

## Training Heritage Locks

A look at the heritage locks training course recently held by the Master Locksmiths Association (MLA).

Antique lock restoration, creating replica keys and historical accuracy were top of the agenda at the latest training event hosted by the leading trade association for the locksmithing profession.

The Master Locksmiths Association has successfully held what is believed to be the industry's first ever heritage locks course at its Daventry headquarters to a sell-out audience of professional locksmiths keen to find out more about this subject.

In addition to hands-on training, the day long course explored topics including: antique lock inspection and repair, accurately copying historic keys, record keeping, and how to use appropriate tools and material to maintain antique locks and create era-appropriate replicas.

The course saw experienced historical locksmiths Keith Carrier and husband and wife team George and Valerie Olifent draw on over 80 years of combined experience as specialist antique locksmiths. The course saw the experts pass on technical insight and skills to a new generation of locksmiths from all over the UK.

MLA member and antique locks course expert George Olifent said: "I can't count the number of times I have been asked to fix locks where a non-specialist locksmith has inadvertently destroyed an old lock due to inexperience. I have even seen brand new locks fitted to ancient doors ruining the whole look of the building – this practice is simply unnecessary when a skilled expert can create accurate replacement keys and locks to reflect the era of the building and to maintain authenticity.

"To get to a point where you are able to know the era and what material a lock or key is made of by look alone takes years of practice and dedication, but historic restoration is also a very rewarding and challenging career. I am delighted to be able to help the MLA launch its heritage lock course and pass on the knowledge I have gained throughout my career to other professionals who share my passion for sympathetic restoration and who understand the importance of maintaining the integrity, character and historic accuracy of antique locks."

To help heritage site managers and owners of historical property and antique furniture source a suitably qualified historic locksmith, the MLA is able to recommend approved specialist heritage locksmiths from all over the UK. Details of your nearest specialist can be obtained from the MLA by calling 0800 783 1498, or by emailing [enquiries@locksmiths.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@locksmiths.co.uk).



Justin Freeman, MLA technical manager and heritage lock course host added: "With a history dating back to Egypt and 2000 BC, locks and keys have a long standing in British society, but with all of the technical advances in this field over the years there has been a great deal of concern from our members that some of the skills used to manufacture and restore these systems are dying out. The fact that every lock and key was handmade in the past and is therefore unique means creating a replica key or fixing a lock from a past era is not a simple task.

"As the UK's biggest locksmithing association we were keen to combat the apparent decline in restoration skills so with the help of our specialist members we have put in a lot of hard work to be able to bring this course to our members. The first of our heritage lock courses was a great success and feedback from the day has been incredibly positive – we hope to run similar training or more specific courses in the future for novices and experienced historic locksmiths alike."

Go to [www.locksmiths.co.uk](http://www.locksmiths.co.uk) for more information on the MLA and its training courses.

