



## **NATURAL MATERIALS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015**

### **Introduction**

The NMA has had an excellent year during 2015. As proposed last year, there was a change to the board members to include individuals from outside the IOM3. This new board held its first meeting at IOM3 HQ on February 13th this year.

As a completely new association within the IOM3, launched in November 2013, the NMA is now gaining momentum and recognition. The new board consists of people who are passionate about Natural Materials and educating society about the benefits of utilising these resources to the full.

However, the NMA is facing the same issue of credibility that any new organisation, commercial business or research facility, has to overcome in the initial stages of growth. This challenge is compounded by the general perception of Natural Materials by society as a whole. Research and education into the properties and uses of these resources is increasing, and the NMA will build with this tide of growing acceptance that natural resources will provide materials for the future.

The NMA is an important conduit to develop relationships with bodies outside the IOM3, particularly with respect to designing with Natural Materials

### **1. Board membership**

As mentioned above the new board has now been active since February this year. The members are as follows:

Iris Anderson – Energy Security, DECC

Professor Bruce Wood – Professor of Design Innovation, Director of Centre for Creative Industries, Glasgow Caledonian university

Paul Latham – Sales and Product Development Director, Lathams Ltd

Dr Chris Holland – Head of Natural Materials Group, Department Materials, Science and Engineering, Sheffield University

Dr Graham Ormondroyd – Head of Materials Research, Bangor University

Dr Brett Suddell – Technical Director Biobased Solutions Ltd

Angela Morris – CEO The Wool Packaging Company Ltd

The NMA board is a group highly experienced individuals with particular interest in Natural Materials, brought together to cover a broad spectrum of Natural Materials areas: bio-fuels, circular economy, bio-

plastics, silk, wool, timber, packaging (which includes many natural materials), and the main bridge to the commercialisation of the above materials, innovation, creativity and product design.

Throughout 2015 support from within the Institute has been provided by Dr Keith Watkinson.

### 2. Board meetings

There have been several Board Meetings during 2015 to discuss NMA strategy and event planning.

**February 13th – IOM3 HQ, London:** Attendance 5 members, 2 apologies and Keith Watkinson from IOM3

March 30th – Conference Call with Bruce Wood to discuss potential Design Event in Glasgow

**April 13th – The Wool Packaging Company, Market Drayton:** Attendance 6 members, 1 apology and KW

**July 6th – SCIN Gallery, London:** Attendance 6 members, 1 apology and KW

July 20th, August 6th, September 9th and September 23rd – Conference Calls to plan and update on Design Event in Glasgow: Attendance All members over the meetings.

**October 14th – Design for Sustainability with Natural Materials Event, Glasgow:** All board members attended

October 20th – Conference call to discuss the outcome of the Glasgow Event: Attendance 5 Members, 2 Apologies and KW

**November 16th – James Latham plc, Hemel Hempstead:** Attendance 6 members and 1 apology. Bernie Rickinson also attended this meeting.

### 3. Activities during 2015

#### 3.1 Technical Programme

The concept of a Design Event to be held in Glasgow was mentioned in the 2014 report. With the passion and commitment of the new board, our first 'Design for Sustainability using Natural Materials' event was organised and held in Glasgow on October 14th 2015.

Despite some challenges along the way, the determination of the board members to ensure that this event took place, won through and a truly successful and exciting day was had by all who attended. For our first event we could not have asked for more. (Please see programme and Eventbrite feedback info of the event attached).

Although the Glasgow Event was the main focus, the Board had meetings at The Wool Packaging Company, James Latham and the SCIN Gallery, these businesses all have a Natural Materials focus and are perfect for such meetings.

Membership update: We have 39 members who have declared the NMA as their primary technical division and 29 members have declared the NMA as their secondary division, giving a total of 68 members. We had 4 new full members in 2015 giving a 10% increase.

### **3.2 Web-site developments**

The NMA home page had 943 total views this year, 35% up on last year.

### **3.3 Engagement with technical communities or local societies**

The Event in Glasgow was advertised throughout the IOM3, to encourage participation from across the societies, especially in Scotland.

On April 16th The Wool Packaging Company gave a presentation at Bath University with WEMMA and Angela Morris promoted the NMA at this event.

On November 10th The Wool Packaging Company gave a presentation at the University of Creative Arts and Angela Morris promoted the NMA at this event.

As two of the board members are also members of the WTS there is continual engagement with this technical community.

Other board members have interests in groups and societies outside the IOM3, for example BBIA (Bio-Based Industries Association) and FEMS (Federation of European Materials Societies). Therefore engagement with other relevant communities outside the NMA is a continuous process.

### **3.4 Contributions to IOM3 Journals**

The Glasgow event was reported and included in the November edition of Materials World.

### **3.5 Other**

All the NMA board members are deeply involved on a daily basis in the area of Natural Materials and sustainability. They are constantly being proactive in promoting and leading sustainability initiatives that will bring credibility and knowledge directly into the NMA.

## **4. Strategy Objectives for 2016 and beyond**

### **4.1. Opportunities and constraints**

To exploit the increasing interest in the use and application of natural materials within the design industry which will have a direct effect on the possibility of these materials being used in Industry.

To become a resource for those individuals that have an interest in Natural Materials.

To further develop the NMA board with individuals who can help it to gain credibility and influence industry and education.

To gain a better understanding of the other technical divisions within the IOM3 so that the NMA can encourage interaction and gain in credibility within the IOM3.

#### **4.2. Specific targets**

The NMA has created the event brand of Design for Sustainability with Natural Materials.

The next event is now planned and will be hosted by London Metropolitan University on April 20th 2016, with support from the WTS.

We plan to hold at least two 'Design for Sustainability with Natural Materials' events in different parts of the country every year. These events are aimed at promoting the use of Natural Materials and attract a wide range of delegates including professionals working with natural materials, researchers, students and those who are just passionate about the environment and sustainability for the future.

The purpose of these events is to achieve exactly what the NMA was set up to do. They will bridge the knowledge gap and educate society in whatever sector about the use of Natural Materials. They will demonstrate how these materials are actually in use today and already providing superior alternatives to manmade products.

These events cut across all boundaries and are in themselves an excellent vehicle for achieving the targets of the NMA.

I have no doubt that in the future 'Design for Sustainability with Natural Materials' will become the event to attend for those with an 'interest' in Natural Materials and with the support of the IOM3 will increase the membership of the institute.

We will also continue, where possible, to maintain a presence and participation in relevant exhibitions and conferences.

We will continue to maintain and improve ranking in the table by the generation of News items, regular updates and relevant articles for general interest and promoting the benefits of membership.

#### **5. Other matters**

As part of the development of the NMA, we have planned an IOM3 Away Day with Bernie Rickinson for 8th February 2016 at the IOM3 HQ.

Angela Morris

NMA Chair

7th March 2016