



The 'Organisational Still Life': as devised and developed by Elizabeth and Charles Handy

Elizabeth Handy has been passionate about photography since she was a child. She is now an international photographer. Elizabeth has pioneered novel ways of portraiture, including her 'Organisational Still Lives'. Charles Handy is a social philosopher. He has written many books, including those on the management of organisations. Charles has been described as the *Peter Drucker of Europe*. He has been consistently ranked as one of the world's most influential thinkers.

The idea of the Organisational Still Life was inspired by the *vanitas* paintings of the seventeenth century, in which successful individuals commissioned Still Life paintings of objects that signified their status in society – a globe for a traveller, a gold goblet for wealth and so on.

The Caplor Horizons 'Still Life'

In this modern version, members of the Caplor Horizons' team were asked to select just five objects and a flower that, together, represented all that was most important to the organisation. The way in which the objects were arranged was, in itself, important.

Charles and Liz Handy facilitated the process on 27th May 2015. This involved twenty-three people all bringing five objects and a flower. Liz took this photograph of the participants:



Split into five groups, each participant described the meaning or story behind the five objects and the flower that they had brought and its relevance to Caplor Horizons. Each group, having discussed all the objects and flowers (from the whole of their group), then chose just five objects and a flower that they felt most represented the organisation. These were laid out as 'Still Lives', photographed by Liz, and were then presented to the other four groups.

From the five 'Still Life' presentations, a final five objects and a flower were chosen that best symbolised and embodied the whole organisation. The result can be seen as the Caplor Horizons' Still life, as photographed by Liz below:



The Caplor Horizons 'Still Life'

The Small Lighthouse



A lighthouse is a tower or similar structure designed to emit light that can be used as a navigational aid for maritime pilots at sea or on inland waterways. Lighthouses not only mark dangerous coastlines and hazardous reefs, but also show the way to safe entries to harbours and assist in navigation.

We want our organisation to be a beacon of light for others, not just helping them to navigate the best way forward, but also focusing (like a lighthouse lens) on specific actions that will make the biggest difference.

The lighthouse in the picture is deliberately small. Margaret Mead said: *“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

The Caplor Horizons’ team, like the lighthouse, is deliberately small and is built on a human scale. Charles prompts organisations to think about *“becoming better, not bigger”*. Long term, our growth will come through influence, rather than organisational size, and by our approach being adapted and adopted by others.

However, despite being small, like the lighthouse we have a strong foundation and we aspire to illuminate the way, helping leaders and their teams to become stronger, develop effective visions and strategies, and improve their advocacy work.

The Morris Dancer’s Hat



Morris dancing is a form of English folk dance usually accompanied by music. The earliest known mention of Morris dancing dates back to 1448. The dancers wear colourful trousers and jackets, decorative hats and bell pads on their shins. They wield either handkerchiefs or sticks, the latter of which are hit against each other to beat out the rhythm of the dance.

Today, there are six predominant styles of Morris dancing, each style named after their region of origin.

The hat in the picture belongs to a Border Morris dancer. ‘Border Morris’ is one of the six styles and refers to a collection of local dances from villages along the Wales-England border in the counties of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire. This is where Caplor Horizons is based.

However, such customs exist right around the globe and are fundamentally important to that group of people. The hat represents our respect for the diversity and richness of differing cultures around the world and signifies that we ensure that *their* traditions and ethos remain at the heart of any contribution we make.

We appreciate the great importance of organisational culture and the necessity of rooting our work with individuals, teams and organisations in the realities that they face - to start where they are, not where we are.

The Orchid



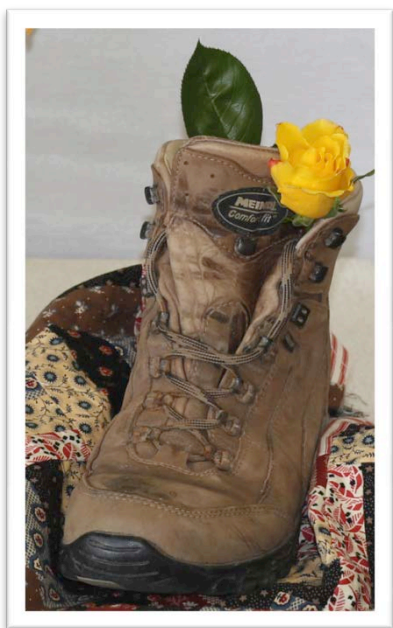
The orchid is a diverse and widespread family of flowering plants, with blooms that are colourful and fragrant. They are one of the two largest families of flowering plants, with around twenty-five thousand species. This is more than twice the number of bird species and is about four times the number of mammal species.

Genetic sequencing indicates that orchids are likely to have arisen around eighty million years ago, which means that they would have coexisted with the dinosaurs! Orchids are found around the globe and are used in perfumery, in horticulture, as a food source and also in traditional medicine.

Protecting the world's biodiversity is crucial to humankind's survival and the orchid in the picture symbolises this and the importance of sustainability. It also happens to represent Caplor Horizons' brand colours (orange and green) but, more importantly, the fact that we work with organisational leaders and their teams to inspire and enable a sustainable future.

The orchid pictured was felt to be very special, insofar as each beautiful part of it was like an individual person contributing to the Caplor Horizons team; each person bringing their unique contribution to the work of Caplor Horizons. As Charles encourages, we must all strive to find our "golden seed" and to "do what we are best at for the good of others".

The Boot



In Al Gore's book *'The Future'*, he makes a compelling case about organising action around the issue of the Climate Crisis:

'Ultimately, here is the choice we face: we can either make the solution to the climate crisis the central organising principle of global civilisation, or the hostile conditions we are creating will grow rapidly worse, thickening the smothering blanket of global warming surrounding our planet and destroy the viability of civilisation as we know it.'

He then goes on to be optimistic about actions people can take. Not only is the climate crisis threatening humankind, but other environmental matters require urgent attention, perhaps best summed up by the important work on Planetary Boundaries (*the central concept in an Earth system framework, proposed by Johan Rockström and Will Steffen*). In addition to environmental concerns, other major social changes are needed in order to achieve a sustainable future, including eliminating the scourge of poverty.

At Caplor Horizons, we are focused on taking practical steps to strengthen effectiveness. The image of putting 'boots on the ground' is important. It is clear that the time for debate is over. Action is required right now. We are committed to walking the talk and to providing practical support for charities and responsible businesses to inspire and enable positive change.

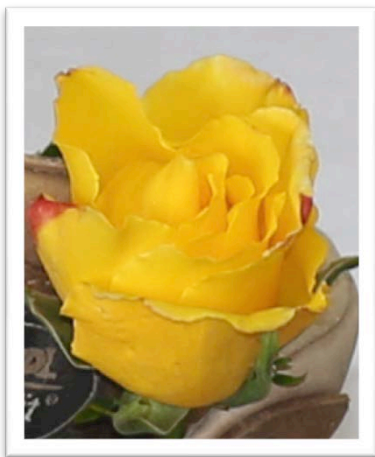
The Patchwork Quilt



The strength of Caplor's weave is in the diversity of its different threads. The wide range of skills and experience that Caplor Horizons' Staff, Advisors and Partners bring to the organisation fosters a culture of creativity and an atmosphere of dynamic innovation.

The particular piece chosen is from an unfinished quilt. We still have work to do! However, it has a colourful range of patterns, representing the diversity that is pivotal to our evolutionary approach. It enables our own organisational culture to adapt and improve as new individuals and organisations join our network. It also represents that we work with a wide range of organisations.

The Peace Rose



The 'Peace' is a well-known and successful garden rose developed by French horticulturist Francis Meilland between 1935 and 1939. He died in 1958 but, by 1992, over one hundred million Peace roses had been sold. When Meilland foresaw the German invasion of France, he sent cuttings to friends in Italy, Turkey, Germany, and the United States to protect the new rose. It is said that the rose was sent to the US on the last plane available before the German invasion.

After 'Peace' became so well known, Francis wrote in his diary: *"How strange to think that all these millions of roses sprang from one tiny seed no bigger than the head of a pin."*

Caplor Horizons is, relatively speaking, a tiny organisation – *no bigger than the head of a pin* – but the Peace Rose encapsulates the generosity and philanthropy of our Advisors who contribute their time and experience, and whose actions cascade to bring about lasting and meaningful change for the benefit of society.

As a plant, it represents the importance of new life and renewal. We want to help others to find, as Charles puts it, their *"Second Curve"* (see his 2015 book: *The Second Curve, Thoughts on Reinventing Society*).

The arrangement of the objects



'The Small Lighthouse' is centre stage, as our core activities involve helping leaders and their teams to become stronger, develop effective visions and strategies, and improve their advocacy work.

'The Orchid' dominates the picture, as sustainability is at the heart of everything that we do.

'The Morris Dancer's Hat' is also prominent as, in the words of Peter Drucker, *'culture eats strategy for breakfast'*!

'The Peace Rose' is placed in 'The Boot' because, although Caplor Horizons is focused on providing practical steps to strengthen leadership and organisational effectiveness, we're also constantly trying to help individuals and their organisations find their 'second curve' as part of the process.

This calls for ingenuity, renewal and something fresh – like putting the Rose in the Boot! It shows that although we believe in hard work and taking things seriously, we also have a great sense of fun and bring a distinctive approach to all that we do.

Finally, 'The Patchwork Quilt' – this has been placed *under* 'The Boot' and 'The Peace Rose' as it's the diverse range of skills and experience provided by the Caplor Horizons' Staff, Advisors and Partners that *underpins* our culture of creativity and provides the atmosphere for dynamic innovation.