



Canolfan Grefft Rhuthun  
Y Ganolfan i'r Celfyddydau Cymhwysol  
Ruthin Craft Centre  
The Centre for the Applied Arts



# function

resource pack

what is craft?



# what is craft?

Who does it?

Why do they do it?

Why does it matter?

Looking at the nature of craft and its relation to everyday living – based on four broad seasons over 2 years we aim to consider:

materials

decoration

process

function

and explore the question... *What is Craft?*

Ruthin Craft Centre is delighted to launch our new and exciting programme called *What is Craft?* As part of this project we will be undertaking a 2 year audience development, outreach and resource legacy programme which includes a new designated on-site resource space at Ruthin Craft Centre. We want to return to the basic questions about the nature of craft and its relation to everyday living. *What is Craft? Who does it? Why do they do it? Why does it matter?*

We hope you will be inspired by this programme and more importantly get involved!



what is craft?

# function

resource pack

*Driven to make objects which are intimately related to people's lives:  
jugs for pouring, seats for sitting, towels for drying hands and crockery.  
Amanda Fielding, Making Connections, in Hands Across the Border,  
Ruthin Craft Centre publication ISBN: 1-900941-77-5*

Most crafts have evolved from a utilitarian need to create a functional object – something that ‘does the job.’ Personal touches and artistic decoration came later but function dictated how the object would be made, what form it would take and what materials it would be made from. Take for example a teapot: it must have a spout for pouring efficiently and a heat-proof handle for holding. It should be big enough to contain sufficient liquid, but not too heavy to lift safely and, of course, should be water-tight! Without fulfilling these criteria, the pot is useless, no matter how beautifully crafted it is as an object.

This pack investigates the origins of some everyday objects, focusing on how the different purposes for which they have been used has influenced design and materials. The pack is designed to support teachers and gallery educators in the planning, delivering and following up visits to Ruthin Craft Centre with a collection of activities, ideas and resources related to the broad theme of function. The workshops and practical tasks are suitable for all ages and can be adapted to your group's specific needs.

Julie Robson, 2016

written by Julie Robson for the  
**what is craft?** function season



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get inspired,  
get involved!

*“Have nothing in your houses  
that you do not know to be  
useful, or believe to be beautiful”*

– William Morris



*As William Morris said...* exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre, 2014



# Chair

**Definition:** *A seat for one person, with a back-support and usually four legs*  
(Chambers Dictionary)

The chair was historically an emblem of authority, status and dignity – a throne for Pharaohs, Emperors and Kings. Ordinary people would have sat on the floor, maybe on cushions or mats, and later on wooden benches or stools.

It was not until 16th century that chairs became common household items. During the Renaissance in Europe they were developed as household items for anyone who could afford, or make them. During the centuries that followed, the chair became a vernacular solution to seating for individual comfort and it has changed shape, style and size, following trends in taste and fashion and developing technology.

Prior to the mid 17th century, wood was the dominant material for chairs, often with upholstered details such as cushions or padding on seats, arms or backs for support. These would be made in velvet, tapestry, silk or leather according to the chair's use and where in the house it was to be. Those in dining or reception rooms were often decorated with carved details or embroidery.

The chair is perhaps the most personal item of household furniture. Designed to support and surround the human form, it can also express individuality and taste. It also reflects the fashion trends of the period: in the shape of the backrest, the form of the legs, the angle of the seat, the colour and material.

In the modern period, the chair was subjected to a wide range of stylistic changes such as Art Nouveau, International Style, Pop Art and Postmodernism with designers such as Gerrit Rietveld, Verner Panton and Marcel Breuer challenging traditional ideas about what forms a chair could take and what it could be made from

Contemporary chair-makers continue to experiment in chair design with the benefit of digital technology and scientific research. A challenge for today's furniture designers is to be eco-friendly and environmental concerns have also contributed to the need to explore sustainability and recyclability of materials.



Wire Braced Low Back Chair 1990,  
Richard La Trobe-Bateman



Jim Partridge & Liz Walmsley, *Carving out space* exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre, 2013

## Tasks

**Discover** the history of chairs. Visit your local museum, stately homes, art gallery, churches etc and make sketches or take photographs. How have chairs changed throughout the centuries? Do they represent the style or fashion of their era? Imagine the occupants of these chairs and imagine what their life might have been like.

**Make** a list of different types of chairs: indoor, outdoor, historical, modern, household, public, fold-up etc. Go chair hunting! Collect pictures and make a collage or chart for your classroom.

**Find out** about famous chairs in history, art and popular culture eg Eisteddfod Bardic chairs; Van Gogh's chair; A W N Pugin's chairs for the House of Parliament; Enid Blyton's *Wishing Chair*; the Coronation Chair; Hemingway's chair, Roald Dahl's... etc

**Design** a chair that you would like to sit in! Create sketches, describe your chair in detail. Make a model in card or balsa wood, design cushions or covers! Draw a picture of yourself in your chair!

**Write** a story about the life of a chair – how it was made, where it lived, who has sat in it! You might choose a favourite chair in your home, or a relative's or friend's house, in a museum or public place. It could be a rocking chair, a car seat, an armchair, a throne, a bean-bag... be imaginative!



### Further Resources

Galen Cranz, *The Chair: Rethinking Culture,*

*Body and Design*, W W Norton & Company, 2000

Florence de Dampier, *Chairs: a History*, Harry N Abrams, 2006

Charlotte & Peter Fiell, *1000Chairs*, Taschen, 2013

Judith Miller, *Chairs*, Conran, 2009

[www.onlinedesignteacher.com/2016/02/furniture-design-history.html](http://www.onlinedesignteacher.com/2016/02/furniture-design-history.html)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zwsmhyc>

*'The main concern of the work, on all scales, from a large bridge to a lightweight chair, is to show how the object operates as a physical structure: things like tension, compression, bending, twisting, joining and so on. The geometry, materials and constructional methods are chosen to expose the physical operation of the whole, and of each part, as clearly as possible'.*

– Richard La Trobe-Bateman



Richard La Trobe-Bateman, *As William Morris said...* exhibition



David Colwell exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre, 2010

## Maker in Focus: David Colwell

*'Comfort has been a central interest in all the timber chairs; they are after all not unlike clothes or a pair of shoes in having intimate body contact.'* – David Colwell

David Colwell begins the process of chair-making by sketching a figure in sitting positions and then designs the chair around the shape of the body. A chair, he believes, should fit and feel comfortable: 'pretty close to a good pair of boots.'

How people occupy chairs is also important. Even when relaxed, we shift position and Colwell recognises that a chair's structure should be flexible and allow for free movement. His *C12 Act One Chair*, for example, has a springy steam-bent support that bends down when the sitter leans back. Its padded seat can be slid forward or backwards and the arms are rounded to allow it to be pulled close to a desk, but have ample support for resting elbows. Unlike most working chairs, there is space underneath for feet and Colwell also describes the 'ease of scooting it around on its castors.'

Colwell's observation of people and seats has also been demonstrated in his public commissions. He claims to judge the success of his work on whether 'people like and use them' rather than critical acclaim. His *Bench for the National Museum of Wales*, Cardiff recognises that visitors prefer individual spaces to sharing long benches, yet encourages interaction or conviviality by clustering his seats together in a flexible arrangement. He has also designed seating for NHS hospitals which consider the varied needs of patients and incorporate different seating positions, supports and spaces.

Many of Colwell's individual chairs, such as the C3 range, are stackable which is particularly useful in libraries, assembly and function rooms. His *C2 Director's Chairs* can be folded up for easy storage. He has also designed seats that link together in rows, which he prefers to be curved rather than straight regimented lines, to encourage conversation and sociability.

The flexibility of Colwell's chairs is the result of years of experimenting with structure (which he compares to anatomy), taking every opportunity to talk to his users and to consult physiotherapists about links between posture and comfort. He says, 'I also spend a lot of time sitting in them myself.'

## Tasks

**Watch a video** of David Colwell talking about his career – how he makes chairs for different uses, people and places. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zolqQ146Wyyw>)

**Find out more** about David Colwell and the range of furniture he has designed. Choose an example of his work and write a descriptive piece about it – what interesting features does it have? What would it feel like to sit in? Can you imagine it in your home?

**Discuss** Colwell's approach to design: follow his procedure for designing chairs and make sketches of a range of people (eg small child, large man, disabled boy, elderly woman etc) sitting in different positions. Think about the shapes and sizes of these sitters and how they occupy a seat. Then talk about how you could make a chair to accommodate their individual forms comfortably.

**Design** a desk or table for one of Colwell's chairs. Think about co-ordination of materials, style, scale, colour etc.

**Take photos**, make sketches and notes on public seats and benches. Compare the examples you find with David Colwell's public seating projects (eg *Museum Bench*).

## Further Resources

Simon Olding (ed), *David Colwell: Making Chairs*, Craft Study Centre and Ruthin Craft Centre, 2010  
[www.davidcolwell.com/](http://www.davidcolwell.com/)  
<https://www.facebook.com/davidcolwelldesign/>  
<http://www.handfulofsalt.com/profile-david-colwell/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zolqQ146Wyyw>



above: David Colwell *A Welsh Collection* exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre, 2008. top: *C3 Stacking Chair*, David Colwell





Mandy Coates, *At Home* exhibition

## Basket

**Definition:** *A container made of plaited or interwoven twigs, rushes, canes or similar flexible material, often with a handle across the top* (Chambers Dictionary)

The fundamental craft of basket-weaving became part of everyday life for many communities as a solution to the carrying and storage of goods and produce. Made from a light-weight but sturdy material such as willow, palm or bamboo, baskets could be rounded and deep or open and flat, depending on the goods to be contained in them. A lid could be woven if the contents were to be stored and handles were often fitted to ease transportation.

Until the mid 20th century, basket-weaving was a common trade, but the cheaper options of cardboard boxes, crates and plastic carrier bags contributed to its decline and traditional techniques and basketry forms were forgotten. In recent years, however, the craft has enjoyed a revival with makers such as Mary Butcher, Liz Farey and Dail Behennah bringing the traditional skills into the modern era. As Butcher explains, part of the reason for the vibrancy of contemporary basket-making is that makers draw their inspiration from a wide variety of sources from other cultures and disciplines, often via the internet: “The range of our knowledge is increasing all the time, and it is being transmitted very quickly.”

As with many other traditional crafts, part of the appeal of basketry is the timeless quality of simple forms that have evolved to suit the function of the object; using natural sustainable materials to make strong durable objects. In an age when supermarkets are discouraging the use of disposable carrier bags, the basket may well be the eco-friendly option for shoppers of the future.



## Tasks

**Find out** about basketry and its many uses around the world – not just containers, but also trays, furniture, screens, architecture etc.

**Make** a paper basket: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbHfZkKpMNE>

**Bring** together a display of different baskets to discuss design: where is the handle attached and why is it there? What shape is the base? How deep is it? What would you put in it?

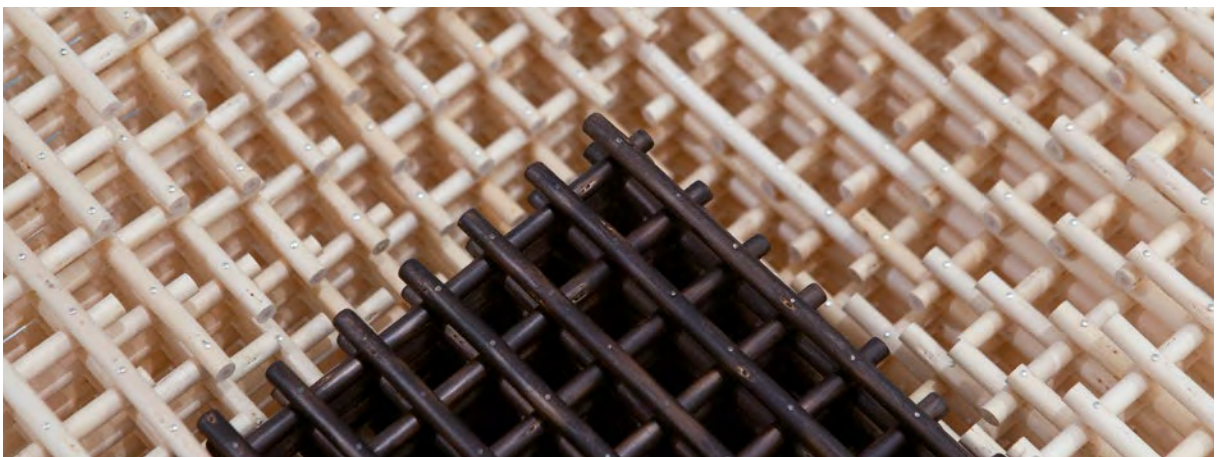
**Set up** a basket with objects for a still life drawing or painting. Look at some examples in art history for inspiration (eg Paul Cézanne, *The Basket of Apples* c1893; Henri Matisse, *Basket with Oranges* 1913; Frances Hodgkins, *Loveday and Ann: Two Women and a Basket of Flowers* 1915; Pablo Picasso, *Still Life with Fruit Basket* 1942 etc)

### Further Resources

Brian Sentance, *Art of the Basket, Traditional Basketry from Around the World*, Thames and Hudson, 2001

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911\\_Encyclop%C3%A6dia\\_Britannica/Basket](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/Basket)

<https://www.facebook.com/basketryandbeyond/>



Clockwise from top left: Jenny Crisp, *As William Morris said...* . Mandy Coates, *Baskets* exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre, 2016. Dail Behennah, *Fieldwork* exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre, 2015





*Frame farm basket, frame Breton Picker, Lee Dalby*

## Maker in Focus: Lee Dalby

*'My work is all about utility, about functional containers'*

Part time DJ, Lee Dalby calls himself an urban basket maker and has always grown his own renewable materials at the Woodlands Farm, Shooters Hill, London. He has been working in traditional methods since 1986. Whilst working for basket-maker John Galloway, he learned the basic building technique of 'stake and strand' which involves staking willow 'struts' into a base and then bending them vertically and then weaving the horizontal 'strands' into them. Lee then went on to work with a Breton gypsy Jean-Paul Verombier and his family that have been practicing basketry for generations, using split-willow frames. An example of this technique can be seen in his *SE18 basket* (named after the part of London where Lee lives and works). Splitting and opening out the willow means that its surface area is increased, giving a flatter, smoother surface to objects such as *Frame Farm Basket* and *Frame Breton Picker*. This method also helps to keep the baskets lighter.

Since 2000, Lee has also been working in bamboo and continues to make a wide range of domestic utility wares. He also creates sculptural and functional architectural forms within the landscape or indoor settings. He says: 'Apart from battling the carrier bag... my hope is to bring zones of comfort and contemplation into the busy world of today.'



## Tasks

**Research** other contemporary basket makers (eg Mandy Coates, Joe Hogan, Caroline Sharp, John Galloway)

**Design** a shopping basket for the 21st century using the materials of your choice. Describe your basket's unique features, make sketches or a model. Design an advertisement for it!

**Weave** words and music! Cut out strips of text, a poem or sheet music and use them to make a mat or paper basket.

### Further Resources

*Baskets*, (catalogue) Ruthin Craft Centre 2011

<http://www.leedalby.com/>

<https://www.designweek.co.uk/issues/17-september/profile-lee-dalby/>



*Large contemporary frame farm basket, Lee Dalby*



Micki Schloessing, *Welsh Table* exhibition

## Teapot

**Definition:** *Pot with a spout and a handle used for making and pouring tea*  
(Chambers Dictionary)

The teapot was invented in China during the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368). Tea drinkers during previous dynasties used cauldrons for brewing and drank from bowls. From the late 17th century, Europeans trading with China began to import tea along with porcelain pots which could not be made in Europe at that time. Due to the shipping expenses, tea was considered a luxury item and drinking it was initially restricted to the upper classes. When European potteries eventually began to make their own porcelain pots, they were influenced by Chinese designs.

In colonial America, the port of Boston became associated with importing tea. Also a centre for artists and craftsmen at this time, unsurprisingly many silversmiths produced high quality teapots for the expanding market amongst the new merchant classes. Just as there is a knack to brewing a perfect cup of tea, creating the ideal teapot is an art, achieved only by practice and understanding the tea-making process. The pot usually has an opening at the top with a lid and this must be big enough for putting tea bags or loose tea in and then to enable the user to remove them afterwards. It also has to be sufficiently wide for pouring boiling hot water safely into the vessel.

The spout should allow the tea to be poured into a cup with ease and has to be strategically positioned so that the pot does not have to be tipped too far (in which case, hot tea would overflow through the lid!). A small air hole in the lid is often created to stop the spout from dripping and splashing when tea is poured. Sometimes an infuser is used to hold the leaves as they steep, which makes cleaning the pot easier. It also prevents leaves from flowing into the cup although some teapots have a built-in strainer on the inner edge of the spout.

A handle should fit into a hand comfortably. It should be made separately and added on to the bowl of the pot so that it does not get too hot. In the case of metal teapots, great care should be taken to have a non-conductive material for the handle to avoid burnt fingers! A tea cosy or thermal cover is sometimes used to enhance the brewing process and to keep the tea warm for as long as possible.

## Tasks

**Find out** how to make tea! Have a tasting session in your classroom and try a variety of teas and pots. Find out where it is grown and how it is produced. Put together a definitive guide to making a good cuppa!

**Research** the tea trade and silver production in Boston. Discuss the portrait of silversmith Paul Revere by John Singleton Copley (<http://paulrevere.us/>) where he holds a teapot.

**Hold a Teapot Competition!** Collect images, photographs, illustrations of teapots and vote on which one your class likes best. Discuss the reasons for your choices (its usefulness, colour, aesthetic design? etc).

**Paint a teapot** buy a cheap plain pot and create your own images or patterns on its surface in enamel paint.

**Make a teapot** from your own drawings using clay coils or slab-building techniques.

**Discuss** the merits of novelty teapot design – can a pot be playful, artistic, expressive or unusual and still work as a functional object?

### Further Resources

Steve Woodhead, *The Teapot*

Book, A&C Black, 2005

Robin Emerson, *British Teapots and Tea Drinking*, Norfolk

Museums Service, 1994

Garth Clark, *The Artful Teapot*, Thames and Hudson, 2001

Edward Bramah, *Novelty Teapots: 500 Years of Art and Design*, Quiller Press 2003

<http://www.stokemuseums.org.uk/blog/tea-seventy-two/>

<http://ceramicartsdaily.org/pottery-making-techniques/handbuilding-techniques/the-30-minute-teapot/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7q0gGxe7UM0>

[www.vam.ac.uk/page/c/ceramics/](http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/c/ceramics/)



*Shino glazed teapot and teabowl, Margaret Frith, 2012*



## Maker in Focus: Walter Keeler

*'My work is generally useful in one way or another. It is not always straightforward... functional... perhaps challenging you a little bit.'*

Walter Keeler is interested in history and has a fascination with old pots and containers. He says that he is inspired by 'the notion that pottery has served people both practically and in other more subtle ways.' By this, he means that pots can fulfill an everyday function and yet still be interesting to look at.

His characteristic shapes, for example, are influenced by metal containers such as milk churns, oil cans and funnels. The salt glaze that he uses, endows these pots with an appearance of weathered and well-used metal. However, even though a teapot may look like an old watering can, Keeler insists that the form works well as a vessel for making tea: the handles on the lid and side are easy to hold, the bowl is spacious, the spout pours without spilling – it works!

Keeler continues to experiment with shapes in his studio. His pots are wheel thrown and then altered by hand in order to make something that is both sculptural and functional. Some of his creations are particularly challenging to the viewer. It is difficult to make out how a pot such as *White cut branch teapot* with what appears to be a tangle of root-like spouts can efficiently pour tea, but it does! What appear to be thorns on the handle and lid of *Teapot with Thorns* are actually rounded thumb grips that allow the user to hold them firmly. The 'double barrel' of *Angular Teapot* and its wide looping handle may surprise and even confuse at first, but as with all of Keeler's pots, the angles have been carefully calculated to tip and pour effectively.



Keeler pays great attention to details and ensures that the object is useful and easy to operate for everyone. For example, he says of his teapots: 'I always make sure that a left-handed and right handed person can pick them up.' His work successfully combines tradition with innovation, witty design and aesthetic beauty. Above all, they fulfil a function: 'If the pots could not be used I would not bother making them.'

*Angular Teapot*, 1981, Walter Keeler



left: *Cut-branch Teapot*, 2003. Walter Keeler. right: *Green Teapot*, 1996, Walter Keeler

## Tasks

**Write** down words that come to mind when you look at Walter Keeler's pots. Are they words you would usually associate with teapots? How would you describe them? What makes them unusual? What do you think inspires his work?

**Talk about** the design of vessels for pouring such as watering cans, oil cans, jugs, teapots... what makes them effective? Try pouring water from a variety of containers to work out the most efficient shape or form for pouring.

**Make** a drawing or painting based on one of Walter Keeler's teapots. You could repeat the shape on your page with stencils or design a print for kitchen wallpaper or textiles.

**Design** a teapot in the style of Walter Keeler, based on another household or industrial container (eg watering can, petrol container, perfume bottle etc).

### Further Resources

Emmanuel Cooper and Amanda Fielding,  
*Walter Keeler*, Denbighshire County Council, 2004  
[http://www.themaking.org.uk/Content/makers/2006/09/walter\\_keeler.html](http://www.themaking.org.uk/Content/makers/2006/09/walter_keeler.html)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=diNobnS8dxU>  
<http://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Crafts/021M-C0960X0027XX-0000V0>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OROiXhtYdpA>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oDDaLLNnleI>



*Interior Details* exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre, 2014

## Tea Towel

**Definition:** *cloth for drying dishes* (Chambers Dictionary)

Tea-time in 18th century Britain was a genteel affair amongst the upper classes and the best china tea service would be used. The lady of the house took great pride in her porcelain and rather than trust a servant, would dry it herself with a linen cloth. The delicate fibre derived from the flax of linseed plants was ideal for this purpose, being soft and absorbent. Linen was an expensive material and so the tea towels were washed and ironed with great care. Often these towels would be embroidered as they were included in the table display. Before the introduction of tea cosies (which the Duchess of Bedford is said to have popularised from the 1840s), a linen tea cloth would usually be neatly folded and wrapped around the pot to keep it warm and to absorb any drips.

The Ulster Weavers, Ireland, founded in 1880 were one of the first companies to create kitchen textiles for the expanding British market. During the Industrial Revolution, tea towels like many other traditional crafts were mass-produced more cheaply in a mixture of cotton and linen. In the modern era, other materials were introduced for their thickness, absorbency and soft texture, for example terry towelling, a thick cotton pile with small loops.

Nowadays, every home has tea towels, often chosen to compliment the kitchen's décor. They are also produced for the tourist industry, printed with pictures and names of places as souvenirs of a holiday.



## Tasks

**Recycle** old tea towels into a rag-rug <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XuITyZ5mUBM>

**Embroider or hand-paint a tea towel!** Buy a plain white cotton towel and create your own decoration with stitches or dye paints.

**Find out** about Van Gogh and how he used tea towels when he could not afford canvas:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2007/aug/29/art.artnews>

**Design** a school tea towel with images of your classmates. You could produce a class effort, each pupil contributing a self-portrait to add to it.

### Further Resources

Jemima Schlee, *Take a Tea Towel*, GMC Publications 2015

<http://www.weavingtoday.com/blogs/weaving-today/a-brief-history-of-tea-towels>

<http://www.ulsterweavers.com/about-us/>



*Interior Details* exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre, 2014

## Maker in Focus: Alison Morton

*'I wanted to take something that had obviously worked for a long time, take it and make something new of it' – Alison Morton*

Alison Morton described feeling 'historically connected' by growing flax and then weaving it into linen, thereby following the process from start to finish. She became interested in this material because of its reputation and long history of use in British culture: 'there was life before terry-towelling.' She recognised that although there were cheaper alternatives to linen, its quality and durability made it worth investing in.

Alison's approach to making is one of practicality and common sense: 'finding the appropriate yarn and processes for the end result.' She explained that when she first began making tea towels, there was a resistance to linen, 'because it wasn't fluffy,' but she realised that it works better than cotton for drying dishes due to its ability to soak up water. As a light material, it also dries out quickly when it becomes wet which is another important factor for cloths that are in continual use in the kitchen. She particularly favours huckaback linen for her towels. This is a loose weave with a pattern of 'floats' or threads that are slightly raised from the warp and weft to create a rougher, more absorbent surface. She sometimes combines other materials with the linen, such as cotton or chenille to add texture to the cloth.

Alison's tea towels are simple in design, usually plain with stripes or squares of colour, and this allows the weave and its texture to be appreciated in its own right. Even her signature touch, the addition of loops, is one of practicality which provides something to hang it up by.



Alison Morton, *Interior Details* exhibition





Alison Morton, *Interior Details* exhibition

## Tasks

**Research** the production of linen from flax. How is a plant transformed into a tea towel? Find out about huckaback linen. What other materials can be used for making tea cloths?

**Copy** the patterns of Alison Morton's towels and make paintings or prints. Use these to help you to design a range of kitchenware in a similar style.

**Discuss** the best material for tea towels. Ask family and friends about their preferred material. What qualities should a tea towel have ideally?

**Stitch** loops onto tea towels for hanging them up.

**Listen** to Alison Morton's oral history – her life, her work and inspiration  
<http://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Crafts/021M-C0960X0112XX-0001V0>

### Further Resources

[http://www.vads.ac.uk/learning/learnindex.php?theme\\_id=csctex&theme\\_record\\_id=csctexamorton&mtri=csctexfor](http://www.vads.ac.uk/learning/learnindex.php?theme_id=csctex&theme_record_id=csctexamorton&mtri=csctexfor)  
<http://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Crafts/021M-C0960X0112XX-0008V0>  
[http://huckaback.co.uk/linen\\_huckaback\\_towels.php#.V6nkUPkrLIU](http://huckaback.co.uk/linen_huckaback_towels.php#.V6nkUPkrLIU)





## Scarf

**Definition:** *a strip or square of often patterned fabric, worn around the neck, shoulders or head for warmth or decoration* (Chambers Dictionary)

Scarves are perhaps the most versatile item of clothing: coming in all shapes and sizes, colours, materials; worn for warmth; as an accessory, on or around the head, neck, shoulders, waist; tied in many ways with knots, folds and loops; worn for religious reasons or to indicate membership of an institution such as a college; tied around the head to keep hair from the face; waved as a symbol of allegiance to a favourite football team.

Egyptian Queen Nefertiti is one of the earliest known wearers c 1350BCE, with her scarf wound tightly beneath her flat headdress. Chinese sculptures from around 1000BCE feature fringed pieces of fabric around their necks. Warriors of Chinese Emperor Cheng wore silk scarves to signify military rank. The Romans wore a strip of cloth known as a 'sudarium' which literally means 'sweat cloth' to wipe their necks in the heat.

Scarves became fashion accessories in the early 19th century and continue to be popular in the modern age. The variety of styles and ways of wearing scarves provides endless scope for individuality and can add the finishing touch to almost any outfit, for any occasion, in any climate.

Some types of scarf include: muffler, cravat, headscarf, bandana, ascot, pashmina, tichel, boa, hijab, stole, kerchief, cowl etc.

## Tasks

**Write** a description of your favourite scarf or draw a picture. What makes it special to you?

**Assemble** a collection of scarves in the classroom of different styles, shapes, colours etc. Discover different ways of wearing them. Be inventive!





Wallace Sewell exhibition at Ruthin Craft Centre, 2015–2016

**Knit** a scarf! This is the easiest item of clothing for beginners to make.  
(see: <http://www.wikihow.com/Knit-a-Scarf>)

**Find** images of famous scarf wearers (eg Nefertiti, Grace Kelly, Doctor Who, Rupert the Bear, Harry Potter, Queen Elizabeth II...)

**Research** football scarves! Find out about their history. Why are they usually striped? How have they changed in the modern era? Make a painting based on the various team colours and logos on scarves.

**Choreograph** a dance with scarves!

### Further Resources

Nicky Albrechtsen and Fola Solanke,  
*Scarves*, Thames and Hudson, 2011  
Potter Style, *How to Tie a Scarf:*  
33 Styles, Potter Style 2013  
<https://www.countingflowers.co.uk/scarf-history>  
<http://www.scarves.net/scarf-tying-index.html>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5LYAEz777AU>  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwRwJUgt\\_Tg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IwRwJUgt_Tg)



*Paper Pinstripe scarf*, 2007, Tim Parry-Williams, *All Tied Up* exhibition



## Maker in Focus: Nick Ozanne

*Three words that describe my work are... elegant... timeless... and British*

Working under the studio name of Leto & Ariadne, Nick Ozanne employs traditional wood-framed looms to create his scarves. All work is done by hand, from the winding of the warp, the laborious weaving process and finally the fine detail of the finishing.

Selvedge magazine described his signature design, 'Evelyn Waugh Stripe' as allowing the wearer to 'reconnect with a lost sense of Englishness.' Inspired by the author's novel 'Brideshead Revisited,' set in the 1920s, the scarves capture something of the effortless style of Waugh's prose and class of his characters.

The scarves endow the individual with a sense of personal identity. Ozanne emphasizes that all of his work is unisex, 'suitable for all and only dictated to by the taste of the wearer.' He recognizes that scarves are intensely personal items of clothing, worn next to the skin, not only as a fashion accessory or statement, but also for protection and warmth. He strives to create a long-lasting product in durable yet tactile fabrics that are pleasurable to wear and says:

*'I like to think of my work as heirloom pieces and something that you can wear year after year. I only weave in natural fibres that improve and soften with use and feel both comforting and luxurious against the naked skin.'*



*Patisserie scarf, 2009,  
Nick Ozanne, All Tied Up exhibition*





*Pencil Stripe scarves, Evelyn Waugh Stripe scarves, 2009, Nick Ozanne, All Tied Up exhibition*

## Tasks

**Find out about** silk – what is it? How is it processed and woven into fabric?

**Read** *Brideshead Revisited* by Evelyn Waugh (see free download: <http://www.steporebook.com/book/brideshead-revisited-7048-epub.html>) Which characters could you imagine wearing Leto & Ariadne scarves?

**Research** 1920s fashion. What other clothes are typical of the era?

**Discuss** 'Britishness' in relation to dress. What clothes do you associate with national identity?

**Make** an abstract painting based on colours and lines in Leto & Ariadne scarves.

### Further Resources

<https://letoariadne.com/about/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiWBigxLi1I>

<http://bibelotmagazine.com/tag/nick-ozanne/>





Rozanne Hawksley, *Pale Armistice*, 1991, *Offerings* exhibition

## Glove

**Definition:** *covering for the hand which usually has individual casings for each finger*  
(Chambers Dictionary)

Gloves developed originally as a means of protecting hands from cold weather and for handling rough, abrasive or hot materials. The first gloves were probably scraps of material folded over and stitched as a more practical option to wrapping rags around or pulling long sleeves down over fingers.

Romans wore gloves for cooking and also for eating hot food. They did not use forks at this time, so covered their fingers with light gloves called 'digitalia'.

In the Middle Ages, fingerless gloves made from leather and lined with cotton were used by peasants, shepherds and farmers to protect their hands while they worked.

The Pharaohs were the first to wear gloves as symbols of status and to keep their hands beautiful, covered in silk. Egyptian women also used them while eating or working and these gloves were pocket-like in form with a thumb, rather like mittens.

The upper classes began to decorate gloves with embroidery and jewels in mediaeval times when it first became an accessory and a symbol of dignity and honour rather than simply a useful item of clothing. The symbolism associated with gloves became very complicated during this period (see link below).



Hand-knitted gloves originated in colder Northern European countries by the late 13th century and later became more widespread with William Lee's invention of the knitting machine, 1589.

In modern times, advancements in technology have increased the range of materials and ease of manufacturing to make it possible to produce gloves for all occasions, climates, conditions and uses. Some examples include: walking gloves, oven gloves, golf gloves, gardening gloves etc. How many types of glove do you have?

## Tasks

**Research** the history of gloves. Find examples in paintings from art history or visit a museum.

**Make** a list of all the different types of gloves that are:

- Used in everyday life (eg oven glove, rubber gloves, gardening gloves...)  
How many gloves do you have in your home?
- Worn for work (eg by a surgeon, dentist, cleaner, art-handler...)
- Worn for sports (eg boxing, golf, cycling, cricket, goalkeeping, skiing...)

**Find out** about the symbolism of gloves.

**Design** gloves for a range of occasions and functions. Invent a new glove! (eg a 'painting glove' with brushes or spongy pads on the fingertips; a 'teacher's pointing glove'; 'a tickling glove' with feathers...be inventive!

**Make** a glove puppet or a finger puppet! ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEHUC4Udf\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEHUC4Udf_A); <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrnPunxNh2E>)

**Make** an oven glove! (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtS5itzH9tk>)

### Further Resources

<http://www.fashionintime.org/history-gloves-significance/>  
[http://www.gloves.com.ua/about\\_glove\\_en.php](http://www.gloves.com.ua/about_glove_en.php)  
<http://www.sothebys.com/en/news-video/blogs/all-blogs/sotheby-s-magazine--december---january-2016/2015/11/gloves-useful-symbols-costumist.html>





Angharad Thomas

## Maker in Focus: Angharad Thomas

*'Knitting has been an activity that was a chore just as much as tending crops or cleaning the house for many women only 30 or 40 years ago. You knitted because you could not afford to buy. Now, because of twists in global economics that seem like a bizarre fairy tale, it is cheaper to buy many goods, knitwear included.'*

Dr Angharad Thomas has been a teacher, knitwear manufacturer and designer for knitwear production in global markets. She currently works as an archivist for the Knitting and Crochet Guild of the UK whilst also designing, making and 'blogging' as part of her 'Glove Project' (<https://knittinggloves.wordpress.com/about/>). The blogs provide a useful insight to the thought process and practical aspects of making a useful item of clothing for a particular person as she documents each pair with photographs, drawings and notes.

Angharad has been knitting gloves to traditional patterns since 2011, often adapting them and creating her own designs. She is particularly interested in the history and folk culture of gloves in different parts of the world. She follows the old time-tried patterns that have been passed down through generations of knitters and continue to be passed on amongst the knitting community today via the internet.

One of Angharad's discoveries was the *Midge and Flea*, the earliest pattern published by the *Scottish Rural Womens' Institute*, dated 1966 which was probably an adaptation of a rural glove that might have been knitted anywhere in the north of England, Wales or Scotland. Its name comes from the speckled pattern of the midge and flea shapes in contrasting colours.

The function of a glove is always the most important consideration for Angharad – the fact that it is hopefully going to be worn again and again. As a keen walker, she appreciates the pleasure that warm, well-fitting gloves can provide on the cold hills:

*'I started a pair for a friend as she really needed some good gloves when we were out walking in the Lake District.'*

Most of her gloves are produced as presents for friends and, as her blogs reveal, she considers the needs of each individual in making them. She begins by drawing around their hands to produce a template as not all hands (or even fingers) comply with standard sizing. One friend, for example has a crooked little finger and this was carefully considered in her design. All of these gloves include the owner's initials as an added personal touch.

## Tasks

**Draw** designs on rubber gloves with marker pens! Angharad often uses this technique to try out designs as they can be easily washed off and redrawn.

**Keep a blog** recording a trip, a project, your thoughts and ideas. Documenting with pictures and words provides a useful record and resource for future work. Read Angharad's blog for inspiration.

**Research** glove patterns that Angharad Thomas has used (eg Sanquar, Sir Gar, Midge and Flea, Polar Gloves etc). Copy the patterns in coloured pencils or paint.

**Draw** around your hand to create a template or stencil and use them to create a painting or print based on hand shapes. You could create a variety of stencils by drawing around your family or friends' hands.

**Design** gloves for a friend with personal touches such as initials, favourite colours, logos etc)

### Further Resources

<https://knittinggloves.wordpress.com/about/>

<http://kcguild.org.uk/inspiration/our-designer-members/angharad-thomas/>

[http://www.autonomic.org.uk/allmakersnow/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/AMN2014\\_Thomas.pdf](http://www.autonomic.org.uk/allmakersnow/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/AMN2014_Thomas.pdf)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFg3uQj6Lfl>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1IPwLlv9zQ>





# what is craft?

materials

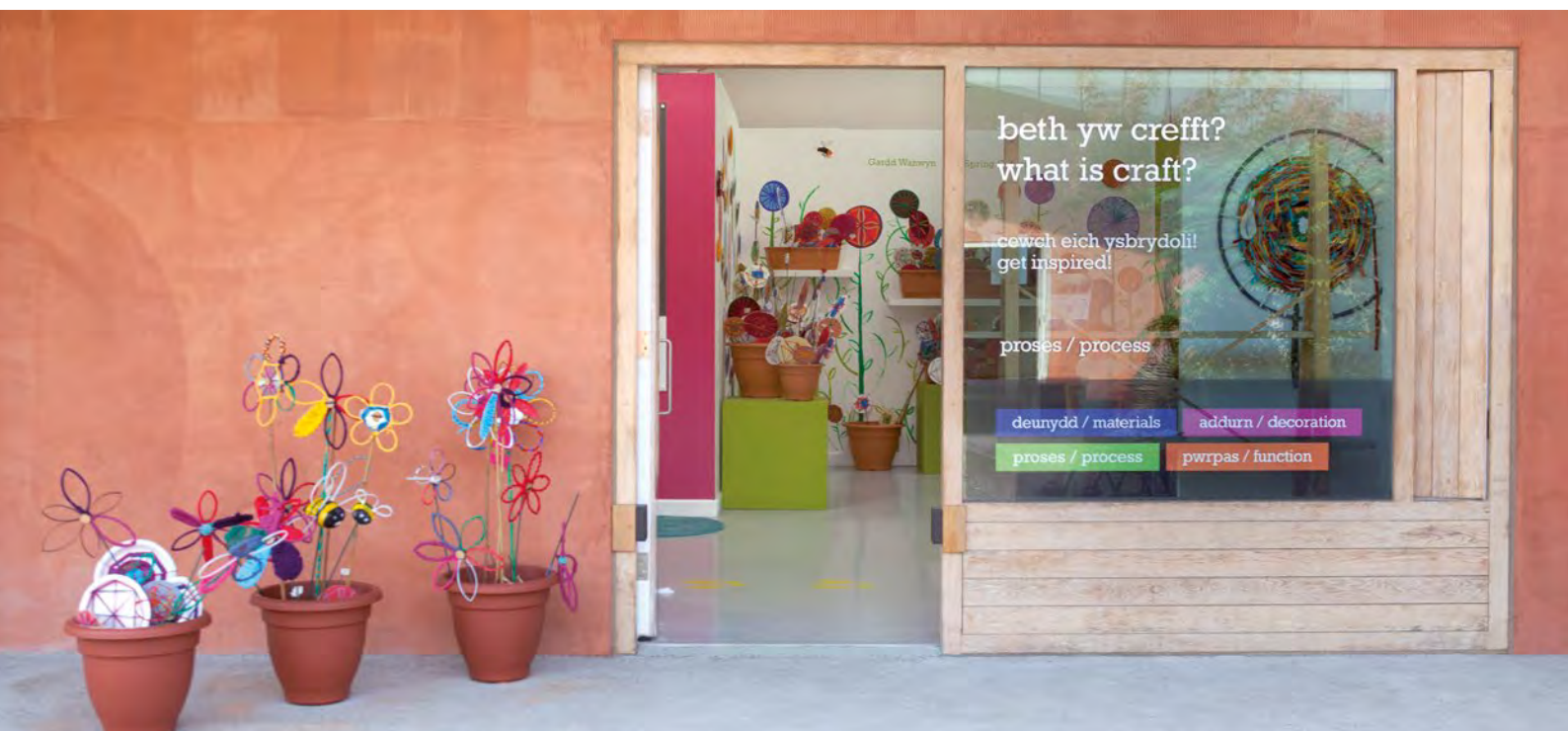
decoration

process

function

Who does it?  
Why do they do it?  
Why does it matter?

We hope you will be inspired by this programme and more importantly get involved!











# what is craft?



Have you taken part in all four *What is Craft?* Seasons and collected all four badges?

You can now claim your **FREE** bag!

materials

decoration

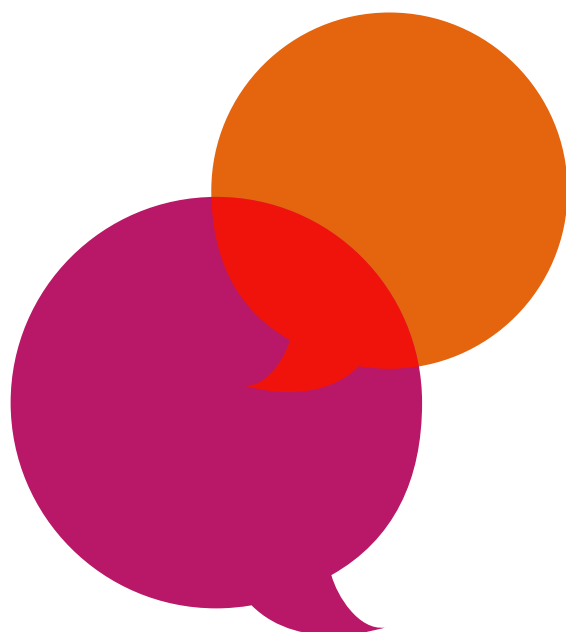
process

function

All four resource packs are available to **download FREE** from our website.  
[ruthincraftcentre.org.uk](http://ruthincraftcentre.org.uk)







Canolfan Grefft Rhuthun  
Y Ganolfan i'r Celfyddydau Cymhwysol  
Ruthin Craft Centre  
The Centre for the Applied Arts