

# Why Sawdust & Soul?

During the process of wedding planning, and eventual wedding day we ignited something of a creative spark that had lay dormant for a little while. I had recently completed a Bench Joinery Qualification and was looking for a way to keep a hand in woodworking until more permanent employment could be found. Clare was already up-cycling furniture for the home but had put that to one side while wedding items were being made. On the lead up to the wedding, we had been asked many times just what we were planning to do with all the decorations once the day was done. We thought we would sell it all on, have done with it, get it out of the way. But somewhere along the line it became obvious that we didn't want to simply sell on our wares, our efforts, our time and skills.

We were enjoying it, we felt the pride and benefit that went along with that. The idea sat while we got married but was soon picked back up once the excitement had settled. We knew what we wanted to do, we'd both had separate plans but decided to align forces early on. We wanted to make small pieces of furniture, we wanted to give new life to items and materials that would otherwise go to waste, we wanted to pass on the rustic, woodland theme of our wedding to others that wanted the same thing but might not have the time or desire to produce themselves.

The name came by chance a little while later. We'd been thinking about a business name or brand for weeks. As is often the case, the best ideas occur when you stop trying. It was just two words that perfectly encapsulated what we are about. It was something concise but subtle and we both loved it. Clare designed the logo and the Instagram feed was launched. From there we have grown steadily and we have developed a few core customer relationships. Most of our work so far has centred around the smaller items as they are quick and easy for us to produce and deliver, but we have made a start on the furniture. Hopefully, given time this will be a lucrative side to the business.

## Challenges & Learning?

The major challenge is finding the time to get work done. When we're fulfilling orders its easy because you have the incentive. You're being paid to produce an item for a customer.

Its much more difficult to find the energy when we've done a full days work, put the toddler to bed, finally sat down to eat at 8pm then get up and start again at 9. We are yet to figure out the balance, but in realistic terms we are still very much in the early days.

It's also difficult when we compare ourselves to other small business start-ups and find that we're lagging behind. It's challenging not to see other company's success and wish that for us. But I guess what we don't see in all the hard work they're putting in behind the scenes. *(The same late nights, the same freezing hours in the workshop or hunched over the dining table making the goods that in a small way define, or are defined by, who we are.)*

## This time next year?

- Build our Etsy shop & help people to discover our products.
- Build up the Sawdust & Soul inventory available for personalisation plus larger scale items of up-cycled or reclaimed timber furniture.
- Explore local market stalls & community events.
- Continue to be inspired through connections with many of the makers we follow on social media.
- For Clare, this is an opportunity to immerse herself in creativity and get back to doing what she loves, for me it's a chance to be a more imaginative woodworker.