



Chairman's Report 2017

Membership

The GA ended 2017 with 694 paid-up members (including DesignGAP), and 47 paid-up JDA members. We continue to receive daily applications for membership, particularly around events such as trade shows, our Meet the Buyer events, and the later stages of Gift of the Year. We would like to hit 700 members between the GA and DesignGAP, and close to 60 members of the JDA, by the end of 2018.

Trade Fairs

The GA team attended around 30 trade fairs in 2017. Although we have a small team, this has been an essential part of our year, as it allows us to visit members on their stands, recruit new members, and maintain relationships with the various organisers. The people we speak to at trade shows account for a significant proportion of those who take part in Meet the Buyer, Gift of the Year, the GA Yearbook, and other initiatives.

Gift of the Year

The 2018 Gift of the Year competition was the first run in partnership with Spring Fair. This allowed us greater scope for expanding the competition's reach, as the budgetary arrangement between us and Spring Fair preserved our financial interest in the competition without increasing the operational costs to the GA.

The competition culminated in a sit-down dinner at the Vox in Birmingham, hosted by celebrity compere Rory Bremner.



1,047 entries were made by almost 280 companies. It is the increase in suppliers entering that is of greatest interest to us, as this means the competition is becoming more representative of our enormous and creative industry. We will continue to work with Spring Fair to expand the competition, and have added two new categories (Ethical Gift and Pet) as part of accomplishing this.

Meet the Buyer events

2017's programme of Meet the Buyer events was something of a learning curve for us, with some extremely useful if mixed feedback as the year went on. Attendance and feedback both saw a sharp positive change towards the end of 2017, and we are now confident in the programme's success throughout 2018.

Not only does the programme give us more operational revenue for other projects, it is at the core of our promise to be at the heart of the gift and home industry, as through these events we connect buyers and

suppliers. Many of these brief (15-20 minute) meetings result in ongoing business between the two parties, which is a huge measure of their success. We have a number of events planned throughout 2018, with a large range of buyers throughout the country.

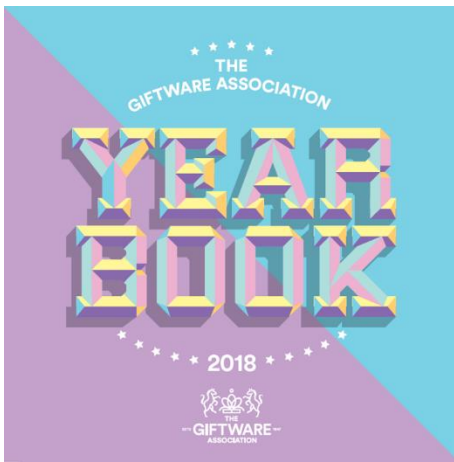
Members' Day

Our 2017 AGM was themed as an anniversary celebration, with the GA celebrating its 70th birthday. As well as the usual talks from experts, we entertained attendees with afternoon tea, cocktails and an evening party which included a world foods barbecue, live music and circus acts.

The event was held in Birmingham, at the Fazeley Studios. We received a great deal of positive feedback from this event, and it has helped us in planning subsequent events for our members.

Communications

The GA team has been working hard to ensure its compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation. In preparation for this, and to better connect with our members and non-member subscribers, we spent 2017 working on a 'welcome series' for anyone who subscribes to our regular news and updates. This went live in January, and has been enormously well received.



We created and distributed a DesignGAP Directory, featuring contact and product details for over 40 of our DesignGAP members. This was sent out to numerous buyers throughout the year.

On the back of the success of the Directory, we produced the first ever *GA Yearbook* (pictured). It featured information on our services, benefits and initiatives, as well as profiles and contact details for over 80 of our members. We are very pleased with the resulting book, which we have been distributing to certain retailers, and which is also available for sale.

Team Makeup

In June, Callum Thompson joined our team in the role of administrative assistant. He has been invaluable in helping run the day-to-day business of the GA, including keeping in touch with members, maintaining our records, and being a vital point of contact for *Meet the Buyer* events and the *GA Yearbook*.

Dave Kukadia has now left the team and rejoined the Federation's international department.

National Committee

In 2017 we welcomed Clive Briscoe (pictured) to our National Committee. Clive is a Managing Director of Apples to Pears, a long-standing GA member.

We are delighted to include him on the Committee, and know he will bring his own expertise and insight along with him.

2017-18 is the last year in which Henri Davis will be the Committee's chairman. She will step down in June 2018, when Jeremy Corner is expected to be confirmed in her place.

