

## Industry Committee - an update from the Chairman

Having taken over as Chairman in October last year we've been reviewing our activities and developing plans for the future of the Company's relationship with industrial related organisations. We've been able to make some progress and have done a lot of planning but the COVID situation has held us back somewhat - nevertheless, we are ready to put all of our efforts into our plans and programmes as we get more freedom of movement. Alongside the planning/review process, I've taken the opportunity of working with my committee on reviewing and amending our Terms of Reference so that they are fit for purpose for the next few years.

As you all know, we have a significant level of involvement with the **Needle Museum at Forge Mill** in Redditch. The Museum has obviously been closed over recent weeks but we look forward to its re-opening in the very near future. Just before closure we had pleasure in sponsoring the creation of a video of the work of long standing employee at the Mill: Ches - as he is known to us all - a man who has devoted many years of effort to the Museum, particularly in making sure that the water wheel, which is key to the whole operation of the Mill, remains in good working order so that the visitors can enjoy learning about how needles were made in years gone by. The video is now available for viewing on our website. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I3soXk0miiM>

A couple of years ago we donated a couple of tablet computers to the Museum. JoAnn, the curator, had recently improved the number of displays in the top floor of the Mill but, because of the age of the building and its Listed status, access to the third floor is not easy and impossible for the disabled. The laptops mean that JoAnn could load onto them a virtual gallery of the displays on the third floor for people who have mobility issues, "opening up" this part of the museum to all.

We asked the students at the **Royal School of Needlework** if they would kindly make a couple of protective covers for the tablet computers. My first "official" visit as Chairman was to take a trip to the RSN at Hampton Court to formally receive these covers from the students who had produced them. A photo of these covers is below - the stitch work is exquisite. I had a great visit to the RSN and thoroughly recommend you all to go there to see their work. Once we are free to travel around again, I am planning a visit to Forge Mill, hopefully with the students who produced them, to formally present the covers to JoAnn. In doing so, we hope to develop a relationship between the two organisations so that RSN students can get a better understanding of the history of needle making.



We currently support two sixth form students over a two-year period through the **Arkwright Engineering** organisation. Arkrwright Engineering Scholarships is a Smallpiece Trust Programme which is the most prestigious scholarship programme of its type in the UK, which identifies, inspires and nurtures future leaders in Engineering, Computing and Technical Design. Their Headquarters is in Leamington Spa, not far from Redditch and the Forge Mill Museum. As we get more involved with Arkrwright, we have agreed that we will look to creating a mutually supportive relationship between Arkrwright and Forge Mill Museum. Along with the development of a potential link between the RSN and Forge Mill we can envisage quite a mutually agreeable relationship developing.

We are sufficiently satisfied with our relationship with Arkrwright and the quality of their scholars that we are looking to increase our relationship from the current two students that we support to four this year and potentially even more over coming years. As we develop our level of investment in the Programme, in order to provide the best support possible, we also need folk to come forward and offer to act as Mentors for these students. I would like to assign one Liveryman to each student for the duration of their scholarship period. It's not an onerous task but an extremely important and rewarding one. If you would like to help out, please contact me direct.

The other area that we have been spending time on is reviewing our long-standing relationship with the **City & Guilds** organisation. A lot of time has been spent in discussion with the current (relatively new) management team at C&G and we are working out how we can, hopefully, go forward for our mutual benefit, particularly in supporting apprentices or others in need of support through their programmes or other related activities - we hope to report more on this in the not too distant future.

The recent lock down situation has, as mentioned earlier, curtailed some of our activities, in particular the development of our relationship with needle making companies or those in related industries - we plan renewed efforts in this regard once we are fully free to travel around again.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any thoughts or ideas for activities that we should get involved with or any other matters industrially related. I'm also always open to offers of help with specific aspects of our work.

Ken Allen  
Chairman  
Charity Committee  
[kenallen48@me.com](mailto:kenallen48@me.com)