

Review of 2021

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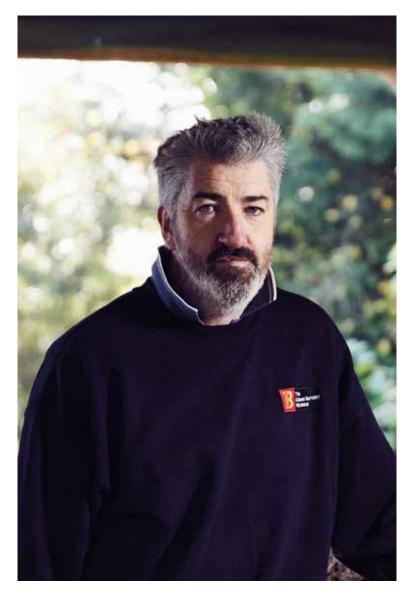
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Oly Barnsley, Matthew Booth, Stephen Rock





Workshop Review by James Ryan



Introduction

I am very pleased with our achievements in 2021, given the ongoing challenges presented by Covid-19. We navigated our way through pandemic-related restrictions as best we could. Thankfully, the impact was not as significant as it might have been. We had interesting orders to fulfil, which you can see on the following pages. We continued to provide high-quality furniture-making training, and in Chris Gunkel, we recruited a promising new apprentice. Inevitably there were disruptions to our program of outside events. We had no public exhibitions or Workshop Open Days in 2021, which was frustrating. I enjoy talking face-to-face with people about the work we do, and of course, engaging with new clients is vital for the success of the workshop. Thankfully, despite promotional work being more challenging, we continue to add new commissions to our order book.

London Craft Week Easy Chair

In 2021 we took part in London Craft Week for the first time. For this event we developed our new Easy Chair in association with Bernie de Le Cuona. Bernie is the founder and CEO of de Le Cuona, a purveyor of luxury textiles with a 27-year history. Bernie is someone to whom designers and historical bodies turn when a textile specialist is required. Her fabric house uses only the finest natural fibres sourced from around the world.

It has been many decades since we have produced an easy chair in the workshop. Delving into the workshop archive, I found several easy chair designs that had been drawn by Edward Barnsley in the 1950s. I used these as a starting point for producing a new design. A fascinating part of the collaborative process was the insight Bernie gave me into the different fabrics she produces. I learnt much about the raw materials and the different processes involved. For the chair, Bernie selected from her collection a green boucle fabric that has the most wonderful deep texture. I added some hand-gouged surfacing to the ends of the arms that, together with the boucle fabric, gives the chair an inviting tactile dimension.

The chair launch was held in de Le Cuona's Pimlico Road showroom during London Craft Week. The chair was also featured in The World of Interiors magazine.

I am very grateful to Bernie and her team for their help with this project. It was a real pleasure to work with them.











Extending Dining Table and Chairs

This is the latest iteration of my most popular design of extending table. It is very satisfying to be able to continually refine the design of a piece. I am able to learn from the last version and make slight but evolutionary improvements to the extending mechanism. The table extension leaf is discreetly folded inside the table base and the mechanism is extremely smooth and easy to operate. This version in walnut was made by Joe Orchard.







Tall Stool

Oscar Harris made this oak stool. It is an adaptation of one I designed a few years ago. On the top rails you can clearly see the figuring of the 'rays'. With rays as prominent as these, the timber can only be quarter-sawn oak.





Pair of Bedside Tables

I adapted one of my occasional table designs to suit the client's requirements. The tables here are in walnut with feather, or crotch, walnut panels. These tables have what could be called 'semi-secret' drawers. The drawer fronts, at first glance, look no different from the side rails. I like the visual simplicity this gives to the design. They were made by Oscar Harris.





Desk Chair

This chair was commissioned as a leaving present for a school teacher. I invited him into the Workshop for a chair 'fitting'. By doing this we were able to establish an optimal seat height and arm shape, and precisely match the chair to his frame.

The chair, in oak and brown oak, was made by Oscar Harris.



Oval Dining Table

This was one of my favourite new designs this year. An oval or rounded table top shape can provide very flexible seating positions. Diners are able to sit anywhere around the table and a greater number can be accommodated. However, to make full use of this versatility, and for the table to be comfortable in use, the table legs and understructure must be unobtrusive and not get in the way of the diners' legs.

The table top was made of several pieces of brown oak which were very carefully selected to give the impression of being one single piece. The timber selection process is an aspect of our work I particularly enjoy and a skill I learnt during my apprenticeship. It involves attentively reading the grain of the boards you are working with and then cutting and orientating them so that the grain appears to run seamlessly from one board to the next.

With this table I feel I have created a visually light and appealing design without compromising the rigidity or stability of the table. The trick is knowing where one can reduce the thickness of an individual component without losing strength.

I worked with Simon Bulley on this piece.











Apprentice Pieces

On these two pages are a few examples of smaller pieces made by our apprentices for clients of the Barnsley Workshop. Oscar Harris made the ash dovetailed stool and the cherry table with a limestone top. Chris Gunkel made the casket in oak and carved the lettering.



Workshop Cottage Garden

A neighbour of the Barnsley Workshop, Catherine Bryan, has been instrumental in helping to restore the workshop cottage garden. Catherine's advice and the hard work of our gardeners Dean and Emma are returning the garden to its former splendour.

Training

Unlike in 2020, when Covid-19 affected our ability to assess applicants and recruit apprentices, in 2021 we were able to proceed as normal. We invited potential applicants to look round our workshop and to bring in examples of their work. In June, we held skills-test days for the most promising applicants. This led us to offering an apprenticeship to Chris Gunkel, who started training with us in September.

It was clear from our selection process that Covid-19 has made life difficult for many of our applicants. For applicants who had been studying at further education colleges, the amount of time they had been able to spend making furniture in the college workshop had been significantly reduced. Practical experience is so important, and unfortunately many students have missed out.

One of the strongest apprenticeship applicants this year was Lauren Cabell. We were very impressed by her commitment to becoming a skilled furniture maker. Unfortunately, we were not able to take her on as an apprentice. However, with the financial support of Dr Sue Powell and the Olwen and Edwin Powell Award, we were able to give Lauren five weeks of training in the workshop. Although a short period, we were confident that the time invested in Lauren would assist her greatly in her future endeavours.

Workshop Development Plans

We obtained planning permission to turn the Workshop Cottage back into residential accommodation. After the death in 1996 of Tania,



Edward Barnsley's widow, we converted the family's home into office and exhibition space. With the building of the new workshop extension we will be able to house the office and showroom elsewhere in the building. As part of our overarching plan, our intention in the future is to be able to use the cottage as some form of accommodation.

The workshop extension has been steadily moving forward. The precarious ground conditions on the site have presented challenges. This called us to reexamine our foundation design. Our revised scheme for the new machine shop uses steel-cased piles and a steel grillage frame on which our new building will be built. This new approach reduces the need for heavy machinery on site and keeps ground works away from the steep escarpment.

Masterpiece 2021 Online

This year, for the eleventh year in a row, we participated in the Masterpiece London Fair. Due to

Covid-19, the fair was all online with a new website section for the exhibitors' latest offerings. I was pleased to be able to present a new version of my extending table design.

As part of the online fair there was a variety of podcasts, videos and panel discussions. My latest library steps were chosen by Peter Osborne of Osborne Samuel Gallery as one of the sculptural highlights of the fair. It was a real thrill to be mentioned alongside Henry Moore and Lynn Chadwick.

London Craft Week 2021

This was the first time we have participated in this annual event. Craft practitioners collaborate with London-based organisations and companies to show work during the event week in October. We exhibited our new easy chair in the de Le Cuona Pimlico Road showroom.

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Staff Departures

In August, I was very sad to say goodbye to our senior craftsman Joe Orchard. He has left us to take up a new opportunity, working as a craftsman in a furniture-making workshop. I would like to pay a heartfelt tribute to Joe. I have worked closely with him over many years. Joe joined the Barnsley Workshop as an apprentice in 2005. Throughout his time with us, he has worked with dedication and integrity and produced furniture of outstanding quality. He set a fine example to many apprentices and became a valued member of the core workshop team. The ethos behind the Barnsley Workshop and the associated Educational Trust is that all our staff, apprentices and trained makers alike, should be able to develop fulfilling careers as craftspeople. Although his departure is a loss for me and the workshop, I fully support his wish to experience new challenges and broaden his experience.

Simon Bulley left us in August and is working as a furniture-maker in Hertfordshire. Simon, shown on page 16 uncovering boards in our timber sheds, joined us as an apprentice in 2017. He successfully completed a three-year apprenticeship and stayed on with us as a trainee craftsman. I am sure Simon will do very well in his new job.

Visitors and Events

The number of organised visits we received from organised groups was cut right back this year.

However, as the pandemic restrictions eased, we had visits from various groups. Rycotewood Furniture Centre, John Lloyd Fine Furniture School, the Furniture Craft School and the City of Winchester Trust all visited.

Acknowledgements

I am fortunate to work with such highly dedicated and skilled makers. This year the team comprised apprentices Chris Gunkel, Oscar Harris, trainee craftsman Simon Bulley, craftsman-tutor Stephen Rock and senior craftsman Joe Orchard.

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has helped us in the Barnsley Workshop over the past year. I would like to thank the Trustees of the Edward Barnsley Educational Trust, and the Trust's three special advisers, who give their time and energy to the charity. They are listed on page 35.

I would also like to say a special thank you to:

Philippa Hobson

Catherine Bryan

Bernie de Le Cuona

Michel Focard de Fontefiguieres

Hamish Low (of Adamson and Low)

Dr Sue Powell

Arthur Scott





Hamish Low, of Adamson and Low cabinet makers, describes training in the Edward Barnsley Workshop in the 1980s.

You joined the EB workshop in 1987. What led you there?

My woodwork teacher at school had been trained at Loughborough where EB was a lecturer and like many he became an EB disciple. We were taken to exhibitions with examples of EB's work in the late 70's. As a result, I wanted to learn how to make everything to that standard.

What was the workshop like and who was working there?

I remember it was quite strict with a disciplined hierarchy. There was also a lot of expertise to learn from. Chris Butler, Mark Nicholas and Richard Elderton were the craftsmen working on commissions. I was labelled a trainee and worked with all three craftsmen on their commissions until they couldn't stand it any longer. Fortunately, this coincided with me reaching a high enough standard to work on commissions of my own. Adam Gamble and Mike Shally were the apprentices.

Very often George Taylor would drop in – a little bit like Sir Laurence Olivier dropping in to observe rehearsals at a village pantomime. I remember George's instruction as I was dry-assembling a joint, 'What are you doing?' he asked. 'Just trying these dovetails'. 'Well don't. If you fiddle with a joint it will look grubby. A joint only fits once and needs to be sharp and crisp. Cut them all at the same time and quickly, knowing with certainty that they are going to fit perfectly, mix up your glue and glue the whole lot up in one go'. This is why traditional apprenticeships work. Just five minutes of the master's time to learn three lessons.

- 1. You must have the maturity and confidence to focus completely on what you are making.
- 2. When you are focused to that degree you will be fast and the work neat and crisp.
- 3. Not only is there an aesthetic to things that are well made, there is a more important aesthetic to things that are made well and quickly.

What did you do after you left the EB workshop and how did your experience open doors for you?

Since leaving EB I worked for John Makepeace before then joining Nicola Adamson as a partner in Adamson and Low, a small cabinet-making workshop in the Weald of Kent making individual pieces of furniture to commission. I don't believe I would have been offered the job with John had I not been at the EB workshop and I definitely wouldn't have had the confidence to be a partner in my own endeavour.

What do you do now?

My wife and I continue to run Adamson and Low but we no longer make furniture that has been commissioned. We now make pieces speculatively. We have always been passionate about the constructive use of native hardwoods and this has led us to specialising in the preservation of the rarest of native hardwoods, Fenland Black Oak, or Bog Oak. Black Oak is a species of gigantic native oak tree growing 5,000 years ago. At that time, climate change resulted in a rise in sea level which flooded the ancient high forests, killing the trees, which then fell into the silt of what was once the forest floor. Anaerobic conditions then preserved the trees for 5,000 years. The timber yielded from these trees has many unique characteristics, making it highly prized by craftspeople all over the world. But with beautiful timber come great challenges, and Black Oak is notoriously difficult to dry. It has taken us thirty years of trial and error mostly error - to develop techniques to do this.

How has your time at the EB workshop helped you with the work you are doing now?

Possibly the most important lesson learnt from my traditional apprenticeship is the humility to accept that when things go wrong, it is very likely to be your fault. There is nowhere to hide when working under somebody more senior. I would not have persevered

with the preservation techniques if I hadn't learnt the humility lesson. The simple truth is you are very well qualified to attempt the procedure again and much more likely to succeed if you learn the lessons from previous attempts.

For what it's worth, a piece of advice for the current cohort of apprentices, is that the person who never makes mistakes never makes anything.

There is no doubt that my interest in processing native hardwoods definitely came from an affinity with the EB air drying sheds. Most of the trees we were using would otherwise have been wasted and such beautiful things were made from wood that was seasoned in such a very direct way.

I have this same direct craftsman's approach to assessing Black Oaks in the fields of the fens.

What else did you learn from your apprenticeship at the EB workshop?

I liked and admired the people I was working with then. I think their attitude rubs off on you. To be as good as them you subconsciously realise that you actually have to be a little bit like them. I am also very grateful for the kindness shown to me by the Barnsley family.

Do you have any advice for your younger self?

Don't worry so much about getting things wrong, as a lack of confidence can make mistakes more likely. Confidence is a very important factor in making things quickly, and making things quickly definitely doesn't mean compromising on standards. I now realise that the aesthetic quality of the craftsmanship which so inspired me as a school boy was achieved precisely because it was made so quickly and beautifully.

To see examples of Hamish's work, visit adamsonandlow.com thefenlandblackoakproject.co.uk





Training in the Edward Barnsley Workshop

The Edward Barnsley Educational Trust (EBET) provides furniture-making training in Edward Barnsley's historic workshop. We set high standards and teach valuable craft skills. Helped by our supporters, we offer life-changing opportunities.

Why was the EBET established?

There is a nationwide shortage of skilled furniture-makers. However, for most people wanting a career in the craft, it is impossible to find affordable, workshop-based training. Providing a good training is expensive. Small craft workshops can cover their training costs only by charging tuition fees. For most aspiring furniture-makers, those training fees are prohibitively expensive. In 1980, a group of Barnsley Workshop supporters founded the Edward Barnsley Educational Trust. Its aims, as set out in its deed, are to provide training opportunities and financial support to people

who are 'entering upon or engaged in the craft of handmade furniture'. We do not charge apprentices for their training. We pay them the National Minimum Wage.

The EBET Apprenticeship Scheme

Our apprentices make furniture alongside experienced craftsmen and learn how to achieve the high standards of the Barnsley Workshop. Apprentices begin by making set pieces entirely by hand, guided by Stephen Rock and James Ryan. With more experience, apprentices work on larger pieces of furniture commissioned by the workshop's clients.

We operate a rigorous selection process. Apprentices train with us for at least a year. Some stay on for a second or third year of training. We help apprentices find employment at the end of their training. With their skills and experience, our apprentices are much in demand.



We frequently receive enquiries from other workshops seeking to recruit EBET-trained apprentices.

Additional Activities

In addition to apprenticeships, the EBET also offers short-term training to interns, including international students. We offer work experience to school and college students. We organise regular open days for the general public to learn more about our work.

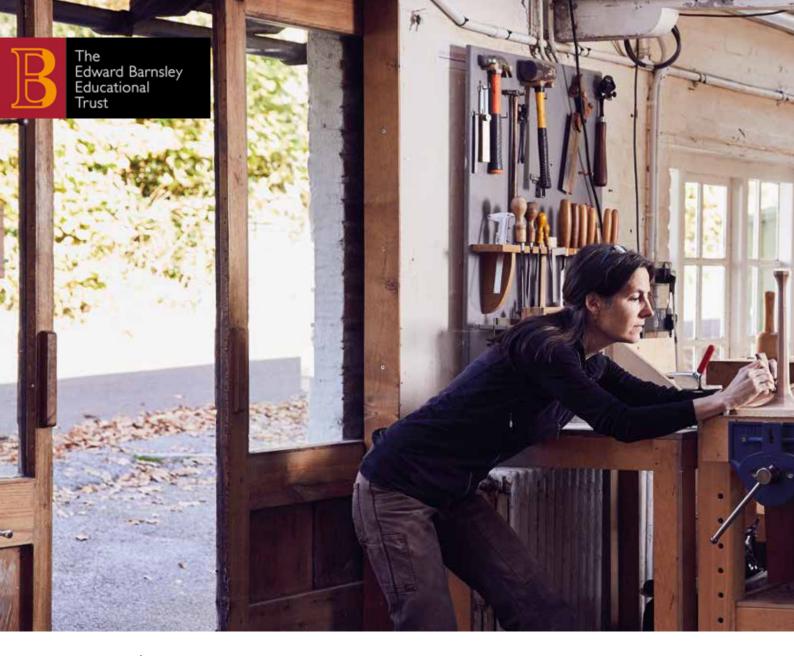
Our Achievements

Since 1980 the EBET has trained more than sixty people. It is a testament to the effectiveness of our training programme that nearly all of them continue to earn their living making high-quality furniture. Our apprentices have won national and international cabinet-making competitions. Some have gone on to set up their own furniture-making businesses.

Designer-Maker James Ryan and Crafstman-Tutor Stephen Rock trained with us as apprentices. James is the manager of the Barnsley Workshop and is a former chairman of the Bespoke Guildmark Committee at the Worshipful Company of Furniture Makers.

Background

Edward Barnsley CBE (1900–1987) was an important furniture-maker who established his workshop in rural Hampshire in 1923. Barnsley furniture is renowned for its high quality. Examples of our work can be found in the Palace of Westminster and Canterbury Cathedral. The oak boards used in the rebinding of the Domesday Book in 1986 were made in the Barnsley Workshop. Edward's father, Sidney Barnsley, was a pioneering figure in the Arts and Crafts Movement. The Edward Barnsley Workshop has a unique link to the origins of a movement that has helped shape our national identity.



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Our Costs

Providing we have sufficient funds, each September we take on new apprentices and we offer a further year of training to some of our current apprentices. The sale of apprentices' work helps cover the cost of their training. Nevertheless, to employ a craftsmantutor, train our apprentices and cover a share of the workshop overheads we need to raise around $\pounds 75,000$ each year.

Fundraising

We receive support in a variety of forms: individual donations, regular payments and legacies. We have also received donations and grants for our recent building appeal. We invite individual supporters to become Friends of the EBET. Details are on page 35. On page 34 of this Review and on our website, there is a list of all the grant-giving organisations that have supported the EBET since its inception. We are extremely grateful to all our generous supporters who help us train the next generation of skilled furniture-makers.















Organisations Supporting Recent Apprentices

The Arts Society, Grayshott

The Arts Society (Patricia Fay Memorial Fund Award)

The Barbara Whatmore Charitable Trust

The Carpenters' Company

The Charlotte Bonham-Carter Charitable Trust

The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust

English Woodlands Timber

The Ernest Cook Trust

The Furniture Makers' Company (Olwen & Edwin Powell Award)

Garfield Weston Foundation

The Golsoncott Foundation

The Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust

Hargreaves and Ball Trust

Hedley Foundation

The Mikado Trust

Newby Trust

Radcliffe Trust















Trust Trainees 1980 - 2021

Colin Eden-Eadon	1981	Retired tutor, making boxes and writing, Shropshire
Giles Garnham	1981	Contact lost
Robert Lawrence	1981	Furniture maker and university technician, West Sussex
Darren Harvey	1984	Furniture maker, Australia
Christopher Butler	1985	Proprietor, Christopher Butler Furniture, Scotland
Michael Shally	1985	Draughtsman, Hampshire
Frank Roper	1986	Contact lost
Hamish Low	1987	Proprietor, Adamson and Low Cabinet Makers
Adam Gamble	1987	Proprietor, Adam Gamble Furniture, Lancashire
Stephen Rock	1988	Craftsman-Tutor at the Barnsley Workshop
Phillip Brown	1989	Proprietor, Kraftwork, Hampshire
Sean Casey	1989	Furniture tutor, Chichester College
Richard Ash	1990	Furniture maker and teacher, New Zealand
Robert Surgey	1990	Deceased
Yasunori Nagao	1990	Furniture maker at the Arts and Crafts Village, Japan
Frederik Lundquist	1992	Furniture maker, Sweden
Colin Norgate	1992	Proprietor, Colin Norgate Workshop, Hampshire
James Ryan	1992	Designer at the Barnsley Workshop / freelance designer
Bjorn Wenzel	1993	Furniture maker, Sweden
Stephen Lamont	1994	Proprietor, Stephen Lamont Furniture
Gunnar Good	1995	Furniture maker, Sweden
Duncan Hitchings	1995	Proprietor, Duncan Hitchings, Dorset
Simon Owen	1996	Furniture maker, Surrey
Theo Cook	1997	Tutor, East Sussex
Vincent Large	1998	Proprietor, Courage Copse Creatives, Devon
Simon Pretty	2000	Cabinet maker, Fareham
Graham Christmas	2001	Professional diver, Bermuda
Ross Clarke	2002	Proprietor, Warleigh Building Services, Hampshire
Tony Buskas	2003	Furniture maker, Sweden
Gary Tuddenham	2003	Proprietor, Parabola Workshops, Cumbria
James Oliver	2004	Proprietor, Artisan Ensemble, France
Joe Orchard	2005	Furniture maker, Hampshire



Samuli Maja	2005	Structural Engineer, Finland
Aidan McEvoy	2005	Proprietor, AM Fine Furniture, Surrey
Ben Smith	2006	Furniture maker, Cumbria
Nathan Day	2006	Proprietor, Nathan Day Design, Australia
Andrew Cunningham	2007	Draughtsman, Wales
Daniel Pateman	2007	Tutor, Sussex
Robert Culverhouse	2008	Workshop manager, London
Joshua Jaeger	2008	Furniture maker, Bath
Nathanael Lloyd	2008	Proprietor, Anthony Lloyd Fine Furniture, Ware
Christopher Wallis	2009	Project manager, Lancashire
Douglas Williams	2009	Project manager, London
Mark Tamcken	2009	Teacher and furniture maker, Berkshire
Christopher Adkins	2010	Furniture maker, Wales
Will Church	2010	Furniture maker, Germany
Laura Tunstall	2011	Furniture designer, London
Tom Keogh	2011	Workshops manger, Wales
Andrew Marsh	2012	Proprietor, Andrew Maker Furniture, Cheshire
Paulo de Vasconcelos	2012	College tutor, London
Danny Humphreys	2013	Furniture maker, Cambridge
David Williams	2013	Furniture maker, Lancashire
Sam Brister	2014	Workshop foreman, Wales
Douglas Foster	2014	Furniture maker, London
Edmund Barker	2015	Furniture maker, London
Nathan Peach	2015	Furniture maker, East Sussex
Warren Bentley	2016	Furniture maker, Wales
lan Towers	2016	Furniture maker, Wales
Simon Bulley	2017	Furniture maker, Hertfordshire
Joshua Pengelly	2018	Furniture maker, Dorset
Max Shaw	2019	Furniture maker, Oxfordshire
Oscar Harris	2019	Apprentice at the Barnsley Workshop
Chris Gunkel	2021	Apprentice at the Barnsley Workshop





Grant-Giving Supporters 1980 - 2021

Association for Cultural Exchange

Annesley (CLW) Trust

The Antony Hornby Charitable Trust

The Arts Society

The Art Workers' Guild

The Barbara Whatmore Charitable Trust

The Belmont Trust

The Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation

The Brewers' Society

The Broderers' Charity Trust

The Carpenters' Company

The Charlotte Bonham-Carter Charitable Trust

The Chase Trust

Christie's

Comino Foundation

The Cinderford Charitable Trust

The Crafts Council

The Crafts Study Centre

The D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust

The Drapers' Company

The Dulverton Trust

East Hampshire District Council

The Edward Hornby Charitable Trust

Ellis Campbell Charitable Foundation

English Woodlands Timber

The Ernest Cook Trust

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

The Fine Art Society

Fitton Trust

The Foundation for Sports and the Arts

The Worshipful Company of Furniture Makers

The Gane Charitable Trust

Garfield Weston Foundation

The Golsoncott Foundation

The Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust

The Grocers' Charity

The Haberdashers' Company

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Area Arts Society

Hampshire Archives Trust

Hampshire County Council

Hargreaves and Ball Trust

The Harley Foundation

The Headley Trust

Hedley Foundation

The Helen Hamlyn Trust

The Idlewild Trust

The Jane Hodge Foundation

The Kobler Trust

The de Laszlo Foundation

The Leche Trust

The Leathersellers' Company Charitable Fund

The Leverhulme Trust

The Lionel Wigram Memorial Trust

The Lord Faringdon Charitable Trust

The Lynn Foundation

Magdelen College, Oxford

The Manifold Charitable Trust

Marks and Spencer

The Mercers' Company

The Mikado Trust

The Monument Trust

Newby Trust

The Olwen and Edwin Powell Award

Petersfield Area Arts Society

The Pilgrim Trust

Pyke Charity Trust

Radcliffe Trust

The Rank Foundation

Rowan Bentall Charitable Trust

Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851

Schroder Charity Trust

Southdown Trust

Sotheby's

The Tudor Trust

Please Donate to Keep Craft Skills Alive

Every donation makes a difference to our apprentices and is very gratefully received.

Friends

Become a Friend of the Edward Barnsley Educational Trust by making a regular donation.

Legacies

If you are about to write or change your will, please consider supporting the work of the Edward Barnsley Educational Trust. Legacies to the Trust are free of inheritance tax.

Please get in touch if you would like more information about donating, becoming a Friend or giving through Gift Aid.

The Edward Barnsley Educational Trust

% The Edward Barnsley Workshop (contact details overleaf)

Registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (1182709)

Trustees

Bill Jackson Paul Martin MA(RCA), FCSD Rodney McMahon BA, FCA (Chair) Peter Taylor

Special Advisers



Edward Barnsley, 1974



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Designer-Craftsman and Manager James Ryan Visitors welcome by appointment 8.30 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday www.barnsley-furniture.co.uk