

NOMINATION FOR WLCOW ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2023/4

Ruth Emily Davey. Age 36 Born in Hafod Estate, Mid Wales near Machynlleth

Ruth grew up on the Hafod Estate, Mid Wales - around 18 miles inland from Aberystwyth, a picturesque landscape often called Wales best kept secret. *"This wilderness in my early years helped lay the path that I walk today. This gift has drawn me to work with my hands."*

After 3 years in Art college, she met [Alan James Raddon](#) - shoemaker and friend of the family. He was in his early 60's at the time and didn't have any children to pass on his skills/life's work to. He spoke about wanting to take on an apprentice. Ruth was 18 at the time, and spent the next five years at his side, learning his craft, his techniques, and his philosophy. His varied clientele included Billy Connolly, Sir Alec Guinness, Diana Athill and Emma Thompson. I worked from his quaint workshop by the sea in Aberarth,

Ruth has now been making shoes for over 16 years. The knowledge Al passed on has helped her to set up two shoe shops in Machynlleth, where she has trained apprentices of her own. Her first, Mariko Kato, has returned to Japan where she has set up shop on her own - [MARIKOK](#), making Ruth's designs.

In 2019 Al and Ruth set up [The Original Shandals Co](#) as a joint project, making off the shelf versions of their Shandals for those who wished to buy them.

In 2011 Ruth won the inaugural [Balvenie Young Master of Craft Award](#) then shortly after as part of an annual creative business competition Ruth had a year's residency 2011/12 in one of the [Thomas Heatherwick](#) creative units in Aberystwyth Art Centre. Ruth also won a QEST scholarship in 2013 which helped her to study more about tweed, on the isle of Lewis, and to train as a Reflexologist. She was awarded a [Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship](#) which enabled her trip to Mexico and Japan in early 2016 to investigate the passing down of techniques from master to apprentice.

Ruth has also been involved in a number of projects and collaborations - most recently making a Welsh Leather collection with Haley Hanson. She has been invited to be a judge on The *Balvenie Master of Craft Awards* alongside Kevin McCloud, David Stewart, Robin Wood and Anne Cuthbertson. See Video: [A day in the life of Ruth Emily Davey The Balvenie Young Master Of Craft Award 2011...](#)

Her first shop - [Red Shoes](#) - has been featured in many publications including Travel + Leisure Magazine, County Living, The Western Mail, The Telegraph and The Guardian. Ruth has also won several awards for her work as a Craftswoman.

