



NEWS RELEASE

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Kent maille maker wins Heritage Crafts *Lifetime Achievement Award* supported by the Marsh Charitable Trust

Nick Checksfield has won the 2024 Heritage Crafts *Lifetime Achievement Award*, supported by the Marsh Charitable Trust, including a £1,000 prize awarded at a special presentation at Eltham Palace on Tuesday 26 November 2024.

Heritage Crafts was set up 14 years ago as a national charity to support and safeguard heritage crafts skills, and has become well known for its *Red List of Endangered Crafts*, the first research of its kind to rank traditional crafts in the UK by the likelihood they will survive the next generation.



The award, supported by the **Marsh Charitable Trust**, celebrates a heritage craftsman who has demonstrated an outstanding contribution to their specific craft over 25 years or more. It marks a lifetime's dedication to a particular traditional skill, resulting in a practitioner operating at the highest level, having made a significant impact on the continued high-esteem in which their craft is held.

Nick Checksfield is one of only a couple of professional maille (sometimes known as 'chain mail') makers working in the UK today, and of these, he is by far the most experienced. The restoration of original, historical pieces is a huge challenge, requiring the making of maille links in a bewildering range of styles and types. Nick has fashioned new armour pieces for some of the most famous competition jousts and historical martial artists around the world.

The other two finalists for this year's award were **Tony Bedford**, who began his life as a silversmith aged 16 as an apprentice at Nayler Brothers, on completion of which he was made a Freeman in 1969, going on to work for Stuart Devlin, Grant Macdonald, Garrard's and Asprey's, and **Kevin Gauld**, whose determination, eye for design and attention to detail has resulted in a waiting list of over three years for his Orkney chairs. In 2018, he was recognised as a Scottish Design Champion ahead of the opening of the V&A Dundee.

The **Marsh Charitable Trust** runs a portfolio of awards with a number of nationally and internationally recognised partners to celebrate the outstanding contributions of people who are committed to social, cultural and environmental causes.

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Contacts:

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Photo captions:

- **Nick Checksfield**, winner of the 2024 *Lifetime Achievement Award*, and **Nick Carter** from the Marsh Charitable Trust. Photo by Robert Wade.

About Heritage Crafts

Founded in 2009, the Heritage Crafts is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered as the 'Heritage Crafts Association', the advocacy body for traditional heritage crafts. Working in partnership with government and key agencies, it provides a focus for craftspeople, groups, societies and guilds, as well as individuals who care about the loss of traditional crafts skills, and works towards a healthy and sustainable framework for the future. Its aim is to support and promote heritage crafts as a fundamental part of our living heritage.

www.heritagecrafts.org.uk

About the *Red List of Endangered Crafts*

The Red List of Endangered Crafts, created by Heritage Crafts, was the first to rank traditional crafts in the UK by the likelihood they would survive the next generation. The 2023 edition of the Red List, funded by the Pilgrim Trust, assessed 259 crafts to identify those which are at greatest risk of disappearing, of which 62 have been classified as critically endangered, 84 as endangered and 112 as currently viable.

The Red List shows that the craft knowledge, skills and practices that form an important part of our shared cultural heritage are – for a number of reasons – at risk of being lost. Heritage Crafts believes that these cultural assets are as important as unique heritage buildings and ancient beautiful landscapes and could provide future generations with fantastic opportunities to enrich their lives and the lives of others.

<http://redlist.heritagecrafts.org.uk>