

A Woodcarver's Gift at Christmas time

A new set of crib figures for St Augustine's church, Rugeley was unveiled on Advent Sunday. For BWA member Joe Wootton it was the culmination of an 18 month project to carve the twelve king-sized figures to replace a aged and damaged plaster set.



Staffordshire carver Joe Wootton jokes that he has 'sawdust in the veins'; well he might, as a fifth generation woodworker who seems now to have passed the genes on to his own grandchildren.

Joe started as an apprentice carpenter and joiner in the 50s, but moved on to teaching at King Edward School in Lichfield, picking up skills (and qualifications) in metalwork, silversmithing and building along the way. When a heart condition put an end to heavy work two years ago, his attention turned increasingly to carving and a number of commissions have followed.

St Augustine's church needed to replace a battered set of plaster figures, at which point Joe came to the rescue. 'I accepted a request to copy the old pieces,' comments Joe, 'but most of them had lost parts, so I had to use my imagination.'

The nativity figures are all of lime, the standing ones some 18 inches tall. The depth was achieved by laminating 2½ inch planks. The finish consists of two or three coats of oil and then wax. The final job was to create the table on which they are to be displayed. No problem

there for an all-round craftsman like Mr Wootton.

I wonder if we can persuade Joe to turn one of these figures into a little project for the *Gazette*?

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Nine years and a couple of face lifts later

That's the *Gazette*, dear Reader, not your dishonourable Editor. This May I will complete my third term of office as editor; nine years or (much) more than half the time I have been woodcarving.

Quick, hide! It looks like an editorial.

Thus far I have avoided those pointless editorial columns where the incumbent drones on about how good the magazine is, some current topic, or worst of all, the minutiae of their personal affairs. But the time has come for an editorial of sorts, if only to explain the delayed appearance of your favourite, irregular quarterly.

I will not be seeking re-election at AGM 2008. This is partly because of family pressures on my time, and partly because nine years is quite enough time for anyone to do a periodical. Ideas dry up, routine sets in and new enthusiasm and a fresh perspective are needed.

A little help from my friends

I want to see the *Gazette* continue and improve. Aware of the dangers of a hiatus between Editors I have been trying for some time to find a way of ensuring continuity. In the last few weeks a Shropshire member, Kathy Bristow, has let me know that she would like to get involved with the

Gazette production. At the moment we are investigating how and to what extent she would be willing to take on the job. This has been one reason for the delay in the *Gazette*. To be fair it has mainly been due to unforeseen and unavoidable pressures on my time, a situation which is not likely to change in the near future.

Step down and stay in touch

I am not sure quite how things will work out. We do not know as yet if Kathy will want to stand for election as Editor, or if someone else will come forward to be elected to the post. But this is the best plan I have to ensure that your *Gazette* continues and improves.

No doubt there will be more on this topic in the small, Winter issue that Kathy will help me produce; it should be with you in late Jan/Feb. Whatever happens I would like to contribute to the *Gazette* in some way, so long as the Editor and members are happy to see me do so.

So it's not so much 'Adieu' as a move from the Editor's chair to a comfortable bean bag just across the office, from where I hope I can make myself useful.

Russell Parry



Change the name, change the sign and get in line, Regions?

Dear Carvers.

A short time ago Rockingham Forest Carvers were invited to support the BWA at the Festival of Wood at Marston Moretaine, Bedford. I volunteered to be the representative from the East Midlands.

I was very disappointed with the standard of the exhibition. It did not do justice to the quality and great effort put into the carvings and the show by all the participants. The overall impression was a lot of wood objects, all very good, placed on tables with a group of enthusiasts enjoying themselves. If we are to get more people taking part and to promote wood carving to a wider number of people, we have to put on exhibitions worthy of the time, effort, skill and quality of our membership.

We need to focus our exhibition efforts on those to whom we are trying to attract, and ask our selves afterwards as to whether we achieved those aims.

May I propose the following:-

- 1 The CHIP scheme be put on the back burner, the money saved put to

- 2 Promoting The BWA in a professional way. Even getting professional advice.
- 3 Get a new and modern Logo or even a new name, Say "The British Wood Carvers" or "The English Wood Carvers" or "The Wood Carvers Guild". Do we need a logo?
- 4 Specify the style of the lettering to be used in all publicity materials including letter heads
- 5 Sell to the membership! "Casual shirts, Fleece jackets, etc with the Association name spelled out in letters. It does work, I was at a Stately Home and Sculpture Garden recently, in my RFC fleece Jacket to keep out the cold you understand, and one of the party I was traveling with, made enquiries about carving and two of the Room guides engaged me in conversation about carving.

- 6 The Council of the BWA provide a set of standards and promo-

tional material that must be used if the regions are to represent the Association. Even subsidise some specified Exhibitions.

- 7 A set of guide lines for the regions to use.
- 8 Venues such as Libraries, Art galleries, Museums, Schools, Colleges, even some Hotels want to put on displays, all are better places to get new members rather than the wood or craft shows where we are only preaching to the converted.
- 9 The Association sponsor some children to a weekend tuition course and get the FREE editorial comment this would generate.

Yours

Graham Biggs

P.S. In my past life, for a number of years, I was part of a small team running all the UK based exhibitions for a multinational company.

The Editor replies

That's quite a list, Graham, and my responses are a mixed bag. Some of my reply may seem less than accepting of the need for change. If this is so I hope it is not because of any entrenched views I (or the National Council) hold, but because it is what I feel best serves the needs of BWA members. If readers feel this is not so, please let someone on the National Council know! From a membership that is close to a thousand, we get surprisingly little feedback, and must usually proceed on the basis that 'no complaints mean we are not getting things wrong'.

1 The CHIP scheme costs the BWA nothing at present. Some Regions (and some non-BWA carvers) are using the material for their own assessments, without reference to the NC, but we have had no recent requests for central BWA assistance with it. This seems satisfactory. Does it represent 'the back burner'?

2 The great benefit of the National Council is that we may be a bunch of amateurs, but we are free! A clue to our other strength lies in the word 'amateur'; we are all lovers of woodcarving. Professional help may yield some valuable results, but consultants are surprisingly expensive, and in my experience seldom know much (without being paid to research it!) about curious little corners of the world, like ours. Far better to rely upon the specialist knowledge of members who know about carving and carvers. There is a wealth and breadth of experience in our Regions but we get relatively few offers of help at a National level (witness last year's Annual Exhibition at Alrewas). You mention in your letter your experience of exhibition organisation. Perhaps you would like to lend a touch of professionalism to our arrangements at Alrewas (or elsewhere) this year?

3 The BWA logo is not loved by every member! But it is the one on most National and Regional material and would involve considerable cost to replace. Who joins or leaves because of the logo?

The name is descriptive and it is hard to think of a better one. 'English' would be quite misleading. To me 'guild' has the unwelcome resonance of exclusivity, trade and fusty medievalism, none of which I think serve the BWA's image.

4, 6 & 7 We do provide National guidelines to Regions. They are sent by the Regional Secretary to Regional leaders when new Regions are started, and are updated from time to time.

I do not see the National BWA as a body whose function is to impose or demand anything. We are an umbrella organisation for Regions who organise their own exhibitions, meetings, finances. The organisation's strength is in its Regional activities and all the signs are that Regions would not welcome a 'party line' imposed by NC, even if it offered benefits (which I doubt).

5 Indeed, it does work, and let's all fly the flag (I hope you noted my gratuitously obvious BWA shirt in the last issue of Woodcarving!) We tried sweatshirts and Ts a few years back at National level and they were not well received, most Regions preferring to make their own arrangements. I have considered doing Christmas cards or a calendar, but previous experience with cards (before 'my time') has suggested that we will not get many takers and

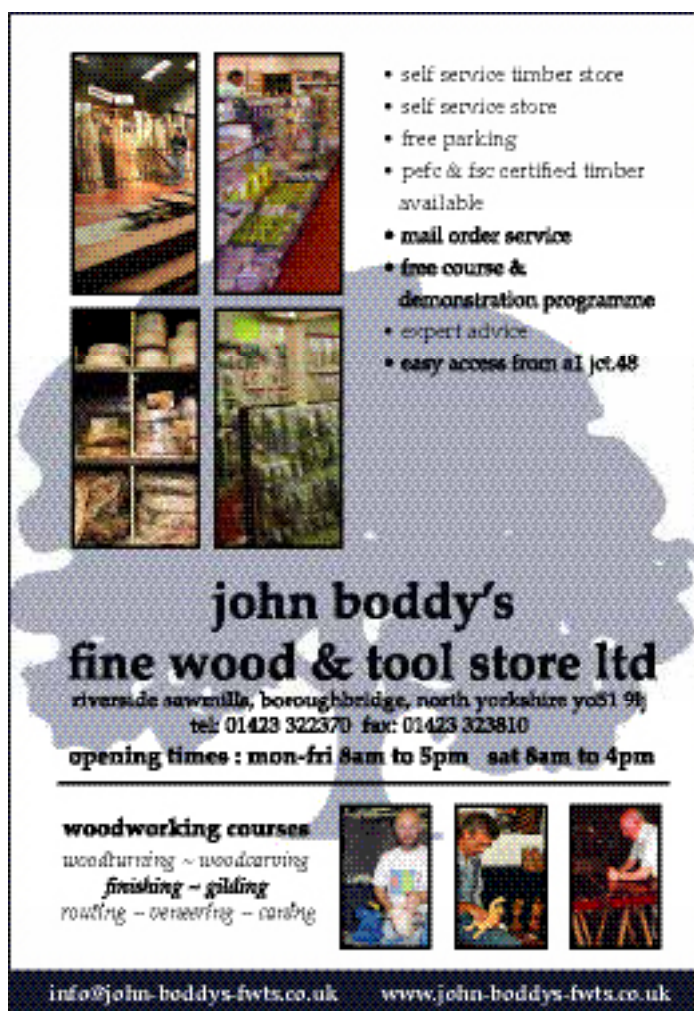
may well risk losing members money.

8 This is a very good point. I could not agree more that we need to present ourselves to the general public rather than woodworkers. It is why neither the BWA nor most Regions any longer have a strong presence at the Woodworking shows. Recalling major events at random they are at Alrewas, King's Heath Garden Show, Harrogate Show, Southend Library, and a host of other local shows and events. Even Westonbirt attracts a far wider audience than just woodworkers. Galleries would be a real coup, but they don't normally take mixed displays and are very selective. It's certainly a challenge though for some of the more experienced members.

9 A couple of years ago we advertised a free course with Martin Turner for younger carvers. We had not one single response. It's not an exercise I feel worth repeating in the near future.

Any readers' comments on the above?

Russell Parry



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AGM 2008 - A Date For Your Diary

The date for next year's AGM has been fixed for 17th May. It will be held at:

**The Astley Cooper School, St.Agnell's Lane,
Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire**

Further details of the AGM and associated events will be published in Jan/Feb *Gazette*.

Stan Kimm & Herts Region

Let There Be Light

Following the success of previous competitions at the AGM we intend to follow in their footsteps for 2008.

The carving competition will be to produce a Nightlight(s) Holder. The Holder must have one, or more, suitable spaces for nightlight(s) and be appropriate for either indoor or outdoor use.

People usually bring their entry to the AGM or send it with others from their Region but if anyone wanted to post an entry they could send it to me at my home address :-

32, Beaufort Avenue, Kenton, Harrow, Middx.
HA3 8PF.

**Bring your entry along
and light up the AGM!**

Call for Proposals & Nominations

In accordance with the BWA Constitution, proposals and nominations for the AGM must be announced to the membership 60 days before the Meeting. Would members therefore let the Editor have details of any proposals or nominations for NC (seconded) in time to be published in the Winter (Jan/Feb issue) Gazette. They will need to arrive with me by 18 January 2008, but preferably sooner if possible.

The following NC posts come up for election at AGM 2008:

Chairman – currently Peter Benson

Editor – currently Russell Parry

Ever seen a Safety Post?

No? Well, we're aiming to create one on the National Council from AGM 2008.

Like it or not, insurers, exhibition organisers and suchlike are increasingly demanding evidence of safety consciousness. As an organisation we are aware that we need take appropriate steps to consider health and safety of members (and others attending our events) in a systematic way. It is expected that we take reasonable measures are taken to protect and advise members, and for this we feel there must be a dedicated H & S officer on the NC.

The job need not be an onerous one, and would suit someone with previous experience of this kind of work, or an interest in finding out about such matters and keeping up to date with developments in the field.

Could any member who feels they could take this on please contact a member of NC so we can take the matter in hands as soon as possible?

Just an honourable second

Some Regions have arrangements whereby the National Council can contact a 'deputy' if the Regional leader or usual contact is unavailable. This makes it much easier for us if illness or holidays arise (my original draft says 'unfortunately arise', but your holidays might not be like mine).

Could Regions with no similar arrangement please discuss the matter and let the Regional Officer (Bridie Tonge) know the name of an 'alternative contact'? We would appreciate having this updated as and when changes occur locally.

BWA Annual Exhibition

National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas

June 14–20 2008

The Chairman has applied for a 'Awards for All' grant to fund this event, but it will go ahead on the above dates (set-up day 13 June) regardless of the bid's outcome.

All Regions and all members are invited to exhibit at the venue; we would like to show everything from beginner's to expert's work, and unfinished carvings are also of interest to the public. It is hoped that as many members as possible will visit, and even, better, help with the staging of the event. After a disappointing level of support last year, which depended on a handful of members plus Essex Region, it would be great to see a wider involvement at this, most central of locations.

For further information and to register your interest as an exhibitor/helper/demonstrator please contact Peter Benson, the sooner the better.

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BWA National Insurance Cover – further clarification

Peter Benson's article in the Summer Gazette prompted a letter from member Clive Nash and much discussion at National Council and in the Regions. As a result, the precise situation has been established with the insurance company that provides our National Public Liability policy. Here is an outline of the insurance cover and measures taken to ensure members stay within the cover provided. More detailed material has been sent to Regional leaders, but we suggest all members read the following summary, certainly if they are involved in public events.

The BWA Public Liability Insurance is exactly what it says: Public Liability insurance for paid-up members of the BWA when taking part in official BWA activities.

It is organised on an individual club basis – each Region is considered to be a separate Club under the umbrella of the BWA – therefore only fully paid-up members are covered and only whilst on Club activities. Any presence at a show or demonstration must be cleared with Regional Leaders and approved to be conducted as an official BWA event if it is to be covered.

Basic cover

The basic cover paid for by the Association is for Public Liability Third Party cover **only**, up to a limit of £2,000,000, but Regions are at liberty to increase the range of cover at their own expense. This should be done through the Chairman, Peter Benson and not direct to the Insurance Company in order that we have an accurate record of all transactions.

Selling carvings

Possible areas that Regions might like to add to the basic cover could be insurance of tools and/or carvings at shows.

I must stress that this is a specialist club insurance and does not cover the individual whilst on private activities or engaged in trading.

This brings up the issue of carvings being offered for sale at exhibitions. If this is done and the money is paid to the carver, he/she is considered to be a private trader and will **not** be covered. This may well negate the cover for the whole Club. If however, the carvings are offered for sale by the Club and the proceeds are paid to the Club this is acceptable. If the Club wishes to pay an amount to the carver to cover costs this is perfectly acceptable - it may be appropriate for the club and carver to agree this amount beforehand - but any attempt to participate in private sale arrangements should not be undertaken if cover is to be maintained.

Hands-on

The other issue that I have investigated is the one of being covered for giving hands-on experience to members of the public.

Under the terms as they stood, it was very unwise to offer any hands-on experience as you would not have been covered – as I mentioned in the last article.

However, we have now agreed a scheme of operation that will offer 'hands-on cover' at no extra charge to members, **provided we meet the required criteria and agree to abide by the proposed terms and**

conditions.

A list of instructions has been produced as follows:

Anyone wishing to offer any hands-on experience at a BWA event must first get **two** signed copies of the 'Hands-on Instructions' from their Regional Leader. All BWA members not directly attached to a Region will be 'parented' to a convenient Region for the purposes of the insurance. Please contact your Membership Secretary for details of this 'parenting' if you don't already know.

Both copies must be countersigned by the carver, stating agreement to abide fully by the instructions. One copy should be sent to me at the National Council for our records **prior to the event**. It is also desirable for anyone taking part in this activity to have a copy of the Insurance Policy to hand – it is obtainable from Regional Leaders.

Criminal records bureau checks

It is a current legal requirement for anyone dealing with children under the age of 16 to be screened by the Criminal Records Bureau or to be accompanied by a suitably responsible or qualified adult.

In the light of current circumstances any hands-on activity cannot be taken lightly and should only be offered by members experienced in teaching or instructing adults and/or children.

I know that this might seem unnecessarily cautious but the National Council and the Insurers cannot sanction any deviation from these procedures.

Even with all these constraints we cannot cover every eventuality and have to rely on each member's common sense. Any such activity should only be undertaken with full attention to Health and Safety precautions. Tools need to be correctly stored and protected and members of the public must be working in a safe environment. Ask yourselves how you would like your children or grandchildren to be protected.

Please...

if there are circumstances that we have not covered here, contact me and I will try to clarify matters. **Do not** take a chance and hope that nothing will happen. Times have changed and we are stuck with the consequences.

I would add here that any non-UK members cannot be covered by this insurance and should make their own arrangements in their own country.

E astern I nspiration

Bodhisattva

by *Jim Morgan*

Perhaps a little over-elated with confidence at the success of 'Rudolph' (reported in Jan 2005 *Gazette*) and the resulting £3,500 he raised on his travels, I accepted another challenge from the same bearded gentleman.

In his antique dealings, the piece he had become very fond of and retained, was in his opinion suitable for me to carve. OK said I, as soon as I find a suitable piece of wood I will scale it up to a workable size and start. Having done that and bandsawed the rough outlines, I went on holiday to ski in the French Alps. Unfortunately, on the first day I fractured my left wrist, was operated on and put in plaster, with little hope of carving for at least three months. I was, however, assured by the surgeon that after that time it would be as good as new!

'How is the carving coming along?' asked my bearded friend. With two visits per week to Oswestry hospital it left little time for woodcarving, I explained. In any case, I cannot grip a gouge with my left hand, as it will not close tightly enough. The surgeon had suggested wrapping some bandage and tape around the handle to make it thick enough to grip! Not a very practical solution you will agree.

Frustrated as I had become with the delay and lack of progress, it occurred to me that a little research would not go amiss. Who or what was the figure to be copied? The Kangi (inscription in Eastern characters) looked Japanese, so I photographed it and gave a copy of it to my French friends, who have a son teaching English in Tokyo. Perhaps he could provide some answers. The reply was 'Name: Bodhisattva, Goddess of Compassion and Mercy'. The Kangi represented the Rising Sun. Fine, but only the bandsawn outline had been completed after ten months.

Over the years, I, like most of us, have been pressurised by relentless advertising to purchase tools, which



might become useful one day. That day had arrived, I remembered the Dremel-like set I had bought some years ago, which had never been put to use. This could be used with a set of, again unused, sanders bought some years ago. If only I could remember where I had put them!

To cut a long story short, using rasps (rather than gouges with tape thickened handles) I got the main body into shape. The drum sanders were particularly useful for forming the folds in the garment. But after that it was slow going, seated with the work on my lap, on a cushion, gripped with my (gammy) left hand. This work augmented the physio treatment received, and approved, by Oswestry.

The fish basket and hands were carved from off-cuts of the same block of lime, using a T-shaped handgrip onto which I fixed with screws the piece to be carved. By this time my left hand was getting stronger and it enabled me to carry

on with the head and cowl, trying to duplicate the original decoration and produce an oriental face. This done, my next task was fitting the hands holding the fish basket to the body. With the hands clasped together, it was not possible to push in and glue them individually into the cuff cavity – or, if she had bare arms, to put a wide arm band on the joint. The solution I used, was to cut away the inside of the gown at the lower arms and drop the hands in from the back, then carve a small panel to replace the piece cut away. Drilling a hole through the hands large enough to take the basket handle, then putting a dowel behind the basket to hold it to the body, was the final solution.

When accepting the challenge, I had intended only to make a stylised version, but you must agree, it is surprisingly easy to get carried away when enjoying the pleasure of woodcarving. Nothing attempted means nothing gained.



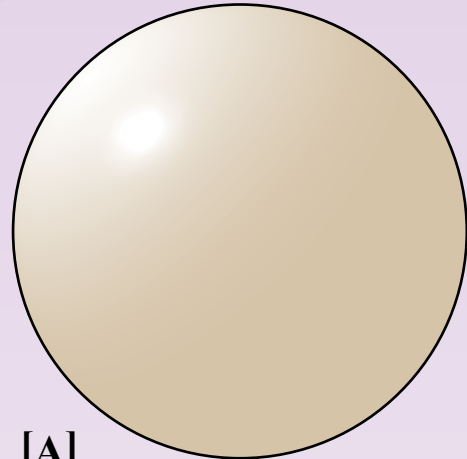
Some of you may have seen this little puzzler of Stan's, either amongst the 'Hamster Ball' competition entries in 2006, or at Westonbirt this year. The interlocking pieces that make up the ball are obviously separate, but if they don't come apart, how did they ever get together?

Well Mr Kimm has had his fun (at least with his fellow carvers) and here he tells you how it's done.

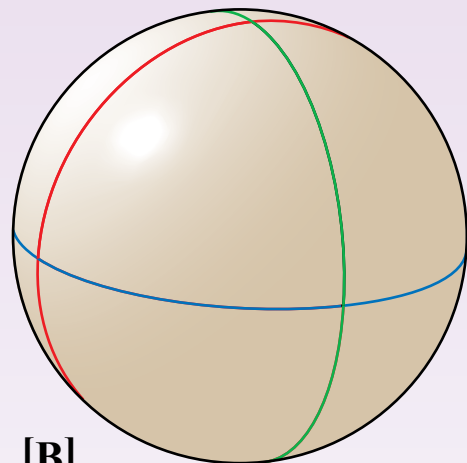
- 1 Carve a perfectly round ball, 3 inches in diameter [A]. Lime wood is recommended. [Dare I suggest this could be turned? – Ed.]
- 2 Draw three great circles perpendicular to each other, dividing the surface of the sphere into eight equal parts. Each is being triangular, four in the 'northern' hemisphere, four in the 'southern' [B].
- 3 Select four of the eight triangles that only touch each other at their corners. Two in each hemisphere. On each triangle draw the three meridians. These are lines that divide the three corner angles in half and so cross at the centre of each triangle [C].
- 4 Draw three spiral arms for each of the four triangles, starting at the centre where the meridians intersect and ending one in each corner to meet a similar arm. Each pair of spirals forms an S-shaped curve. Use the points of intersection with the meridians as an guide in making all the spiral arms alike, (shown in [D] with dotted lines). You should now have marked four identical (or nearly so!) pieces, each with three arms.
- 5 Drill a small hole to the centre of the ball at each of the four corners where the S-shaped curves meet, (red dots in [E]).

To do this, cut a 2½ inch hole in a 1 inch thick piece of wood to nest the ball in. Now drill the holes on a pillar drill to ensure that all the drilled holes meet at the centre.

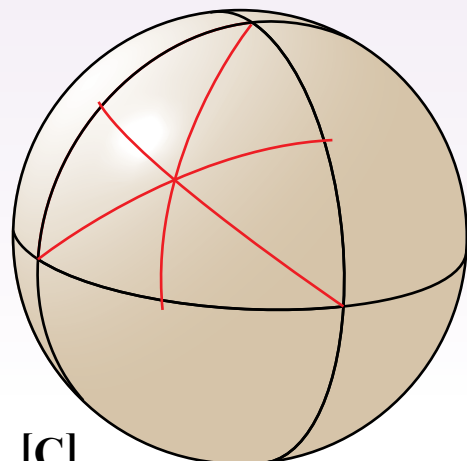
Set the drill depth stop so that the drill reaches the exact centre of the ball (1½ inches).



[A]



[B]

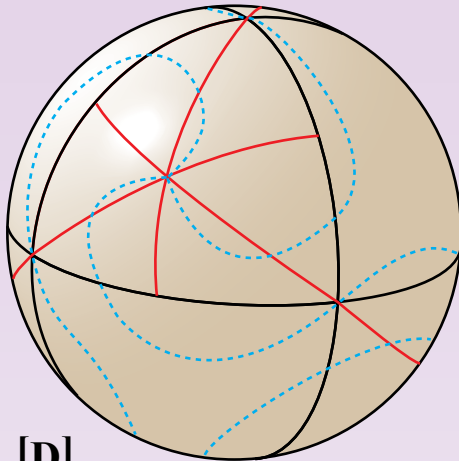


[C]

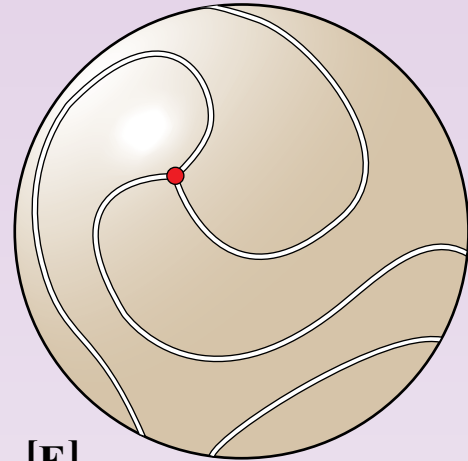




Sagittarius Pisces Libra Leo Gemini Capricorn Cancer Aries Aquarius



[D]



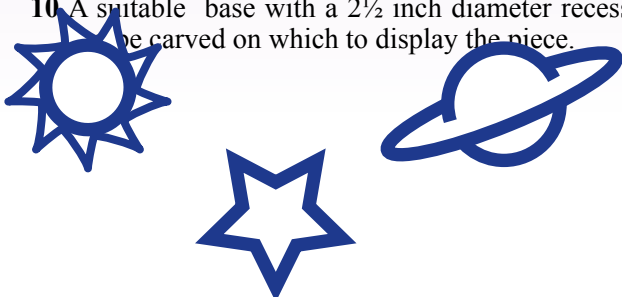
[E]

- 6 Feed the fretsaw (or coping saw) blade, with pins removed if necessary, into the holes and saw along the curves. Use the blade to cut on the pull stroke, keeping the saw pointing towards the centre of the ball. If you fail to keep the saw pointed strictly towards the centre it may be necessary to remove a little extra material around the centre in order to separate the four parts.
- 7 With a thin riffler and file smooth the internal surfaces made by the saw, and slightly round off the outer surfaces of the four parts giving them a 'blown up' look. Do not remove the edges; lower them somewhat, making them less sharp, not to protrude too much as the parts move slightly against each other.
- 8 I carved the Zodiac signs on the ends of the arms of the four pieces and the name of the sign along each arm, as shown right. Make these shapes by cutting along the marked-out lines with vertical cuts using small chisels and gouges. Then shave off each side of the vertical cuts to form a 'V' using a sharp pointed knife, or a scalpel with a number 10A or 11 blade.

In a similar way carve the Sun, Moon, Star and Planet on the centre space of each piece.

- 9 Finally smooth the ball with fine abrasive and finish with satin varnish or finishing oil.
- 10 A suitable base with a 2½ inch diameter recess to be carved on which to display the piece.

For those not astrologically inclined there are other possible symbols that could be used for embellishment. How about the months of the year, and four seasons? Or personalise your puzzle and have fun thinking up your own symbolic system!





THIS PRECIOUS EARTH

Westonbirt and the launch of **THIS PRECIOUS EARTH**

Gloucestershire's touring exhibition was unveiled for the first time at the Westonbirt Festival in late August. Some extraordinary carvings, beautifully displayed it certainly impressed visitors to the Show, judging from the comments floating around the marquee.



Gloucestershire's Lyn McCracken is congratulated by judge, Mike Shinn (former Dean of Faculty, Fine Art and Fashion at University of Gloucester) and Mike Hancock of Classic Hand Tools, the sponsor of her prize. In the background is Dave Johnson's monumental relief, featuring carbonised footprints and an exquisitely incised line from the Koran.

After so many months of preparation *This Precious Earth* finally hit the ground on late Bank Holiday at the festival of the Tree. The banners and staging were a triumph, allowing plenty of room for each carving to tell its own story. Bryan Corbin, ably assisted by Dave Johnson, Geoff Dixon and Lyn McCracken, have put a tremendous amount of work into the project and it was clear that it had paid off.

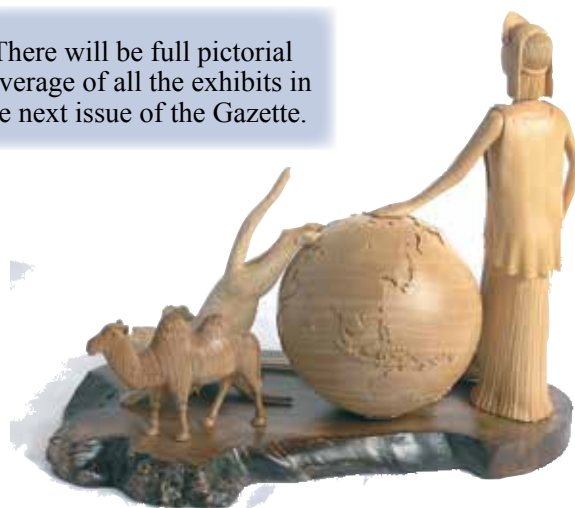
It was nice to see the prize for Artistic Merit go to Lyn McCracken, whilst Stan Kimm was awarded the Westonbirt Trophy for his work's interpretative merit.

Successfully launched, *Precious Earth* moves on to the Regions until summer 2008.



Gaia and her endangered children captured the Westonbirt Trophy for Stan Kimm of the Hertfordshire Region. Here it is viewed from the front and behind; a larger picture is shown on p14.

There will be full pictorial coverage of all the exhibits in the next issue of the Gazette.



Ian Wardle (Durham & N Yorks) carved this splendid Panther for the exhibition. We were sad to learn of his unexpected death not long after Westonbirt. Some of you will have met him when he gallantly stepped in to the breach to take master classes at AGM 2007. A quiet gentleman, with a huge knowledge of art and sculpture, we will miss his company and his masterly carving in equal measure

'Not a word now!

...but between you and I, Christmas is coming.'

At least that's what I imagine him to be saying. I found this little fellow in the New England Wood Carvers *Spirit of Wood* newsletter. He was carved and donated to the Tree of Hope by NEWC member Lenny Hill. Yvette Holladay, Editor for NEWC bought him, and she and Lenny kindly let me use this photo.

The Tree of Hope is a Christmas fundraiser for charity, where people donate decorations which are then sold in aid of the charity. Lenny's ornament was given to help the Bedford VA Hospital. The tree (below) has raised \$2,345 so far for this cause, and is being managed by Maria and Lorne La Goy, who run Carvers' Place in Leominster, Ma.



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This Precious Earth moved on from Westonbirt to the Kings Heath Garden Show (above) in Birmingham, at the invitation of the West Midlands Region. Here it is in their marquee. See page 14 for a full report.

STOP PRESS!

We hear that the exhibition has just completed its stay in the North East, having appeared to great public acclaim at the Great Yorkshire Show in Harrogate; many thanks to Dave Shires, the Durham & N Yorks and Yorkshire Regions.

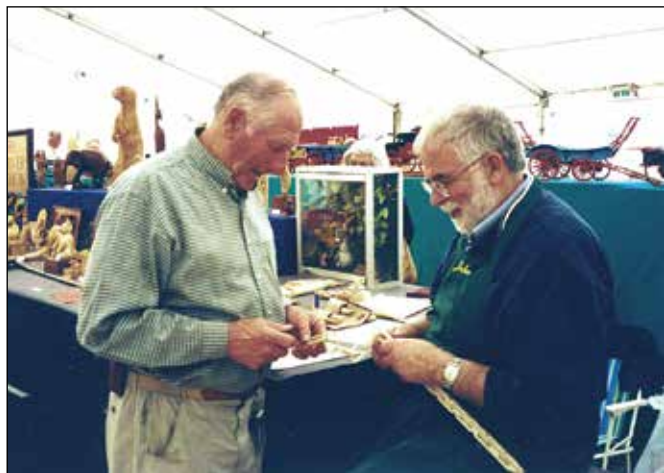
From here *This Precious Earth* moves on to Kent and then Shropshire in the Spring. More news in the next issue.

The Warwickshire Carvers at Woodex 2007

by Ron Burn

The enthusiasm of visitors to the Midlands Woodworking Show, Woodex 2007 held at the Midlands Exhibition Centre this spring, prompted me to write these few words. It was also prompted by the small amount of copy in the Spring colour issue of the Woodcarver magazine, so painstakingly and excellently prepared, by our editor. We read in the magazine of the editor's struggle to obtain sufficient material to print.

The Warwickshire Region has been in operation for probably 15 years, first under the worthy chairman, the honorary BWA member, Bob Atkins and for the last eight years by David Pledge. The Woodex Show is a real stimulus for all our members, but more particularly for our current chairman to goad us into action. This year our stand at Woodex had over 100 exhibits covering a wide range of carvings, simple relief (if that is ever a correct description of any carving), life-sized dog's head, carved turned items, letter carving and the most detailed bird and animal carvings. Clearly a wide spectrum and representation of the carving library. A number of our members were hands-on, carving walking stick handles in walnut (below right) and interlocking lengths of chain



John Hudson demonstrates the finer points of chain carving but finds he just can't avoid that bothersome cross-grain!

in pine (above). This prompted one visitor to ask the question, 'have you tried carving loops of chain?' The reply was, 'Ah, but one link would be cross-grain and weak.' Our carver then realised that every link has some cross grain! So a chain in the form of a loop would be no weaker! The full Warwick Carvers display is shown above right.

The interest visitors have in their 'hobby' of carving and general woodworking activity was evident from the number who lingered for some time at the stand, to ask questions of the stand marshals or just to admire the work. We hope to gain new members at these events and this year was no exception. Although most of the enquiries were from visitors resident in other parts of the country,



The full extent of Warwick Carver's table at Woodex 2007

they were quickly given the contact details of their nearest Regional group.

We have also been successful in gaining awards at the Woodex open competition. This year from three entries in the senior class we gained a first and a second. Bryan Joynes with his lifelike carving of a bison (bottom of opposite page) which gained the first prize. This took his total of first prizes to five, with one second, at successive Woodex exhibitions.



Mick Kitchen busy carving a stick handle; it's one aspect of carving that always seems to evoke interest at shows.

The 'sixth first' was denied due to the detail carving of an owl set against lifelike ivy leaves being mounted on a piece of MDF! As good as this was for transporting purposes it should not have been featured as part of the display. A lesson for us all to remember, it is the total display that is being judged. Mick Kitchen won second prize with a relief carving of a green man in oak (opposite page, top).

We were the only BWA Region at Woodex, but carving was supported by the excellent stand showing the work of Michael Painter and his colleagues. Their carvings are magnificent and the stand was made all the more attractive

by having three live demonstrations of carving throughout the Show.

Our interest in carving displays is not confined to our weekly meetings and the Woodex Show. We have a presence at Westonbirt in the BWA Marquee, and local shows at Burbage, Southam and at Kenilworth. These are all very time-consuming but rewarding, as they enable people to see the opportunity carving has to offer. Perhaps it will stimulate young people in particular to be interested and to want to know more about the craft, skill and fascination of carving.

The Warwickshire Region display was in the main Club marquee where we were an oasis of carving between a galaxy of woodturning, wheelwrights, marquetry and chairmaking. The marquee was a real hub of activity. The exhibition was clearly an opportunity for like-minded folk to discuss and demonstrate the finer points of their craft, so aptly shown by the happiness that exudes from every part of the marquee. Last year we felt that to call ourselves The Warwickshire Region of the British Woodcarvers Association was too grand a title to attract newcomers so we decided to change to Warwick Carvers. This also continues the historic association Warwick has with woodcarving.

Our membership is only 30 with a hard core of 15 regulars at the weekly hands-on Wednesday meetings. These are now held at Warwick School with Bryan Joyne always available to give a word of encouragement and guidance. We have two octogenarians, Joan who has developed a character in her carvings over the past two years. She carves in very old and hard oak salvaged from farm fencing and offcuts from logs. The character she obtains in general form and face detail is unique. Ron the other octogenarian, tends to concentrate on letter carving.

The other members have widely differing specialities such as rocking horses, chain carving, walking sticks with duck heads, chimney pots, axes in tree stumps, old boots, relief carving on turned items, to list just a few. One member is very concerned to provide an interest for people with learning difficulties. Bryan has gained much satisfaction by enabling young people with these difficulties to relief carve boats and seahorses. He says it is particularly pleasing to see the pleasure on these young people's faces when they take a tool, are enabled to use it safely and create a lifelike object from a flat piece of wood. Most of our members have only been carving for around ten years, taking it up upon retirement or having a forced change of career. One of our members has been able to become a professional carver of rocking horses and has his commissions located in eminent houses. A few

years ago a number of our members undertook the design, building and relief carving of a large, six-panel font cover in oak for a Cotswold village church.

So why do we enjoy carving? Of course we must be interested in it, but is it the opportunity to have a chat, listen to the odd joke and to have a cup of tea every Wednesday evening amongst friends? Or what is it? Possibly the challenge of bringing out or revealing the hidden features within the piece of wood to become a significant three dimensional form, having a beauty all of its own and previously hidden from view. There is no doubt we are

*Mick Kitchen
was awarded
2nd Prize for this
smiling Green
Man in oak.*



enthusiastic and like to talk about what we do, often at the expense of finishing or making much progress on our piece of work. One member even states that he measures the time he has been finishing a carving by the number of birthdays it has seen!

I started this article on Woodex 2007 and Warwick Carvers presence at that exhibition. We are only able to be there to enjoy these pleasures as the result of the Exhibition taking place. We are conscious of the difficulty facing exhibition promoters and the costs to the exhibitors of a stand and its staffing. There is also the often prohibitive high car parking charges (not a problem at Woodex) for delegates. These are real challenges. We hope these cost difficulties can be overcome enabling more suppliers to find it worth their while to have a presence at more exhibitions. The Internet may be an easy opportunity to make a purchase, but how can we compare tools and pieces of equipment without being able to pick up, handle and check for ease of use? Would co-operative type stands offer a solution? Could clubs provide some form of sponsorship or help offset costs by providing some of the staffing? Then there is the growth in general craft fairs; could there be any amalgamation with a mutual widening of activities? There is of course the fact that going to a show there is the expectation of spending money. What a disappointment to leave with money still in our pocket!

Surely some way has to be found for good quality tools and equipment to be available to view and compare, as was the case before so many shows were discontinued or reduced in size due to excessive cost.

Bryan Joyne's collected his fifth '1st Prize' ribbon at Woodex for a powerful and dignified Bison



West Mids Region at the Kings Heath Garden Festival

from Ron Bowen

Our main show of the year was The Kings Heath Garden Festival held 1–2 September. It was once again a very successful show, over 30,000 visitors through the gates, and as usual the BWA has recruited new members. Six turned up at our hands-on meetings only three days after the event, and possibly more to come.

We had an added attraction this year thanks to Bryan Corbin and his band of merry men – whoops nearly forgot – and ladies. They came up with the idea of the *This Precious Earth* Exhibition to be shown at Festival of the Tree, at Westonbirt Arboretum and then to tour around any of the Regions that would like to stage the exhibition.

Our show at Kings Heath being the following weekend after Westonbirt, gave us the honour of being the first to exhibit the carvings. The public were impressed with the variety of the subjects thought up by the carvers, but mostly by the quality of the carvings. Many of them coming back time and again to have another look.

Many thanks Gloucestershire for coming up with the idea and to all the carvers from around the Regions for producing a magnificent exhibition.

When we came to pick up the carvings on Bank Holiday Monday we were impressed with the way that Bryan and his guys had made the stands and displayed all the carvings.



A general view of the West Midlands Region's display at the Show.



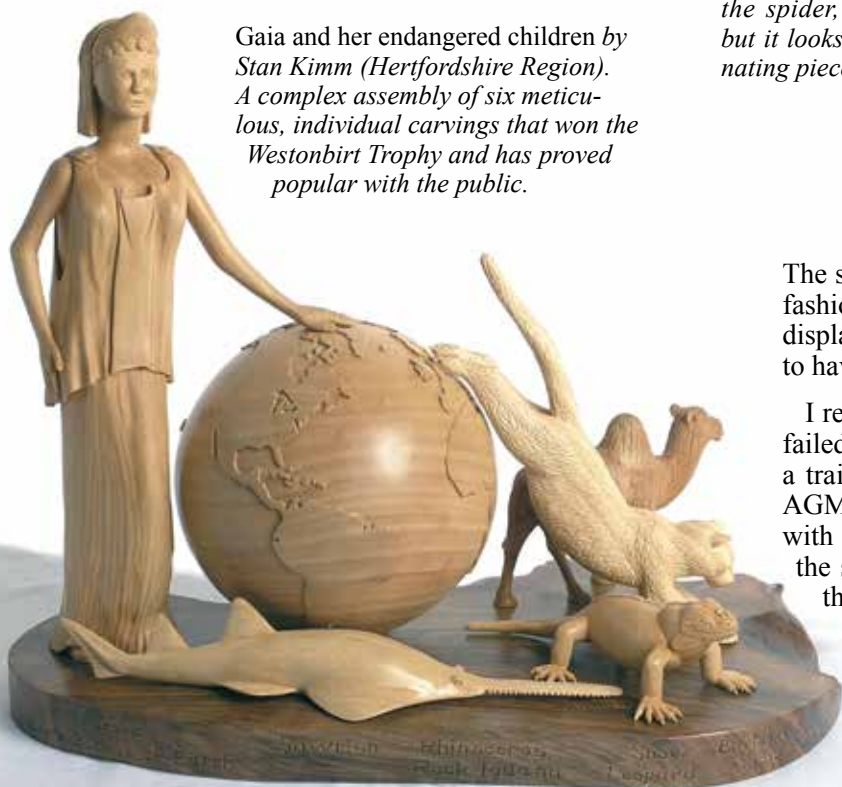
The 'Fircones' carving group had their own display. This is a BWA satellite group based in Birmingham.

Right: St Lawrence church, Birmingham and Eagle both in lime by Jim Oakley. I'm not sure who made the spider, behind, but it looks a fascinating piece!



The stands had been made to be broken down in flat pack fashion to fit into a trailer with the carvings. Our own displays would have been so much better had we been able to have these stands.

I read Dave Johnson's Update in the last *Gazette* that we failed to raise the cash to implement the plans to purchase a trailer. I evidently misunderstood what happened at the AGM because I understood that we had voted to go ahead with the purchase of the trailer, and that the increase in the subscriptions to £20 would help in covering this and the insurance increase plus the new excellent coloured *Gazette*. I hope that the committee do all in their power to help even, as Dave put it, with 'an amended version'.



Gaia and her endangered children by Stan Kimm (Hertfordshire Region). A complex assembly of six meticulous, individual carvings that won the Westonbirt Trophy and has proved popular with the public.



Copy in lime of an 18th century mirror from the V & A Museum, by Andrew Mather. Some of you may recognise this from an illustration in Hasluck's Manual of Traditional Woodcarving.

Having finished the piece Andrew discovered that he could make an appointment to see it at the V & A (it is not currently on display). He did so, and took photos that would have been most useful – had he only known beforehand.

I have not seen the original, but wonder if it can live up to Mr Mather's 'copy'!



Above: Another of Andrew Mather's carvings, made while on a course in Birmingham. In the style of Gibbons, the chips and peas are Andrew's idea!

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The Second Annual Exhibition and Demonstration of Woodcarving Highgate Hall, Elton, Cambs. on the 13–14 October

It was once again a great success with an attendance of some 200 people over the two days.

Visitors were treated to a display of over 100 carvings of all shapes and sizes, in different timbers. With the exception of a separate display, which consisted of only works still in progress, these had all been completed during the last 12 months. Judging by the comments made during the day, everyone had a splendid time and the variety of subjects and the quality of the work duly impressed all.

In addition to the display, refreshments were dispensed by our Ladies in the kitchen, and in another room there were carving tools and timber on sale by local enthusiasts, who also reported a good attendance.



Many thanks are due, firstly to the members of the public who came along to see what woodcarvers do, and ask pertinent questions, and secondly to the club members who were either demonstrating, helping out in various ways, or who donated carvings to exhibit.

Overall, it was a very satisfying weekend for the organising committee, and who knows, it may be that we have made some converts to woodcarving, which of course was the main object of the exhibition.

If anyone reading this wishes to see the photographs of the carvings that were on display, all you need to do is log on to our Website (<<http://www.rockinghamforestcarvers.org.uk>>), then follow the links to 'Members Carvings' and the set 'RFC Show 2007'

Tony Smith

Regional Liaison Autumn Report

Food for thought from Bridie 'hotpot' Tonge

I really feel I have to put the record straight. Yes, Sarah [Lawrenson – Lancs Region] is right; I do love my food, but she got it wrong with the request for hotpot! My visit to the Yorkshire group coincided with the Lincolnshire group's visit, so an absolutely fabulous cold buffet was served up. My goodness what a feast! Everything *and* salad (well you have to do the five-a-day thingy). *And* to follow, homemade rhubarb crumble. At this point I have to say I don't have a sweet tooth... I had seconds. (Thanks Barbara.)

On my last group visit (Durham) it was fish and chips. I must stress that I did share my chips with a poor, unfortunate gentleman who did not have a lunch (but note, not the fish).

Well Westonbirt started out on a 'be good campaign', but waned at the first lunch. The nearest tea stand was serving homemade cakes: lemon drizzle, sticky toffee, walnut. You get the picture? The second day we went to the lunch van and had chips and mayo. But called off on the way back for afternoon cake! In the evening we had a pub meal (and pud) for dinner. The third day followed in a similar vein. The fourth day we had lunch at the tent. Oh, we did have good breakfasts as well. Weetabix, bacon butties, the usual and I made sure we had fresh fruit too. The one healthy meal consisted of veg curry and couscous, which *should* have been followed by chocolate fondue but we were too full, so we just had the chocolate the next day.

Oh, and by the way Regions, my favourite foods are hotpot, mushy peas and beetroot (not pickled) followed by egg custard tart (yum yum) with lashings of tea! Cheers to you all

Bridie

P.S. Do I still get the invites to visit I wonder? And yes, I do occasionally get round to do a little carving.

Around the Regions

N. Yorks & Durham at Westonbirt

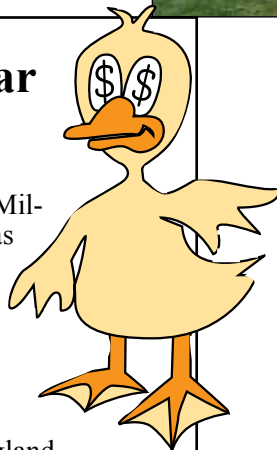
Three members from Durham & North Yorks travelled to the 2007 Festival of the Tree at Westonbirt. We arrived on Friday afternoon and left on Monday morning. As always the journey over Bank Holiday had it's fair share of interesting moments. However, the bit in between was full of wondrous moments. We were lucky enough to spend the time with people we wanted to be with! Even more importantly, we were with people who wanted *us* to be with *them*! In short a brilliant time and our thanks to *all* who made it so!



Vince O'Donnell and Dave Shires monkeying about at Westonbirt. But where did they find the new member, who is so conspicuously 'strong in th'arm and short in t'leg'?

The Million Dollar Duck?

We've all heard of the Six-Million Dollar Man, but news has reached the *Gazette*, via The BWA USA Region's Autumn Newsletter, of the first (and second) Million Dollar decoys.



In a private sale in New England, two pieces by Elmer Crowell (1862–1952), changed hands for a cool \$1.13 million each. Crowell was active over a long period and his work has long been considered the pinnacle of the decoy maker's art. These streamlined, painted birds, one a preening Pintail drake, the other a sleeping Canada Goose, are unusual because of the attitude of their necks and heads. Both were made around the beginning of the First World War.

Interest in collecting American folk art has soared in the last few years, and the broker who fixed the deal is quoted as saying that if the pieces had gone to open auction in the Spring it would not have surprised him if they had reached \$2–3 million.

*Courtesy of Rip Stangroom
USA Region*

Kent Region

Exhibitions 07–08 (so far)

Dec 17–21 This Precious Earth at Rochester

July 13–15 Kent County Show, Detling

Aug 24–27 Westonbirt Festival of the Tree

Malcolm Dye

Canterbury Group

Please note that I have had to change the location and time of the group. At present the details are as below:

The Canterbury wood carving group meets weekly during term times at the Canterbury High School on a Tuesday night from 7:30 - 9:30 pm. To cost varies according to attendance, as the charge is intended to offset the cost of the workshop hire, and is expected to be £25 for a 6 week or £5/session.

For more information please contact David Howard on 01227 265085, or e-mail: waddy100@hotmail.com.

David Howard

Around the Regions

Shropshire

November's visit from Michael painter was a great success. He carried on with the detailed treatment of hands that he began last time and also gave some guidance on lettering. The programme for 2008 is still under consideration – dates in the next *Gazette*.

Regular Meetings

Saturday meetings – Gerry proposed that our meetings start earlier in order to encourage people to do more carving in the time available. In future the room will be opened at 12 noon. We will attempt to start the business part of the meeting at 2 pm sharp!

Regular workshops second Saturday of each month at the Mary Webb School, Pontesbury.

Tuesday night carving sessions. Resume at Prestfelde School after School summer hols. From 7 till 9 pm, £1.

Thursday night carving sessions,
Commence on the 7 September from 7 till 9.30 p.m. See Jerry Hughes (01743 790735). Fees to be paid at first meeting.

For both of these evenings BWA membership is obligatory.

Rosa Ford

Hertfordshire

Our regular monthly meetings at the Ashley Cooper School continue to be well-supported and new members are always welcome to join us on the second Sunday of each month. Do, however, 'phone Stan Kimm (see back page) just to confirm date as we do occasionally need to change.

The weekend of 21/22nd July saw us manning the Herts Region stand at the Chilterns Show, held at Great Missenden, Bucks – just across the County boundary. In spite of the dreadful weather on Friday 20th, Stan & his wife Lynn were able to "set up" with a good display of carvings from the Group. Although the weather continued very changeable, attendance seemed to hold up well and the exhibits attracted quite some interest as did Jean Bitmead, who, with her trusty portable bench, demonstrated carving techniques by working on her relief carving depicting some aspects of the Vale of Aylesbury. We hope that some of those who watched her will be inspired to have a "go"

The carvings on display at the above show will be taken to Westonbirt for the Festival of Wood over the August Bank Holiday weekend – everyone must hope that the weather is kind for all those taking part in this very special event.

Over the weekend of 8th/9th of Sept., we, along with other branches of the BWA, will be participating in "Woodworks" a festival of wood, woodlands & wood products at Marston Moretaine in Bedfordshire. This event, now in its 5th year, is held at the Forest Centre.

As a result, our Sept. meeting will be on 16th, when we hope to hear from Jean regarding her course in Austria at the celebrated Geisler/Moroder School.

All in all, quite a busy summer for the group.

Cyril Brown

Lancashire

By the time this goes to press we will have held our 7th AGM (and unless I'm very surprised on the day I assume the usual candidates including myself will still be steering the ship!) and will have enjoyed a lovely slide show after the AGM – bribery to get more people to turn up does seem to work. Thanks to Tom and Alice Fleming for their excellent show.

2008

January 19	Carve in with Peter Muckalt 12-4
February 16	Talk /demo by Colin Kirkham 12-3
March 15	Carve in with Peter Muckalt 12-4
April 19	Talk /demo by Peter Benson 10-4
May 17	Carve in with Peter Muckalt 12-4
June 21	Talk/demo by Paul Cook 12-3
July 19	Club carve-in 12-4
August	NO MEETING
Sept 20	AGM 1-3

In addition we have been invited to exhibit /demonstrate at the Gujarat Hindu Temple in Preston, where Ivan has represented the club for the last few years and thoroughly enjoyed.

Also, we have been invited to exhibit and demonstrate at Red Rose Woodturning Club in Bilsborrow on February 23 – *an early call to the refreshments advisable, this was Bridie's famous cake meeting!* (allegedly to protect all bystanders!)

As you can see we have a fun twelve months planned and look forward to seeing you there. Happy carving!

Sarah Lawrenson

Essex

It has been a good year for exhibitions for our region and we all had a great time at Westonbirt this year. It is always great to meet up with the other regions and to enjoy the camaraderie that exists between us. Our thanks to Bryan and Gloucestershire for hosting the event and inviting us.

We attended the Woodworks show at the Forest Centre Country Park in Bedfordshire at the invitation of Hertfordshire Region and once again a very enjoyable weekend was had by the eight stalwarts who presented themselves at the event.

Our workshop meetings are still thriving, second Sunday of the month at West Hanningfield village hall and the second and fourth Mondays at the Bridgewater Drive Church at Westcliff on Sea. On Sunday 28th. October the Westcliff group will be leading worship in the church. This has become an established annual event much appreciated by the church and club members alike. Our sincere thanks to our member, Revd. Allan Cox for leading the service again, with reading and prayer support from the members. There is always a display of carving at these services and a chance to chat over a cup of tea after worship.

We have been invited to exhibit at Southend Central Library in the New Year, 2–16 January. We love this venue as the exhibits remain in situ for a fortnight and we steward and demonstrate our art every day. Last time we were there, we had 23 members attending overall and 42 members sent in carvings for display. We also had over 150 favourable written comments from the public left at the library.

Ted Jeffery

West Hanningfield & Outside Events

Nov 11 Normal workshop

Dec 9 Christmas buffet lunch. bring along your latest carvings, eat drink and be merry

Jan 2–16 Southend Library.

Westcliff

2nd and 4th Monday each month

Workshops at URC Church Hall, Bridgewater Drive, from 10 to 4, £3 for the day.

For more information, and details of our regular monthly (West Hanningfield) and fortnightly Westcliff meetings contact me, Jean Weston on 01268 758676 or e-mail JeanLWeston@aol.com .

Jean Weston

Hampshire

Here are our venues for the beginning of 2008

6 Jan Sutton Scotney

3 Feb Chandlers Ford

All venues are village halls. We meet at 10.00, bring pack lunches, have our monthly meeting and also hold a raffle. Tea coffee biscuits etc. are available. We pack up at 16.00 hrs.

Visitors are welcome to come and see what we are up to; details from John Dixon (01794 389 377). We look forward to meeting our visitors.

John Dixon

restorart@talktalk.net

British Woodcarvers Association

Application for membership



Surname (Mr/Mrs/Ms).

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Region (if any).....

Category:- Please Tick one box only.

Hobbyist ☐

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Subscription rates: Full membership - £17

Junior membership - £5

Junior membership is available to those under 16. Junior members have full membership rights except the right to vote at the AGM

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 issue: submit to editor by 18 January '08**

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