



Press Release

31 May 2017

MASTER COOPER WINS CRAFTSMANSHIP TROPHY AT BATH AND WEST

Britain's last remaining Master Cooper, Alastair Simms, has been awarded this year's Trophy for Craftsmanship in the Cider Industry at the Royal Bath and West Show.

And appropriately, the Trophy which he won - a miniature wooden barrel - is given by the Worshipful Company of Coopers, whose Renter Warden, Roy Campbell, made the presentation.

Alastair Simms is based at his White Rose Cooperage at Wetherby in Yorkshire, and divides his time between crafting new wooden casks, and repairing both older casks and oak vats. He is a regular in the Orchards and Cider marquee at the Royal Bath and West Show, displaying the skills, techniques and tools of his craft, many of which date back centuries.

In paying tribute to Alastair Simms, Orchards and Cider Chairman, Anthony Gibson, described him as a "flag-bearer for a craft which is as vital as it is threatened".

"You can certainly make a very good cider without maturing it in the wood, but you can't make a great one" said Mr Gibson, "and the same goes even more so for cider brandy".

"Alastair Simms is a man to be cherished. He is both an advocate for and an exemplar of his trade. By recognising his contribution with this Award, I profoundly hope it may inspire a new generation to follow his example and take up apprenticeships in his trade.

"He may be our last master cooper temporarily, but I have every confidence that, with his influence and example, there will be others to follow in his footsteps."



Ends

- *The Royal Bath & West Show will be held from 31 May – 3 June. Tickets are now on sale from www.bathandwest.com*

For further information on the British Cider Championships or media enquiries contact Anthony Gibson on anthony.gbsn@gmail.com

About the Royal Bath & West of England Society

The Society was founded in 1777 in Bath by a group of philanthropists led by Edmund Rack. We are a registered charity organisation (Registered Charity Number 1039397). The Society was formed with the aims of encouraging agriculture, arts, manufacture and commerce.

Our charitable activities provide:

- Agriculture, veterinary, educational and art scholarships
- Technical events and Seminars
- Practical farming advice and conferences
- Countryside Education
- Diversification advice for farmers
- Education for children
- A market place for countryside products

As the Society approaches its 240th year it continues to deliver a wonderful mix of established traditional exhibits through to the latest energy technology and contemporary entertainment.

The entertainment and features around the 242-acre site ensure enjoyment for every member of the family and include attractions that are spectacular to watch, educational, inspirational, “hands on” or just plain fun.

For further information or media enquiries contact Jonathan Hall on 01749 822 210 or e-mail jonathan.hall@bathandwest.co.uk