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VIEWING THE RUSHES: Christine Crisp wrapping the largest of the three rush mats bound for Mexico, at Waveney Rush Industry, Oulton Broad.

Picture: BILL DARNELL

'Adios' to rush mats on way to Mexico

By KEIRON PIM
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A FIRM maintaining a five century-old Broads tradition is exporting its wares across the world.

Waveney Rush Industry is ready to dispatch three enormous woven rush mats to Mexico, a couple of months after receiving an £11,000 order from a Parisian design house.

Regular clients include the National Trust, which has purchased rush mats for Blickling Hall and Oxburgh Hall, while

You can track the method back at least 500 years

SAMMY CRISP, manager of Waveney Rush Industry

the Royal Family, fashion designer Mary Quant and the Rothschild family are also satisfied customers.

While there is considerable interest at

the top end of the market at home, Waveney Rush Industry is exporting up to half of the characteristically East Anglian products it makes to locations around America and Europe.

The company is now run by Sammy and Christine Crisp, from Beccles. Mr Crisp joined as manager two years ago after retiring, while Mrs Crisp has been working at the Oulton Broad workshop for 34 years.

Mr Crisp explained how the firm was keeping alive a strand of East Anglian heritage.

"You can track the method back at least 500 years, and this firm has been running

since 1947. You've got to have a belief that you're doing something good because it's very hard work!"

Mrs Crisp, who oversees the workshop described how she chose rushes every morning and soaked them in water for a hour, before the six-strong team of braiders could begin crafting them into rugs, log and pet baskets, chair seats and any other orders people cared to place.

The mats that are soon to be on their way to Mexico measure roughly 11m by 8m, 4m by 3m and 5m by 3m.

CONTACT: Details of Waveney Rush Industry's products can be found on their website at www.waveneyrush.co.uk.