

Natural Materials Association Annual report 2016

The NMA has had another productive year during 2016. As proposed last year, we have delivered our events and are looking forward to widening our participation and membership in the coming year.

1. Board membership

The board has now been active since February 2015. As of October/November 2016 two members have left due to other commitments (PL and BS). Furthermore, our chair AM has stepped down and CH has been elected in place. The current members are as follows:

Name	Status	Organisation
Iris Anderson		Energy Security, DECC
Dr Chris Holland	New Chair	Head of Natural Materials Group, Department Materials, Science and Engineering, Sheffield University
Angela Morris	Former Chair	CEO The Wool Packaging Company Ltd
Dr Graham Ormondroyd		Head of Materials Research, Bangor University
Professor Bruce Wood		Professor of Design Innovation, Director of Centre for Creative Industries, Glasgow Caledonian university
Dr Brett Suddell	(outgoing)	Technical Director Biobased Solutions Ltd
Paul Latham	(outgoing)	Sales and Product Development Director, Lathams 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 2016 support from within the Institute has been provided by Dr Keith Watkinson and the board would like to thank him for his service over this period and wishes him well in his future endeavours.

2. Board meetings

There have been 4 Board Meetings during 2016 to discuss NMA strategy and event planning. There is also frequent teleconferences and email communication across the board to develop events and discuss community engagement.

Conference calls on January 5th, February 18th, March 2nd, March 31st and October 4th for event planning.

- February 8th – IOM3 HQ, London. Attendance 5 members, 2 apologies and Keith Watkinson from IOM3
- April 20th – Board Meeting at London Met Event. Attendance 6, 1 apologies and Keith Watkinson from IOM3
- July 12th Board Meeting in Sheffield University. Attendance 2, 5 apologies.

- August 11th Board Meeting Potters Club, Stoke on Trent. Attendance 5, apologies 2.

3. Activities during 2016

3.1 Technical Programme

Our main focus was to deliver an event similar to our 2015 Glasgow event. “Design for sustainability with natural materials” was held at the London Metropolitan University on April 20th 2016, with support from the WTS and a range of generous sponsors. Overall the event was regarded as a success, however there were difficulties with transport delays (tube) on the day which may have affected attendance as our registrations met the capacity of the venue (150+). A post event questionnaire provided an excellent means for assessment and feedback, with attendees enjoying the speakers, networking opportunities and the panel discussions, which we will respond to in future events.

Membership update: We have 31 members who have declared the NMA as their primary technical division and 39 members have declared the NMA as their secondary division, giving a total of 70 members which demonstrates a steady growth from last year, but something we would like to expand upon (see specific targets).

3.2 Web-site developments

The NMA home page had 1472 total views this year, 56% up on last year and with 2206 total views across the entire NMA microsite.

3.3 Engagement with technical communities or local societies

The board members present their work at several national and international meetings per year and whilst doing so they actively promote the existence and the purpose of the NMA to a wide range of audiences. Specifically 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), FEMS (Federation of European Materials Societies) and RSC, IOP sub-interest groups and international societies such as the Materials Research Society (MRS). Therefore, engagement with other relevant communities outside the NMA is a continuous process.

3.4 Contributions to IOM3 Journals

Contributions this year have been particularly exciting in the form of an upcoming book “Designing with Natural Materials” to which is planned to launch later this year. Graham Ormondroyd and Angela Morris have edited a collection of chapters from both industrialists and academics to address the area of designing with natural materials. The book’s aim is to fill the gap between the current scientific knowledge of the use of natural materials and the product design and development. The book will introduce natural materials and define the phrase within the context of design, then develop ideas of designing with natural materials in specific areas, including buildings, automotive and packaging. The book will continue to look to the future of new bio-based materials and how these will influence design.

Visit bit.ly/natmatdesign for more information.

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 2017 and beyond

4.1. Opportunities and constraints

- To exploit the increasing interest in the broad use and application of natural materials within 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 and expand the NMA board with individuals who can help it to gain credibility and influence industry, academia, policy and education.
- To collaborate across divisions within the IOM3 to raise our profile and offer a diverse set of activities and engagement opportunities to its members.

4.2. Specific targets

- To deliver at least one cross divisional event (either with the WTS or the Biomaterials group).
- To contribute towards IOM3 publications. For example to deliver the proposed book "Designing With Natural Materials"
- To further engage with the NMA members and broaden/increase board membership through community brainstorming sessions.
- To increase membership of the association through wider promotion/updates on our website/twitter feed and specific targeted events for our sub-communities.

5. Other matters

None at this point.