

Fitting frame for a loving tribute

The Guild's London Branch last year invited its members to propose a frame design to include dried flowers from the funeral of much-loved former Branch Master Andy Goodall GCF. The design selected by Andy's wife, Lesley, was by **Nicole Johnson GCF(APF)**, who explains the reasoning behind her design and how she carried it out

WAS lucky enough to meet Andy in his capacity as head of the London branch of the Guild when I first joined and attended branch meetings. Unfortunately, Andy became very unwell and had to step down from this position.

After a brave fight,

Andy sadly passed away in 2020. Some time later, his wife, Lesley, approached the branch with the idea that they could make a memorial frame for her. She wanted to include photographs of Andy with flowers that she had dried herself from the family's funeral bouquet.

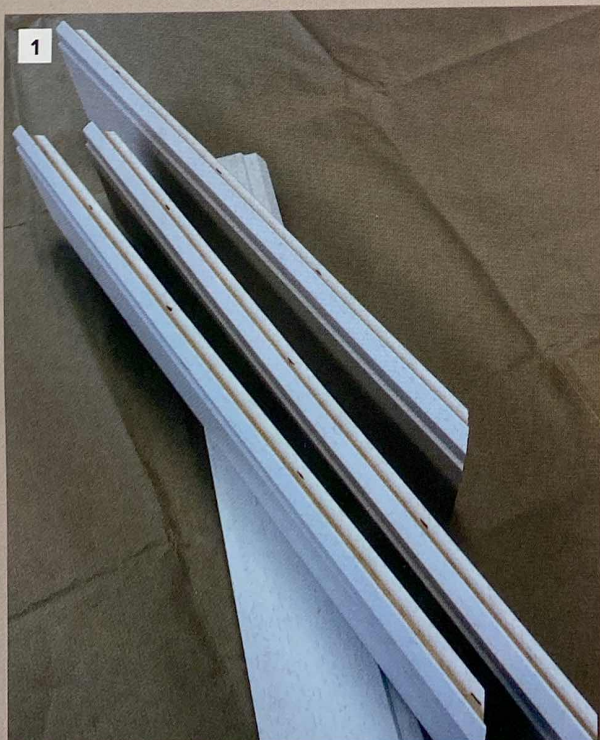
DESIGN PROCESS AND CONSTRUCTION

A brief was put together by Sue Harper and Jenny Isaacson, the joint co-ordinators of the London Guild branch, and distributed by email to the members.

The frame was to be no larger than 300x400mm

and had to include two photographs, a selection of the dried flowers and two lines from Lesley's poem, and would be glazed with UV glass. We were asked to provide a scale drawing of our frame idea with an outline of the techniques that would be involved, a list of materials and their costs.

STEP BY STEP



1: The sides of the box frame came from a previous project. The white finish was replaced with black gloss lacquer



2: The cabinet door, also finished in black gloss lacquer, was glazed with Tru-View Museum glass donated by Wessex Pictures

I got my thinking cap on and tried to put the three-dimensional ideas and images in my head down on paper – something I have never found easy to do, even though I can visualise them clearly in my mind.

An important consideration in my proposed design was the delicate nature of the dried flowers and a concern that once they were in a frame, they might deteriorate.

The photographs also concerned me in so far as there would only be two images to sum up Andy's life. Why not, therefore, design something that could easily be accessed, so that the flowers could be changed over, if required, and the photographs swapped for others? A cabinet frame was the way forward, I decided, giving flexibility in the way it could be used to display the contents. I put pen to paper and drew an idea.

A wide moulding would be turned on its edge to create the box, while another, used in the traditional way, would make a door frame. The inside would be lined with a pale cream, flowery design mountboard (Crescent Artisan) that would echo the flower theme of the frame.

The frame would be divided in two, with a piece of acrylic acting as a shelf. I would set the two photographs in separate frames, one on the shelf and one on the bottom of the cabinet. Several of the flowers would also lay along the shelves and a selection would be displayed upright behind the picture frame on the bottom shelf.

For the lines from Lesley's poem, I planned to have the black text printed on a glass decal that would be applied to the UV glazing of the door.

REFINING THE DESIGN

I submitted my drawing and brief and was thrilled when I received an email to say that Lesley had chosen my design. To assist me in creating the frame, the



Above: The finished frame enabled Lesley to change the photos and flowers inside

London branch of the Guild kindly donated £100 to my chosen supplier, which in this case was Wessex Pictures.

I contacted Lesley and we exchanged plenty of WhatsApp messages, refining the design to fit in with her choices. I believe that it is good to recycle where possible and with Lesley's agreement, I reused a previous customer's white frame moulding, turning it

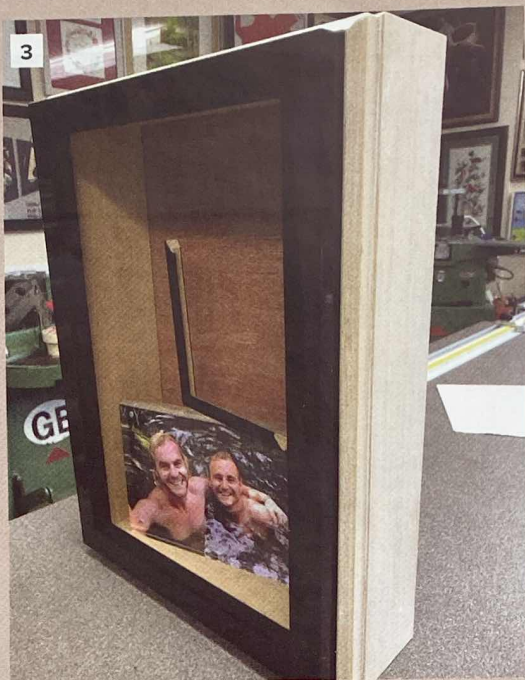
on its side to create the box sides. Because my husband Ian is a furniture restorer, I have access to a lacquering process. I stripped off the white finish and constructed the box before it was lacquered in a black gloss at Lesley's request. Inside this, I fitted a black gloss frame, creating the door to the cabinet. This was glazed with a piece of Tru-View Museum grade glass, kindly donated by Ashley

Younger of Wessex Pictures in Andy's memory. A plywood back was attached and the inside of the box lined with mountboard in a floral design to enhance the dried flowers that would be included inside the frame. Black foamcore was used to line the sides behind the mountboard, creating a gap to hold a small acrylic shelf. Here again, I made use of acrylic recycled from a customer's glazing of a

STEP BY STEP

3: Two black 178x127mm photo frames were made from a narrow black/gold moulding and glazed with Ultra Vue glass to ensure the photos could be seen clearly through two sets of glass

4: The inside of the box lined with mountboard in a floral design to enhance the dried flowers that would be included inside the frame



5: Eyelets were screwed into the front of the photo frames to hold the dried flower stems

6: Hinges would have protruded from the side of the recessed cabinet door, so instead the door was secured with rare earth magnets, which were recessed into the box edge and door frame



large poster. Two black 178x127mm photo frames were made from a narrow black/gold moulding and glazed with Ultra Vue glass to ensure the photos could be seen clearly through two sets of glass. These frames contained the photographs of Andy and his family

that Lesley had included in her brief.

I used turn keys to secure the backboards with the idea that Lesley would be able to change the photos for others, should she wish. A small support was added to the back to help the pictures to stand. The flowers could

also be changed for others as they lay along the shelves, while others were threaded into two small eyelets screwed into the sides of the photo frames.

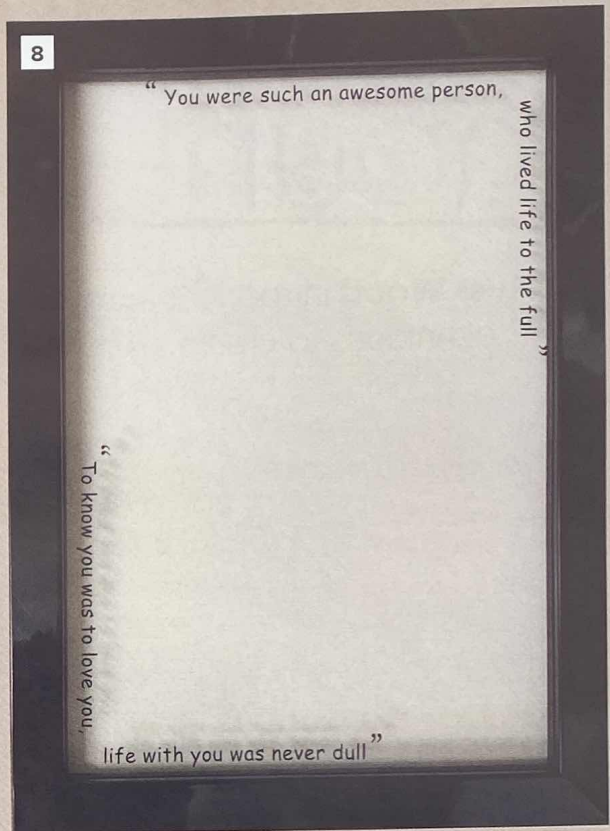
Having placed all the items in the frame, I decided to change the original placement of the text (two

lines from Lesley's poem) into diagonal corners. I had it printed by a local company in Lesley's choice of font, Comic Sans, in a self-adhesive format that I could apply to the inside of the museum glazing.

A black spacer held in the glazing of the door frame,



7: The upper photo frame and flowers rest on a clear acrylic shelf 8: Two lines from Lesley's poem were produced by a local firm as self-adhesive lettering, which was applied to the glazing 9+10: Close-up of the photo frames and dried flowers inside the box frame



which I had intended to secure with two to three small black hinges to the box behind. However, due to the fact that the door was recessed, the hinges would have had to be on the outside and this would have spoilt the clean lines of the frame. A rethink was

necessary and so I decided to secure the door with 2x5mm rare earth magnets, which were recessed into the box edge and door frame. This created an invisible fixing that would allow Lesley to access the display.

Finally a Z-bar was attached to the back of the

frame ready for hanging.

The final piece was extremely close to my original drawing, which was an interesting process to go through because I don't usually work like this when framing.

I enjoyed the design process and hope that I

have created something that Lesley will now treasure and is worthy of preserving Andy's memory.

Nicole Johnson GCF (APF) is a multi award-winning framer and owner of We Frame It! in Southampton
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