

Natural Materials Association Annual report 2017

The NMA has had another productive year during 2017. We have undergone a restructuring of the board, increased our membership, produced articles for Materials World, delivered a new book “Designing With Natural Materials” with Taylor and Francis and are proposing several new joint events for our members.

1. Board membership

This year has seen a restructuring of the board to increase the technical backgrounds and diversity in order to better engage with our membership. This was initiated through a community brainstorming event at IOM3 HQ.

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 2017 support from within the Institute has been provided by XXX XXX and the board would like to thank him for his time alongside many others at IOM3 who have helped us.

2. Board meetings

There have been 4 Board Meetings during 2017 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. We have regular conference calls on January 5th, February 18th, March 2nd, March 31st and October 4th for event planning and we have also engaged with Social Media and now use WhatsApp as a means for quick communication throughout the board.

Board meeting details.

- 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 2017

3.1 Technical Programme

Our main focus this year has been to engage with the community and determine how best to serve them. Community brainstorming events have been held which supported our board refresh and expanded our outlook as to future avenues for member recruitment and engagement.

Membership update: We have 81 (31, 2016) members who have declared the NMA as their primary technical division and 44 (39, 2016) members have declared the NMA as their secondary division, giving a total of 125 (70, 2016) members which demonstrates a marked growth of 56% from last year, well exceeding our targets 10% year on year but still something we would like to expand upon (see specific targets).

3.2 Web-site developments

The NMA home page still remains one of the top IOM3 microsites for our size, ranking just outside the top ten overall. We had ~850 total views this year, which is decreased from on last year and as such we have taken steps to update our website and create a webmaster board position:

Parvez Alam has kindly agreed to be our new webmaster and we are planning on increasing our presence on the web through more updates.

Furthermore we have developed our social media presence through Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn pages. All of which we will be using to promote natural materials stories to our members and their wider communities.

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), EPSRC Early Career Manufacturing Forum 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

We have completed “Designing with Natural Materials” to which is planned to launch on the 22nd July 2018. 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 <https://goo.gl/V8aays> 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

Compared to our 2017 objectives from last year we have met most of our targets and are working towards the rest. Our main area of focus for this year is the delivery of more cross divisional events.

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 and improve our social media presence.
- 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 (features in Materials World) Promotion of our book and associated book launch.
- To further engage with the NMA members and broaden/increase board membership through community engagement.
- 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.