had been selected by Gloucester City Council to launch an Arts and Crafts Market and a letter from St Mary' and All Saints of Hampton Lovett Crafts Festival Organisers inviting the Guild members to exhibit.

The Guild was asked for a donation towards a plaque to commemorate the fallen from the Worcestershire regiment during the Malayan Campaign 1950-1953, which was done. There were also thank you letters from John Yelland for the bottle of whisky he got every year and from Simon Dupernex and also thanking the Guild members for the presentation gift of a piece of Martyn Pugh's work which, he said, he had always admired, in recognition of his years of work as Treasurer. Finally, an invitation had been received for two Guild members to attend the Civic Service on Mayor's Sunday, at Worcester Cathedral. Surprisingly it seems no one went, although this invitation was repeated in subsequent years and members did attend.

It was now that a figure was to become part of the Guild who had a deep influence and for many years was a key instigator of actions that took the Guild forward. His name was Peter Bennett and he was a friend of Harry Brown's. He had also known Alan Knight and is mentioned earlier in this history. He was not a maker himself but agreed to become Treasurer and worked hard for the Guild until 2017.

The meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1998, was poorly supported considering it was the AGM and there was no quorum.. There were only 12 members present with the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer and 19 apologies.

The Chairman Russell Rogers had dictated his report in advance and it was read out for him as he was blind. He thanked Martyn Pugh for his valuable work as Chairman over three years, and his work towards obtaining a lottery grant. He said the Guild had had a normal year and was flourishing, with an increase in membership. The year had ended on a sad note with the death of George Elliott ( a pioneering glass blower) but Russell said George would have "wanted us to forge ahead". Many members attended his funeral in Madley.

The next meeting – the Extraordinary General Meeting to make up for the lack of a quorum at the AGM - was on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 1998 at the earlier time of 7pm at the Countryside Centre. At the bottom of the Agenda for this meeting it states in bold print that it was absolutely essential that Full Members attend in order to confirm matters for the year. It is interesting to note that all the way through the Guild's history it is always the same hard core of faithful members who attend the meetings on a regular basis, with other members coming very occasionally when they feel they can't get out of it. Some members have loyally continued to attend meetings after moving quite long distances away from Worcester.



Due to the firm summons, there were 21 Full members and 2 Guest Members with the Chairman, Sec and Treasurer so decisions could be finalised for the coming year and accounts and reports for the previous year could be approved.

There is a letter in the 1999 folder from Belinda Terry, which shows she was upset (understandably) that ,in spite of her negotiations on behalf of the Guild to create an opportunity to exhibit at the Jinney Ring Craft Centre in Hanbury run by Jenny and Richard Greatwood, they had not received any communication at all as to whether the Guild was interested in it as a venue or not. As the issue had been discussed at the meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 1998 and the Guild members had decided that, if they could not find an alternative they preferred, they would take the Jinney Ring Centre up on its offer, this was careless and rude. Attached to the letter is an invitation from the Greatwoods to exhibit on 22-24 July 1999, asking for a response before the end of November 1998. This is fairly typical, it seems, of many craftsmen and women. They don't intend to be rude, they are simply so wrapped up in their work, and in the creative thought processes that things are inclined to be "put on hold" if they require a decision.

There are hand-written notes at the bottom of the letter, saying Belinda was phoned, but was out and her partner was spoken to. "Profuse apologies – not sure which of us this end was at fault – it wasn't the proper response from us – our sincere apologies".

Like so many other opportunities, the Jinny Ring offer was never pursued.

In the Secretary's report it was agreed that the Guild's Constitution needed updating. A draft of the update would be presented at the next meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May 1999 and ratified at the AGM in June.

Peter took this task in hand with a sub-committee of other members and produced a new constitution which has been in use ever since with amendments added as necessary.

It was imperative to keep up with internet technology and a Guild website was to be set up. Steve Smith told members that he was ready to make a start on this and those interested should get in touch with him.

A provisional meeting had been arranged with West Midland Arts on 7 July 1999 so they could scrutinise the application – enabling the Guild the opportunity to change anything. There would be a lottery working party at Anna's on 22<sup>nd</sup> July. They were getting on well with the form-filling, with help from local Arts Officers and in particular, Steve Boffy, the County Arts officer at the time. It was requested that letters of support from key people in crafts in the Guild's area should be included – eg Hereford Arts Officer, Gallery Owners etc and Michelle had arranged for this. A draft of a Guild Education Policy had been approved by Claire Carter at West Midland Arts and would be sent out with the AGM papers.

Martyn had taken photographs of the Guild's shabby equipment at the Spring Garden Show.

Judith also reported that £5000 of partnership funding had been promised from the Elmley Foundation. The Guild could use its funds to match this (the Guild target was £1000). The Guild needed to demonstrate that it was actively seeking to boost Guild funds, so a letter was being sent to the Guild's mailing list with a direct appeal for a contribution, and a Guild bookmark was printed to be sold at Guild Shows.

The Treasurer wrote to the secretary, Toby Bruce-Morgan, before the AGM, enclosing the proposed Budget, the certified accounts for the year ending March 1999. He said that Russell Rogers was proposed as Chairman. Peter as Treasurer seconded that the show fees and subs should remain the same except for the Invited Guest Exhibitors which should go up from £75 to £100 per show. He invited Toby to make any queries he wanted if anything needed clarifying. Peter Bennett, coming from a business world, had taken the reins of Treasurer held so competently by Simon and continued to hone it so that the paperwork and accounts were as professional and as detailed as possible, whilst explaining them at every meeting for the benefit of the members.

The AGM for 1999 was held on 28<sup>th</sup> June at the Countryside Centre. The draft of the new Constitution was presented and accepted and Peter's hard work was appreciated by all.

In his report the Treasurer said that income on sales was £390 up on 1998. Results from both the Guild Hall Show and the Autumn show were significantly up. Income from Exhibition fees from members was £66 up on the previous year. This was mainly because there had been an increase in £5 on show fees and there had been more exhibitors at shows. The £5 increase in the membership subscription had increased income as expected and the transfer of £2000 to a Building Society account accrued interest of over a £100.

There was now a change and improvement in Guild publicity. Judith, with Jan and Michel had got a good system going and an important issue had been resolved for the first time in the Guild's history – it now had a logo! The Guild had used a company that Michel knew, called Ad Lib Partnership and they had come up with a simple but striking image of a square quartered in white and green with the letters WGDC in each quarter. The wording Worcestershire Guild of Designer - Craftsmen was lettering underneath. The membership leaflet was now in full colour, so more vibrant and appealing to look at and included images of members' work. 3000 had been printed. A5 folders had also been printed which were designed to hold information about the Guild and individual members cvs and cards. They had been sent to Arts Officers, Councillors, potential sponsors etc. and had been well received. There was also new Guild stationary. Steve Smith had printed some name labels and fliers for the Guildhall exhibition, using the logo

and a scanned image. The logo had worked well in black and white in newspaper ads.

1000 postcards with images of member's work were printed and would be used as invitations to the Guildhall preview, with enough left over for the following year too.

The Christmas Exhibition at the Guildhall had been used as the base for an interior design programme on TV called "Our House" but it was felt there was not much worthwhile material from the Guild's point of view.

The Membership Secretary Janie Lashford said that over the last 5 years the Guild had had 16 new Full Members, seven of these during 1998/9. Membership stood at 42 including the Secretary and the Treasurer. Janie was retiring as Membership Secretary and was thanked for the wonderful job she had done over the last 5 years in this new role.

The list of elected officers at this AGM illustrates well how the work of the Guild was being shared amongst the members.

President, Ray Key  
Chairman, Russell Rogers  
Treasurer, Peter Bennett  
Exhibition Secretary, Heather Barningham  
Assistant Ex Sec. Belinda Gilbert  
Publicity Officer, Judith Price  
Assistant Publicity Officer, Michele Marwood  
Social Secretary, Brian Maiden  
Catering Officer, Anna Yelland

Two new positions were created:-

Equipment and Training Officer (ie training members to use Guild Equipment),  
Harry Brown  
Education officer, Margret hallmark

The position of Secretary remained unfilled, with Toby Bruce-Morgan leaving.  
John Yelland would be asked to continue certifying the Guild accounts.

At the 16<sup>th</sup> September 1999 meeting, Anthea Watson – who was a friend of Bridget's was thanked on agreeing to take on Secretarial duties for one year only.  
The new Constitution had been approved and circulated.

The Guild had received a grant towards the Guild Hall Show and Marie Therese King offered to organise a giant puppet display outside the venue which would hopefully attract visitors.

The Guild embraced the greater use of the internet and a website had been organised by Steve Smith. It was ready for use, with information about it printed on the Guild leaflet. The Guild would pay the annual fee for maintaining the site. The Lottery Application had at last been submitted - £3000 of it would come from Guild funds and £2000 be put into a sink fund. The sink fund was a vital part of the application as it had to be shown that the Guild was growing funds to replace equipment from its own resources in the future.

To everyone's delight and relief, the Lottery bid was successful and so the Guild could begin to purchase the new equipment. This became known just before the Guild met for a meal in an Indian restaurant in Stourport early in 2000, so there was real cause for celebration as the Guild moved into the new Millennium..

The coming year saw the impressive new exhibition equipment being used at the Three Counties Show. The task for planning this fell to Heather and Belinda which was a daunting venture into unfamiliar territory. However, all went well and people were glad of the lightweight screens. Work looked very good against the grey background (although glass was not so successful) and the lights were very effective, if a bit hot if you happened to be standing directly beneath one! Initially everybody had the same layout which meant that each exhibitor was surrounded by screens which was a bit claustrophobic. This drawback was soon solved at subsequent exhibitions by converting some screens into half size which made for a more flexible layout.

In his Treasurer's report at the next AGM in 2001 – Peter was enthusiastic. There was only one outstanding subscription and the Overbury show, Three Choirs Festival, and the Autumn Show were all financially successful,. James Pearse was concerned that the 3 Choirs wasn't making enough for the Guild, but Peggy Brown pointed out that the WGDC had made more in a week there, than the Gloucester Guild had made at Painswick in a month.

John Lepper (a colleague of Steve Smith's who had taken on the task of looking after the equipment), warned that the trailers were exceeding the regulation weight for towing, It was decided that a third trailer needed to be purchased in order to spread the load.

A sample of a new correx plinth with a wooden top, which had been made by Steve Smith was shown and approved. Although lightweight, these proved to be very durable and some have been used until this day.

Tony Davis, now the Publicity Officer, showed "in-house" cards designed by Steve Smith. They would feature the the current Alan Knight Award winner 2001 who was Clare Johnson, a glass maker.

A video of some Guild members at work was being produced as part of the Lottery funding and this was now nearly finished. It had been taken by Matthew Dukes, a

professional photographer based in Worcester. It was played at shows on a television screen where it caused great interest among the general public.

At the AGM on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2002 the Chairman ( Danek Piechowiak) reported that in spite of a very unpromising start to the year with an economic down-turn being followed by the Foot and Mouth crisis, which meant that the Three Counties Show had been cancelled, did not stop the Guild having a financially successful year. There were more new guests and members than ever before, many of them responsible for the improved figures. Peggy Brown had become the Exhibition Officer and had made good use of the new screens. She was a master of juggling space to fit everyone in, especially at the Three Choirs and the Autumn Show. The Treasurer expanded on the fact that a potential disaster had turned into a successful year of trading. The year had ended with a surplus of £1274. It was difficult to quantify how much influence the new credit card facility, which had been available from the Overbury Show, had made on sales. There were £560 of donations in that year.

In AOB Tara Coomer was unanimously voted as the Alan Knight Award winner for the year. Dates for meetings for the coming year were agreed. Shows were discussed – 25 possible exhibitors were interested in the Cotswold Show at Cirencester plus 9 from Hereford Guild. The Cirencester Show would cost about £2000. General approval was shown to pursue this as an event.. Danek said the 3 Choirs organisers had not been helpful.

Tony Davis stepped down as Publicity Officer at this AGM and was replaced by Stan Greer, a printmaker. He improved the Guild logo as well as creating new stationary individual to each officer and upgraded the annual exhibition and members list.

Finally Ray Key was congratulated on his lifetime professional/creative acclaim.

Next AGM was fixed for 25<sup>th</sup> April 2003.

When the Minutes were sent Brian Maiden told members that all Guild Fixtures would be printed on a credit card sized laminated card. These proved to be very useful but unfortunately they were only produced for a couple of years.

By March 2002 the Guild had amassed a considerable amount of professional equipment. This was now the overall responsibility of the Equipment Officer, and included 95 large display panels, 10 small panels, 111 panel poles, 20 pole bases, 23 spikes, 6 short poles, 5 banner poles, 5 flag poles, 5 flags, light units, extension leads, a free standing sycamore display panel, mallets, brooms, tea urn (very important item this!) display boards melamine display tops, 2 trailers, hitch locks, a frost protection convector, tool box and various drills and other hand tools.

A Lottery grant of £3628 had been awarded to the Guild to celebrate its Golden Jubilee under the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award scheme. Extra space was hired in the Guildhall which meant the exhibition spilled into the court room. Recent graduates from local art schools were invited to take part and were sought out and contacted by Marie-Therese King. Showcases were hired specially and the display added extra interest to the show as well as giving the opportunity for inexperienced young craftsmen to take part in a professional looking exhibition. Special carrier bags were purchased which were gold with the Guild logo printed on them. They were plastic, which would be unthinkable today! The Guild has since moved on to paper carrier bags. The grant meant that the Guild could pay for RAC signs, which cost £269.50. Special banners were commissioned from Marie-Therese which had to be hung inside the Guildhall, as no banners were allowed on the exterior of the building. Work from past members was on display, accompanied by photographs and brief biographies. It included work by Alan Knight, Hugh Birkett, Lesley Govier and Alice Barnwell. A photographer was hired to record the event. Altogether, the show demonstrated the Guild's commitment to honouring its past and providing encouragement to young makers for the future.

Local media had been contacted and radio Hereford and Worcester were going to do a feature on the Guild. Stan had done a wonderful job with publicity. He had stressed the importance of using high quality up-to-date images of members' work and had asked members to provide them although there was not a whole-hearted response. This has been a problem for the publicity officers to this day.

A celebration meal, which was subsidised by the Guild, took place in the restaurant on the first floor of the Guildhall which was very well attended by members and was a memorable and happy evening. The Guild had a real sense of camaraderie, something the members still value.

Altogether, it was a very successful show and visitor numbers were good.

It was at this time that Julia Sweetman, Martyn Pugh's business associate, kindly offered to cater for the Guild Annual meal in January. Julia is great friends with Brian Maiden (Furniture Maker with the Guild since 1994) and enlisted his help to make a delicious meal for the party, which was repeated for several years and was greatly appreciated by one and all. Brian also has a reputation as a great cook and bon viveur. As the dishes were delicious and complex with wine in almost every recipe! Consequently, there were fewer bottles of wine available when the rest of the guests arrived and Julia and Brian would be slightly flushed, undoubtedly due to the hard work involved. Brian organised an eight piece band for the first of Julia's suppers and they were fabulous entertainment.

An exhibition record sheet from this time shows that the Officers were keeping a close eye on how often the Guest Exhibitors joined the Guild for shows. Those who didn't support the shows were unlikely to be invited to join as a Full Designer-Craftsman. Jocelyn Perry, Sharon McSwiney, Penny Williams were the most supportive and are all strong members today.

Whilst Brian Maiden was Secretary, he produced a WGDC Newsletter. This reported positive results coming in regarding enquiries and sales from the Guild website. Brian reported that a Guild Archive and a written history had been set into motion by Sue Lauzier, Danek Piechowiak's partner, which had been made possible through a generous donation to the Guild given by Olive Knight. Sue said there were a lot of gaps in the records and asked for Officers past and present to check their files for old written records to try to fill in the gaps.

On 17<sup>th</sup> January 2003, there was a Budget Preparation meeting called by Peter Bennett. This started a tradition which has continued and has been invaluable to helping the Guild understand it's finances.

In Jan 2003 there were 9 applications for membership, a sign that the Guild was getting a high standing in the Designer-Maker world. Three furniture makers, a sculptural Forging Metalworker, two ceramicists, a stained glass maker, a textile designer and a jeweller.

Stan Greer asked Sue Lauzier, as Archivist ,to write a precis of the history of the Guild to which he added information that potential applicants for membership could use, along with an explanation of the Alan Knight Award. This was put on the central sales table at shows for the public to take.

In the financial year April 2002 – March 2003 the subscription was £45, show fees except for invited craftsmen were £50 and for joint exhibitors £75. Sales commission payable to the Guild remained at 10% except for invited craftsmen who paid show fee of £100. Also Peter reminded everyone that the provider of the credit card took commission of 5% of sales, and debit card commission would cost £0.40 per transaction. If any member wanted to borrow the card machine for a non-Guild show they would also be charged the 5% of sales. Mileage for carrying out Guild business was set at 25p per mile for exhibiting members and 32p per mile for non-exhibiting members.

### **Forging links with other Guilds**

The Three Choirs Festival is an historic, annual national musical festival held for a week originally in August, but now in July. Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire take turns to host the festival but it was under Danek's chairmanship that this show developed for the Guild. Until now, it had only put on an exhibition when the Festival was in Worcester, but now there was a move to join with the other three Guilds and to present a bigger event.

The Guild had exhibited every three years in various locations in King's School next to Worcester Cathedral, but in 2001, when it was Gloucester's turn to host the festival, the officers of the Worcestershire Guild persuaded the other two county Guilds to join them in a large marquee for a joint exhibition which proved to be a success. Of the three Counties, Gloucester was the most helpful and the Kings School rented the Junior School playground to the Guilds, which adjoined the grounds of Gloucester Cathedral. A difficulty with this site was security, as it was a through route for the general public and unfortunately, several pieces of jewellery went missing. In spite of this, the show was a great success with 30 exhibitors and good sales. The playground was used as the Gloucester venue twice, but the second time there was some flooding in the marquee and work was damaged. Barry Owen, an instrument maker with the Worcestershire Guild, together with his wife Anne (lovingly described by Barry as Management), stayed close to the marquee in their camper van for the week of the exhibition as added security, thus carrying on a tradition that Peggy and Harry had begun at the Three Counties Shows for years, taking their caravan and parking it just outside the marquee there.

When it became the turn of Worcester to host the festival, the Guild successfully persuaded the organisers to let them have a prime space, rather than being put into classrooms or other out of the way places for the week. The main driver of this initiative was Peter Bennett, who managed to get permission to have a marquee on College Green, a beautiful environment at the heart of the festival space next to the cathedral and near the river. He ordered the marquee, ensuring that it had flooring so that it wouldn't become muddy underfoot, (which would not have been popular with customers in their best concert outfits!) and so that any flooding wouldn't affect work. He also sorted out security, the electricity supply and even the pruning of a tree so that there was room for the marquee. For the next Gloucester Festival in 2007, the Guild arranged a meeting with the Festival committee and discussed moving to a better venue. They were allowed to erect the marquee right outside the Gloucester Cathedral entrance, which was an excellent improvement, and meant that members of the public attending concerts in the evening, could pop in before the performances, as they had in Worcester. Hereford managed to get a marquee site quite near to the cathedral for two of the festivals held there, but as it is quite an open site, security was a problem. A number of different venues have been tried in Hereford with varying success. These shows have been lovely events for the exhibitors, with the opportunity to go to concerts and spend time in beautiful surroundings. The stewarding system enables the work load to be spread. There is almost a holiday atmosphere and the chance to get to know members of other Guilds is beneficial for all. Sadly, Guild members have become less keen to take part in the shows apart from Worcester, maybe because of the travelling or because of the length of the event.

In 2004, another Lottery application was made. The Guild had often spoken of holding an exhibition in Birmingham, with the aim of reaching a new audience. A



possible site had been found by Peggy at the Repertory Theatre in a large room with huge windows looking out to Centenary Square. This was called the Centenary Suite, but since the building of the new library in the square, the room has ceased to exist. Judith completed the application forms and a grant of £4,695 was awarded. The exhibition was only moderately successful, but it was decided to hold it for another year. No grant was forthcoming this time and the members felt that it was a lot of effort for little return, so this exhibition was not continued. The Guild has always tried to explore new venues, but its base continues to be the Spring and Autumn Gardening Shows, which are now so well established.

Another application for funding came in 2007, not through the Arts Council this time, but through a new organisation called Netinfinity which was based in Birmingham. Alison Dupernex had been going to meetings at West Midlands Arts for some time as the Guild representative and they urged the Guild to apply for a grant towards a project of their choice. It was decided that a professional photographer should be paid to visit every Guild member in their workshop and photograph them at work. These would be used at shows and displayed on each exhibitors stand. The application was eventually successful, although after the photographer has begun on the project, Judith was informed by Netinfinity that the funding had been stopped. Naturally, this caused great concern, as by now the Guild had committed itself financially. Fortunately, all was sorted out and the project continued. The photographs produced were high quality, although many members didn't like their own images. They are still in use to this day, but now the members are all looking rather older than their photographs! Netinfinity ceased to exist some time afterwards.

### **Into the twenty-first century**

The life of the Guild now followed a well-established routine. Meetings continued to be held at the Countryside Centre, Chairmen and Officers changed, with the work being shared out as much as possible, although it was a continual concern that some members did not attend meetings and just turned up for the established shows. Membership flourished and was stable at around 50 members.

One show which did change was the November Guildhall show. This venue could no longer be used as it was being refurbished in order to comply with the new accessibility regulations. The first alternative venue to be tried was St. Helens, a fine church just round the corner from the Guildhall, which was being used as a community centre. The first show was held here in December 2005 and continued until 2008. However, it proved to be difficult to attract people to take the short walk to the church from the High street, despite the best efforts of the publicity team who arranged for balloons and banners to guide the way to the church. Footfall was never very good, although the first preview had been well attended. Somewhere else had to be found and it was proposed that the Guild should return to Pershore – not to St. Andrews, but to Number 8 – a new theatre, community centre and cafe in a refurbished space in the High Street. It had been funded and

was run by the efforts of the local community who had achieved a magnificent result. The theatre part of the building had a seating system that folded away, creating a good exhibition space. The first show was held in 2009 and both the preview and the show was a success, so there was great enthusiasm to continue with this venue. Sadly, in spite of this initial enthusiasm and huge efforts by the publicity officer, Marie-Therese King, the number of exhibitors and sales fell over the next four years and the venue became very expensive to hire, so it was decided to rethink the Christmas show.

The next year, in 2013, the Guild returned to the Guildhall in Worcester, initially for an October show, as some people felt that there were too many other Christmas shows which attracted the members elsewhere. There was a return to the November dates the next year and the show continued to be held there until 2016. Some members said they felt that the Guild had 'come home' and were very pleased to be back, but it was becoming increasingly difficult to persuade members to take part in Guild-only shows, even though they were sometimes subsidised by the Guild. Sales and footfall were never as good as they were at bigger, more commercial shows and of course people have to make a profit. Previews had been abandoned as the number of guests who turned up gradually dwindled and they became an event for the members rather than their customers. This was something that many Galleries were discovering, so it seemed to be a general trend.

History repeated itself and the last Guildhall show took place in 2016.

There was no Christmas show in 2017, but soon a new opportunity presented itself. The old Worcester Porcelain Works was being redeveloped and the architect had met with two Guild members, Jocelyn Perry and Jo Dewar who were exhibiting at the Blue Ginger Gallery during Art week. He was very impressed with their professionalism and the quality of their work and invited them to come and see the development with a view to making use of the space there. This they did and agreed that it was a project that had definite possibilities, so the architect was invited to a Guild meeting to explain the development. It had excellent funding from the Bransford Trust and had money to spend on high quality materials.

### **Hartlebury 2006 – 2018**

One development for the Guild in 2006, was the offer of permanent gallery space at the Worcestershire County Museum at Hartlebury. This was too good an opportunity to miss as the Guild had talked since its very beginning of such a possibility. A new entrance to the Museum was being made in the lovely old coach house. It was completely refurbished and had a very light and contemporary feel with a limestone floor. Brian Maiden had been commissioned to make the desk in the entrance. Ikea showcases were being provided for the Guild and the sales would be manned by Museum staff. The Guild undertook to look after the

displays, changing them regularly and keeping them dusted and polished. Judith and Heather Barningham undertook the organisation of this and had a team of helpers. A grand opening was planned for November 5<sup>th</sup> 2006. Members were given invitations to send out and drinks and refreshments were to be provided. This was very successful, with some excellent sales and was a terrific start to the project.

In spite of this encouraging beginning, sales were never very plentiful. It was thought that one reason for this was because the major number of visitors were in fact school parties. It was certainly a beautiful place to visit with an excellent cafe, but numbers of people wanting to spend on designer-crafts were thin on the ground.

In 2007, the Bishop of Worcester moved out of the Castle to be based at Worcester; a huge change as the bishops had lived there since the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. A group of trustees was formed to try and raise funds to purchase the Castle and preserve it for the community.

In 2010, the Guild organised an event to take place on June 27<sup>th</sup> in an attempt to boost publicity. The Castle is home to a very famous library, the Hurd Library, and guided tours were regularly given. It was decided to put on a series of demonstrations of a variety of crafts by members. Visitors would be able to see makers at work and have a guided tour of the Library and the old Bishops apartment. They were invited to give a donation towards the purchase of the Castle. Everybody on the Guild mailing list was sent an invitation and it was hoped that this would generate interest in the shop. June 27<sup>th</sup>est. Unfortunately, however, June 27<sup>th</sup> turned out to be a very hot day and what was worse, it clashed with England taking part in the World Cup football final! This inevitably meant that the number of visitors was not what had been hoped..

Ownership eventually passed to the trustees, who managed to raise the necessary funds, although the Museum remains the property of the County Council.

This spelled the end of the shop for the Guild. The only too familiar path of waning interest from the members meant that displays were hard to keep looking fresh, although some members, notably Ray Key, were active to the end. Early in 2018 the showcases were removed and as they were Guild property, they were given to members. It was the end to twelve years of a happy association with the Museum.

### **Publicity**

In 2005, when Brian Maiden was publicity officer, a new drive to improve the image of the Guild had begun. A publicity team was formed as it was too big a task for one individual and Brian enlisted the help of Sharon McSwiney, Sarah Walker and Heather Barningham. Advice was sought from Heather's daughter,

Becca, who had experience of marketing through her work with Midland Shire Farmers. They came up with the idea of creating a new image for the Guild which could be used multiple times in conjunction with the established logo. Frans Wesselman was commissioned to design and make a small stained glass work which depicted pieces of work made by members and the activity of making.. This he did and he produced a beautiful piece which was framed and hung in the Guild shop. The design translated well into publicity such as posters and invitations and a new A5 Guild directory was printed with Fran's design on the cover. This featured all the members as well as information about shows, how to commission work, the Alan Knight Award, the Guild officers, the website, Hartlebury and a short history of the Guild. There was even a list of the traditional gifts for wedding anniversaries on the back page. It was a high quality and comprehensive brochure which was a huge leap forward in terms of the Guild's image. The directory was updated every two years.

In 2016, it was felt that a fresh approach to publicity was needed again and this happened under the leadership of Barry Lockwood, a ceramist and print maker who had taken on the job of publicity officer. He formed a small team to help, which included Becca Williams, a jeweller, who later took on the job from Barry. The directory, although impressive, was expensive to produce and a more concise way of presenting information was needed. Also, it was felt that the Guild's colour of green which had been used since the 1950's, was old-fashioned and that a new logo was necessary; something simple and up-to-date was required. Great discussions took place, with members expressing a variety of opinions, as ever. Not everyone was in favour of such a change, feeling that it would be a loss of our established image, but the majority were convinced. A new logo of orange and grey was produced, which has a very contemporary look. The name of the Guild was changed from the rather cumbersome Worcestershire Guild of Designer Craftsmen to a snappier Worcestershire Guild with a strap line saying Contemporary Crafts. A threefold A5 leaflet was printed which contained information about the members, dates of shows and other information about the Guild. The change had given rise to much debate as can be imagined. Makers tend to be very individualistic and not afraid to voice their own opinions!

### **The Worcestershire Arts Trail**

In 2010, under the chairmanship of Alison Dupernex, the idea of a Worcestershire Arts Trail was mooted. This had been spoken of at various times, but Alison provided the energy and drive to make it happen. This was a major project, but a template existed in the form of the very successful Hereford Arts Trail and the organisation was based on the same pattern. Funding was obtained both from a lottery grant and the County Council, organised mainly by Sarah Jones, a batik maker. Artists and galleries from all over the county were invited to take part. There was an enthusiastic response and forty-two venues took part with either individual artists showing or groups such as the Jinny Ring Centre and Bewdley School Sixth Form Centre holding special exhibitions. Several Guild members

held exhibitions in their homes and invited makers from other counties to join them. The first Arts Trail took place from May 27<sup>th</sup> – May 30<sup>th</sup> in 2011, and was a huge success. It was repeated on June 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> in 2012, but the burden of work involved soon meant that it could not happen unless a professional could be paid to organise it which would be too costly. Unfortunately, it could not continue but it had been a very worthwhile enterprise and still exists in a smaller way with the Worcester Open Studios event which happens every August.

## **Shows**

The Guild was reaching further afield in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and a strong link was made with the Shropshire Guild of Contemporary Craft, which had been founded in 2001. In 2005, the Shropshire, under the chairmanship of jeweller Clive Cooke, obtained funding for a show at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum. It was given the ingenious name of Gorgeous. A huge old engine shed was the space for the exhibition and 46 makers took part, including a good number from the Worcestershire Guild. There were demonstrations, talks and a graduate award, all backed with good publicity. Gorgeous carried on for another 2 years in this form until it lost its funding and was taken over by the Ironbridge Museum staff, who have run it ever since in conjunction with the Shropshire Guild. Some makers were members of both the Worcestershire and the Shropshire Guild and other joint exhibition opportunities were explored. The Shropshire Guild also organised exhibitions called Showing Off, which are still held at various venues in Ludlow and the Worcestershire Guild have lent their exhibition equipment for use at some of these shows.

Reaching in the opposite direction, geographically speaking, in 2010 the Guild were invited to put on an exhibition at the Needleforge Museum in Redditch to be on display in June. Members took on a stewarding rota and the exhibition looked good, although few sales were made. Another invitation had been received from the Court Barn Museum in Chipping Camden, a Museum dedicated to the Arts and Crafts movement in the Cotswolds (which was referenced at the beginning of this history). Again, this was a stewarded exhibition and took place in December 2010. There were some good sales and the Guild felt that it was a venue worth continuing with, so another show was arranged for December 2011. Tragically, the Museum suffered a major burglary in November that year and many irreplaceable items were stolen, so the show could not take place as the Museum had to be closed while repairs and new displays were organised. However, the Guild put on a show there again in December 2012. This was the last one, as many members were reluctant to face travelling, sometimes considerable distances, during the Winter weather and support dwindled.

In 2017, another opportunity to show Guild work in the Cotswold area came from the Gordon Russell Design Museum in Broadway to put on a show in early August. Ray Key had been instrumental initiating this and as ever, brought great energy and authority to the idea. The work from the Guild members was arranged

amongst the other displays, to surprisingly good effect - the modern pieces complimenting the historic items to their mutual advantage. It was hoped to repeat the show again at some future point, but so far, this has not happened.

The Guild was still looking for a venue for a November Show and in 2018, they took advantage of the contact made with the newly renovated Worcester Porcelain Works and held their first exhibition there. It was held over a week including two weekends and there was a change round of some of the stands half-way through the week. Sales were not very good, but everybody felt that it was an excellent venue with potential. The show was repeated the following year, but unfortunately coincided with flooding in Worcester and cold wet weather, so the footfall was very poor. The other advantage to the Guild in connection with the Porcelain Works is that they have some showcases and the Guild has been showing members work in those.

The Guild has always been open to other possible venues for shows and researched several in some depth, including Gardeners World at the National Exhibition Centre and Stoneleigh, the site of The Royal Show. Unfortunately, these initial soundings often turned out to be impractical or lacked enthusiasm from the members.

## **Members**

The membership of the Guild has grown and there are around 60 members in all, (full members, affiliated members and life members). There are potentially 56 exhibiting members, which means that space at the popular shows can be tight as the Guild has always stuck to the principle of allowing anyone who wishes to exhibit rather than having a first come first served system as many other groups do. Extra space is often negotiated and ways found to fit everybody in. This is the difficult task of the Exhibition Officer and they manage to work miracles. Since the Guild decided to accept members from other counties, makers have joined from far afield, Reading, Stoke-on-Trent and Cornwall for example. Only about a third of members are actually from Worcestershire now, but with the development in communications, this doesn't prevent people making a contribution to the running of the Guild. Liz Kemp, the treasurer, lives in Essex, Simon Conolly, the publicity officer lives in Shropshire, as does Jill Bagnall, who organises the Guild website and whose son Adam, organised a on-line shop in 2020 to sell members work. This has changed the character of the Guild as people can't meet up so easily in person. Some feel that it has eroded the ethos of the Guild as a close group, but a strong feeling of camaraderie still exists, although the business aspects of managing the group are obviously a major consideration. The Guild is no longer a 'Club' of craftsmen with independent means which was often the case, although by no means always, in its early days.

There are two members who deserve a special mention. Although they are not makers themselves, they have contributed hugely to the running of the Guild since

1998. One is Peter Bennett, who has already been mentioned. Apart from acting as Treasurer and spearheading the organisation of the Three Choirs exhibitions and updating the Constitution, he was always at hand to help set up shows and made sure that the equipment was well maintained every year before it was used for the first time. He took a keen interest in the welfare of members and was always ready to help in a crisis. Peter retired in 2018 after 20 years service to the Guild. In her chairman's report one year, Alison Dupernex referred to him as the Guild's Treasure. He was made a life member.

The other member is an unlikely angel by the name of John Lepper. John had been working with Steve Smith, a cabinet maker, who had to wind down his workshop as it was not making a sufficient profit. (It was through Steve that the Guild had acquired the shop space at Hartlebury where he worked after leaving his furniture business.). John became a factotum for the Guild. He took on the job of Equipment Officer, which took a lot of the pressure off Peggy and Bunny and in 2003, did a college course to qualify as a PAT tester for the annual checking of electrical equipment (a legal requirement). He makes sure the trailers are properly packed and that nothing is missing and he helps out at the set-up of shows. It is said that nobody is indispensable, but the Guild would find it hard to stage an exhibition without John, who has six pairs of hands and knows where everything is. For a time, he became Assistant Treasurer and helped Peter with the accounts as well as dealing with the collection of money and credit card slips from shows, a job which had to be done daily, so relieving Peter of some of the pressure. John even took on the role of Chairman for two years.

Towing the trailers to venues has always been an essential task and this was done by blacksmith Bunny Brown for many years. To see his reversing the trailers into tight spots was a marvel! Eventually, it became too big a job for him to do as well as being an exhibitor and somebody from outside the Guild was approached to do the job for a modest fee. It was taken over by Howard Freeman, who does a reliable and meticulous job. For some time, it was hoped that the Guild would find somebody from within its ranks to take it on and whenever there was a new applicant, one question was often asked – 'Have they got a tow bar?'

Sadly, Olive Knight died in 2017. She had been a huge supporter of the Guild for some 39 years and it was through her generosity that the writing of this history could be done.

Several members are internationally well known and are excellent ambassadors for the Guild.

Ray Key was a member since 1974 and Guild President for many years until his death in 2018. He was a powerful mover-shaker for the Guild from the moment he was accepted as a member and at various times became Treasurer, Secretary and then Chairman. He also exhibited and lectured in America and has written several books on wood turning. A special stand dedicated to Ray's work was set up

at the Spring Show in 2018 and a special award has been founded to help members develop their work by following courses or buying special tools.

Ceramist Bridget Drakeford has won awards for her exquisite teapots in Japan and sells her work nationally and internationally. She has held the position of Chairman and has organised the displays in the showcases in the Worcester Porcelain works. She has been a stalwart of Guild shows, supporting those that are often not so popular with members.

Danek Piechowiak, Chairman of the Guild from 1999-2006 sends his engraved glass to various customers throughout Europe including Greece and Mallorca. Martyn Pugh, a gold and silversmith of international reputation, has had many apprentices over the years, including two who became Guild members. These were Tara Coomber, who has progressed from silver smithing to stone-cutting and the other was Becca Williams, who moved away to Cornwall, but still played an active part in the Guild, doing superb work as publicity Officer, as well as setting up a successful workshop in Cornwall. They were both recipients of the Alan Knight Award. Martyn was the driving force that initiated the application for the Lottery funding. He has also held various Officers positions including two stints as Exhibition Secretary and one as Chairman. These are just a few of the well known makers who the Guild is fortunate to have as members but is by no means an exhaustive list.

Another member who has been made a life member of the Guild is Jocelyn Perry, who became secretary under the chairmanship of Danek Piechowiak. Jocelyn carried out her duties with incredible efficiency and took her job far beyond the remit of the usual secretarial duties, She organised rotas for stewarding shows, visited potential exhibition venues to sound them out and was always willing to take part in the less popular shows. She had to retire as secretary in 2009, due to ill health, but took up the reins again a few years later. Jocelyn was punctilious and exacting, she expected high standards from the members and upheld her belief in the strong ethos of the Guild as a champion of excellence in craftsmanship.

Both Brian Maiden and Judith Price have also been made life Members.

### **Social events**

Although regular Guild meals seem to be a thing of the past, other social events have taken place and two notable ones were organised by Brian Maiden. The first was a visit to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. A coach was provide and a lovely day out was enjoyed. The other was to celebrate the Guild's seventieth birthday in 2012 and members voted to go on the Severn Valley Railway from Kidderminster to Bridgnorth and to have a meal in a pub there. This was a great success, especially as it was subsidised from Guild funds and a good time was had by all.



Hopefully, more social events like this will happen in the future as they do so much to build friendship within the Guild.

### **The Guild ethos**

The members of the Guild, particularly the older ones, often refer to the Guild ethos. They are anxious to keep the emphasis on excellence of work and to support each other in every way possible. The Guild has certainly done this, giving people practical help in times of difficulty such as after a burglary, or after a terrible incident, as when Brian Maiden's workshop was burnt to the ground and everything in it destroyed. There are many examples over the years of kindness between members - flowers sent in time of illness, transport given when cars are not available, support in times of bereavement and countless other acts of generosity.

The work displayed at shows continues to be of high quality and the variety of crafts has grown, making the shows a delight for members as well as the public. The Guild continues to be an important element in many members lives and it must be hoped that this will continue.

### **2020, a year like no other**

The terrible advent of Covid, meant that 2020 became a year like no other in the life of the Guild. All shows were cancelled, making things very hard for members, who are increasingly moving to ways of selling on line in order to find a market for their work. Although there were no Guild meetings, the officers still communicated and Liz Kemp made sure that the finances were kept in order. Fortunately, the Guild finances have been well managed and it has good savings to tide it over the crisis. This has enabled the Guild to offer a year of free membership in 2021 - a saving to a full member of £70 and a practical way of supporting its members, very much in the Guild tradition. The founder members would have been proud this action and it demonstrates one of the Guild's founding principals, that of combating the isolation of craftsmen working alone.

It is not yet known at the time of writing this, just how 2021 will work out, but perhaps before the end of the year, John will be required to PAT test the electrics, Howard will be standing by to tow the trailers, members will be putting up screens and setting out their own work all ready for a show. Somebody may even be making a cake for everyone to share.

## Membership

The following list is not up to date, but includes the great majority of members to 2009.

Allard Terence (Terry) – Carved Inlay in Marble  
Andrews Martin – Glass Blower  
Andrews Ruth M – Woodsculptor  
Applied 7/11/59 Educated B’ham College of Art & Craft, left 1963  
Antley Lyn – Jeweller  
Bailey Matthew – Blacksmith  
Barham Anthony – Furniture Maker, **Founder Member** of Worcestershire Guild  
Barningham Heather – Ceramicist  
Applied 1994 Guest Member 1994 Full Member  
Barnwell Alice A.R.M.S. (1907-1980)– Diamond Point Engraved Glass, Artist in Etchings, Water-colours, and Pen and Ink drawings, **Founder Member** of Worcestershire Guild  
Bell Antony H - Ceramics  
Birkett Hugh F.S.D.C.(1919-2002) – Furniture Maker  
Accepted 1953, Guild President 1955, member for 48 years  
Bissell Howard – Potter slipware, **Founder Member** of Worcestershire Guild  
Angela Bragg – Batik  
Brewer Jane – Silversmith, student of Alan Knight  
Applied 1971, member from 1977 .  
Brown Gwen – Glove Maker  
Brown Margarita (Peggy)wife of Harry (Bunny) Brown – Bellows Maker 1983  
Brown Harry – Silversmith. Member 1964  
Brown Harry (Bunny)- Blacksmith  
Brown Nicola (Niki) – Handweaver/designer M.A. in textiles  
Bruce-Morgan Margaretha B.A. – Weaver/spinner/dyer  
Applied 1986 Guest 1986 Full Member 1987  
Buckley Nancy E – Weaver  
Burleigh-Smith K. - Craft not known – only came to one meeting  
Cass Barbara – Potter Member of Craft Centre of GB & Craftsmen Potter’s Assoc.  
Applied 1965  
Collingwood Peter – Weaver  
Coomber Tara – Silver and Goldsmith  
Crilly Christine – Embroiderer B.A. Hons.  
Applied 1980, Guest Exhibitor 1980, Full member 1982  
Davies Julie – Weaver and Textile Designer  
Applied 1983 Guest exhibitor 1983 Full member ? Left when she moved to Leicester  
Davies Tony and Sue (Bredon Pottery) – Domestic Potters  
Digby Grace – Jewellery, Oil and Water-colour pictures

Exhibited from 1954  
Donovan Paul – Wood Sculptor  
Applied 1971,  
Dowel Michael – Model Boat Maker Applied  
Resigned as exhibitor 2004, but still member  
Drakesford Bridget – Potter, Porcelain and Stoneware Fellow Scottish Potter's  
Assoc. Member of Scottish Craft Centre Edinburgh  
Dugdale-Bradley Rosemary – Weaver/Potter Sunfield Pottery, Clent  
Resigned 1956 as she did two crafts but was only accepted for one  
Dupernex Alison – Knitwear Designer-Maker  
Applied 1990, Guest 1990, Full member 1991  
Elliot George – Glass Blower  
Evans Alan – Blacksmith designer-maker, Full member 1977  
Evans Peter – Furniture Maker, Founder member of Craftsmen of Gloucestershire  
Member 1961  
Evans Joy – Wood carver, Founder member of Craftsmen of Gloucestershire  
Member 1964  
Firth John – Furniture Maker, **Founder member** Worcestershire Guild  
Florence Nora – Rush Work/Corn dollies  
Applied 1972  
Fowkes William – Furniture Maker, **Founder Member** of Worcestershire Guild  
Fryer D. A. – porcelain sculptures of marine fish.  
Galpin Pippa – Potter/ceramicist/sculptor  
Gibson Penelope – Embroiderer  
Applied 1965, Member 1965, Left 1972  
Gilbert Belinda - Jeweller, B.A.(Hons)  
Applied 1985, Guest exhibitor 1985, Full member 1986  
Goodwin-Jones Richard B.A.(Hons) L.S.D.C. – Raku Ceramicist  
Applied 1985, Guest exhibitor 1985, Full member 1986  
Govier Leslie N.D.D., A.T.D.– Print Maker, Artist in Oils and Water-colours  
Greer Stanley – Printmaker and Lettercutter,  
Applied 1990 Full member 1990 ?*Sue check*  
Guerrier Katharine – Decorative Textile Designer, Full member 1989, left 1999  
Hales Teressa? – *Sue check*  
Hallmark Margaret B.A. – Silk Batik Artist, *Sue check dates*  
Hardy Timothy – Leather - worker designer-maker  
Applied 1987, Guest exhibitor 1987, Full member 1990  
Harris Katherine – Guest member 1996. Moved to Northwick, Worcs  
Heatly Richard – Furniture Maker  
Homer Martin – Potter Applied 1972  
Hotchkiss Allison -Applied and accepted 1977, left 1980  
Howard Graham – Leatherworker  
Guest member 1987, attended Three Counties Show then. Members  
questioned his tooled leather work.  
Hoyland Jessie – Weaver, Artist in pastels,  
Applied and accepted 1953, left with regret 1956

Hughes Angie – Embroidered Textile Designer-maker  
Humphris Paula – Maker of figures in pottery  
Johnson Clare – Architectural Stained Glass Maker  
Johnson Graham – Furniture Maker, Applied 1984.  
Johnson John – Designer Toymaker  
Jones Elizabeth – Batik Fibre Artist Guest member 1990  
Jones Mark – Clay Modelled Historic Figures  
Jones Siobhan – Kiln Formed Glass Designer-maker  
Keep Kathleen M – Weaver was invited as a guest exhibitor in 1954  
Keepax Mary – Applied 1965  
Kellett Janet (Jan) – Bookbinder, (also Restoration and Conservation) Full member 1994. Moved to Canada in 2002  
Key Ray - Woodturner  
King Marie-Therese – Batik Artist  
Knight Alan F.S.D.C.(– Black and Silversmith  
Ladell Leslie E – Furniture Maker and Wood-turner  
Lashford Janie B.A. (Hons) – Milliner Applied 1992, Full member 1994 left  
Lemmon Albert – Stained Glass Maker, **Founder Member** of Worcestershire Guild  
Lemmon Peter – Stained Glass Maker, Son of Albert Lemmon  
Longdon Geoffrey – Chair Caner  
Louise Victoria (Piechowiak) – Hand Smocker and Embroiderer, Guest 1985, Full member 1987, left 1990  
McSwiney Sharon & Williams Penny – Metalworkers in Jewellery, clocks, & ornaments  
Mackinnon Blake and Janette – Ceramic Jewellers  
Maiden Brian – Furniture Maker Guest member 1994, Full member 1995  
Makepeace Smith John – Furniture Maker Applied 1960, Full Member 1961.*Sue check*  
Marwood Michelle – Ceramicist Became non-exhibiting member in 1999. Moved to Burgundy in 2004 died 2020  
Matthews Catherine – Silk Scarf Maker and Embroiderer -The first recipient of Alan Knight Award  
Miles Vera – Weaver Full member 1972 but exhibited as invited guest from 1964  
Moore Lucille – Jeweller  
Moore Penelope (Penny) – Was member in 1972  
Moore France G.- ceramics/ceramic jewellery 1972  
Morris J. Philip – Silversmith  
Mullins Victoria – Potter, mainly stoneware Full member 1971. Moved to Isle of Wight  
Nicholls Steven – Jeweller  
Owen Barry – Stringed Instrument Maker  
Pancheri Robert A.R.B.S.– Sculptor and Woodcarver, **Founder Member** Worcestershire Guild  
Parker- Smith Annie B.A (Hons) – Porcelain and laterv papier mache 1982

Pearce James – Jeweller and worker in Lapidary Applied 1980  
Pearce Jenny – Basket Maker  
Perry Jocelyn – Beadwork Jeweller  
Pickford Jennifer – Artist Blacksmith GE  
Piechowiak Danek Marcus – Diamond Point Glass Engraver, Guest 1985, Full member 1987  
Poole John – Sculptor Full member 1961  
Price Claude – Stained Glass Maker Full member 1965 *Sue check*  
Price Judith – Jeweller Guest 1985, Full member 1986. Very active Officer for Guild  
Pritchard Peter – Screen Printer  
Proctor Carole – Calligrapher/Lettering Applied 1993  
Pugh Martyn Jeremy M.A. 1980– Gold and Silversmith.  
Redfern Stephanie – Potter  
Rogers Russell – Basket Maker, Guest 1981, Full member 1982  
Shotton Margaret A. -  
Smith Elizabeth – Enamellist (19 - 2002) Left 1998  
Steveni Angela – Embroiderer  
Smith Gail – Applied 1991  
Smith Steven – Furniture Maker  
Stevenson Ineke – Ceramicist Sutcliffe Malcom – Glass Blower  
Sutcliffe Jean  
Sutton Ann – Textiles  
Sweet Medicine Beads (Bhava Mitchell, Samantha Hemming, Susan Cameron(Black)) Designer-Makers of Beadwork Jewellery.  
Swindale Owen – Jeweller, Full member 1972.  
Thomson Tony  
Templer James T. - Applied 1960  
Terry Belinda – Jeweller, Guest 1989 Full member  
Thompson Tony – Jeweller  
Trott Jackie Poly.Dip.A.D., L.S.I.A., C.I.C. – Ceramics and embroidery Member 1976. left in 1997  
Tucker Kathleen – Calligrapher and Heraldic Artist (Husband Eric was Treasurer.)  
Tufnell Atholl - Sculptural Ceramicist specialising in planters and fountains  
Tyas Sarah Jane B.A.(Hons) – Textile Artist, Guest 1988, Full member 1988  
Vilven Charmian – Applique work, jackets etc  
Walker Sarah – Textile Artist, Lamp Maker  
Wesselman Frans – Stained Glass Maker GE  
Whitehouse Richard – Silversmith  
Whiting Geoffrey – Potter, stoneware, Water-colour Artist, **Founder Member** Worcestershire Guild  
Wilkes Frances – Sculptor, Member 1961  
Wright Dixon K – Weaver  
Williams Evan John – Chair and Stool Maker Applied 1990, Guest Member 1990  
Yelland Anna – Embroiderer Guest member 1972, Full member 1973

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Published in 1999 by the Bromsgrove Society Printed by Warwick Printing Co Ltd.

C R Ashbee & the Guild of Handicraft

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Alan Crawford

Fiona MacCarthy

Cambray Printing Services, Cheltenham

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**Thanks and Acknowledgements**

Mr Roy Albutt

Mr Eric Bailey

Reverend Peter Chippendale

Olive Knight

Mrs Margaret(Tibbi) Mundy

Mr Christopher Pancheri

Sian – Archivist Birmingham School of Art & Design

Mr Terence Simons

Mr Ivan Smith

Sandra Smith - Lickey Parish secretary

Mr William Thomas – Bromsgrove Guild

Mr Robin Whitaker & Mr Anthony Wherry - Worcestershire County Records  
Office

David Whiting & family

Mrs Victoria Cecil-Wright (Vicky Mullins)

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