

# CUTTING EDGE



For members of the  
Institute of Carpenters

Summer 2025

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**Patron:** HRH The Duchess of Gloucester

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**Cover image:** A larger example of kigumi in practice. This time showing what appears to be a cross-section of a roof. Photo credit: James Filus, April 2025

# WELCOME

## Welcome to the Summer 2025 edition of Cutting Edge.

It was a pleasure meeting many of our members at the recent members' day, catching up with our regulars as well as first-time attendees.

As always, any comments or suggestions for editorial pieces are welcome, as well as your regular contributions to Glue Up.

Thank you once again for your continuing support. If you have any questions or need to contact the IOC at all, you can email us at:

[info@instituteofcarpenters.com](mailto:info@instituteofcarpenters.com)

*Denise*

**Denise Tabone**, Administration Manager

June 2025

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Geoff Rhodes FIMMM MIOD | IOC President



Welcome to the latest edition of Cutting Edge. Since the last issue, I have a lot of memorable and exciting news to share with you — from our successful IOC & NAS Members' Day and AGM to our latest CITB-supported and funded initiative, Wood/Work.

I was delighted that we had a fabulous and successful combined IOC & NAS AGM and Members' Day, which took place at Carpenters' Hall on 14 May. Thank you to everyone who attended.

I was equally pleased that our Royal Patron, Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Gloucester KG GCVO, graced us with her presence at the 10th IOC Timber Industry College Hub event at Exeter College on 27 March, where she met speakers, staff, student learners, and toured the facilities.

This event marked the final component of the two-year CITB–IOC Mentoring Champions' Scheme, which has taken place at locations across the UK. Over 1,200 students have benefited from these events, hearing from a range of industry specialists and learning about the variety of career opportunities available within the construction industry.

After two successful years, we remain committed to nurturing and supporting new entrants to the sector. This commitment continues with our latest CITB-supported and funded initiative, Wood/Work, which expands our offer to include In-Work Support, among other services. Our website is currently in development, but you can visit it to find out more: <https://wood-work.co.uk>.

We anticipate that Wood/Work will, in the future, lead to a continuation of our events at various IOC Colleges — events that have brought together learners, guest speakers, and local businesses, all with the aim of inspiring the next generation. More on this in due course.

Earlier this year, I attended the Timber in Construction Summit in London, as well as the Government's launch of the Timber in Construction Roadmap, where Environment Minister **Mary Creagh** CBE MP spoke about



the 'triple win' of building with timber, and why this is so important as a part of the Government's Plan for Change.

Since the event, more than 150 individuals and organisations, including the IOC and NAS, have been actively collaborating to move forward and ensure the role of timber is able to contribute to the UK's housing and climate goals.

We are actively participating in the 'Skills' working group — one of seven component areas currently being developed. With so much discussion around the industry's skills crisis, it is good to know that the IOC is playing its part.

Over the last quarter, I have also represented the IOC at the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) meetings as well as a host of other timber industry related events.

More colleges are now teaching woodworking skills, and their students continue to join the IOC, alongside trained professionals and corporate members. Let us continue this momentum and take a moment to extend a warm welcome to them all.

Our Board continues to review the progress made in collaboration with the NAS on four major projects: growing IOC

membership, improving our communications strategy and processes, further developing our partnership and governance procedures, and embedding the IOC's vision and values to ensure consistent application.

I sincerely hope you are beginning to notice a variety of improvements, and I want everyone to be proud of what we are accomplishing, both individually and collectively.

Our quarterly Cutting Edge remains available in hard copy to all paying members, colleges, corporates and reciprocal members, along with the digital version of each edition, which is also available for our fast-expanding student membership. If you do not wish to receive a hard copy of Cutting Edge, please let head office know by emailing:

**[info@instituteofcarpenters.com](mailto:info@instituteofcarpenters.com)**

In conclusion, I trust I can count on your continued support.

Enjoy the read!

## Geoff Rhodes

FIMMM MIOD | IOC President

James Filus | IOC Director



*“Recent engagement through our Membership Survey and direct contact has provided valuable feedback, confirming we are on the right path—whilst highlighting important themes to implement. Our aim is to build your support through collaboration, not simply to present a finished plan and tell you what is happening.”*

In the December 2024 edition of Cutting Edge, I mentioned having worked in local government before joining the National Association of Shopfitters. That experience taught me many lessons about leadership in that environment and one in particular has stuck with me and still resonates today.

At the time, we were exploring the digitalisation of services, as there was simply no money to fund the traditional face-to-face access points. As part of the process, we engaged with a disability commission to help shape the future and the feedback on our plans was eye opening – because the things we needed to do for budgetary reasons risked excluding some of our most vulnerable citizens, the obvious and necessary solution was to collaborate. A powerful phrase used throughout the consultation captured this perfectly: “Nothing **about** disabled people **without** disabled people.”

So, how does this relate to you? You may have noticed that I take a consultative approach. While today’s circumstances may differ, one key fact remains: the input of those most affected is essential, especially when you have not walked in their shoes.

While I have learned a great deal about the wood trades in the past six years, I am not a shopfitter, joiner, or carpenter. This is why your views and feedback are vital to shaping our future. Therefore, I like to ensure we do nothing about carpenters and joiners, without carpenters and joiners (and shopfitters too). Extending this principle to your membership, you have my full assurance: there will be nothing **about** the IOC, **without** the IOC.

To demonstrate this in practice, we launched a Membership Survey in the last edition of Cutting Edge, and I am very grateful to everyone who took the time to share their thoughts.

More recently, I wrote directly to all our members to sense-check some thoughts on several key issues, and again, the feedback was incredibly helpful. The generally positive and supportive feedback leads me to believe we are heading in the right direction. However, there are some important themes that have emerged, and I want to ensure these are properly reflected in our future planning.

You have asked for:

- More educational content with a focus on continual professional development (CPD)
- Regional events and meetings
- Enhanced benefits, such as discounted insurance schemes.

These are now being incorporated into our planning, and I hope to share some of this thinking when our next edition of Cutting Edge reaches you. As a Board we are mindful that it has been some time since we had an up-to-date long-term plan, so that is the next priority.

Once a draft is ready, you will again be consulted. The aim is to build your support through collaboration, not simply to present a finished plan and tell you what is happening.

If you would like to share your thoughts on other topics you feel passionate about, please do not hesitate to contact me via email: [james.filus@shopfitters.org](mailto:james.filus@shopfitters.org) ◀

## James Filus

IOC Director





# WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

## Fellow

- Andrew Warburton (Australia)
- Martin Jarvis (Grand Cayman)
- Wayne Gray (Lincolnshire)
- Craig Smith (Gloucestershire)

## Member

- Rupert Pooley (Lincolnshire)
- Dick Litton Holt (East Sussex)

## Student

- Jake Fairs (Tyne and Wear)
- Josh Johnston (Tyne and Wear)
- Stephen Lloyd (Tyne and Wear)
- Dylan Maxwell-Lawson (Tyne and Wear)
- Bobby Newman (Tyne and Wear)
- Elliott Short (Tyne and Wear)
- James Wallace McGeorge (Tyne and Wear)
- Ethan Allison (County Durham)
- Finlay Antonys (County Durham)
- Liam Appleby (County Durham)
- Callum Ayre (County Durham)
- Conway John Bainbridge (County Durham)
- Liam Ballan (County Durham)
- Harvey Boughen (County Durham)
- Keane Broadman (County Durham)
- Cameron Cheetham (County Durham)
- Jude Conroy-Brown (County Durham)
- Aidan Coulson (County Durham)
- Kai Coulson (County Durham)
- Mitchell Dickinson (County Durham)
- Oliver Drake (County Durham)
- Ella Mae Dunn (County Durham)
- Harry Ellis (County Durham)
- Kristian Ghiotti (County Durham)
- Bruno Grey (County Durham)
- Charlie Hall (County Durham)
- Joe Hall (County Durham)
- Lewis Horswill (County Durham)
- Aaron Lauder (County Durham)
- Cameron Lock (County Durham)
- Daniel Mains (County Durham)
- Brandon Mallett (County Durham)
- Kelwyn Murphy (County Durham)
- Callum Nixon (County Durham)
- Regan Parker (County Durham)
- Thomas Perry (County Durham)
- Josh Thomas Roberts (County Durham)
- Reece Rumble (County Durham)
- Joe Singleton (County Durham)
- Aleisha Slatt (County Durham)
- Jack Gascoigne Slattery (County Durham)
- Cameron Vayro (County Durham)
- Jayden Weldon (County Durham)
- Callum Woods (County Durham)
- Joe Hall (Northumberland)
- Reuben James Tebbs (Cumbria)
- Jack Davidson (Derbyshire)
- Joe Hood (Cambridgeshire)
- Stephen Hooley (Cambridgeshire)
- Floyd Barners (Norfolk)
- Adrian Szuster (Norfolk)
- Andrew Ball (Suffolk)
- Shaun Barlow (Suffolk)
- Luke Clements (Suffolk)
- Tyler Cooper (Suffolk)
- Finley Deeley (Suffolk)
- George Hardman (Suffolk)
- Oscar Harvey (Suffolk)
- Liam Hornsby (Suffolk)
- Riley Dore (Suffolk)
- Liam Hornsby (Suffolk)
- Jamie Morley (Suffolk)
- Freddy Penistone (Suffolk)
- Colby Poolton (Suffolk)
- Will Powell (Suffolk)
- Joseph Revell (Suffolk)
- Cain Rae (Suffolk)
- Brett Sawyer (Suffolk)
- Alfie Shaw (Suffolk)
- George Stutters (Suffolk)
- Harvey Thompson (Suffolk)
- Jayden Wright (Suffolk)
- Jack Harvey (Essex)
- Hugh Glanville (Wiltshire)
- Michael Aldridge (Devon)
- Louis Lockyer-gendre (Somerset)
- Tyrun Allen (Devon)
- George Anderson-Pearce (Devon)
- Harry Archer (Devon)
- Tyler Blackburn (Devon)
- Cody Bowditch (Devon)
- Aaron Browning (Devon)
- Anya Challingsworth (Devon)
- Warren Chambers (Devon)

- Ollie Coote (Devon)
- Jasper Cross (Devon)
- Tyler Ellis (Devon)
- Jack Eyers (Devon)
- Charlie Forey (Devon)
- Riley Gard (Devon)
- Thomas Gerry (Devon)
- Oliver Gill (Devon)
- Kenzie Goode (Devon)
- Billy Hall (Devon)
- Finn Harrison-Curtis (Devon)
- Luke Harvey (Devon)
- Harvey Henderson (Devon)
- Bradley Holley (Devon)
- James Hughes (Devon)
- Gabe Hurved (Devon)
- Rhys Jenkins (Devon)
- Olivia Jones (Devon)
- Daniel Lacey (Devon)
- Euan Land (Devon)
- Andrew Lapworth (Devon)
- Aaron Leck (Devon)
- Aidan Luke (Devon)
- Cam Macpherson (Devon)
- Kaleb Maunders (Devon)
- Charlie Milford (Devon)
- Tristan Mitchell (Devon)
- Maximilian Molnar (Devon)
- Rufus Oldfield (Devon)
- Selby Overington (Devon)
- Dexter Palmer (Devon)
- Tim Parkinson (Devon)
- Jay Pearson (Devon)
- Tom Pearson (Devon)
- Bailie Pollington (Devon)
- Brodie Quick (Devon)
- Maxxi Rees (Devon)
- Brody Rendell (Devon)

- William Roberts (Devon)
- Taylor Robbins (Devon)
- Ali Sari (Devon)
- Charlie Selby (Devon)
- Dan Shepherd (Devon)
- Samuel Simmons (Devon)
- Ty Staddon (Devon)
- Maisie Steele (Devon)
- Toby Stuckey (Devon)
- Alfie Thorn (Devon)
- Oscar Tunbridge (Devon)
- Jacob Wadsworth (Devon)
- Corey Wakenshaw (Devon)
- Luc Ward (Devon)
- Ben White (Devon)
- Nathaniel Wood (Devon)
- James Woolley (Devon)
- Maizi Young-Casey (Devon)
- James Haworth (Dorset)
- Leo Renshaw (Dorset)
- Alfie Simpson (Dorset)

## College

Bradford College:

**[www.bradfordcollege.ac.uk](http://www.bradfordcollege.ac.uk)**

Derby College Group:

**[www.derby-college.ac.uk](http://www.derby-college.ac.uk)**

Reaseheath College:

**[www.reaseheath.ac.uk](http://www.reaseheath.ac.uk)**

West Herts College:

**[www.westherts.ac.uk](http://www.westherts.ac.uk)**

Do you know someone who works in wood trades who isn't a member of the IOC? All it takes is one short moment to send them a quick email point them to **[www.instituteofcarpenters.com](http://www.instituteofcarpenters.com)** to find out more and tell them why they should join. So, go on, take that moment now and encourage some more members to join! Likewise, if you know someone already in membership who deserves to be upgraded, please do let us know.

Do you have any college contacts in Northern Ireland and Scotland? If so, we would very much like to hear from you at: **[info@instituteofcarpenters.com](mailto:info@instituteofcarpenters.com)**.

## IOC NEWS

- **Apologies to our readers:** In the March 2025 Cutting Edge a Shutterstock image missing the relevant safety feature was shown. This image has now been replaced in the online version of Cutting Edge and photo checks have been implemented to stop this happening again
- **New Board Director –** I am pleased to announce that **Robin Clevett FIOC** has joined the IOC Board. Robin has a wealth of experience in the industry and will be a great asset to the organisation
- The IOC has recently received a £300 legacy from the late **Sydney Thompson FIOC** who volunteered his time teaching woodworking skills in his local area. In a similar way to the Robert Rampley award, as part of the 3rd year student award, there will be a £100 a year prize given over 3 years for outstanding craftsmanship in Mr Thompson's name, full details to be finalised.



Robin Clevett

## INDUSTRY NEWS

- Furniture Makers' Company offer free and confidential support round the clock to anyone who needs help. Text 'COMFORT' to 85258
- Construction Industry Helpline: 0345 605 1956 or text **HARDHAT** to 85258. Providing financial and emotional support to the construction community and their families: <https://tinyurl.com/mdjprft8>

## HSE NEWS AND GUIDES

- To view the latest news on Health and Safety at Work visit: <https://tinyurl.com/ys3aer8e>
- To access HSE free leaflets on health and safety law visit: <https://tinyurl.com/2b2ufrnp>
- Asbestos and You: for tradespeople to know what to watch for, and what to do should you come across asbestos  
<https://tinyurl.com/4y45z49h>

# MENTORING CHAMPIONS WRAPS UP AND PAVES THE WAY FOR WOOD/WORK PROGRAMME

The IOC's Mentoring Champions' pilot, launched in late 2023 with support from CITB, will formally conclude this summer after a year of testing what mentoring could look like in the real-world of early careers in carpentry and joinery.

The pilot was a chance to explore how simple, structured support could help new learners stay the course, and help experienced professionals share their knowledge in a meaningful, manageable way.

**James Filus**, Director, explained that the IOC collaborated with 10 colleges across the UK, including Lincoln, Exeter, and the Building Crafts College in London, to trial the approach. The goal was not to overcomplicate things, it was to build relationships — and it worked.

**Exeter College:** Student Brad was paired with seasoned carpenter Steve. "It is not like school," Brad told us. "Steve just listens and helps me think through what is happening

on site. It has made a huge difference knowing someone has got your back."

Steve agreed, adding: "Brad's doing great. I have learned a lot too — sometimes you forget how much you know until someone asks."

**Building Crafts College:** Mentor Jack described the experience as "a chance to give something back — without having to become a full-time tutor. I can just be myself and help someone avoid the mistakes I made."

Across the pilot, we saw improved confidence and communication, along with stronger connections between the college and the working world. We also observed a desire for more, a support system that extends after college.

### The Wood/Work programme

That is exactly what the programme will offer. It is the next step, an in-work support programme for new starters in the wood

trades, shaped directly by what we have learnt from the Mentoring Champions' programme. It will include check-ins, peer stories, signposting to resources, and mentoring — all designed to help new carpenters and joiners settle in and succeed.

We are grateful to the CITB for their support in this valuable development for much-needed skills across the UK and to our IOC volunteer mentors and student member mentees who made this project such a success.

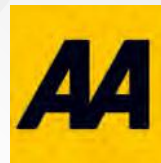
Mentoring Champions may be wrapping up, but it is clear — the needs and enthusiasm for support in those early months of work is only just getting started.

To learn more about the Wood/Work programme visit page 9.

# IOC MEMBER BENEFITS

**A**s an IOC member you have access to a variety of benefits. Below is an overview of the benefits on offer – the landing pages/discount codes can all be found in Glue Up in the My Community, Files folder.

- AA Fleetwise – discounted cover
- BEB – 10% off on contract and legal services
- CADUK – 10% discount (excluding plant operations)
- Courtprice – tailored insurance products tel: **0121 447 7555**, email: **info@courtprice.co.uk**
- Cover my tools – tailored insurance for tools
- Credit Safe – discounted credit checks
- EdApp – RoSPA accredited online learning platform
- Fuel Card Services – discounted fuel cards
- Hospital & Medical Care Association (HMCA) – 40% off the underwriter's standard rates
- Ironmongery Direct – 10% discount (minimum spend applies)
- Numbers – 10% discount on accountancy services email: **info@numbers-ltd.co.uk**, tel: **01296 620220**
- Tradepoint – 10% discount card (over 18s), no minimum spend – posted out to members
- Video & Web – discount on web design
- Which? Trusted Traders – discounted membership
- Wider Wallet – Access discounts at high street retailers/save on gift cards





# INTRODUCING THE WOOD/ WORK PROGRAMME: SUPPORT THAT STARTS ON DAY ONE

Starting a first job in the wood trades should be exciting, but for many apprentices and new joiners, those early months can feel uncertain, even overwhelming. That is where Wood/Work comes in – a brand-new programme from the Institute of Carpenters and the National Association of Shopfitters, supported by CITB.

**J**ames Filus, Director, explains that the Wood/Work programme is a natural evolution from the Mentoring Champions' pilot, shaped by feedback from learners, colleges and employers. We heard clearly that the transition from college into work matters. Support during those early days not only helps new starters succeed, it helps businesses make the most of their valuable investment in new talent.

Wood/Work is designed to do just that. It offers structured, proactive support to help new employees in the woodworking trades settle into their roles – whether they have come through an apprenticeship or another route, and sustain their early success. Just as importantly, it supports the employers who take them on, helping them to get the most from their investment and build lasting working relationships.

We are working closely with colleges and employer partners to roll the programme out in a way that fits the real world. In some places, that means providing a full framework of support. In others, it means adding value to great structures that already exist. Everywhere, it means learning from and sharing what works – and what could work even better.

Wood/Work will include check-ins, practical tools, mentoring options, and a membership-based community that connects new starters with ongoing resources and encouragement. It is designed to be light touch but meaningful, helping prepare everyone involved for the exciting journey ahead.

The Wood/Work service will initially launch in England, but the core Wood/Work modules will be made accessible in the UK. Whether you



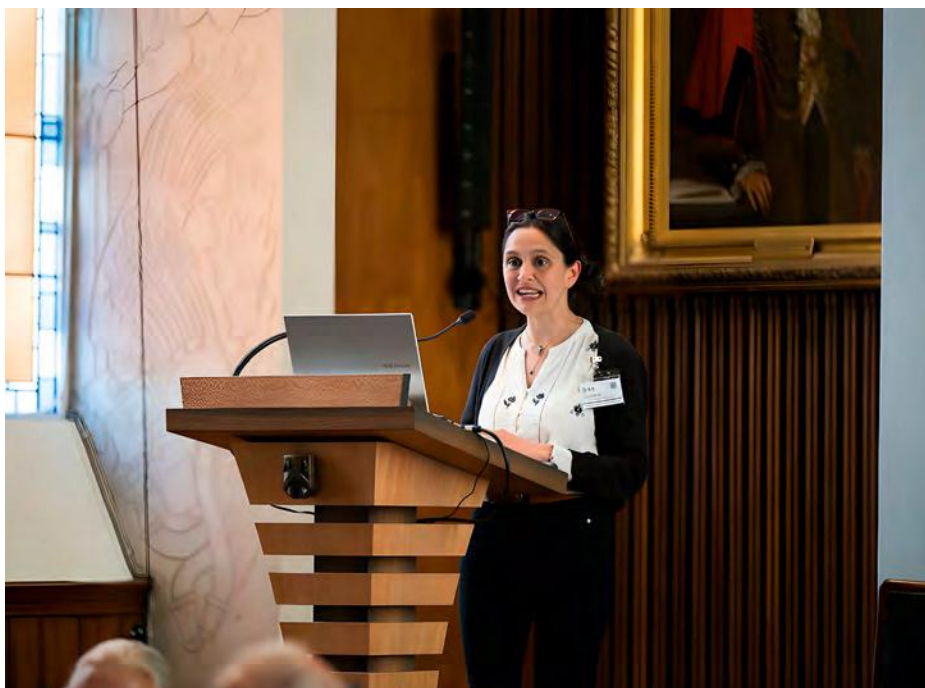
James Filus,  
Director

are a sole trader with your first apprentice, or an established firm taking on a new starter, we would be delighted to hear from you.

If you are an IOC member with a new apprentice or thinking of taking someone on, please do let us know – contact us at: [info@instituteofcarpenters.com](mailto:info@instituteofcarpenters.com).

Wood/Work is here to make the transition into the wood trades smoother, more supported, and more successful for everyone involved. ◀

Visit: [www.wood-work.co.uk](http://www.wood-work.co.uk) and register for updates.



Lucy Kamall from Character Communications explained how Wood/Work builds on the IOC Mentoring Champions' Programme, taking it to the next level at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Members' Day for the Institute of Carpenters (IOC) and the National Association of Shopfitters (NAS).

# PROTECTING THE HANDS THAT BUILD: WHY PERSONAL ACCIDENT & SICKNESS (PA&S) COVER MATTERS FOR CARPENTERS

Courtprice discusses how, in the world of carpentry, your body is the most important tool. Whether you are crafting bespoke joinery, fitting timber frames, or working on-site with heavy materials and power tools, an injury or illness can bring everything to a standstill – your projects, income, and peace of mind. That is why Personal Accident & Sickness (PA&S) insurance is more important than ever.

**A**t Courtprice Limited, we work with skilled tradespeople every day, including many IOC members, and we know how vital it is to have cover that works as hard as you do.

## The risk is real

Carpentry is physically demanding. A fall, tool-related injury, or even a short illness can stop you from working, and when you cannot work, you do not get paid – especially if you are self-employed or on short-term contracts.

PA&S cover is designed to support you financially when life throws a curveball. It pays out a weekly income if you are temporarily unable to work and can provide a lump sum for more serious injuries or permanent disablement.

## Tailored for the trade

One of the key benefits of PA&S insurance is its flexibility. At Courtprice, we help carpenters choose a policy that suits their trade, lifestyle,

and income needs. Cover options include:

- Weekly benefit payments while you recover
- Lump sums for major injuries or long-term disability
- Fracture and dental injury cover, ideal for manual workers
- Hospital cash benefits and rehabilitation support
- Optional extras for added peace of mind

Whether you are working solo, subcontracting, or leading a team, there is a plan to suit your needs.

**Business Owners** – If you run a carpentry business or manage a small team, group PA&S insurance is a smart way to protect your workforce. It shows staff you care, minimises downtime, and strengthens your business reputation. It is also a great retention tool in a competitive market.

## Why Courtprice?

We are not just another insurance firm – we are a trusted advisor to tradespeople



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across the Midlands and beyond. Based in Birmingham, Courtprice Limited offers a personalised approach, clear advice, and policies built around your specific risks.

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# THE 46TH MERLANE TROPHY HELD AT VISION WEST NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COLLEGE

**David R. Winson** shares with us an account of the exciting 46th Merlane Trophy event – and its winners.

It was a hot day, one of the hottest this year – it was a hot competition too, at this long-running East Midlands annual event. This year, 15 competitors from six colleges took part in the 46th Merlane Trophy, first launched in 1977.

The competition was held on Wednesday, 30 April, at Vision West Nottinghamshire College (West Notts College).

The competitors were met by Secretary **Andy Eato** FIOC, who booked everyone in and allocated bench numbers. I also gave a brief welcome and introduced the day's activities.

## The test piece

This consisted of three joists, with herringbone strutting and trimmer joist forming a lined opening for a trapdoor. There were of course a few intricate joints to make it a little more challenging. The task was planned to take four hours, including time to prepare a setting out rod and, as always, designed to ensure that as many competitors as possible could complete the project.

Judging commenced immediately at the start of the day, as the project was being set out. It focused on working practices, skills, and the correct use of tools. The process was

overseen by head judge **Derrick Crawford**, ably assisted by **Andrew Pardner** and with Andy Eato keeping a tally of the marks.

Final judging took place while the competitors, visitors, and guests had lunch. Under strict conditions, the workshop was cleared of all personnel, allowing the judges to assess the workpieces without interruption. The only indication of whose work they were marking was the bench number assigned to each competitor.

With a policy of providing equal access and opportunity there is also a special prize (outside of the top three), the Ernie Leach Shield, awarded to the person who approached the project in the most methodical and skilful manner, with good safe working practices, including a clean working area, and demonstrated proper choice, handling, and care of their tools. Following the death of Ernie Leach this special prize has been sponsored by various people/companies including its founder, The David Winson Organisation, who sponsored it again this year, along with committee members **Allan Gregory** and **Alan Beet**.

West Notts College successfully secured major sponsorship from Knotts Joinery and



The excellent winning piece. Pc Rebecca Howarth, content and communications officer, WN College

Dovetail & Slate, along with Howdens, Tilgear, Protrade, Oakwood Building and Specialist Services, Timber & Joinery Supplies, Huws Gray, Vaughndale Construction, Stabila, and Rustic Rural providing the major prizes, including a goodie bag for each competitor, so nobody left empty handed. Other prizes were added from Lincoln College and special thanks also go to retired member **John Lewis** FIOC, who once again added a panel saw and a box of carpenter's pencils to each of the four main prizes.

The competitors were certainly not disappointed with more than £1,000 of prizes shared out, plus cheques of £100, £75, and £50 for the three places and £50 for the Ernie Leach Shield.

## Winners

Derby College's **Jack Henley** was awarded 1st place, North Notts College's **Alfie Waldock** and **Harrison Lindsay** took 2nd and 3rd place. The Ernie Leach Shield was awarded to **Bethan Simmons** from Derby College.

This year's prizegiving and closing ceremony was presided over by West Notts College's **Diane Booth**, Vice Principal Teaching and Learning, who handed out the main prizes with the Certificate of Participation for every competitor handed out by the IOC's President, **Geoff Rhodes**; we were also honoured to have a visit from Director, **James Filus**.

Our thanks go to Adam Thompson and his team from West Notts College; to the sponsors and their teams who were with us throughout the day; to all our supporters, including the IOC Board of Directors (with a grant of £250), without whom it would not be possible to run the Merlane Trophy.

The 47th competition will be held at Derby College 29 April 2026. ◀

**David R Winson** MBA FIOC



The competitors from regional colleges gather for the event. Pc Rebecca Howarth, content and communications officer, WN College

# BEYOND THE BENCH: EPA PREPARATION THROUGH PRESSURE AND PERFORMANCE

**Brian Tunbridge**, Tutor at West Suffolk College, explains how the college is actively developing strategies not only to prepare students for the End Point Assessments (EPAs), but also to foster a mindset of excellence that transcends assessment. This includes participation in the Worshipful Company of Joiners and Ceilers' Joinery Craft Competition.

**A**s End Point Assessments (EPAs) for carpentry and joinery apprenticeships roll out across the country, many learners find themselves facing a completely new challenge. The EPA — comprising a two-day practical assessment, an online knowledge test, and a professional discussion — can be unfamiliar and daunting, especially for those encountering such rigorous evaluation for the first time.

At West Suffolk College, we have been actively developing strategies, not only to prepare students for the EPA, but also to foster a mindset of excellence that transcends assessment. Our teaching and learning

▼ (L-R) Peter Maton FIOC, chairman of the craft committee with James Buckle, winner of the Worshipful Company of Joiners and Ceilers' Joinery Craft Competition



approach adopts the WorldSkills methodology, incorporating high-pressure test scenarios, skills-based challenges, and targeted mindset training. This dual-purpose strategy supports success in the EPA while simultaneously nurturing the skills needed to compete at elite levels, such as the WorldSkills competitions.

Competitions, both internal and external, are an integral part of our preparation framework. They sharpen technical ability, build resilience, and help apprentices manage nerves under pressure — an often overlooked, but critical component of performance. For example, the Worshipful Company of Joiners and Ceilers of the City of London annually holds a respected craft competition, while the Institute of Carpenters runs its own national competition which consistently draws impressive talent.

On 12 April, West Suffolk College proudly hosted the Worshipful Company of Joiners and Ceilers' Joinery Craft Competition for the first time. This landmark event saw 24 entrants from around the nation competing under pressure. Our apprentices achieved an exceptional clean sweep, taking 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. While the winner was a third-year apprentice, the runners-up were at Level 2, highlighting the importance of offering these opportunities across all levels and abilities.

This inclusive approach allows even early-stage learners to gain experience under conditions that replicate EPA intensity. Competitions test not just skill, but efficiency, time management, and the ability to stay calm under scrutiny — all vital qualities for EPA success.

Moreover, competitions serve a broader purpose in giving apprentices a better sense of their own development. In smaller class



▲ Luke Newton demonstrates precision and focus during the Worshipful Company of Joiners and Ceilers' Joinery Craft Competition

settings, it is easy to feel confident as the “top of the class,” but stepping into an arena with peers from other regions and colleges broadens perspectives. It cultivates humility, fuels ambition and reveals areas for growth that may otherwise go unnoticed.

At West Suffolk College, EPA preparation is more than a checklist — it is an evolving journey of growth, confidence-building, and excellence. Through structured pressure tests and competitions, we empower apprentices not only to pass, but to thrive under pressure, represent their craft with pride, and carry forward the timeless skills of carpentry and joinery into the future with assured capability. ◀

**Brian Tunbridge FIOC | West Suffolk College**



# MASTER CRAFT CERTIFICATE SCHEME

The awards for the Master Craft Certificate Scheme were recently presented by the Lord Mayor of London at Mansion House on 3 March.



▲ (Centre) Jeremy Murphy FIOC, collecting his Master Craft Certificate for Joinery. Pc Phil McCarthy



▲ (Centre) Adam Hobbs FIOC collecting the Master Craft Certificate for Joinery on behalf of Canada based Patrick Moore FIOC. Pc Phil McCarthy

Congratulations to IOC members Jeremy Murphy FIOC, and Patrick Moore FIOC, (the author of the recent Stereotomy series), who were both awarded the Master Craft Certificate for Joinery. Patrick was unable to travel to the event and Adam Hobbs FIOC collected his certificate on his behalf. ◀

For more information visit: <https://tinyurl.com/mr8nt98r>



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\*Always speak with your accountant regarding NI requirements



Carpenters' Hall was standing room only



A lively panel discussion on competence frameworks

# IOC & NAS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) AND MEMBERS' DAY

**Denise Tabone**, Administration Manager, discusses the shared Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Members' Day for the Institute of Carpenters (IOC) and the National Association of Shopfitters (NAS), held at Carpenters' Hall, London.

The event, held on Wednesday 14 May, was a sell-out with over 130 registered attendees, surpassing last year's turnout. As one guest commented afterwards: "2024 was good but yesterday was on a different level."

## The Annual General Meetings

### NAS

The day opened with the NAS AGM, where the year-end accounts were presented by **David Edmonds**, President. He then introduced **Roger Munnery**, Business Development Director, for Powells Limited, who became the NAS's 45th President.

Roger introduced himself, sharing that construction was in his blood – his father having been a plasterer and small builder who, at the age of four, challenged him to hammer as many nails into wood as he could. He opened his Presidency with the statement: "That is the thing about this industry. It is not always easy – in fact, it rarely is – but it is full of opportunities to build, learn, and grow. I look forward to helping lead the NAS as we continue to raise standards, champion our members, and support the future of shopfitting in the UK."

### IOC's

The IOC's AGM was opened by **Geoff Rhodes**, President who presented the year-end accounts and reflected on the past year, drawing insights from the Annual Report which had been shared with members in early

March. Geoff also paid tribute to **John Taylor**, who had stepped down as IOC Vice President in December 2024, and thanked the IOC and NAS staff, the Board and the many volunteers who contributed to the success of the IOC.

## Theme of the day: Shaping the future of competency in our industry

### The morning session

After opening remarks from **James Filus**, Director, Roger Munnery and Geoff Rhodes, the day's theme, Competence was introduced, a big-ticket item for all corners of construction to get to grips with. Our keynote speaker, **Wayne Clarke**, of the Global Growth Institute, and author of *How to Become a World-Class Manager* opened with a presentation on operational excellence, which he said goes beyond competence.

After a networking break, **Faye Burnett**, Programme Director for the 800-person Industry Competence Steering Group Installer Competence Programme, Competence Lead within the CLC People & Skills Group, and Programme Director at Mace, set the scene for why competence has become the topic for construction today. This was followed by **Amanda Scott**, Skills Lead & UK Training Manager for the IOC and NAS, who outlined our response to the competence challenge.

The session was rounded off with a lively panel discussion, where Amanda and Faye were joined by **Beverley Peace** (Consilium

ESG); **Dawn Hillier** (CITB); **Ian Gurling** (British Woodworking Federation); **Stephen Green** FIOC and **Stephen Flynn** (Rosebirc). Each of the panellists has been instrumental in supporting the IOC and NAS in developing competence frameworks. They shared their thoughts through pre-submitted questions, as well as those raised by the audience.

### The afternoon session

Lunch was followed by an introduction to the IOC's new Corporate Member, Grown in Britain. **Dougal Driver**, CEO, shared information about their mission to ensure the future success of the UK's woods and forests (see page 15 in this edition). **Sam Bawden** and **Lawrence Pearce** of Holmes and Hills, the NAS's national legal partner, then took the competence theme literally, by spelling out how to manage contracts effectively – starting with 'M' for Maintaining Records!

Wayne Clarke returned for his second session, this time focusing on strategic excellence. As always, Wayne was engaging and treated the audience to a multitude of insights, whilst also challenging them to think about one thing they could do to make a meaningful impact on within the next 30 days.

Before closing the day, James Filus introduced a section titled "Celebrating Our Successes" and a series of updates allowed the IOC and NAS to reflect on the past 12 months, with various guests expanding on each topic. **John Guerin**, European Managing Director for Lumin, a new IOC Corporate Member,





Lucy Kamall from Character Communications explained how Wood/Work builds on the IOC Mentoring Champions' Programme, taking it to the next level



A visibly enthused Geoff Rhodes, President, spoke passionately to the attendees

introduced the business. **Terry Clarke** from the Creative Interior Awards spoke about the new awards programme for the interiors sector and how NAS members could enter for free. Finally, **Lucy Kamall** from Character Communications explained how Wood/Work builds on the IOC Mentoring Champions' Programme, taking it to the next level.

James then told attendees the exciting news that the NAS' e-learning platform, available to IOC members, had been accredited by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). James also shared how he (and by extension the NAS/IOC), had been asked to Co-Chair the CITB's Commercial Sector Plan and, more recently, was invited to support the Government's Construction Skills Mission. These invitations highlighted how both organisations were at the coalface in driving change within the industry.

The event concluded with James expressing his gratitude to all the staff and sponsors who made the day possible. It was a fantastic celebration of the partnership between the IOC and the NAS, a partnership that will continue to grow into 2026. We look forward to seeing you next year.

# MINUTES OF THE AGM

IOC President **Geoff Rhodes** welcomed everyone to the 2025 Annual General Meeting, talked about the history of Carpenters' Hall and thanked them for attending. The meeting commenced at 10.13 a.m.

## Present

C Archer, P Bailes, J Bailey, M Barnett, N Boulton, M Bradshaw, M Burdfield, D Carver, B Chan, T Chisholm, R Clevett, M Corton, D Dore, D Driver, E Duff, D Fisher, J Gilkison, C Griffiths, J Guerin, R Harman-Taylor, B Haskins, C Higley, A Hington, M Jahrling, G King, C Ledigo, N Little, F McGlade, W Miller, A Pardner, L Perkins, T Perkins, S Poland, P Preston, G Rhodes, N Salmon, K Sear, C Smith, G Smith, G Stanney, D Stevens, B Streather, P Street, B Tunbridge, T Upstone, R Ward, D Winson.

In attendance: D Tabone, (IOC Admin Manager), N Addyman, M Allen, N Barbour, S Bawden, J Bowers, C Burdfield, W Clarke, D Edmonds, J Filus, B Flynn, K Flynn, S Flynn, I Gurling, D Hillier, A Hilton, L Kamall, H King, K King, P Latham, L McCracken, L Matthews, D Mesecke, R Munnery, A Murray, L Pardner, C Parks, T Patton, B Peace, L Pearce, C Robson, S Roworth, L Sacre, A Scott, J Simpson, C Turnbull, K Wendt, T Woodley

## Apologies

J Apps, L Drury, R Lay, L Sibley.

## Minutes of the 2024 AGM on 27 March 2024

Geoff explained that the minutes of the 2024 AGM had been published in the June 2024 edition of Cutting Edge and included with the AGM Papers. As no matters had arisen from these he asked for agreement to the minutes.

Acceptance was proposed by **David Winson** and seconded by **Marcus Jahrling**. Acceptance of the minutes of the 2024 AGM was carried.

## 2024 Annual Report & Accounts

Geoff advised that the annual report and accounts had been sent out to members in March 2025 and he was comfortable with the IOC's small end of year surplus and available funds.

**Resolution 1:** To receive and adopt the Report of the Directors for the year ending 31 December 2024

Vote	Present	Proxy	Total
For	46	2	48
Against	0	0	0
Total	46	2	48

Acceptance was proposed by **Brian Streather** and seconded by **Colin Archer**. Acceptance of the Report of Directors for the year ending 31 December 2024 was carried.

Marcus Jahrling, Honorary Treasurer was introduced and talked briefly about the changes implemented to improve processes and communication and that he was pleased to confirm his approval of the accounts and recommend them to the Institute's members.

**Resolution 2:** To receive and adopt the financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2024

Vote	Present	Proxy	Total
For	46	2	48
Against	0	0	0
Total	46	2	48

Acceptance was proposed by **Marcus Jahrling** and seconded by **Wilson Miller**. Acceptance of the financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2024 was carried.

## President's address

- Attendees were told that after a 3-year process, the IOC was just 1 of 3 organisations awarded a Royal Patronage in 2024
- After 9 years as IOC President, the time had come for a new President to take on the role and continue the IOC journey
- The winding down of the mentoring champions' project which had involved speaking to around 1200 students as well as having 60 students/30 members directly involved in the mentoring scheme was mentioned and all those involved thanked for their hard work
- **John Taylor**, Vice President had stepped down from the board in December 2024 after many years of incredible service
- The NAS Strategic Partnership had been agreed for another year up to July 2026
- IOC and NAS staff, the Board and all volunteers were thanked for their continuous hard work
- The WCC were thanked for their continued support and ongoing grant to the IOC.

In conclusion, Geoff stated he would leave attendees to reflect on the President's report in the Annual Report and that as always, the IOC was open to suggestions on ways of improving going forward.

## Closing remarks

The AGM closed at 10.26 a.m. ◀

# EXETER COLLEGE WELCOMES THE IOC'S ROYAL PATRON TO TENTH COLLEGE HUB

Exeter College was honoured to host the IOC's tenth, and final, Timber Industry College Hub event, graced by the presence of HRH The Duchess of Gloucester, Royal Patron of the IOC. This landmark gathering marked the final milestone in a series of events that have connected industry leaders, educators, and aspiring carpenters and joiners across the UK.

## Royal endorsement

The royal visit and the success of this event highlighted Exeter College's commitment to preparing students for rewarding careers in the timber industry, while promoting sustainable practices that will shape the future of construction and forestry. The presence of HRH The Duchess of Gloucester underscored the necessity of equipping the next generation with the skills and knowledge required to excel in this essential trade.

## Industry and education: A powerful partnership

The event opened with a warm welcome from **John Laramy**, Principal and Chief Executive of Exeter College, who stressed the importance of fostering links between education and industry. **Geoff Rhodes**, IOC President, then talked about the vital role these events played in supporting the next generation of skilled professionals. The event featured a lineup of industry expert speakers and practical demonstrations by students, covering key themes such as sustainable forestry, the evolution of timber in construction, and the variety of employment pathways in the trade. **Darren Murrish** (CITB) provided an insightful overview of the employment landscape and career opportunities, while **Dave O'Connor** (Exeter College) shared a college perspective on how industry partnerships helped shape student futures.

## Key highlights of the event:

Leading professionals from across the timber sector provided in-depth insights into

*Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Gloucester, and Geoff Rhodes, IOC President, engaging in conversation with students. Pc Exeter College/Rob Coombe*



sustainability, technological advancements, and employment trends. Speakers included:

- **Nick Boulton** (Timber Development UK & Trussed Rafter Association), who explored UK raw material supply, sustainability, and the green agenda
- **Roly Ward** (Medite/SmartPly), who discussed MDF and OSB production and technical developments
- **Neil Summers** (American Hardwood Export Council – AHEC) shared perspectives on sustainable global forest resources and the international timber industry
- **John Bailey** (Benbow Group) offered personal insights on career opportunities in the shopfitting and interiors industry
- **Ed Suttie** (BRE) presented new developments in the construction industry

- **Samantha Barnes** (Historic England), discussed conservation work and the importance of the heritage sector.

Students participated in interactive workshops, showcasing cutting-edge woodworking techniques to the Duchess and attending guests. Axminster Tools, Reisser UK, CITB, and the IOC provided hands-on displays. The event gave students direct access to potential employers and industry mentors, bridging the gap between education and real-world career opportunities. The IOC Mentoring Champions' initiative was a central theme, reinforcing the importance of experienced professionals guiding the next generation of carpenters and joiners.





Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Gloucester, pictured with the students, their tutors and other dignitaries. Pc Exeter College/Rob Coombe

## Celebrating success and looking forward

This event was the culmination of a series of ten Timber Industry College Hubs, which have taken place over the last two years at Lincoln College, Building Crafts College (Stratford, East London), West Suffolk College, Neath Port Talbot College (Wales), UHI Inverness (Scotland), New College Durham, Leeds College of Building, Newcastle & Stafford College Group, Northampton College, and Exeter College. These events have successfully provided woodworking learners and apprentices with crucial industry insights, career guidance, and direct engagement with professionals from the timber sector.

Geoff Rhodes, IOC President, reflected on the impact of the initiative: "The IOC Timber Industry College Hub events have been a tremendous success, offering students across the UK an invaluable glimpse into the future of the timber industry. These hubs have demonstrated the power of partnerships between colleges and businesses, and Exeter College was the perfect venue to mark the conclusion of this national initiative.

"We are honoured to celebrate this milestone at Exeter College with our Royal Patron, The Duchess of Gloucester, and are already planning our next series of college events, which will continue our journey around the UK."

John Laramy, Principal and Chief Executive said: "Hosting this final IOC Timber Industry College Hub event has been an incredible honour for Exeter College and for me personally, as I started my career in the construction industry. I am delighted that we have been able to support this event.

"This initiative has provided our students with invaluable industry connections, hands-on experience, and insight into the future of sustainable timber and construction.

"The presence of HRH further highlights the importance of equipping the next generation with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in this essential trade.

"Strong partnerships between education and industry is key to our success and we will continue to ensure our learners are prepared for rewarding careers in carpentry and joinery."

The success of the Timber Industry College Hub programme would not have been possible without the support of CITB and Timber Development UK (TDUK), whose collaboration has ensured students received



▲ Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Gloucester, reading the plaque commemorating her visit. Pc Exeter College/Rob Coombe

▼ Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Gloucester, viewing the students' cutting-edge woodworking techniques. Pc Exeter College/Rob Coombe



relevant, industry-driven insights to help shape their careers.

Looking ahead, the IOC is dedicated to supporting its members and new starters coming into the sector, while strengthening the vital links between industry and education. The IOC Timber Industry College Hub events have laid a strong foundation for continued collaboration, helping to secure the future of skilled workers in the carpentry and joinery sectors. ◀

Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Gloucester, and Geoff Rhodes. Pc Exeter College/Rob Coombe







# NAIL IT WITH GlueUp



The IOC's membership platform (Glue Up) will enhance your membership experience as it enables you to share your thoughts, book events, access benefits, and view your membership details all in one place.

Importantly, it will also allow you to network, make connections across the Institute's membership, and view and comment on other members' inspirational work and achievements.

More than half of our paid members have now signed up for Glue Up, so what are you waiting for?

The platform is free of charge and only takes a couple of minutes to register. Simply use the QR code or go to **<https://app.glueup.com/register/account>**.

To sign up you will need to input the email linked to your membership account.



# REVIEW UPDATE: NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS (NOS) FOR WOOD OCCUPATIONS

**Amanda Scott**, Chair of NOS Wood Occupations Review Body, and National Working Group, outlines the significant milestones reached so far by the NOS National Working Group, as well as the next phases of the process. These include credit and levelling and submission for UK Government ministerial sign off.



Leading on all timber trades by aligning the IOC and NAS by harnessing our constructive collaboration in wood occupations has been a privilege, with significant progress made as we strip down piece by piece all timber trade occupations to create the new standards. Those standards include:

- Shopfitting bench works
- Shopfitting site fixers
- Site carpentry
- Heritage architectural joinery
- Heritage site carpentry
- Heritage structural post and beam carpentry
- Light structural timber framers
- Pre-assembled roof structure installers
- Structural post and beam carpentry
- Timber decks and cladding
- Timber frame erectors.

The freely given contribution of time, combined with the breadth of knowledge of our technical specialists, has been above and beyond. With so many individuals from across the IOC and NAS engaged in the process, now, 14 months into the two-year process, we have reached significant milestones.

Since March 2024, the NOS National Working Group has held 31 two-hour sessions, and the early-stage consultations have now concluded. The full body of work is currently going through the standard administration wrap in preparation for submission to the regulator, having achieved the UK 4 home nation sign off. As we have worked closely with the regulator throughout the process, we anticipate that any changes will be minimal and minor.

Any eagle-eyed reader will note the omission of Wheelwrighting in the NOS suite. The decision to omit was twofold – primarily

the CITB does not have any Wheelwrighting company levy payers and is no longer in scope. Therefore, we have reached out to the Worshipful Company of Wheelwrights, who will undertake the setting of their own standards going forward.

We anticipate receiving feedback from the regulator within the next four weeks.

Having crossed two major milestones, we now move forward into the next three phases of the process.

1. Credit and levelling: An instructional session on how this is broken down before starting the exercise for each trade. Anticipated completion – October.
2. UK Government ministerial submission and sign off.
3. The final phase will see the new Wood Occupation Standards embedded into the N/SVQs and Apprenticeships across all of our occupational competence-based qualifications. This new set of robust competence markers will also be

integrated into our safety passporting systems and the SICCS card scheme, as part of our role as CSCS Alliance partners.

The guardianship of the core and technical specialism standards is vital to our sector representatives and leadership. The support of our associations has been instrumental in meeting this significant challenge, ensuring that we establish a fit-for-purpose set of competence standards. These standards are essential, not only for keeping our workforce safe, but also for ensuring they are skilled, experienced, and highly competent, and ultimately safeguarding those who will work within our buildings in the future.

The new standards will be embedded for new entrants at the start of their journey into our crafts and throughout the developing workforce, becoming the much-needed expert craftspeople of the future. ◀

For further detailed information please contact: [amanda.scott@shopfitters.org](mailto:amanda.scott@shopfitters.org)



# MEMBER ALERT – KNOW THE DIFFERENCE



**Amanda Scott**, Skills Lead & UK Training Manager at NAS, explains the two key types of qualifications often discussed: **occupation-related** non-competence qualifications and **occupational** competence qualifications.

It is important to understand the differences between a diploma and an N/SVQ when choosing and investing in a qualification for a new entrant to our sector.

While both occupation-related non-competence qualifications and occupational competence qualifications types are valuable, they serve distinct purposes and meet different industry standards. The primary distinction lies in practical site experience and industry recognition.

## Occupational competence qualifications

These will certify an individual's ability to work independently and safely in their trade and will ensure eligibility for a Shopfitting and Interior Contracting Competence Scheme (SICCS) Skills card.

**Why?** Occupational competence qualifications, such as N/SVQs, are designed to validate not only theoretical knowledge and practical skills, but also the learner's ability to apply these satisfactorily in a real on-site working environment.

These qualifications confirm that a candidate meets industry benchmarks for a specific occupation and can demonstrate a key element of competence in the workplace, making them eligible for SICCS or CSCS Skilled Worker cards.

## Occupation-related non-competence qualifications

These will not result in gaining a SICCS Skills card or CSCS card.

**Why?** Occupation-related non-competence qualifications focus on theoretical knowledge and practical skills related to specific construction trades and cover wood occupations areas such as shopfitting and site carpentry.

However, they are delivered in off-the-job simulated environments and so lack the requirement for hands-on site experience and the industry-recognised competency thresholds required for occupational roles.

For instance, qualifications like the NOCN Level 3 Diploma in Wood Occupations in Shopfitting or the City & Guilds Level 2 Diploma in Site Carpentry fall under this category. They will NOT result in a SICCS or CSCS Skilled Worker Card.

These programs **only** equip learners with foundational knowledge and skills but do not qualify them for a SICCS or CSCS Skilled Worker card, as they do not meet the N/SVQ Level 2 occupational competence standard. If you have an individual with a NOCN Level 3 Diploma or City and Guilds Level 2 Diploma or thinking about this qualification for a

new entrant, please remember they will not meet with eligibility requirements and must undergo an N/SVQ qualification.

As IOC/NAS members, I am able to connect you to OSAT (On Site Assessment Training) NVQ assessors to gain the correct occupational competence qualification at a members only discounted rate.

Once registered, your individual can apply for the SICCS trainee card, meaning access to is permitted while under assessment. This card is limited to a two-year window, providing enough time for your individual to gain that all important N/SVQ.

## New SICCS Shopfitting Trainee Card

The NAS team has launched its new SICCS Shopfitting Trainee Card in line with the new regulations - see following article.

It applies to:

Those who have attained a previous NOCN Level 3 Diploma or City and Guild Level 2 Diploma within the last 5 years.

Those studying or intending to study a Level 2 N/SVQ and/or the OSAT version Level 2 N/SVQ or above. ◀

To apply please visit:  
[www.shopfitters.org/siccs](http://www.shopfitters.org/siccs)



# NEW SICCS TRAINEE CARDS – LAUNCHED 1 APRIL

**Amanda Scott**, Skills Lead & UK Training Manager at NAS, introduces two new SICCS Trainee Cards designed to suit the needs of employees and new entrants, and explains the different eligibility criteria for each.



The NAS team has developed the new Shopfitting and Interior Contracting Competence Scheme (SICCS) Trainee Card and the SICCS team is always on hand to provide you with guidance – but here is a simple breakdown to get you started.

## New SICCS Shopfitting Trainee Card

### Two-year Shopfitting Trainee Card (Renewable)

- For individuals who have attained a non-occupational competence qualification, e.g. a Level 2 or 3 Diploma in the last 5 years
- Valid for 2 years only
- To renew for a further three years, you must

be registered to undertake a Level 2 minimum N/SVQ and provide registration evidence

- Cost: £30 plus VAT
- The CITB Health, Safety and Environment test is required at **Operative** level (valid within three years of application).

### Five-year Shopfitting Trainee Card (Non-renewable)

- A five-year SICCS Trainee card is for those registered for and working toward a competence-assessed qualification, such as an N/SVQ or an academic qualification such as an HNC, HND or Degree

- The qualification may be vocational or academic, but it must be acceptable for a skilled SICCS card. Holders of the five-year card are expected to complete their qualification by the time it expires
- Valid 5 years maximum
- Cost: £30 plus VAT
- Registration evidence will be required
- The CITB Health, Safety and Environment test is required at **Operative** level (valid within three years of application). ◀

To apply please visit:  
[www.shopfitters.org/siccs](http://www.shopfitters.org/siccs)

## CITB CONSENSUS

An overview of NAS member responses to the triennial survey on CITB Levy Proposals for the 2026 Levy Order and the overall results.



In March, the National Association of Shopfitters and Interior Contractors (NAS) asked their membership to take part in the triennial survey on the CITB Levy Proposals for the 2026 Levy Order, to gauge our sectors' views on whether they supported proposals for the next Levy Order.

Project managed by **Amanda Scott**, Skills Lead & UK Training Manager at NAS, she shares some of her key campaign headlines.

The NAS Consensus Team has ensured that the CITB Consensus survey of our prescribed organisation's membership vote on the new Levy Order was conducted through a transparent and thorough process. This has culminated in a formal response to CITB that accurately reflects the collective voice of our members.

We developed an approved consensus survey plan and extensive communications project plan, utilising modern voting collation systems, in line with the Reasonable Steps Regulations 2008.

We received a fantastic response from levy-paying NAS member companies based in Scotland, Wales, and England. Our official response rate was **52.3%**.

In response to the question, "Do you agree that the Levy Proposals are necessary to encourage adequate training in the construction industry?" **57.5%** of respondents answered Yes – indicating that the membership supports the CITB's new Levy Order with a YES return to the Consensus question.

### The overall results

The NAS is just one of 14 Prescribed Organisations (POs) The CITB also surveyed 4,000 of its non-prescribed organisation levy-paying employers as part of the consensus process.

A total of **67.2%** of Levy payers backed the proposals, meeting the requirement for Consensus, which also mandates that supportive employers represent over 50% of the Levy payable – this figure stood at **72.0%**.

The results summary means: 12 out of 14 Prescribed Organisations (POs) (89%) supported the proposals and among non-PO employers, the agreement was highest among medium-sized business (78.5%) and strongest in Scotland (70.2%).

The New Levy Order for 2026-2029 means the levy rates remain unchanged at PAYE: 0.35% and Net Paid (taxable) CIS subcontractors: 1.25%.

The threshold will increase, meaning employers with a combined payroll and CIS payments under £150,000 will be exempt. Those between £150,000 and £499,999 will receive a 50% automatic discount.

These changes are aimed at continuing support for smaller employers while maintaining industry-wide investment in skills and training.

### Conclusion

Looking back from the last consensus return, there is a noticeable shift in the margins. A 72% approval is a strong mandate from the construction industry, which perhaps can likely be attributed to a couple of key factors: the appointment of the new CITB CEO and senior leadership team, increased engagement with PO leaders, and the promise of the New Scope Order.

For us at the IOC and NAS, there is more for the CITB to deliver in partnership with us, such as maximising NAS levy returns, creating solution-based training provision plans, increased competence, and providing superior end-to-end support for the new generation and be conscientiously mindful that over 40% at the NAS do not support the CITB New Levy Order. ◀

# TAP INTO FRESH TALENT



**Lisa Marie Perkins**, Employer Engagement Lead at ACE Training, urges businesses to invest in the next generation of construction talent.

As the academic year draws to a close, ACE Training, a construction training provider based in Kidlington, Oxfordshire is calling on local employers in Oxfordshire to consider the long-term benefits of hiring apprentices this summer, as a new cohort of motivated school leavers prepare to enter the workforce. Lisa said: "Hiring an apprentice is not just about giving a young person a start, it is a strategic investment in your business. In construction especially, bringing in enthusiastic, work-

ready individuals can boost productivity, energise your team and help secure your company's future workforce."

Apprenticeships offer an alternative to traditional academic routes by combining practical training with paid, hands-on experience. With many young people completing their GCSEs this summer, now is the ideal time for employers to recruit.

"Employers who act now can secure some of the best candidates from this year's school leavers," adds Lisa. "It is a win-win.

Businesses get skilled, loyal team members and young people gain a solid foundation for a lifelong career. ◀

## To find out more

Contact: **Gemma Scrivener** or **Lisa Marie Perkins**

✉ [gemma@acetraining.co.uk](mailto:gemma@acetraining.co.uk)

✉ [lisa@acetraining.co.uk](mailto:lisa@acetraining.co.uk)

☎ 01865 370040

🌐 [www.acetraining.co.uk](http://www.acetraining.co.uk)

## EDUCATIONAL

# WOOD AND OUR HEALTH

**Ed Suttie**, Head of Strategic Advisory and Interim Head of Research & Innovation Group at BRE, explains that science now supports the idea that wood provides many benefits – and carpenters are central to creating healthier buildings.

For a material as widely used in our built environment as wood, it is perhaps surprising that we are only just beginning to quantify some of its qualities. The recognised health and wellbeing benefits of the forest resource for both planet and people provide a strong foundation for this growing understanding.

Biophilia – our love of nature – delivered through biophilic design – our connection to nature – shows building occupants respond, heal, learn and relax better in environments that mimic nature. Wood as a natural material is a strong proxy for nature bringing us warmth, diversity of pattern, thermal comfort, acoustic and aesthetic qualities.

We live in stressful times, the World Health Organization (WHO) tells us that stress-related illness is the primary cause of sickness in office workers. Our buildings clearly need wood in their interiors as part of a biophilic design revolution.

"The role of wood in healthy buildings" documents the scientific evidence for the positive impacts of wood on people in buildings. Scientific evidence is important, but we must also value instinct. Building

interiors are experiential and that instinct and first experiences are important. This shapes designers, carpenters, craftspeople and others drawn to work with wood, creating a deep experiential quality to their buildings and interiors.

The global evidence suggests that a 'wood preference' exists when studying the perceptions of wooden surfaces compared with other materials. People who are asked to compare materials by looking, touching and smelling material samples prefer wood over steel, plastic, metal, stone, ceramic, brick and aluminium. Wood is commonly perceived as natural, warm and healthy, and is often preferred over other materials.

The global evidence of the physiological and psychological benefits of wood draws on work in Canada by Augustin & Fell<sup>2</sup> that found in healthcare environments, natural materials and views are associated with better patient outcomes with respect to recovery times, lower pain perception, and positive dispositions. For education Kelz et al.<sup>3</sup> studied the use of wood in Austrian classrooms and found that over the course of a school year, pupils' heart

rates significantly decreased in a solid wood classroom, but increased in the control non-wood classroom

New timber buildings are stunning, but there is also opportunity around refurbishment and fit-out. Much of our existing building stock will remain with us for many decades and needs refurbishment. Wood has an exciting role to play in contributing to positive indoor environments, delivering real-world qualities and improved outcomes such as recovery rates in hospitals, education success in school, comfort in our homes and business outcomes in our offices. We are part of nature and prefer wood. Increasingly, the positive impacts of wood on occupants of buildings are being measured and in future, we hope to be specifying these health benefits. ◀

## Source

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# GROWN IN BRITAIN: CRAFTING A BETTER FUTURE FROM UK TIMBER

For carpenters and furniture makers, boat builders and manufacturers working with wood daily, it is striking that the UK imports approximately 73% of its timber needs. Grown in Britain (GiB) has been working tirelessly for over a decade to change this reality, promoting sustainable woodland management and championing homegrown timber quality and availability.

## Champions of change

Established in 2013, GiB emerged from a concerning statistic: over 60% of UK woodlands were unmanaged. This neglect occurred while we continued to import timber from around the world, contributing to carbon miles and missing opportunities to support local economies and enhance biodiversity at home.

Today, thanks to the efforts of GiB and other organisations, unmanaged woodland has been reduced to around 40% – a significant improvement, though much work remains.

## More than simply certification

While GiB is known predominantly for its certification schemes verifying the sustainability and provenance of homegrown timber, its mission extends to:

- Connect supply chains, bringing together woodland owners, processors, and end users
- Promote innovation in British timber applications through research and development
- Demonstrate that using homegrown timber makes both environmental and economic sense
- Support the development of UK timber processing capabilities.

## Success stories to inspire

GiB seeks not just to tell, but to show.

The prestige of GiB-certified timber reached royal heights when Buckingham Palace commissioned 100 oak chairs for the King's Coronation. Several chairs were crafted at the Snowdon School of Furniture using GiB-certified timber supplied by Whitney Sawmills. The oak, felled in Droitwich, and beech, felled in Wiltshire, perfectly aligned with The Prince's Foundation's values of sustainability.

Artisans, including **Emma Chesterman**, **Luke Richardson**, and **Nick Wright**,



▲ Coronation Chairs being crafted in GiB-certified oak

transformed these carefully selected British-grown materials into seating fit for a historic royal occasion – a powerful testament to the quality of homegrown timber and British craftsmanship.

## Showcasing British excellence

GiB has also collaborated with prestigious businesses Benchmark, ercol, and this year, Gaze Burvill at Clerkenwell Design Week's British Collection. This important event showcases homegrown timber's exceptional quality and versatility when shaped by master craftspeople, further cementing GiB's role in connecting sustainable British materials with high-end design and manufacturing.

Recent collaborations are also proving what is possible with British-grown timber. The partnership between ercol, Tyler Hardwoods and GiB, for example, made possible by the Forestry Commission's Woods into Management Forestry Innovation Funds (WIMFIF), has successfully brought ash furniture production back to the UK at scale, with pieces created from Grown in Britain certified materials.

Meanwhile, innovative businesses like Highland Heritage Woodworks in Scotland

are demonstrating how local timber can be transformed into high-value products through skilled craftsmanship and forward-thinking approaches. Companies like Buck & Birch are now producing GiB-certified gin under the revised GiB certification standard, which includes tree-derived products like sap and fruit.

## Nurturing the next generation

GiB is equally committed to developing future talent through its scholarship programme. Phoebe Oldfield became the first GiB Scholar after participating in the V&A Museum's Field Notes Summer School and we supported her development as a craftsperson through attendance at Sylva Wood School's Professional Course.

This year's scholar, **Jacob Marks**, is exploring the potential of underutilised British timber, including coppiced hazel. His hands-on approach to sustainable design exemplifies GiB's mission of maximising homegrown resources whilst advancing craftsmanship for the future.

## Now is the time to get involved

Your timber choices today shape tomorrow's forests. You can support British forest products by:

- Specifying GiB-certified timber for your projects
- Supporting businesses that use GiB-certified materials – look for the logo!
- Seeking GiB certification for your business – the more businesses who commit to a sustainable future the stronger our industry will become. ◀

To learn more about trusted certification and sustainable solutions for your business, please visit [www.growninbritain.org](http://www.growninbritain.org).

# MATERIAL SCIENCE FOR WOODWORKERS: Metals - Iron and Steel continued

The late **Brian K. Hodgson** continues discussing why a full understanding of the stresses and strains engendered in materials in use is essential when selecting or designing metals. This is particularly true for steels, which are man-made alloys of iron and carbon, often combined with other elements to achieve specific properties.

In mechanical engineering, different properties were developed in the making of machine parts and engines. These properties may not be the same as those developed in construction and civil engineering, however both mechanical and civil engineering needed iron and steel for tool making. The writer L T C Rolt published a book in 1965, revised 1986, titled *Tools for the Job*. In this he reduces the actions to just a few types from which all basic machines have developed. For hand tools for woodworkers, I would recommend Graham Blackburn's *Traditional Woodworking Handtools*.

Tooling brings together the mechanical and civil engineering areas of work. Often the civil engineering side has larger tooling, such as boring machines that cut tunnels out of rock and lines the tunnels with curved concrete panels.

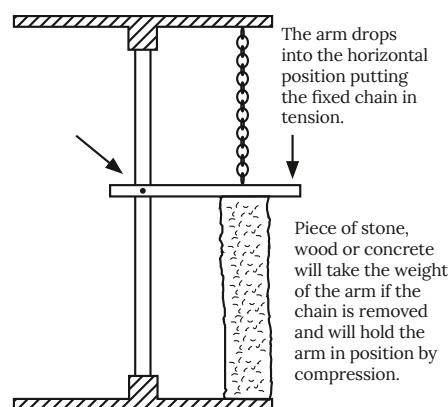
First though, we need to assess the forces at work – both the amount or quantity of forces and how they act on the structure and the structural components. We understand these forces better than ever as material science laboratories have machinery that not only put samples under those forces, but are able to see inside the material and find out how a failure starts and grows. Because of this, we know that in metals used on jet engine turbines, the failure of the vanes starts at the crystal boundaries – all metals consist of interlocking crystals and at the boundary of two or more crystals, fractures grow. At Rolls Royce jet engine works, the vanes of the turbines are **grown so that each one is one giant crystal**.

Back to basics – the most important forces to understand are compression and tension. Diagrams 1 and 2: are very simple diagrams of an apparatus I made that visually demonstrates these two forces.

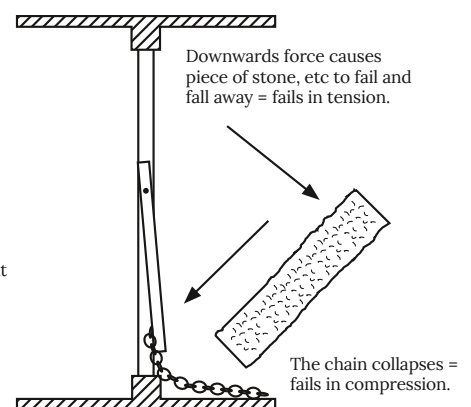
## Simple device for demonstrating compression and tension

by Dr Brian Hodgson FIMMM

Stand of timber or metal with foot at top and bottom. At the centre of the height is an arm loosely fixed with a screw or bolt, in the tension half this arm is held in place by a chain fixed to the upper "foot," which holds the arm in position.



**Diagram 1.** Correct stresses: Chain in tension and stone, wood or concrete block in compression.



**Diagram 2.** Incorrect stresses: Stone, concrete block, etc fails and falls away. The chain cannot support in compression and collapses.

**Diagram 1:** You see the apparatus in the resolved forces state. The chain is in tension and will withstand a tensile force – the chain can well resist this tension and holds the central arm in the correct position. If the piece of stone, brick or wood fits snugly between the held out arm and the foot of the apparatus, it will take the load and be in compression. The whole thing is in a resolved state and secure.

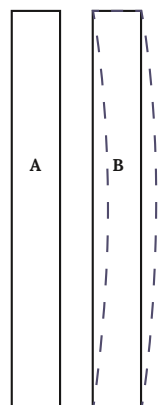
**Diagram 2:** The apparatus is turned on its head and the chain in the bottom half collapses as it cannot deal with compression (it is not rigid enough). There is nothing holding the stone, brick or wood in place, so it falls away.

As you might expect, tension and compression can get more complicated and below is a list of some of the more complex applications.

## Other factors affecting material in compression and tension

**1. Posts and columns:** These are usually assumed to be just in compression like the stone or brick in the above model. However, if the compression force becomes excessive, the column will bend (fig. 2).

Once the forces create a strain in the column that causes it to bend, tension is created on the stretched side. The stressed sides are shown in broken curved lines.



**Fig 2.** Column A not over stressed; column B bending under excessive stress.

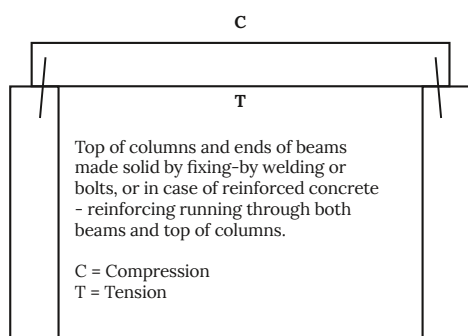
Column A all in compression.

Column B bending so B1 is in compression but B2 is stretched and therefore in tension.



**2. Simply supported beams:** These are just ledges on columns at both ends and are not fixed to make them a solid column and beam. The beam bends and puts the top in compression, whilst the bottom of the beam is stretched and therefore in tension.

**Fig 3.** Fixed end beams – main span = Compression on top third, tension on bottom third. End bits around fixing stresses are reversed-tension on top, compression on bottom of beam.



**3. Fixed beams:** The joints at column top and beam end are made solid so beam and column act together. This creates more complicated stresses, and the edges change from being in compression to being in tension and vice versa (see fig. 3)<sup>1</sup>.

**4. Continuous beams:** Running over several columns reproduce similar stresses to those in 3 above.

**5. Curved sheeting:** Any shaped thin pieces like panelling or corrugated roof sheeting, if bent to fit produce compression on the inside of curve and tension on the outside. If the curved sheet is straightened out, the stresses are reversed. These types of stresses are created in motor vehicle panels, but are often neutralised by heat tempering.

**6. Twisting of rods:** Using torque forces puts the outer skin in tension.

There are many more instances where tension and compression come into play and cause the person drawing up the specification to choose steel rather than cast iron.

## Choice of steel

It is an understatement to say there are many steels, although the main divisions fit into three types:

**1. Low Carbon-Mild Steel:** This, as its name suggests, contains very little carbon – as little as 0.2%, two tenths of a percent! It is available in hot rolled or cold finished sheets. Hot rolled steel is used for beams and columns in high rise buildings and the superstructures of bridges and big ships. Cold finished or cold rolled steel is a finer more attractive looking steel, created to very strict tolerances, but the cold rolling process

hardens the steel, making it more resistant to deformation. By adding carbon above the 0.2%, steels can be hardened and made more resistant to compressive deformation, building up its tensile strength.

**2. High Carbon Steel:** This steel has a carbon content of over 0.8%. The steel is fully hardenable with the application of heat treatment, making the steel resistant to abrasion and enabling it to hold a cutting edge in tooling. This is connected with the type of crystalline structure of the steel at different stages of its manufacture – hardening and tempering plays a large part in these crystal formations.

**3. Alloy-Steels:** This rather loose title covers a multitude of steels usually depending on other minerals or metals besides the common carbon. Tungsten, Cobalt, Molybdenum and Vanadium are alloys that help cutting tools continue working when reaching high, sometimes red-hot temperatures. Chromium, Nickel etc, is used to make the steel more resistant to rust, an example being Stainless Steel. Steel is called stainless if it has a chromium content over 10.5%.

These classes of steel are there for convenience and do not cover all steels.

## The manufacturing of steels - Early times

Iron, and later steel, has been discovered in many different places and civilisations. Apart from the meteorite-delivered iron mentioned in an earlier edition, iron must have been found by accident, like many synthetic materials. W K V Gale suggests that early man may have used stones to surround a fire, and that some of these stones may have been iron ore<sup>2</sup>. It is most likely any fire was using wood and some of this would have turned to charcoal. This rich in carbon fuel would have combined with the oxygen in the ore, creating a process termed reduction. In this process, the oxygen from the ore would have combined with the charcoal to form CO (carbon monoxide) or CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) and changed the ore into iron metal.

This very simple process can be repeated, but without clocks to time the reaction, it could also go wrong. In the first stages, almost pure iron would have produced what we call wrought iron. This could be worked into many different tools, reheated and turned into something else – but if the iron ore was left in the fire too long, it would go beyond giving up its oxygen, begin taking in carbon and you would accidentally have cast iron, which in the early civilisations, could not be worked into any useful tool. Eventually, it was realised that if poured into moulds, that would give you

your chosen shape. Cast iron is very brittle and did not really come into its own until the 14th century when in Western Europe it was used to cast cannons – an industry which along with other places, saw vast cannon works set up in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. Remains of this industrial process can still be seen there today,

For many centuries wrought iron pre-dominated. Cutting edges were seen as alchemy or magic as the blacksmith worked the iron, removing impurities and then worked on folding and beating the necessary carbon to turn the cutting edge into steel.

By the middle ages we had wrought iron for the making of most metal things, cast iron for casting large objects like cannons and the alchemy of the sword master, who could change wrought iron into hard steel. Largely by the colour of the heated metal they could tell the degree of hardness achieved and by cooling indifferent fluids, annealing and tempering, not only were swords made possible but also cutting tools, such as planes, chisels and saws.

The setting up of furnaces (called bloomeries) were still to come, allowing for the precise amount of carbon to make a consistent steel and later for skyscrapers, motor vehicles and reliable steam trains to be possible.

## Conclusion

How iron and steel fed the industrial revolution, and the scientific making of quality-controlled steel will be talked about in the next issue. We will also look inside these metals, see how they are made up and how the various processes we use change them. ◀

**Brian K Hodgson, Ph.D, FIMMM, FFB, FIOC, MIMWoodT, AMICT | Lancaster (deceased)**

### Source

1. Where compression occurs in the top of a beam and tension at the bottom (such as a joist), there is a stress neutral section in the middle. This is why holes for services are often advised or specified in that neutral zone.
2. W K V Gale, *Iron and Steel*, Longmans, London, 1969. Pp 10-12.

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# LESSONS FROM JAPAN'S MASTER CARPENTERS

**James Filus**, Director, talks about his visit to the impressive *The Craft of Carpentry: Drawing Life from Japan's Forests* exhibition at Japan House, High Street Kensington, London.

For centuries, Japanese master carpenters have developed tools and techniques shaped by the extraordinary qualities of wood. Their work has given rise to structures of remarkable beauty and complexity — from exquisite joinery to robust architecture capable of withstanding wind, snow, and earthquakes.

The exhibition explores the tools and techniques behind this tradition, focusing on three core areas: the work of temple and shrine carpenters (*domiya daiku*), teahouse carpenters (*sukiya daiku*), and traditional joinery techniques (*kigumi*).

As you move through the exhibition, it becomes immediately clear that the strength of the structures on display — both large and small — lies in their complex, interlocking joints. **Nishiyama Marcelo** PhD, Associate Director and Chief Curator of the exhibition, explains that due to the historical scarcity of iron in Japan, carpenters developed joinery techniques that do not rely on nails.

## Techniques

Early *kigumi* techniques involved tying components together with rope or string, as demonstrated in the recreation of a traditional teahouse within the exhibition.

Over time, these techniques evolved into increasingly complex forms — whether the structure is large and architectural in nature,

or smaller and even decorative pieces such as the breathtaking folding blind. The accuracy and attention to detail on display is as impressive as it is inspiring.

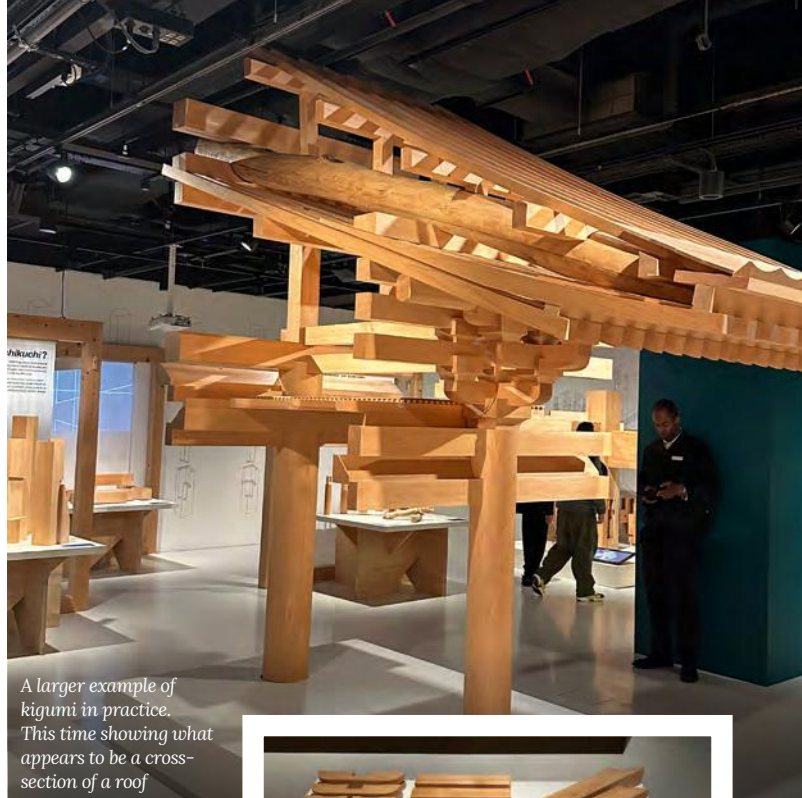
## The spiritual side of carpentry in Japan

The foreword to the exhibition explains that carpenters and woodcutters would seek forgiveness from the forest spirit deities, or *kami*, before gathering materials. With this in mind, it becomes clear how such a deep connection to nature and spirituality has resulted in an approach to carpentry and joinery that not only greatly respects the wood being used, but results in high quality finishes that show a clear attention to detail.

That respect for the material comes through strongly in one statement that resonated with me from the exhibition: “Timber is only a renewable resource if the growth period of the tree and the life of a building align. If we use a 1,000-year-old tree, we need to be prepared to take on more than 1,000 years of responsibility for the buildings we create.”

## Lessons to be learned

As we increasingly see the use of timber within modern buildings, with the need for sustainable practice becoming ever greater, it feels like the lessons learned in Japan's past are as relevant today as they ever were. ◀



A larger example of *kigumi* in practice. This time showing what appears to be a cross-section of a roof



▲ Examples of *kigumi* (joinery) techniques that produce precise, interlocking sections, which do not rely on metal or nails for strength



▲ A hand-crafted *kumiko* folding screen, depicting a mountain range



▲ *Mizu-gumi* (*nejire-gumi tsumi*) and Water joint (twisted tenon joint)

The exhibition is on view until 6 July, and admission is free of charge.

For more information about *The Craft of Carpentry* and to book tickets, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/4mhwe4ez>



# MEDITE TRIMAX A HIGHLY DURABLE TIMBER CLADDING SOLUTION

**Jack Scanlan**, Product Manager at MEDITE SMARTPLY, discusses the benefits of MEDITE TRIMAX – a durable, sustainable and low-maintenance external cladding solution made from MEDITE TRICOYA EXTREME.

**M**EDITE TRIMAX is designed to enhance the look of both new builds and renovations, and this quality timber cladding is available in primed or fully finished options, ensuring a hassle-free installation with a flawless, long-lasting finish. Projects can be completed using MEDITE TRIMAX fascias and soffits, available as standard in white.

Perfect for houses, garden rooms, sheds, and leisure homes, MEDITE TRIMAX presents an easy and durable solution to upgrading the aesthetics of a new or existing building with a product guaranteed to stand the test of time with minimal maintenance.

## Durable

As the primary objective of the cladding is to protect the building from weather elements such as rain and wind, durability is of the utmost importance. Manufactured with acetylated wood fibre, the cladding solution has the highest durability for timber in the market and is also resistant to rot and fungal decay. The panel exhibits outstanding stability, allowing it to be used in applications once limited to products such as composite panels, fibre cement, hardwood, softwood or PVC.

## Sustainable

The softwoods are sourced from sustainably managed, FSC-certified forests. By using fast-growing trees, the cladding offers a sustainable alternative to conventional solutions while providing longevity beyond standard timber cladding.

## Easy to maintain

MEDITE TRIMAX cladding comes primed or fully finished, offering versatility to suit a range of project needs. With easy and infrequent maintenance, users can simply sand and paint the cladding to keep it looking great. Enhanced stability and durability extend the coating's service life, and any damage to the coating will not affect the core. A 50-year warranty on the



base panel ensures performance throughout the building's lifespan. Available in several colours, these cladding panels make it simple to transform the aesthetics of a house and achieve the desired look.

## Project - Premium garden room

Paul Sefton transformed an unused area in his garden into a stylish, low-maintenance garden room.

**The challenge:** Paul had an underused space in his garden and a vision to transform it into a functional and stylish garden room. His priorities were clear: he wanted a premium finish that would enhance the aesthetic of his outdoor space, whilst not wanting to be burdened with ongoing maintenance.

**The solution:** After researching cladding materials that balanced both appearance and durability, Paul chose MEDITE TRIMAX. The product's robust performance in outdoor environments, combined with its low-maintenance properties and sleek, modern look, made it the perfect fit for his garden room project.

**The result:** A beautifully finished garden room that seamlessly blends into Paul's garden while standing out for its contemporary design. Paul now enjoys a high-end, weather-resistant space requiring minimal upkeep. ◀

To learn more about this product visit: [www.meditetrimax.com](http://www.meditetrimax.com)

Jack commented: "We are proud to join forces with SAM Mouldings to bring to the market this innovative cladding solution.

"While the partnership between the two companies is founded on a solid reputation, MEDITE TRIMAX is rooted in advanced engineering, giving end users peace of mind that, with proper maintenance, the cladding will last the lifespan of the building.

"Furthermore, the sustainable appeal is achieved by using fast-growing trees that lock up carbon during their lifespan – a significant benefit as the construction industry strives to reduce its carbon footprint."

"An important function of cladding is to enhance the building's aesthetic appeal," says **Paul Lavery**, Joint Managing Director at SAM Mouldings.

"As a manufacturer of MDF mouldings and a trusted partner of MEDITE for many years, we are proud to lend our expertise to MEDITE TRIMAX. Featuring superior finishing, the cladding is also lightweight and easy to install. We believe the solution is a cut above the rest. Undeniably, one of the main factors in that is the neatness, uniformity and crisp look you can achieve with MEDITE TRIMAX cladding. The cladding solution is available in double shiplap or double tongue and v-groove profiles and is easy to install with stainless steel fixings."



# CARPENTRY HEALTH AND SAFETY

Which? the UK's consumer champion and a powerful force for good, dedicated to making life simpler, fairer, and safer for everyone – emphasises that proper safety precautions are essential. Here is what you need to know about health and safety in carpentry.

**A**s rewarding as carpentry can be for those working in the industry, it is also a trade that comes with a substantially high level of risk.

From accidental power tool injuries and sawdust inhalation to the typical slips, trips, and falls that can be experienced in any work environment, the risks associated with working in carpentry make adhering to health and safety a fundamental part of risk mitigation.

So, whether you are new to carpentry, in need of a refresher, or want to start your own carpentry business<sup>1</sup> in the future, keep reading to learn more about the different carpentry hazards you might come across while you work, as well as tips on how to carry out a carpentry risk assessment, and steps you can take to mitigate the impact of any identified risks.

## What are the main hazards in carpentry to be aware of?

Carpentry hazards are numerous and varied, with any one project typically including a mix of:

- Sawdust and wood chipping inhalation
- Cuts and abrasions from work

- Loose and flying debris
- Falling from heights
- Trips, slips, and falls
- Heavy lifting injuries
- Fire and chemical hazards
- Electrocution
- Accidental bodily harm
- Explosions
- Extended exposure to asbestos
- Loud noises and long-term health problems, such as hand-arm vibration syndrome.

It is advisable to update your risk assessment every few days to account for changes in the working environment or the next stage of your project. Doing so is paramount to avoiding potentially serious accidents in the workplace.

## How to carry out a carpentry risk assessment

With so many conceivable hazards in carpentry present, you would be forgiven for thinking a carpentry risk assessment will be more complicated than a standard one.

However, while perhaps requiring a greater attention to detail than other trades-based risk assessments, you can conduct

a carpentry risk assessment in exactly the same manner by taking the following steps:

1. Perform a thorough sweep of your working environment and identify as many potential hazards as you can – including those posed by your tools and skill level.
2. Once you have your list of hazards, note down the potential result of such a hazard occurring and who or what it may impact – such as too many power tools being plugged in – overloading an outlet and causing a fire, which could injure yourself or damage/destroy your workshop.
3. Finally, assign a risk level to each hazard and the precautions you will take to eliminate or mitigate it as best you can.

From here, you can then begin the process of removing or controlling the risks you have identified before moving on to the actual work that needs to be carried out.

## Tips for how to carry out a carpentry risk assessment

While it is all well and good noting the basic process to follow risk-assessing different hazards in carpentry, if you have not had to do one before, you might not be sure what to look out for.



We recommend you use your own judgment and be as thorough as you can, but for those who want a place to start, include the following in any risk assessment:

- Assess your working environment's layout and ensure it is well-organised, with no clear obstacles or structural dangers
- Check the electrical systems of your work area for any exposed wires, poorly maintained power outlets, water exposure, etc
- Perform a walkthrough of your current work environment and note any environmental hazards that might be present
- Examine your tools for any wear and tear or accidental damage
- Double-check your PPE is functioning correctly and in a suitable working condition
- Speak with other tradespeople on-site to compare hazards and build a larger list.

From here, you should have no trouble building a comprehensive list of carpentry hazards to be aware of, and how you intend to deal with them should they occur.

### Am I required to carry out a risk assessment?

Yes – as a part of small business employment law<sup>2</sup>, it is a legal requirement for all employers to carry out a workplace risk assessment, regardless of who they are and the industry they work in.

Simply put, not accounting for the risks associated with your line of work can result in serious injury to you and your employees and potentially lead to legal trouble down the line.

### How to minimise hazards in carpentry

Now that you know how to carry out a carpenter's risk assessment, what are some of the things you can do to eliminate or minimise the impact of any potential workplace hazards you come across?

Below are our top tips for how to deal with the most common carpentry hazards:

**Working with carpentry tools:** No matter the trade work in, good tool handling is essential for avoiding personal injury, especially when it comes to carpentry. From chisels and hammers to sanding machines and nail guns, there are plenty of carpentry tools out there that can cause serious bodily harm if you are not careful.

Therefore, it is important to prep your workspace accordingly to allow space for

proper tool handling, removing anything that could interfere with correct tool operation. You should also carry out regular maintenance of all tools, keeping them sharp to prevent slips and jumps during use, as well as addressing any natural wear and tear that might occur.

Finally, when using power tools and carpentry machines, it is absolutely essential that you follow the correct training and procedures during use, no matter how experienced you are. These pieces of machinery can be very dangerous, even when inactive, and should be treated with caution at all times.

### Minimising environmental hazards:

Alongside proper tool use, minimising the potential impact of environmental hazards is an absolute must with carpentry. Your workspace needs to be well-ventilated at all times, or failing that, equipped with a sufficiently powerful ventilation/extractor system capable of removing wood and sawdust.

Likewise, proper PPE is necessary to prevent injury from any chemicals you work with, as exposure can result in serious dermatological conditions or breathing difficulties. Even after use with appropriate PPE, be sure to wash your hands and follow good hygiene to reduce the impact of accidental exposure.

As a rule of thumb, no matter how well-ventilated your workspace is, you should always wear a respirator to minimise the volume of wood and chemical particles you inhale.

**Mitigating fire risks:** Fire can be a risk in any working environment, but doubly so when working with a material as flammable as wood. Therefore, having fire extinguishers to hand is a necessity for any worst-case scenario, as is a thorough check of all electrical outlets to ensure that they work correctly and will not overload or spark.

**Investing in the right work gear:** While we have already touched briefly on some of the workwear you will need to safely carry out your work, below is a standardised list of workwear you should invest in for proper protection as a carpenter:

- Thick and durable work gloves
- Dust masks and respirators
- Sturdy eye and high-rated ear protection

- Protective headgear and well-fitted, strong work clothing
- Safety shoes with excellent grip
- Harnesses and ropes for fall protection.

**Other essential things to consider:** Last but not least, regardless of whether you are working in your own personal workshop or on-site, it is always worth considering the following as additional ways to mitigate workplace risk:

- Maintain a clean work area at all times to keep general hazards to a minimum
- Have first aid kits close to hand at all workstations
- Invest in personal or employee first-aid training to ensure there are members of staff on-site who can perform first aid in the event of an accident
- Formulate a fire evacuation plan for use in the event of a serious fire
- Carry out regular safety inspections and risk assessments of your place of work and update your risk list with any new hazards you encounter
- Provide all your employees with the proper training needed to carry out their jobs efficiently and safely.

### Summary

With all of our essential points covered, you should now have a much better idea of what carpentry hazards to be aware of, how to carry out a risk assessment, and steps to take to mitigate the potential of these hazards occurring in the workplace.

Demonstrating good health and safety policies will only benefit your business, showing customers that you are an experienced and reliable business to work with.

### Grow your reputation as a Which? Trusted Trader

If you want to grow your reputation further, then you should consider becoming a Which? Trusted Trader<sup>3</sup>. By signing up, you will be demonstrating to customers that you run a reputable firm capable of delivering excellent service. Not only that, but all Trusted Trader members get access to a dedicated account manager and business page to display work and reviews. ◀

[www.which.co.uk](http://www.which.co.uk)

Source

1. <https://for-traders.which.co.uk/advice/how-to-start-a-carpentry-business>
2. <https://for-traders.which.co.uk/advice/employment-laws-small-businesses-need-to-know>
3. <https://for-traders.which.co.uk/join-content>



**James Filus**, Director, highlighted that one of the benefits of the IOC Glue Up platform is that it creates an online space for members to share their experiences and encourages them to share examples of the work they are proud of. Below are some of these excellent posts.



**Julian Nudds**, Owner and Master Joiner at JN Conservation, shared with the Glue Up community one of their London projects. He said: "This one was a pleasure to make — solid oak, curved profile, including all the casements and even the glass. "It was a challenging project due to the fibrous plaster ceiling inside, into which we had to fit seamlessly."

Julian's post was also selected by the IOC as March's Post of the Month. **Denise Tabone**, Administration Manager, congratulated Julian and sent him his £20.00 voucher for his efforts.

**Ben Haskins**, Carpenter and Joiner at Haskins Woodworks, shared a recent panelling project carried out in a 17th-century manor house in Abingdon. The work spanned multiple rooms, from the third floor down to the ground floor.

Ben said: "All the rooms had different dimensions, tailored to the specifications provided by the architect."

This post was also selected by the IOC as April's Post of the Month. **Denise Tabone**, Administration Manager, was extremely impressed with the precision craftsmanship. Ben was sent a £20.00 voucher for his efforts.



**Ryan Harman-Taylor**, Carpenter and Joiner at Weston Timber Ltd, told us about working on the sapele flooring. He said: "This was a complete restoration as the sapele flooring was found underneath a laminate flooring. To achieve this colour the finish took 3 attempts, and my knees couldn't take much more! I have to confess, the customer wasn't willing to spend on Odie's Oil, so I used a clear satin finish, just as it says on the tin. I started at 40 grit and finished at 240 grit. I am really pleased with the result— it turned out lovely."

**Denise Tabone**, Administration Manager, selected Ryan's post as May's Post of the Month. He will receive his £20.00 voucher for his efforts.

**Andrew Pardner**, Director/Master Joiner at Rustic Rural Ltd, provided his thoughts on a striking 6-metre-wide media wall installation. Andrew said: "This has been a fantastic project to work on. It features stepped base units with shaker-style doors, each with a subtle stopped chamfer to match the box pillars. There is adjustable shelving on both sides, a panelled TV section, and integrated LED lighting that changes colour which is controlled via a remote or a mobile app."



*"I think the cornice running around the top really finishes it off beautifully!"*  
*"The clients were amazing — they even brought us doughnuts every day."*

To see more, visit your Glue Up home page. If however, you have not yet registered and wish to do so, please use the QR code below or go to <https://app.glueup.com/register/account>. You will need to use the email linked to your membership account.





# A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST: 35-YEAR-OLD CITY & GUILDS WORK PIECES

As retirement quietly approaches, the time has come for **Neil Little**, Company Owner of Your Fitted Home Ltd to pack up his workshop - a space that has shaped his craft for many decades. Among the tools and timber, he came across his old City & Guilds work pieces, which now need to be cleared out.

Neil told **Denise Tabone**, Administration Manager: "I am not sure why, however, at the moment, I just cannot bring myself to throw them away. These pieces must be from over 35 years ago.

"Before I decide what to do with them, I wanted to share a few photos with IOC members, to hopefully spark a conversation,

a connection between generations.

"It might be fun for today's students to see how college work has changed, or maybe it will bring back a few memories for people my age."



Frames and Stairs: Old City & Guilds workpieces, made from pine with a small amount of mahogany, completed as part of Neil's qualifications when he attended Erith Technical College in the 1990s.







## CUTTING EDGE EDITORIAL COPY DEADLINES 2025



Edition	Editorial copy deadline
Autumn	31 July
Winter	31 October

Please submit text and images separately and provide images in as large a file size as possible, otherwise they may be of poor print quality. All content must be submitted by close of play on the copy deadline to: [info@instituteofcarpenters.com](mailto:info@instituteofcarpenters.com).

We cannot guarantee that content received after the copy deadline will be included in that edition. Any content not included, will be kept for a future edition of Cutting Edge. Wherever possible, we will try to incorporate all images supplied into your articles, however, due to the space available, this is not always possible.

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