

# WEAVER AGM 2021

A Weavers AGM and Supper took place on Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2021 in the Weavers Room within Verdant Works with forty-one Members and Guests attending.

This AGM included the handing over of the 'Chain of Office' from Deacon John Fyffe, who has served a three-year tenure due to COVID, to Incoming Deacon Paul Leigh.

Pictured right showing those attending on the night



Following the AGM, the evening entertainment, organised by newly appointed Deacon Paul Leigh and his Boxmaster Richard Irvine, included guest speaker Prof. Graeme Morton, who gave an insight into the Scottish Diaspora and Late Deacon Convener of the Nine Trades Robert Dunn - standing in for Deacon Convener Iain Murray who unfortunately was isolating due to COVID; Robert gave the attendees an update of the work of the Nine Trades.



Deacon John Fyffe welcoming all to the event in the Red Box.

The Weaver Craft AGM was held prior to the Supper and took place in the Red Room within the High Mill of Verdant Works.

Deacon John Fyffe welcomed all Members to the meeting and after the usual formalities proceeded to pick out the highlights from his Deacon's Report, which demonstrated the significant level of activity undertaken by the Weaver Craft over the past eighteen months, despite the challenges presented by COVID.

Deacon John mentioned the donation of £500 from the Weaver Craft towards the distribution of PPE equipment within local care homes an extremely worthwhile initiative led by Past Deacon Alastair Scott and Craftsman Bob Low.

In June 2020 and June 2021, the annual Weavers awards were made to the two outstanding final year students at DJCAD: 2020 Francesca Rae and Adam Komuves first and second respectively and 2021 Eden Parkes and Charlotte Neilson.

Deacon John also paid tribute to Adrian Stewart who retired in 2020 from his role as Joint Clerk and to whom we send our thanks and best wishes.

To maintain contact during the depths of the lockdown it was suggested by Past Deacon Alastair Scott that a series of online lectures be held – accordingly, during March, April and May three lectures were given by Craftsman Dr Richard Irvine, Maureen Shaw, an illustrator from Badenoch and Ruaridh Wishart, Abertay University Archivist.

The subjects covered were:

- Discovering the World of Mr David Jeffrey, Verdant Works 1858-1884
- Behind the Scenes at the Museum, Textile Treasures at the Highland Folk Museum, Badenoch
- Abertay and its Historical Relationship with Textile Training.

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All three lectures were of an extremely high standard and very well received – the intention is to organise something similar in 2022.

Deacon John also spoke about the official press launch of the Dundee Tapestry on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> August in Verdant Works. Deacon John paid tribute to the specific expertise and experience of Craftswoman Frances Stevenson and Andrew Crummy (Designer of the Great Tapestry of Scotland) who have been instrumental in helping John get the project to this stage.

During his time as Deacon, John's enthusiasm and drive has taken this project from an 'idea' he had as Boxmaster to where it is today. The Weaver Craft are extremely grateful that John will continue to take the lead on the project with the intention of launching the finished Tapestry in 2023.

Boxmaster Paul Leigh was then asked to give a brief introduction to the two new members – more detailed introductions to be conducted during the main part of the evening. It is encouraging to see that new members are still being recruited to the Craft.

The Deacon then put forward the proposal for the new Office Bearers commencing with his Boxmaster Paul Leigh being appointed as the new Deacon of the Weaver Craft and Richard Irvine taking up the position of Boxmaster, both appointments were seconded at the meeting.

It was also approved that Ashleigh Slater will continue in the role as Schools Liaison Officer with the intention of getting the Intergenerational Project fully back up and running later in the year – post Covid. The ceremonial handing over of the 'Chain of Office' took place and the meeting closed with everyone proceeding to the Weavers Room for the supper.



Deacon Paul Leigh opening speech

Newly appointed Deacon Paul Leigh welcomed all the members and guests and wished everyone an enjoyable evening.

After introducing the Top Table of Clerk Colin Graham, Professor Graeme Morton and Late Deacon John Fyffe and the apology from Deacon Convener Iain Murray, Deacon Paul said Grace.

He then intimated that the Catering Staff from Dundee Rep, led by Eve Moore, would, due to Covid, provide a 'table service' for the meal and coffees.

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Boxmaster Richard Irvine introducing the New Members

## New Members

Two new members were inducted into the Weaver Craft at the AGM Supper.

### **Sheena Devlin**

Sheena was educated at Hawkhill Primary and Harris Academy in Dundee (1970/1982) after which she studied at Dundee University (1984-1988) graduating with a B.Ed. (Teaching). Sheena started her teaching career in Eastern Primary School in 1988; followed by Douglas PS, Clepington PS and then Ancrum Road where she was appointed Headteacher.

Sheena then moved to be Headteacher in Perth from where she was subsequently seconded to the Scottish Executive's Curriculum & Assessment Division for two years prior to returning to work as Service Manager with Schools in the Perth & Kinross area. Promotion then followed to the role of Head of Education and for the past five years Sheena has been the Director of Education and Children's Services for Perth & Kinross District Council.

Sheena has multiple family connections to the Mills in Dundee with her grandfather, grandmother, mother and aunt all working in a range of Dundee Mills over the years – Cairds, Halleys, High Mill, Thomson Shepherds etc.

Sheena was proposed by Deacon John Fyffe and seconded by Boxmaster Paul Leigh.

### **David Reid**

David is originally from St Andrews but has lived in Dundee for the last 20 years. Educated in St Andrews he then attended both Fife College and Elmwood College where he gained qualifications in both Catering and Accommodation Management.

After service in the Royal Navy David returned to work at St Andrews University for over 15 years. While at St Andrews David volunteered for the St Andrews Preservation Museum. Following a move to Dundee, where he worked as an Accommodation Manager for over ten years, he started volunteering at the Museum of Transport. David then undertook formal qualifications in museums and galleries work before taking up a position with Dundee Heritage Trust as an Exhibition Assistant/Guide at Verdant Works and it was through connection that David was encouraged to join the Weaver Craft.

Proposed by Craftsman Richard Irvine and Seconded by Craftswoman Judy Robertson

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Pictures below relate to the new members signing of the 'Lockit Book' after being inducted into the Weaver Craft following the taking of the 'Weavers Oath.' Sheena gave the reply on behalf of the new members.



Sheila Devlin and Clerk Colin Graham



David Reid and Clerk Colin Graham



Sheila Devlin replying on behalf of the new members



Past Deacon David Edgar receiving the shuttle from Late Deacon John Fyffe

## **Presentations.**

Past Deacon David Edgar was presented with a Shuttle in respect of this twelve years as a member of the Deacon's Committee during which time he has served as Schools Liaison Officer, Boxmaster and then Deacon.

David has made a significant contribution to the Intergenerational Project, taking its involvement with Care Homes and Schools to a higher level.

With regard to the achievements of the Intergenerational Project, grateful thanks were extended to Weaver Craftswoman Sandra Thomson and Master Weaver Ashleigh Slater, who produced a 'Weaver Incorporation of Dundee Tartan', both of whom have made great contributions to the Project.

Past Deacon David thanked Late Deacon John Fyffe for the award and said what an honour it had been to serve in these roles, particularly given his own background in Weaving, to be able to serve as 'leader' of this ancient Craft had been an enjoyable and gratifying experience.

Late Deacon John Fyffe was also later presented with the Past Deacons Badge of honour which he received gratefully from Deacon Paul Leigh.

## **Professor Graeme Morton**



After his introduction by Deacon Paul Leigh, Graeme, Professor of History at Dundee University, gave an interesting and topical talk on the subject of the Scottish Diaspora, a subject which is of particular academic interest to him and on which he has written and had published a number of books.

Graeme's talk explored the impact climate has had on the levels of emigration from Scotland and in particular the 'need' to go in search of the sun to destinations such as Australia, New Zealand, and America.

Sir Waler Scott referred to the 'Twa Lands' meaning Scotland and whichever country the people emigrated to and Professor Morton referred to the recent display in the Verdant Works of the Scottish Diaspora Tapestry which highlighted not only the extraordinary range of skills these immigrants from

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Scotland brought to their new homes but how fiercely they clung to their Scottish heritage by means of Highland Games, Burns Suppers etc.

Deacon Paul Leigh replied to the Speaker then presented him with a hip flask.



## **Past Deacon Convener Robert Dunn**

Due to Deacon Convener Iain Murray self-isolating, Robert agreed to deputise and presented an update on the Nine Trades activities.

Robert advised that the Nine Trades in year ending April 2021 had handed out £98k to various organisations throughout the area which, considering the difficulties of the last eighteen months, is an outstanding achievement.

Robert was pleased to report that bookings for Merry Halls (a key source of income for the Nine) are recovering as student life begins to return to normality following the difficulties presented by Covid.

Robert also advised that the Nine have established a new committee tasked with identifying new ways of raising funds - the emphasis being to raise funds for disbursement to the needy within the local area and on projects focused on schooling/education.

Robert completed his remarks by praising Late Deacon John Fyffe, in particular for his work on the Dundee Tapestry, and sending his best wishes to new Deacon Paul Leigh and the Deacon's Committee as they continue the good work of maintaining and developing the profile of the Weaver Craft.



Professor Graeme Morton receiving his hip flask from Deacon Paul Leigh



L-R Sheena Devlin, David Reid, Deacon Paul Leigh, and Boxmaster Richard Irvine

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## Vote of Thanks

Past Deacon David Edgar was asked to convey the 'Vote of Thanks' which was a reciprocated task as New Deacon Paul had carried out this duty at a function in 2017 and Past Deacon David was happy to oblige.

Deacon Paul Leigh then thanked all for attending and their participation in the successful evening and that they have a safe journey home.



The Lockit Book