

Revival Of Dying Art Forms

BRIDGING THE GAPS



Traditional Lace Making	03
Strawback Chair Making	04
Sporran Making	05
Welsh Clog Making	06
Linen Weaving	07

Table of Contents

Traditional Lace Making

Factors for Decline	Gaps Observed	Proposed Solution
Loss of Traditional Skills due to Long Learning Curve	Centuries old traditional lace-making techniques in England, are in danger of disappearing as older artisans retire without passing their skills on to the next generation. There is little to negligible interest among young people in learning such a labor-intensive craft, and formal training is limited.	Work with the Lace Guild of England to introduce lace-making workshops in schools and community centers. Collaborations with cultural bodies such as Historic England could help fund these programs. In addition, the creation of online video tutorials and resources, akin to those used by The Royal School of Needlework , could make the craft more accessible to a younger, tech-savvy audience.
Competition with Mechanized Lace Production	Machine-made lace has flooded the market, drastically reducing demand for handmade lace. The mass-market consumer appeal of cheaper and faster produced lace has caused a decline in the perceived value of traditional handmade lace.	Promote the heritage and quality of handmade lace by partnering with luxury fashion brands such as Burberry or Liberty of London to create exclusive, high-end lace products. Drawing inspiration from successful branding campaigns like that of Gucci's Revival of Handcrafted Fashion , lace-making could appeal to a premium market seeking authenticity and craftsmanship.
Lack of Digital Presence and Global Reach	Many traditional lace makers have limited digital presence and do not utilize modern e-commerce platforms to sell their products. Relying mostly on local fairs or specialist shops for sale significantly limits market reach of handmade lace.	Creation of an online marketplace for traditional English lace through platforms such as Not On The High Street , where lace makers can showcase their unique products to a global audience. Expanding market reach by working with the Heritage Crafts Association to help lace makers build digital literacy and e-commerce skills.

Strawback Chair Making

Factors for Decline	Gaps Observed	Proposed Solution
Declining Interest in Traditional Crafting of Vernacular Furniture	The art of crafting strawback chairs, an essential part of Scotland's furniture heritage, is losing momentum due to a shift in consumer preferences towards modern, industrially manufactured furniture. This is further aggravated by high cost of production and lack of visibility.	Collaborate with interior designers and high-end furniture retailers to emphasize the timeless appeal of handwoven strawback chairs. This partnership could mimic the success of Ercol's Windsor Chairs in England, where heritage furniture pieces were reintroduced as luxury items in the modern home décor market.
Recurring Shortage of Raw Materials to sustain demand in a fast market	Traditional strawback chairs require high-quality straw, which is increasingly hard to source, as many local farms have shifted away from growing the types of straw necessary for these chairs.	Partner with sustainable farming cooperatives in Scotland to encourage the cultivation of heritage straw varieties. The Sustainable Scotland Network could support this initiative by connecting artisans with farmers interested in reviving heritage crops for crafts. Grants or subsidies for farmers producing craft materials could also be introduced.
Lack of accessible Vocational Training Programs across Art and Crafts institutions	There are very few formal programs or apprenticeships for learning traditional Scottish furniture-making techniques, specifically the crafting of strawback chairs, limiting the transmission of knowledge between generations, and to new artisans.	Develop formal training programs in collaboration with the Scottish Furniture Makers Association and vocational schools like Glasgow Clyde College . These programs could offer intensive apprenticeships and workshops for younger artisans to learn the craft while receiving mentorship from master furniture makers. In addition, promoting these workshops through tourism could attract international students.



Factors for Decline	Gaps Observed	Proposed Solution
Competition from Mass-Produced Sporrans	Inexpensive, mass-produced sporrans made from synthetic materials have flooded the market, overshadowing traditional, handcrafted leather sporrans. Consumers often opt for cheaper alternatives, reducing demand for authentic, handmade pieces.	Working with the 'Scottish Leather Group' and 'The Scottish Craft Federation' to promote the value of handmade sporrans, while highlighting their cultural significance and the environmental benefits of sustainable leatherworking.
Lack of New Artisans passionate to retain clan design patterns	The art of Sporrان-making is dying due to fewer young people learning the skill. Traditional craftsmanship is rarely pursued as a career in modern Scotland, leading to an aging artisan population, with frequent outsourcing to Central America.	Partner with local schools and design institutions like 'Glasgow School of Art' to create mentorship and vocational training programs focusing on blending traditional leather techniques with modern fashion trends. Successful projects, like 'Glencairn Craft' that promote sporrان-making, can serve as a model.
Competition from Synthetic Imitations sold in online marketplaces	The rise of cheaper, mass-produced synthetic sporrans, appealing more to tourists, has decreased the demand for handmade leather sporrans, undercutting traditional artisans.	Launch campaigns promoting the cultural and sustainable value of handcrafted sporrans. Collaborating with entities like 'Visit Scotland' could help market traditional sporrans as luxury items linked to Scotland's heritage to the overseas Scottish diaspora, emphasizing their artisanal quality and eco-friendliness.
Limited International Market Access to the global Scottish diaspora	Traditional sporrان makers have a limited presence in online marketplaces, and most sales are localized, limiting international market expansion, especially in niche, high-value tourism segments.	Establish an online marketplace dedicated to Scottish crafts, leveraging platforms like 'Not on the High Street' . Include digital workshops and storytelling about the craft's historical importance. 'Handmade in Britain' and 'Craft Scotland' already support e-commerce efforts for traditional artisans.

Welsh Clog Making

Factors for Decline	Gaps Observed	Proposed Solution
Reduced Demand due to Modern Footwear and cheap Synthetic Clogs	The introduction of mass-produced, affordable, and comfortable footwear has led to a decline in demand for traditional Welsh clogs. People prefer synthetic shoes for their practicality, reducing the market for handcrafted clogs.	Develop a heritage-focused branding campaign in collaboration with the Welsh Folk Museum and tourist centers, emphasizing the unique craftsmanship and historical significance of Welsh clogs, to potentially increase demand among tourists and cultural enthusiasts (as seen with the revival of wooden clogs in the Netherlands).
Lack of Young Artisans due to being culturally detached from traditions like clog dancing.	The art of clog-making in Wales is becoming a rarity, with only a few aging craftsmen continuing the tradition. Without a new generation of artisans, the skills required to make Welsh clogs will soon be lost.	Initiate apprenticeship programs providing structured training and mentorship opportunities, funded by The Welsh Government's Arts Council to attract younger generations to the craft, similar to the efforts made by British Shoemaking Heritage Program .
Limited capacity to meet Market demand within UK and North America.	Most sales of Welsh clogs remain local, as artisans lack the resources and skills to expand their businesses beyond Wales, holding them back from catering to the growing market demand for traditional and sustainable footwear in USA and Canada.	Collaborate with ethical fashion brands and eco-friendly retailers to introduce Welsh clogs to a broader, global audience. Through e-commerce platforms and digital marketing, artisans could leverage global consumer trends towards sustainable and culturally significant products, similar to the success of Finnish Karhu Shoes .

Factors for Decline	Gaps Observed	Proposed Solution
Declining Demand for Hand-Woven Linen outside Ireland	With the rise of synthetic fibers and mechanized weaving techniques, there has been a marked decline in demand for traditional hand-woven Irish linen, further aggravated by consumers often prioritizing convenience and lower prices over handmade, high-quality textiles.	Work with organizations like the 'Ulster Guild of Spinners, Weavers and Dyer' to revive interest in hand-woven linen by creating exclusive, high-end collections that emphasize luxury and craftsmanship. Collaborating with fashion brands focused on sustainability and slow fashion, similar to the Irish Linen Guild's recent initiatives, can help boost demand for these artisanal goods.
Limited Digital Presence and reduced access to overseas markets	Linen weaving artisans have limited access to global markets due to a lack of digital literacy and underdeveloped e-commerce strategies, confining sales to local fairs or niche markets and limiting revenue growth.	Develop digital skills training programs through 'Craft NI' to equip linen weavers with the tools to sell their products online. Marketplace Platforms such as 'Shopify' or 'Etsy' can provide artisans with global reach. This approach has been successfully implemented in other regions, such as the 'Harris Tweed' industry, which now thrives through e-commerce sales.
Stiff Competition from mass-produced textiles from other geographies	Large textile manufacturers can produce linen at a fraction of the cost of handmade products, making it difficult for traditional artisans to compete. This price discrepancy drives consumers toward cheaper alternatives, even at the expense of quality.	Collaborate with high-end retailers and luxury brands that focus on artisanal and sustainable products, similar to partnerships formed with the 'Linen Biennale Northern Ireland' . Creating a niche market for handwoven linens that emphasize sustainability and cultural heritage can justify the premium pricing needed to sustain artisans.



Thank You

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