

# UPHOLSTERY SKILLS CENTRE

WITH OVER A HUNDRED YEARS PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

## Newsletter no. 6

**CONGRATULATIONS TO TILLY  
WHO IS THIS YEAR'S WINNER  
OF THE HEICO DESIGN COMPETITION!**



# NEWS ROUND UP

## VIP Confirmed for Open Day

We are pleased to announce that the local MP Eleanor Laing will be attending our Student Awards and Open Day on Saturday 21st July.

Please keep this date free in your diaries!

## Hole in the Wall

For those of you who have been in the Centre over the last couple of days, you would have noticed a hole in the wall upstairs linking the Skills Centre with the commercial workshop.

This will be a resource space for students.

Watch this space!!

## Commercial Work Experience

This is hotting up now with more work coming in. At the moment there is a lot of work for Mansion House underway.

This is an initiative for qualified or nearly qualified students to gain paid commercial work experience.

Learn and earn!



## Rent a Bench Space

A little community is starting to form of qualified and nearly qualified AMUSF students who come in with their own upholstery jobs to do.

They use the commercial workshop space and facilities and have the tutors around for extra reassurance and guidance.

You can either rent a bench a day at a time, a week at a time or for four weeks at a time. Prices are:

£20 + VAT for one day at a time

£85 + VAT for a week at a time

£55 + VAT for four weeks at a time

# SPECIALIST COURSES DIARY

## April and May—three day courses:

French Polishing -

**Thursdays 5th, 12th and 19th April**

**OPEN TO ALL**

Leather Repair & Restoration –

**Wednesday 2nd, Thursday 3rd and Friday 4th May**

**OPEN TO ALL**

## PAUL'S ADVANCED MODERN COURSE

**Monday 9th —Friday 13th July (5 days)**

Open to AMUSF students who have completed at least Stage 1 by July.

Complements the AMUSF Qualification Courses and gives you further insight into the commercial world of upholstery.

## NEW LEATHER CARVING COURSE

Many of you have admired Ian's Heico chair and he is now teaching these skills on a 3 day course

You learn the techniques of leather carving, cutting, staining & finishing and hand stitching the leather.



During the 3 days you also create your own impressive carved leather belt, handstitched all the way round.



## CHANGES TO CHAIR CANING COURSE

We are now running a one day introduction to chair caning course.

You come into the Skills Centre for one day and learn the basic techniques on an exercise frame.

The beauty of this is you can choose your day, as long as we have a bench space available in the Centre.

**For further information on any of these initiatives or courses, please email [yvette@upholsteryskills.co.uk](mailto:yvette@upholsteryskills.co.uk) or phone us on 07721 909 838**

# Spotlight on Past Students

This month we caught up with Liliana Saggese

## ***When did you train at the Upholstery Skills Centre?***

I started in 2014. The Skills Centre worked well for me as I could do it on a part-time basis and work the course days around the kids' school holidays.



## ***What was your favourite piece that you upholstered during your training?***

My favourite piece was my traditional dining chair for which I won the Harlequin Prize. My mum found the chair, which was part of a pair, in a local junk shop. The rosewood came up a lovely colour and I used a Liberty fabric, which looked green in certain light but grey in natural light. I was really pleased with the result and did the other one at home in the same fabric. My brother claimed them both as a present for his wife!

## ***What are you doing now? How is it going? And how did you get there?***

Now, I've cleared away the kids' toys and a drum kit to make space for my studio at home.

At first, I just worked on bits of furniture that I've picked up over the years. But now I'm starting to do local work that comes via word of mouth, community groups, mums at school and even the local barbers (benches, not tackled the barber chairs yet, but on my list).

I've also made some contacts through my husband's café in north London (I did the café chairs too) and these have led to more work, in particular with a supplier who deals in mid-century furniture - I now have several projects to complete for him, and some future work lined up, which is very exciting.

## ***Any tips to pass on to students going through their training or just setting out on their own?***

I have signed up to the rent a bench scheme in the commercial workshop at the Upholstery Skills Centre which is really beneficial as, while I am working on a chair, I can ask about other projects, prices, tips and what to buy. I have found this really helpful and it's given me the confidence to take more work on.

Be honest with customers (and yourself!) about how long it will take to complete a project and take photos of the chair in progress so that you can show them the state of the insides as well as keeping them posted.

Remember to add a mark-up to the cost of the fabrics so you cover your research, consultation and travel time.

Tell the customer that you will get back to them with the price rather than quoting on the spot. Then take photos and measurements, go away, and think about how you'll do it and what you'll need to work out the price. This takes practice and at first you may get prices wrong and end up not making very much.

Every job is different, every chair is different and that is what makes it a fun adventure!

