

THE RURAL CRAFTS PROJECT ARCHIVE

D RCP

Funded by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's Designation Challenge Fund, the Rural Crafts Project sought to capture the work of traditional rural craftspeople using digital media. The intention was not only to preserve the techniques of these crafts. It was also to engage younger audiences with the museum, by demonstrating the link between rural objects and the real people who created them.

Accompanied by a film team, members of the of project team captured film footage from ten different locations, with a different craft practised at each. This film was displayed in both a physical and online exhibition, as well as within the museum's galleries. Photographs of filming were also taken. Seven other locations were visited, but only a few photographs were taken of these.

The archive is organised by location and craft, with an extra series for project documentation. It covers dates from March 2006 – March 2008. It is a fully digital collection.

D RCP 1 – The hay rake makers, Trevor and David Austen

Films and photographs of Trevor and David Austen, craftsmen from Ashford. Trevor, who had motor neurone disease, was the initial inspiration behind the project, as the MERL team wanted to capture evidence of his craftsmanship before he was no longer able to perform it. On the day of filming, Trevor's brother David did most of the work on camera but Trevor was able to participate at times.

Trevor first ran a rake making business in 1971, supplementing his income with work as a milkman. He gained a reputation for appearing at craft fairs and shows in the 1980s.

Date of filming: 24 May 2006

D RCP 1/1 – Films

D RCP 1/1/1 – Unedited footage split into three parts, totalling 58 minutes

D RCP 1/1/2 – Web version, 2 minutes 10 seconds

D RCP 1/1/3 – Early web version, 2 minutes 9 seconds

D RCP 1/1/4 – Gallery version, 3 minutes 35 seconds

D RCP 1/1/5 – Early gallery version, 6 minutes 11 seconds

D RCP 1/1/6 – Long reference version, 7 minutes 8 seconds

D RCP 1/1/7 – Early long reference version, 6 minutes 8 seconds

D RCP 1/1/8 – Take Ten film, 6 minutes 11 seconds

D RCP 1/2 – Photographs; 124 photographs taken during the filming process

D RCP 2 – The swill basket maker, Owen Jones

Films and photographs of Owen Jones, who first met the museum's curator Roy Brigden at a Living Crafts show in May 2006. Jones was a frequent participator in these shows, as they provided essential advertising for his basket making craft. He lived and worked in Ulverston.

Jones was a keen teacher of this craft, and provided a detailed guide on swill basket making, which forms a part of this archive (D RCP 2/3).

Date of filming: 13th July 2006

D RCP 2/1 – Films

D RCP 2/1/1 – Unedited footage split into six parts, totalling 124 minutes

D RCP 2/1/2 – Web version, 2 minutes 15 seconds

D RCP 2/1/3 – Early web version, 2 minutes 14 seconds

D RCP 2/1/4 – Gallery version, 3 minutes 59 seconds

D RCP 2/1/5 – Early gallery version, 7 minutes 38 seconds

D RCP 2/1/6 – Long reference version, 16 minutes 11 seconds

D RCP 2/1/7 – Early long reference version, 15 minutes 28 seconds

D RCP 2/1/8 – Take Ten film, 7 minutes 38 seconds

D RCP 2/2 – Photographs; 66 photographs taken during the filming process

D RCP 2/3 – Swill basket making instructions

D RCP 3 – The country potter, Mary Wondrausch

Films and photographs of Mary Wondrausch's pottery work. Wondrausch, who lived in Guildford, had a long relationship of working with the MERL and has donated a number of objects to its collection. She was chosen for the project because of her personality and eccentricity; for her, each piece of work was a performance and she fully lived the unique life of a rural craftsperson.

Date of filming: 23rd August 2006

D RCP 3/1 – Films

D RCP 3/1/1 – Unedited footage split into seven parts, totalling 129 minutes

D RCP 3/1/2 – Web version, 1 minute 55 seconds

D RCP 3/1/3 – Early web version, 1 minute 56 seconds

D RCP 3/1/4 – Gallery version, 3 minutes 41 seconds

D RCP 3/1/5 – Early gallery version, 7 minutes 19 seconds

D RCP 3/1/6 – Long reference version, 21 minutes 47 seconds

D RCP 3/1/7 – Early long reference version part 1, 21 minutes 25 seconds

D RCP 3/1/8 – Early long reference version part 2, 16 seconds

D RCP 3/1/9 – Take Ten film, 7 minutes 24 seconds

D RCP 3/2 – Photographs; 65 photographs of the filming process

D RCP 4 – The hurdle makers, Alan and Steve Brown

Films and photographs of Alan and Steve Brown, traditional hurdle craftsmen who worked on a farm near Puddletown. Though hurdle making is an ancient craft, it has remained important for agricultural communities and garden hurdles even have an appeal to suburban audiences. The father and son were also experts in coppicing, which is a traditional form of managing woodland. They suggested September as a month for filming as this is when they would start cutting the coppice.

In February 2007 Steve was forced to give up hurdle making and pursue a more financially stable job, demonstrating the receding nature of this craft.

Date of filming: 20th September 2006

D RCP 4/1 – Films

D RCP 4/1/1 – Unedited footage split into five parts, totalling 100 minutes

D RCP 4/1/2 – Web version, 2 minutes 21 seconds

D RCP 4/1/3 – Early web version, 2 minutes 22 seconds

D RCP 4/1/4 – Gallery version, 3 minutes 49 seconds

D RCP 4/1/5 – Early gallery version, 7 minutes 32 seconds

D RCP 4/1/6 – Long reference version, 25 minutes 30 seconds

D RCP 4/1/7 – Early long reference version part 1, 21 minutes 26 seconds

D RCP 4/1/8 – Early long reference version part 2, 3 minutes 58 seconds

D RCP 4/1/9 – Take Ten film, 7 minutes 36 seconds

D RCP 4/2 – Photographs; 113 photographs of the filming process

D RCP 5 – The blacksmiths, Leonard Mew and Nick Peppitt

Films and photographs of Leonard Mew and Nick Peppitt undertaking their blacksmithing craft. Blacksmithing is a technique synonymous with rural craftsmanship, and unlike many other rural crafts, significant numbers of young people are attracted to the trade. However, it can still be a struggle to keep a blacksmithing business afloat.

At time of filming, Leonard Mew's smithy in St Mary Bourne was about to be sold to make way for housing developments. Nick Peppitt, meanwhile, was faring somewhat better in Highclere. He provided - for example - gates, fences and lamp stands to the village. The project team filmed him making part of a garden style bench.

Dates of filming: 14th – 15th November 2006

D RCP 5/1 – Films

D RCP 5/1/1 – Unedited footage split into eight parts, totalling 164 minutes

D RCP 5/1/2 – Web version, 2 minutes

D RCP 5/1/3 – Early web version, 1 minute 59 seconds

D RCP 5/1/4 – Gallery version, 4 minutes 17 seconds

D RCP 5/1/5 – Early gallery version, 6 minutes 58 seconds

D RCP 5/1/6 – Long reference version, 9 minutes 35 seconds

D RCP 5/1/7 – Early long reference version, 9 minutes 30 seconds

D RCP 5/1/8 – Take Ten film, 6 minutes 58 seconds

D RCP 5/2 – Photographs; 104 photographs taken during the filming process

D RCP 6 – The weaver, Mark Kinipple

Films and photographs of Mary Kinipple, a weaver from Streatley. Kinipple's craft included growing her own plants for dyeing and keeping her own Shetland sheep for wool. While she sold her work, she admitted that she may not be able to support herself without her husband's income, demonstrating that another source of money is often required for traditional craftspeople to survive.

Kinipple was influenced by the hippy era of the 1960s and Nepal was a constant source of inspiration for her work.

Date of filming: 22nd May 2007

D RCP 6/1 – Films

D RCP 6/1/1 – Unedited footage split into four parts, totalling 78 minutes

D RCP 6/1/2 – Web version, 2 minutes

D RCP 6/1/3 – Gallery version, 3 minutes 5 seconds

D RCP 6/1/4 – Long reference version, 16 minutes 27 seconds

D RCP 6/1/5 – Take Ten film, 8 minutes 52 seconds

D RCP 6/1/6 – Short clip, 15 seconds

D RCP 6/2 – Photographs; 106 photographs taken during the filming process

D RCP 7 – The horse collar maker, Terry Davis

Films and photographs of Terry Davis in his workshop in Witanstow. Davis was one of the few remaining horse harness makers in the country. Unlike other craftspeople, he had no need to show off his work at fairs, as harness makers have a small but steady demand from heavy horse enthusiasts. He was heavily involved in charity ventures overseas, where he introduced harnesses to the working lives of people globally. For example, he visited Ethiopia and Tanzania in 2006.

Hand crafting a horse collar is a slow process; the project team filmed Davis for two days and the collar was only partially complete by the end. As a result, profit is limited for a horse collar maker, meaning that taking on an apprentice to continue the craft is often not possible.

Dates of filming: 2nd – 3rd April 2007

D RCP 7/1 – Films

D RCP 7/1/1 – Unedited footage split into twelve parts, totalling 250 minutes

D RCP 7/1/2 – Web version, 2 minutes 26 seconds

D RCP 7/1/3 – Gallery version, 3 minutes 59 seconds

D RCP 7/1/4 – Long reference version part 1, 30 minutes 21 seconds

D RCP 7/1/5 – Long reference version part 2, 8 minutes 40 seconds

D RCP 7/1/6 – Take Ten film, 7 minutes 47 seconds

D RCP 7/1/7 – Short clips, totalling 2 minutes 49 seconds

D RCP 7/2 – Photographs; 133 photographs of the filming process

D RCP 8 – The wheelwright, Douglas Andrews

Films and photographs of Douglas Andrews's wheel craftsmanship, taken over the course of four different filming sessions. The first involved making a pattern for the spokes, and bending the tyres. The second focused on cutting out spokes. The third involved fitting the spokes into the hub. Finally, the wheels were tyred in the fourth session. The wheels in question were being made for a threshing machine belonging to the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum.

Andrews worked on the wheels with an assistant, Daniel Lambert-Gorwyn. They planned to take on another apprentice in the near future, demonstrating good prospects for the longevity of the craft in East Sussex.

Dates of filming: 15th May - 2nd August 2007

D RCP 8/1 – Films

D RCP 8/1/1 – Unedited footage split into 29 parts, totalling 487 minutes. The videos are divided according to the filmmaker who captured them. Videos named D RCP 8/1/1/1 were filmed by Ginge, videos named D RCP 8/1/1/2 were filmed by Ollie, videos named D RCP 8/1/1/3 were filmed by Tim, and videos names D RCP 8/1/1/4 were filmed by Tim and Ollie. The video named D RCP 8/1/1/5 is not attributed to any particular filmmaker.

D RCP 8/1/2 – Web version, 2 minutes 13 seconds

D RCP 8/1/3 – Gallery version, 3 minutes 35 seconds

D RCP 8/1/4 – Long reference version part 1, 18 minutes 33 seconds

D RCP 8/1/5 – Long reference version part 2, 18 minutes 1 second

D RCP 8/1/6 – Take Ten film, 9 minutes

D RCP 8/1/7 – Short clips totalling 1 minute 11 seconds

D RCP 8/2 – Photographs; 82 photographs of the filming process

D RCP 9 – Dry stone walling, Tom Lord

Films and photographs of Tom Lord speaking about the process of dry stone walling. Lord, who lived and worked in Langcliffe, was not a craftsman but a farmer. However, his knowledge on the history of dry stone walling engaged the interest of the project team. He was first noticed by the museum during a Society for Folk Life studies conference in 2006. The shoot was unstructured, with Lord giving a tour of the farm's walls and describing the history and purpose of each.

Date of filming: 20th June 2007

D RCP 9/1 – Films

D RCP 9/1/1 – Unedited footage split into five parts, totalling 102 minutes

D RCP 9/1/2 – Web version, 2 minutes 4 seconds

D RCP 9/1/3 – Gallery version, 3 minutes 57 seconds

D RCP 9/1/4 – Long reference version, 28 minutes 3 seconds

D RCP 9/1/5 – Take Ten film, 10 minutes 6 seconds

D RCP 9/1/6 – Short clips, totalling 1 minute 13 seconds

D RCP 9/2 – Photographs; 157 photographs of the filming process

D RCP 10 – Edge tool maker, Richard Morris

Films and photographs of Richard Morris, an edge tool maker working at a foundry in Dunsford. Project lead Roy Brigden first visited in 1982, as the MERL held several Morris objects. The company A. Morris & Sons was still trading in 2007 and so was chosen for the project. It was typical of a modern rural industry workshop, which typically find a niche in their closeness to raw materials or markets.

Although Morris decided he would not be speaking on film, he was recorded talking about his work with the camera pointing away from him.

Date of filming: 4th July 2007

D RCP 10/1 – Films

D RCP 10/1/1 – Unedited footage split into six parts, totalling 119 minutes

D RCP 10/1/2 – Web version, 2 minutes 13 seconds

D RCP 10/1/3 – Gallery version, 3 minutes 49 seconds

D RCP 10/1/4 – Long reference version, 8 minutes 14 seconds

D RCP 10/1/5 – Take Ten film, 8 minutes 2 seconds

D RCP 10/1/6 – Short clips, totalling 1 minute 9 seconds

D RCP 10/2 – Photographs; 146 photographs of the filming process

D RCP 11 – The Truggery

Photographs taken at the Truggery, Herstmonceaux. This was identified as a good site for filming if another wood craft was needed for the project. However, it was not needed and no filming took place there.

Date of photography: 27th July 2006

D RCP 11/1 – 11 photographs of the Truggery

D RCP 12 – Aldermaston Pottery

Videos and photographs of Aldermaston pottery, in the Berkshire village of Aldermaston. It is unknown why this location was filmed and photographed for the project, but presumably it was a backup pottery site which was not subjected to a full day's filming.

Date of filming: 7th December 2006

D RCP 12/1 – Short films, totalling 42 seconds

D RCP 12/2 – Photographs; 89 photographs of the workshop

D RCP 13 – Arthur Maidment

Photographs of Arthur Maidment and his workshop. His profession and relation to the project are unknown.

Date of photography unknown, probably 2006

D RCP 13/1 – Photographs; 31 photographs of the site

D RCP 14 – Baker Brothers Tannery

Photographs of the Baker Brothers tannery in Colyton. It is unknown whether this location was considered for filming. However, it is strongly linked to two locations which were filmed. It was the supplier of leather to Terry Davis (D RCP 7), and was supplied with oak bark by Owen Jones (D RCP 2). It effectively demonstrates the connections between the rural crafts community.

Date of photography: 9th June 2006

D RCP 14/1 – Photographs; 83 photographs of the tannery

D RCP 15 – Hartlebury Castle

Photographs taken at Hartlebury castle, which was visited en route to Owen Jones (D RCP 2).

Date of photography: 12th July 2006

D RCP 15/1 – Photographs; 13 photographs of the site

D RCP 16 – Philip Koomen

Photographs of Philip Koomen, his workshop and examples of his work. Koomen was a furniture craftsman based in Reading. It is unknown how he was connected to the project.

Date of photography unknown, probably 2006

D RCP 16/1 – Photographs; 22 photographs of the site

D RCP 17 – Bewdley Museum

Photographs of Bewdley Museum. It was visited by the project team en route to Owen Jones (D RCP 2).

Date of photography: 12th July 2006

D RCP 17/1 – Photographs; 10 photographs of the museum

D RCP 18 – Project documentation and reports

Documents produced to capture the project team's processes and record the Rural Crafts project's outputs.

Date of material: March 2006 – March 2008

D RCP 18/1 – Exhibition material

Photographs and documents relating to an exhibition on display at the MERL, opened on 11th March 2008. Many of the craftspeople featured in the project were invited to visit and were photographed together.

D RCP 18/1/1 – Photos of exhibition; 31 photographs

D RCP 18/1/2 – Exhibition opening talk

D RCP 18/1/3 – Exhibition PowerPoint

D RCP 18/1/4 – Exhibition advertisements

D RCP 18/1/5 – Exhibition banners

D RCP 18/2 – Project booklet material

Documents which contributed to the production of the 'Rural Crafts Today' project booklet. The booklet is available in the MERL library under call number MERL LIBRARY PAMPHLET--5610-BOX 1/12. The '10 short films' DVD was included in this booklet.

D RCP 18/2/1 – Roy Brigden film diary

D RCP 18/2/2 – Project booklet plan

D RCP 18/2/3 – Finished project booklet

D RCP 18/3 – David Viner report

As part of the Rural Crafts project, museums consultant David Viner was commissioned to undertake research into the extent of rural crafts collections in English museums. The work consisted of questionnaires, visits and analysis of websites and publications.

D RCP 18/3/1 – Report

D RCP 18/3/2 – Directory

D RCP 18/3/3 – Bibliography

D RCP 18/4 – Opening Up Collections Application Form

Funding application completed by the project team which was sent to the Museums Libraries and Archives Council at the project's outset. It details the aims and deliverables of the Rural Crafts project.

D RCP 18/5 – Progress log

Diary kept by Roy Brigden on the progress of the Rural Crafts project. It tracks the dates on which craftspeople were contacted and visited.