

THE WOODCARVERS *Gazette*



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Autumn 2014



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Mark Baker

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Peter Vernon

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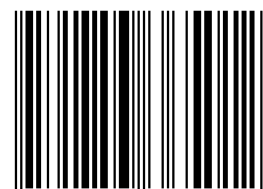
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Woodpecker by Peter Vernon

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NOTICES

Membership Update

Dear Carvers,

Firstly I would like to give my sincere thanks to everybody who has helped me get through my first Membership Renewal session. A special 'Thank You' to all the Regional Leaders, Treasurers, Secretaries etc. who not only helped me get the database up to date but collected Fees and sent in either a single regional cheque or a bunch of personal cheques from their region.

When I took over the job from Lyn McCracken, who had held the job in a temporary position, we had a database of 921 paid up members. It soon became apparent that quite a few people who should have been on the list were not and by 1st June I had increased our number of potential members for 2014-15 to 966. These extra people came from queries of people who were not receiving their Gazette and from cross-checking regional leaders' lists with mine. If in doubt, as the membership year was coming to an end, these people were all added to the database as potential members for this year.

As I write this article on the 21st August, the paid up membership for this year stands at 877, which includes 10 Life members and 80 new members. Of the potential list of 966 that I started with 797 have renewed, 42 are definitely not renewing and the remaining 127 have not yet renewed but I live in hope. My greatest concern is the number of members that we lose after 1 or 2 years of membership. Records going back any length of time are a bit scarce but:

Of the 175 new members in 2012, 56(32%) were lost after one year and a further 34 (20%) were lost after year two. Over two years we have lost half of our new recruits.

Of the 151 new members in 2013 only 93 (62%) have so far renewed, i.e. a loss of 38%.

Regularly losing half of our new recruits within two years cannot be good for the BWA. We have also lost 25 of our longer standing members that I know of, mainly due to old age and illness. It behoves us all and especially regional leaders, to do what we can to motivate and retain our new recruits.

My thanks again to you all for helping me through my first renewal session. If you have any thoughts or ideas to do with membership renewal, payment, organisation etc. please share them with me; there may be a little gem out there somewhere that nobody has thought of!

John Tybjerg



EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Autumn 2014 issue of The Woodcarvers Gazette. I hope everyone enjoys reading this issue; there are a few interviews and a look at this year's International Woodcarving Congress in the US.

There are a few product reviews in this issue, which I hope will be relevant to some of you. I will try to include more in the future if it proves a popular item.

If any of you visit a wood show or related exhibition, please feel free to do a write-up and send me some photos of your experience.

As ever, please send me anything that you think might be suitable to print in the next issue, including any recommendations for who to interview, etc.

Just a quick note about regional groups: if you are a member and far away from a BWA group, you can always try to a new group in your area. If you would like advice about this or would like some leaflets to help you canvas your local area, please get in touch with David Shires, the publicity officer or Eileen Walker, the regional liaison officer.

Until the Winter issue, happy reading and happy carving.



Jason Townsend

Renewal Reminder

This is just a reminder for those that have not yet renewed their membership. An annual payment of £20 is due on 1st of June to renew your BWA Membership. If you know anyone that has not renewed but would like to, please direct them to the website where they can download a copy of the form. Renewal can be paid by:

Standing Order:

You are still welcome to use standing orders for payment of your membership. Anybody that wants to set up a Standing Order payment for next year should contact the Membership secretary for a blank Mandate

Postal Renewal:

Please use the form included as an insert in the last issue of the Gazette, or download and print a copy of the form from the website.

Through your Regional Leader:

Your Regional Leader may be willing to collect Renewal Payments. Check with them.

OUT & ABOUT



The photo on the left was taken on a recent visit to Sizergh Castle, a National Trust property near Kendal. It was taken in the hall as you enter the castle itself and the beasts form part of their coat of arms.



The picture below left shows part of the intricate 'Inlaid Room' at the castle.



The Photos above and to the right were taken up at Center Parcs Penrith, where they seem to be introducing more wooden sculptures of different nature-based varieties all the time!

By Sarah Lawrenson

REVIEW

Axminster HBS350N Bandsaw

I work with all sorts of different hardwoods but nearly always need to reduce the timber in size; if you are going to carve a small thing but someone has given you a whole log, it just isn't practical to try and do that with hand tools. I have been using a 250W bandsaw for some time but it was taking up to 15mins to make a cut in some timbers. I therefore decided to upgrade. I chose the 850W Axminster HBS350N.

This is a large machine even though Axminster grade it for the hobby market. It is about 100Kg and you will need two people to assemble it. I believe that it is manufactured abroad. When assembling it I did find some of the metal had not been machined to as high a standard as I would have liked but for the money, you're getting a whole lot of machine. It comes with a blade already installed which may

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help some people. I haven't had chance to buy lots of different blades for it yet but it seems to be a good quality and powerful bandsaw. They do say that the bandsaw is probably the most versatile piece of workshop equipment and I certainly believe it is. The saw fence is very good. The only addition that I would have liked is a blade tension gauge but for the money this is a great machine.

By The Editor

TIPS

Here are some useful items to have when painting your carvings:



- 1) Mini-Pot storage for paint mixes
- 2) Cheap acrylic paint brushes bought on "special offer" at Art shops or Discount Stores
- 3) Mini-paint brushes, available from most model shops
- 4) Small china dishes - ideal for mixing paint or finishes - easy to clean up afterwards.

Here are some more useful items to keep handy:



- 1) Paper Towel for wiping away dust, spills, excess varnish, paint etc., blotting overloaded brushes, emergency wound cover.
- 2) Teaspoon - handle for opening paint cans, stirring small quantities of paint or varnish. Bowl for transferring liquids to another receptacle for mixing.
- 3) Wooden coffee stirrers (nice and flexible, free from Waitrose) - use inside a folded piece of Abranet to smooth awkward corners - easily trimmed to size required and surprisingly tough and durable.
- 4) Coins - perfect for resting items on to dry during varnish and paint operations.

With the birth of our first grandchild 11 months ago, I started carving a few wooden animals for him, making wooden building blocks and then making some toys for his 2-year-old cousin from the pattern in the book 'Natural Wooden Toys'.



I am now moving on to design some of my own patterns and from all these activities am getting plenty of practice in with painting and finishing. It has been a bit of a learning curve to say the least.



The 'chew' test!

It took me some time but I finally tracked down some EU baby approved wood stains (Earthborn) and Water based satin varnish (Rustins). The beeswax mixed with Walnut Oil mentioned in the 'Natural Wooden Toys' book has also given a great baby friendly finish.

By Janet Robinson



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MEMBER OFFER

Chris Pye & Carrie Camann have been kind enough to offer BWA members a two-week trial of their online carving school WoodcarvingWorkshops.

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<https://www.woodcarvingworkshops.tv/bwa>



By The Editor

REVIEW

Flexcut Knife Strop

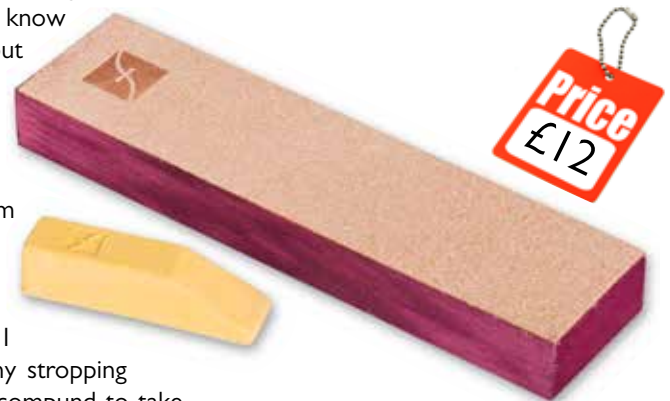
The Flexcut Knife Strop is a wood-backed strip of leather with a small bar of Flexcut Gold honing compound. The strop is well made although the leather is rather thin. That being said, the thickness of the leather doesn't detract from the effectiveness of the strop though. It is a good width, being two inches wide and eight inches long. It's nearly an inch wider than my own strop that I compared it with. The extra width came in handy for knives with blades in excess of an inch or two in length.

This product does raise a question in my mind; am I stropping or honing? I am

not that experienced so I might be wrong (please let me know your thoughts on this) but if I am using a honing compound like Rouge or Flexcut Gold, then I must be honing and not stropping. I am only stropping if I am using the leather strop without a compound. Based on that thought, I don't think that I do any stropping because I always use a compound to take off that little extra bit of metal to get a highly polished finish. I'd love to hear the thoughts of some more experienced BWA members, regarding stropping and honing.

Overall, this is a very good value strop.

Available from www.axmister.co.uk



For the current price tag, I don't think you can go wrong with this strop. It is of course possible to make your own but this strop is nicely made and is ready to go, straight off the shelf.

By The Editor



This is just a quick update on the WWI Remembrance Project. There have been about 40 submissions which has been a brilliant response.

BWA WWI REMEMBRANCE PROJECT

I am now in the process of organising venues to put on a small exhibition. I will keep you informed on the venues and dates through your regional leaders.

I will have some photos of the exhibition and all of the carvings in the winter issue. I thought we might be able to auction off the carvings as a wall display in the Royal British Legion's auction next year but I will

have more information in the winter issue.

Thank you to all of you who have made a carving for the project.

By The Editor

Annual General Meeting 2015

The next BWA AGM will take place some time in May but the venue is as yet undecided. We would like to ask everyone if they have any suggestions for a venue. The venue needs to be fairly central to the UK so that those members at the fringes don't have to travel too far.

Usually the AGM is hosted by and organised by a regional group of the BWA. I would like to ask the question as to whether this ought to be the case in 2015 or whether a committee could be set up to organise a stand-alone event: a festival of woodcarving. It might be:

- Open to the public (perhaps for an entrance fee)
- Space for trade stands (they would pay for their pitch)
- Space for professional carvers to put up gazebos outside to sell their wares (they would pay for their pitch)
- Every regional group showing some of their carvings at a stand or set of tables
- set time for lectures and AGM
- seminars and workshops
- Carving competitions (open to BWA members, judged by the public)

It would need a lot of organising and a venue that can offer all this space for a small price. If you have any suggestions or would like to volunteer to be on an organising committee, please email the national committee.

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WESTONBIRT THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM

2014

Treefest, the annual festival of the tree at Westonbirt national arboretum took place on 23rd, 24th and 25th of August. Every year, entries are invited for the Westonbirt trophy. On these pages are this year's entries and winner.



Cheetah

By Maurice Harper



Miner

By Derek Edwards



Blinking Ollie

By Richard Pepperd



Dragon

By Ian Todd



Anubis

By Richard Pepperd



Maori Triple Twist

By Brian Harris



Tripitaka

By Stan Kimm



Dragon

By Janette Stewart

Running Hare

By Pat Brooks



From an article in Woodcarving Magazine

Love Spoon

By Mark Davis



Owl

By Derek Edwards



Hector

By Stan Kimm



Birth Spoon

By Eric Danter



The Westonbirt trophy is awarded to the carving which takes the most votes in a public vote. Members of the public attending the event, vote for the carving that they would most like to take home. Third place went to Stan Kimm with his carving Tripitaka. Richard Peppard took second place this year with his owl 'Blinking Ollie'. First place and the trophy went to Stan Kimm as well, with his dog 'Hector'. All of the photographs were taken by Richard Peppard.



Lynn Kim congratulating Richard on second place



Stan Kimm receives the Westonbirt trophy from his wife Lynn

BWA Woodcarvers @ Cowper and Newton Museum, House and Gardens in Olney, Bucks

On Sunday 20th July, lucky with the weather again, I was delighted to invite my BWA friends along to what has become our annual get together at the Cowper and Newton Museum in Olney, Bucks. It's a great day for promoting the BWA in North Bucks, whilst also helping to raise funds for the charity-run museum.



Many visitors expressed an interest in a BWA region being set up in North Bucks. The nearest region to this area is Terry Nokes' BWA Bedford region, so we pointed all interest in his direction. However, I have taken note of the more local need for a new region, so will investigate possibilities.

It was lovely to see how wood carving can appeal to any age, to see imaginations grow with soap carving confidence and to hear the 'chip, chip, chip' of our woodcarvers in action, all set in the idyllic 18th century courtyard and gardens. My huge thanks go to Michelle, Orlov, Dave and Hugh from BWA Essex and to Terry, Janet, Alan, Rosie, Stan and Lynn from BWA Herts for coming to support my BWA summer event. We'll be back together again next year too, all being well, so do join us if you can! I'll bake a cake!

This year, as their new manager, I was able to share so much more about the



venue with my BWA friends. The Cowper and Newton Museum celebrates William Cowper (poet, letter and hymn writer) and is set in his home where he lived from 1768-1786. The building is full of Georgian charm with sloping floorboards, low doorways and many of his personal knick-knacks linked to fascinating tales! We also celebrate John Newton as here he was curate of St Peter and St Paul Church in Olney, and wrote the globally famous hymn 'Amazing Grace'! Newton mentored William Wilberforce, and is remembered for his work in the anti-slavery movement. He was great friends with Cowper and together they wrote the 'Olney Hymns'



many of which we still sing today. We also tell the story of the history of lace making as this was the main industry here in the 1700's. Our current display of WWI local stories is poignant, sharing family history in our community. Do come and visit us! www.cowperandnewtonmuseum.org.uk



Wood carving is such a lovely hobby – you can't help but relax when carving. The BWA is a great way to chill out with friends, make new friends and to get advice when you've lost your whittling way!

By Paula Noble



Warwick Woodcarving Group @ Kenilworth show

With a long history of woodcarving in the town, the Warwick Region Woodcarvers group formed over 25 years ago, and three of its earliest members are still actively involved today.

Originally, regular monthly meetings held in church and village halls were simply to chat, share ideas and discuss carving techniques, and in time they developed into proper workshop evenings. The excellent facilities found at local schools made these hands-on sessions possible, which both sustained and stimulated wider interest in the group. The Department Head of our current 'home' – Trinity Catholic School in Leamington Spa – is especially supportive.

Membership grew following exhibitions across the Midlands including Westonbirt Arboretum, Leicester, Kenilworth and Daventry. An important factor was demonstrating a real enthusiasm for carving, and we are fortunate in having several professional carvers in what is now a 30-strong group.



Once a gathering of experienced men-only carvers; we're delighted that beginners, teenagers and ladies all find our weekly sessions interesting, enjoyable and well- worth attending. A major element in achieving such diversity is the relaxed, informal atmosphere that we work hard to preserve. The group includes a 'professional' CRD-attested tutor who shares his carving skills and further mentoring comes from the other experienced members.

By Valerie Sylvester

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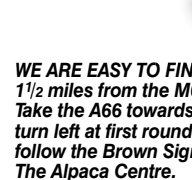


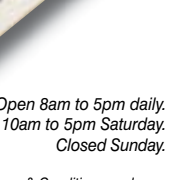










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A woodcarver's Test Piece ~ Carving a Seashell ~

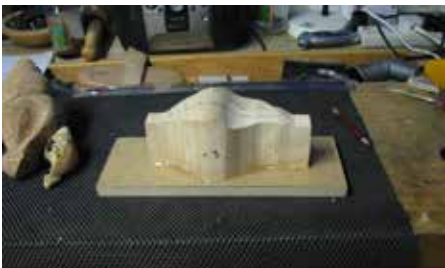
Whilst on the Norfolk beaches recently with our granddaughters, we spent many an hour collecting and marvelling at the wide variety of sea shells. Now here was a subject for carving: the sea shell is a complicated wonder of nature and could be quite a challenge to replicate.



The shell chosen may have the name – Fasciolaria Filamentosa, but the list and variety of shells is enormous so I may well be wrong.



I band sawed two sides and ensured I had those little extras of wood at either end to which I could hold it later. After hot gluing it to a piece of MDF, I was ready to start.



The difficulty with this carving was establishing the spiral effect, similar to a volute or a scroll, and being aware of the fact that the shell is far from symmetrical about the centre line. The identification of high spots by the placement of an X helped considerably from wandering too far from where you had to go.



The process reminded me of my days back in the fifties as an aircraft instrument fitter, when we had to complete many a test piece. This carving was proving to be similar in its demands; a woodcarvers test piece.

Getting the carving to look anything like the shell was taking a great deal of patience, careful observation and a light touch with the chisels. It was taking time as I found I had to continually go round and round the spiral, taking shavings off here and there to get it balanced. As always I was finding the larger chisel I used the easier it was to achieve the necessary curves. I found Henry Taylor chisels numbers 3 & 5, both bull nosed, ideal. It was a case of taking a few shavings off, sanding, reviewing and then repeating the process.



The carving was proving to be a challenge and I hadn't even reached the difficult parts.



Photos certainly helped in identifying problem areas



Eventually I made a start on giving this shell some texture, not easy as there are ridges and hollows in all directions. Use of a fluter proved invaluable especially when used on its side.



After a final review and internal sand I applied my usual finish of diluted Danish Oil followed by light beeswax.



My Conclusion: Excellent subject as a carvers test piece that will help improve observation skills and handling of tools. I enjoyed the exercise and can certainly recommend it, have a go.



By Mick Stidever

BWA Hertfordshire @ Oaklands Fair in St Albans

In mid-June, due to a short notice request from the event, Janet and I were the sole woodcarving representatives at the Oaklands Fair in St Albans. Oaklands College St Albans campus has an agricultural base.

Presumably due to the short notice, we were in fact the only craft-based organisation demonstrating, and we therefore received a lot of attention. We only had our own carvings on display and a few photos of some of Stan Kimm's work.



The children were just as interested as the adults and we had many questions to answer. We were kept very busy all day answering questions (and doing very little carving!) and we both lost our voices towards the end, but it was very worthwhile. We have gained one new member from the event, who came to our next club session together with an equally enthusiastic friend (who has since unfortunately been sent on a work assignment abroad for a few months) but we hope that others may follow!

The only 'photo we have was taken by our eldest daughter, who fleetingly dropped in with my Father's Day card!

By Alan Robinson

BWA Durham & North Yorkshire @ Great Yorkshire show

Two members of the club were prize winners at this year's Great Yorkshire show in Harrogate.

Mick McCabe won first prize for his carving of a human skull and Maurice Walker gained a 'highly commended' for his carving of a bear and her cub.

Maurice was one of the original founder members of the club when it was formed in 2000 and has been a prize winner at the show on numerous occasions.

Mick joined the club in 2012 and his prize-winning entry was one of his very first carvings.

Both members have done our club proud and hopefully their success will encourage other members to enter carvings in future shows.



By Tracey Chapman

An Interview with Gabriel Hemery

Gabriel Hemery is a forest scientist, an author, a blogger and a keen amateur photographer of trees and forests. Gabriel is the CEO of the Sylva Foundation and shares some of his thought with us now...

Is it possible to sum up why you like trees?

I think it is simply that I was brought up in a beautiful part of Devon, on the edge of Dartmoor, and spent all my time out in the woods. Later I suppose this affinity grew into appreciation and a deeper environmental concern about their future, and our relationship with them via forestry.

How did you get interested in photographing trees?

I've always enjoyed photography, and given my professional interests in trees, it was natural I suppose that photographing them would become a passion.

Have you tried any woodcarving?

A little. Before my daughter was born I self-taught myself woodturning, and then became interested in making rocking horses. I made three for my nieces but none of my own children unfortunately - I simply ran out of spare time!

Should we make more use of natively grown hardwood timber and if we do will it help increase the amount of woodland within Britain?



Ancient walnut in Kyrgyzstan

'Native' is not a term I think you or any of us should dwell on. It is an outmoded and unhelpful term in the face of rapid environmental change. I wholeheartedly agree that we should make more of home-grown timber (hardwood and softwood). The first benefit - and in my view this is a priority - will be bringing more of our woodlands into good condition. Lack of management is largely responsible for declining woodland biodiversity. Ultimately, if we can revive our wood culture, then planting trees will have be supported by stronger economic drivers.

Wood culture - what do you mean by it, do we have one?

'The stewardship of of woodland and the use of forest produce for a sustainable future' - this is the definition we have adopted in the Sylva Foundation, the charity which I co-founded five years ago. Do we have one in Britain? I believe that it has been rather moribund in both of the two aspects in this definition - we know for instance that about half of our woodlands are not being managed, while wood has become widely substituted with manmade materials. In a broader dimension, society's connection with forests and wood has become more distanced, to the point that felling a tree may be seen as a bad thing even though wood is still a popular material. Wood culture is a central theme in The New Sylva and it is an all embracing concept that deals with the many facets of our



relationship with trees, forests and timber.

What inspired you to write a new edition of a book seen by many as a seminal work in forestry?

It is in one sense a continuation of the work that I support while working for the Sylva Foundation. The book is another vehicle by which we can reach out to the general public and perhaps reintroduce readers to the wonders of modern forestry. I become very aware, and concerned, while undertaking various education projects with the charity, that so many people held misguided views about forestry that often harked back to notions of industrial forestry born in the mid 20th century in Britain, or somehow associated forest management with deforestation of rain forests. Modern forestry is amazingly complex yet can support all our interests while not compromising our environmental responsibilities - this is, of course, what we mean by sustainability.

I also wanted to celebrate John Evelyn's amazing work Sylva first published in 1664, and I felt the 350th anniversary this year was a wonderful opportunity. I believed that revisiting his wonderful prose and bringing it up-to-date would make a compelling story for modern readers.

What will our forests 'look' like in 50 years time?

The new emerging buzz-word in forestry is 'resilience'. Clearly to support forests that are truly resilient we need to ensure that they are much more diverse than at present, both at the level of individual woodlands, and across the landscape. We need to more open-minded in



Rowan on Dartmoor

terms of species - including being less precious about 'nativeness' - and much more aware of the genetic component (i.e. variation within species). Our forests need to be more diverse in age - less single age monocultures - and in structure.

The simple answer is that our forests may look more like some of the best current examples of 'continuous cover forestry' currently practised at relatively few places in Britain. I hope that we can put a stop to planting more 'green fuzz' - woodlands planted with little thought to longterm sustainability, often with a view simply to greening the landscape or raising money through some vacuous tree planting scheme.

What do you think about the current apparent explosion in tree pests and pathogens?

Of course it is deeply worrying. We should however be conscious that we are much more aware of pests and pathogens than we have been in the past. I do think we should be careful not to over-react and make sure that we learn from previous experiences. We should certainly work harder to control our borders in terms of plant health controls, work ever harder to monitor the state of health in our forests (ideally involving woodland managers in the process), and encourage funding bodies and government to make more funding available to support much-needed research. I welcome the fact that it has



Broadleaved trees on a misty dawn

opened more minds to the importance of genetic and species variation.

What concerns you most about the future for our trees and forests?

Environmental change - given the long timescales of forestry yet our short human lifespans, we must find more ways to overcome short-sighted decision making. Only then can we ensure our forests are resilient to what may come, whether it be wetter winters, summer fires, disease or pest outbreaks and so on.

I'd like to talk about what excites me about the future for our trees and forests. I believe that we are at the cusp of a revolution in our relationship with forests and our use of wood. Engineering advances are continually making wood fibre ever more relevant to modern society - just look at the recent use of wood in the timber lattice roof at the Canary Wharf Crossrail station - while nanoengineering has the potential to replace all plastics with wood-based products. With some imaginative and bold thinking I don't see why we couldn't find ways to overcome competition for land - from development and food production - and aim to double our forest cover. It is shocking that we are among the least-wood countries in Europe. More trees and forests, and therefore more home-grown wood, will benefit society in every way imaginable.

For further information, please visit:

www.thetreephotographer.com
www.gabrielhemery.com
www.sylva.org.uk



Photograph showing the first tree (a magnolia) is installed in the roof garden above canary wharf crossrail and the detail of the roof construction

By The Editor

An Interview with Mark Baker

Most readers will know Mark Baker as the editor of Wood Carving magazine and the GMC's other Woodworking magazines. In his interview he shares a bit about himself and how he got started.

How did you get into carving and what was the first thing that you carved?

I started carving in a very small way during my apprenticeship after leaving school. I say 'a small way' in as much as I was a carpenter and joiner working on a whole range of work. The company was situated in Essex, right on the Suffolk border and we did a lot of work on the old houses – many of which were timber framed. At times we had to replace sections in the house framing, fire surrounds and such like and some of these were decorated. The first item I carved was a replacement patera for a fireplace, my next piece was a corbel and there were various sections and pieces for carved bargeboards. I cannot say I was proficient, but I had to learn fast and also work with only a few tools that, now, would not be my tools of choice. It always amazes me what wonderful work the old craftspeople of past created, with so little tools.

Given the variety of ways that you can work with wood, what settled you on turning and carving?

While I am best known now for turning and - by virtue of being editor of

Woodcarving magazine - carving second, I still make furniture and of course will help out friends with the odd building and DIY project every-so-often. I suppose that I graduated to turning and carving because the two processes gave me a lot of freedom and I don't like being constrained in what I make – or rather, try and want to make. I think also the change was reinforced when I worked at a major Sheffield-based tool company, which primarily focused to turning tools with carving and general woodworking tools also forming part of the product range.

Where do you draw your inspiration from, are there any artists that inspire you?

I draw my inspiration for everywhere possible, even from discussions with people, when you bounce ideas around in conversation. I am a very visual person and I also like touching textured surfaces on items such as fabrics, plants, animals, buildings, ceramics, metalwork and such like. The combination of touch and sight is powerful. I also keep a sketchbook of things so I don't forget and more recently, pictures too.

As for artists that inspire me: Tilman Riemenschneider's work just amazes me every time I see it. I also love the work of Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth. The list could go on, but I think all three were not only marvelous artists, but also freethinkers who constantly pushed the boundaries. There are so many artists – professional and amateur - I could mention, from so many disciplines that I have not enough space to mention them all.



What is your favourite wood to work?

For carving it has to be lime, followed by walnut. For turning it has to be sycamore. All are so versatile in their own way, hold detail well and can be worked in so many ways.

What is your most hated wood?

For carving, that would have to be yew. I was once asked to create a stylised carving for someone, in a piece that came from their back garden. While I love the wood, it does not - for me - work nicely with hand carving tools. For turning it would have to be wenge. I think that while this looks delightful when finished, it is a foul concoction of nasty fibres. It also produces a lot of dust when turning.

Have you dabbled in any media other than wood?

I did hand metal-working for one year and loved it. I have also dabbled in



Trying desperately to finish off a relief panel...



Metal patinated turned and carved bowl

ceramics, stone, plastics and glass. I just love the making and creative processes. I think that is true of everyone who works and makes things with their hands. There is something fascinating about making something yourself.

Do you think that carving is becoming more or less popular with time?

I think we are at a crossroad to be honest. This applies not only to carving, but all woodworking disciplines, hobbies and crafts. People talk of decline in many areas, but it is hard to tell. There are more pressures on people's time and there is so much more for people to do than in the past. The turning and carving network is very well coordinated, but there does seem to be fewer projects being created by people in clubs. People can access information in so many ways now that it is harder to track what is happening and what people are doing. I think as a passionate collective of people, we should do everything we can to encourage youngsters and also those who are 18-40 years old, who are likely to have a bit more time and can get about more easily transport-wise. We all know the age demographic of carving clubs is on average 60+ and some say higher than that. We must do everything we can to ensure our vibrant community of woodworkers stays that, vibrant and well. I think there is a natural innate desire for people to be creative and make something and anything we can do to encourage people to explore that is good.

Do you think that we ought to do more to take advantage of native hardwood?

Yes, without question. New European laws apply to timber being imported now, so we can buy with more confidence than in the past as to where it is from and its sustainability. That said, we have so many wonderful timbers here, do we really need those from overseas?

I think turners like to have something that is different, more so than carvers. While I certainly use timber from overseas for variety, my usage has drastically dropped and I am using up older stock now. I am concentrating more on UK and European timbers and those closer to home that have a story behind them.

By The Editor

BOOK REVIEW

The New Sylva by Gabriel Hemery & Sarah Simblet

This book is quite unlike any other that I have seen or read on the subject of trees and forests. It is part history book, part at work, part encyclopedia, part identification guide and part ode to the tree.

The New Sylva coincides with the 350th anniversary of the original *Sylva* by John Evelyn. This is a re-creation, embellishment and expansion of Evelyn's work. It is described as 'a Discourse of Forest & Orchard Trees' but this doesn't seem to do justice this wonderful work. It is part science, part art and



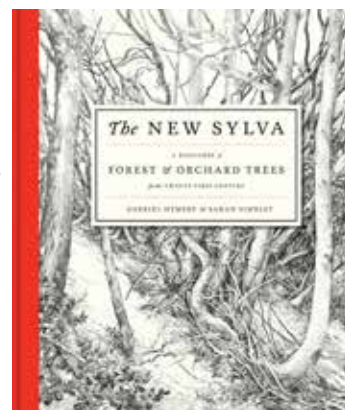
Sarah's highly detailed illustration of Elder in fruit

part history; it provides information on all aspects of trees and forests and a commentary on where we go from here. I find it a remarkable work that I will keep looking back at again and again.

Project Gutenberg have made the original work available on the Internet and although I not sure that I agree with their stance on copyright, I present it here for completeness: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/20778. It is a stunning work for its period but I think that Gabriel and Sarah have produced a work that is both its equal and better. I believe that you can by a reprint of the original *Sylva* but you would be missing out.

The New Sylva describes the history, features and future of many well-known species and some less well known species too. Beautiful illustrations from Sarah bring the book to life, I only wish that I could produce drawings of such fine quality. This books represents a love affair with trees and forests that we should all have.

It is very refreshing to me to see a book like being published in a time where we as a nation are still failing to embrace the



tree as key to our future. Getting outside and getting to know our trees should be compulsory. Slowly things are beginning to change; it feels like the right time for this book. Wood is being looked at again as an industrial construction material and even in the craze of 3D printing, wood fibre is available as a construction material.

I particularly like Gabriel's commentary on how each species can be managed in the future or how it can be used to greater effectiveness.

So much has happened to our trees and forests in the 20th century from losing ancient woodlands, to losing the Elm almost entirely from the treescape, to the dwindling of our orchards and nutteries. I am hopeful of a future where we have been able to turn all this around and be all the better for it. *The New Sylva* is going to be part of this story.



Sarah's wonderful illustration of Willow

By The Editor

An Interview with Tim Atkins

Do you carve exclusively with a chainsaw or do you use hand-tools as well?

I mostly carve using only chainsaws, it is possible to achieve quite a fine detail / finish with only a chainsaw. I do also use a few other tools to refine textures and details such as power sanders and rotary tools and traditional carving gouges.

How did you get into chainsaw carving?

My life as a chainsaw carver started whilst cycling around New Zealand in 1997/98. I started whittling and tried bone carving and was intrigued by the process of carving. I have always enjoyed making things and after my return from travelling I really didn't want to go back to my career in electronics, I want to become a craftsman. It was on a camping trip to Cornwall soon after that I discovered a man chainsaw carving in a layby. The next week I bought my first chainsaw and acquired some logs and just had a go! Using my little experience I gained in NZ I just started whittling with a chainsaw instead of penknife. It wasn't long before I was carving in a layby..

What is the biggest piece that you have created so far?



Tim with his roosting Wyvern

The largest carving I have done to date is over 20 ft. It was at St Faith's, a private school in nearby Cambridge. It is a roosting Wyvern and various other wildlife and foliage carved from a huge Corsican pine that's starting to dangerously lean.



Train complete with carriages

How long do you usually spend on a carving?

A small basic carving can take as little as 20 minutes to create and some carvings can take up to 10 days as did the St Faith's Wyvern. Many of the Apes I have created for the adventure company Go Ape have taken 2 or 3 days to create. I also created a 35 ft cedar tree with 500 yew Monarch butterflies attached to it for the SAS Institute in Bucks.

Where do you draw your inspiration from?

My inspiration comes from lots of different things. I work in the woods and love the wildlife around me. Nature has some very beautiful shapes that suit chainsaws and logs, insects offer some very interesting shapes and forms. My travels in Asia also opened my eyes to world class sculpture and carving. My engineering background has also crept into my carvings with carvings of cars and campervans, giant skateboards etc.

Is chainsaw carving becoming more popular do you think?

Chainsaw carving has always been popular in USA but is gaining more momentum in the UK since I started 15 years ago. There are always new comers to the carving scene, some with astonishing



Tim at work on a Gorilla

creativity and skill.

What is your favourite wood to work with?

Some of my favourite timbers are Elm, Oak, Sweet Chestnut, Yew, Walnut, Cedar of Lebanon, Giant Sequoia.

Do you get worried about shakes or defects in the wood you use?

Over the years I have experimented with many types of timber and always try and work with or around the defects within the timber. When carving in the round I always try and design around the shakes by putting the important features in the most stable part of the log. Some timber I section into quarters or slabs depending on the timber being used.

If someone wanted to start chainsaw carving, do you have any tips on how they might start?

The safest way to start carving with



Jemima Puddle-Duck and foxy-whiskered gentleman

chainsaws is take a basic course in chainsaw use first. I didn't take a course until I wanted to go full time and start competing in National competitions like the English Open. There are a few carvers who offer basic courses in carving. I found it is all down to practice and experimentation, so just having a go is good as well.

How do you keep yourself safe while carving with a chainsaw?

Staying safe is the number one !

Chainsaws are not forgiving I always where my PPE (trousers, boots, etc.). Keeping tools sharp is very important too, so learning to sharpen is another skill that needs practice.



What is the tool that you just cannot do without?

My one tool I cannot do without is my small detail chainsaw. Its light, nibble and amazing what can be achieved without the need for any other finishing tools. Sometimes its good to leave things straight off the saw, it's quite easy to over carve something by refining it too much with other tools.

For further information on Tim and to see more of his work, please visit:

www.chaincreations.co.uk

www.artisanstructures.co.uk

By The Editor



Royston Woodie Group

I am writing to you on behalf of 'The Woodie Group', a small group of people in the Royston area that have an interest in 'all things wood'. We meet once a month and a whole variety of topics are discussed and investigated. After a visit to the European Woodworking show at Cressing Temple Barns we sought out, through the BWA, someone in our area who could provide a short demonstration one evening on wood carving. We were directed to Terry Nokes and we had our meeting in his wonderful workshop last Monday.



Terry's welcome and hospitality was brilliant and the evening was a huge success. It was so successful that we immediately arranged with him a possible date for next year when we hope to have a practical hands-on evening under his tuition.

Some of our group have expressed their thoughts and I have added a few of their comments below.

'Terry had clearly put a lot of work into preparing for our visit. He was an excellent ambassador for the BWA; able to pass on his considerable knowledge of woodcarving in a very friendly and engaging way. His enthusiasm for wood carving has left us all very much looking forward to having a go on our return visit.'

'Although Terry was nervous he gave us a good introductory chat and has me looking forward to a hands-on next year. Well done Terry keep going! See you next year!'

'Got to say it was a very interesting evening..... - the tools and techniques Terry covered was pretty broad and a lot of material was covered in a very short space of time. I personally feel the only thing he could have talked about a little more was power carving..... but

then this may well have been outside the remit for the evening. I would say I really enjoyed the evening and learnt a lot more about a subject I enjoy.'

'I certainly thought it was an interesting evening - quite different to what we've done before and well outside of my previous experience. Going back for a hands-on sometime next year would be brilliant! I was extremely impressed by Terry's warm welcome, and his extensive workshop facilities. His overview of the craft of woodcarving set the scene really well. I found it particularly interesting to see the differences as well as the similarities between the kind of woodworking I am familiar with - cabinetmaking - and the carving.'

'The evening was well organised and well presented with lots of information for people like me who have no experience of woodcarving. The array of tools was very interesting to learn about. Terry was a very amiable speaker and clearly explained the basics. A very enjoyable evening.'

'I felt for his first talk/demo it went very well.. He had obviously put a lot of thought and effort into his presentation. It was interesting and informative; his enthusiasm for the subject was obvious. I look forward to our next visit.'

As you can see we all had a great time. During the evening we had a visit from Paula Noble - photographs were taken and she, like Terry, promoted the BWA. We simply wanted to say 'thank you' to Terry and we thought that you ought to know about our visit.



By Rowland Penfold

CARVING KNIFE

SUPER TEST

Over the next few pages I put some of the best woodcarving knives to the test. It is by no means a test of all the many knives available but I hope you find it useful when you next look at buying a new knife. If there any knives that you would like to see in the next super test please email me and tell me your suggestions.

Editor's Notes

I have tried to represent the knives in this review as best I can. Some of the knives I have photographed myself and they may not look as good as they could, so please bear with me on this. In addition, some makers will supply just the blades for you to put your own handle on and in these

circumstances, I have put my own handles on them, so please don't be put off by my naive handles.

We each have our own carving style and our preferred blade and handle shapes. Please bear in mind that I am looking at these knives from the perspective of my own carving technique, which may not be

appropriate for your carving activities. To review these knives I have been carving seasoned hardwoods like Figured English Ash, Blackthorn, Black Walnut and Yew. I hope that this article may be of use to you and help you in the future. After all, every woodcarver needs a good knife on their bench.

By The Editor

Flexcut KN34 Skewed Detail Knife



Available from: www.axminster.co.uk

Blade Shape	Drop Point	Handle Shape	Lozenge
Blade Length	45mm	Handle Material	Ash
Blade Type	High Carbon Steel	Overall Length	165mm



In a departure from their whale-tail style of handles, Flexcut have released some new knives with lozenge shaped handles. These handles from Flexcut sit well in the hand and I can imagine them being comfortable for long carving sessions.

The KN34 has a drop point blade which feels substantial. It is quite a bit deeper than the other Flexcut blades that I have. The greater depth of blade supports

the skewed-back shape which is quite different for Flexcut; where their knives have traditionally had a straight cutting edge.

Flexcut say that this knife 'gives the user a different approach to a detail or paring cut'. It is a nice knife to use but doesn't suit my carving style. I use a lot of thumb-push cuts and fine paring cuts. The skewed nature of the blade means

that the tip of the blade has further to travel during these cuts. In my opinion, a blade of this style is better suited for long sweeping cuts. If your technique involves starting a paring cut with the tip of the blade, then this knife may be well-suited to you but if you are looking to use just the tip of the knife or you are making thumb-push cuts starting from the base of the blade, a skewed blade like this may not be best for you.

Flexcut KN35 Fine Detail Knife



Available from: www.axminster.co.uk

Blade Shape	Clipped Wharncliffe	Handle Shape	Lozenge
Blade Length	12mm	Handle Material	Ash
Blade Type	High Carbon Steel	Overall Length	155mm



This companion blade to the KN34 shares the same lozenge shaped handle but has quite an unusual blade shape. I guess if I would call it a clipped Wharncliffe shape. The blade is clipped on the underside where the bulk of a

Wharncliffe blade would usually be. This creates a small blade which has quite a good 'reach' on it. The message from Flexcut is that it allows a user to 'choke up' on the blade for more precise cuts. I found it to be a useful knife, not for every

situation but a very useful knife none-the-less. I really like the reach that the blade gives you compared to a traditional fine detail knife where you might have 20mm of blade before the handle starts, which can be restrictive.

Mora 120 Knife



Available from: www.toolsandtimber.co.uk



Blade Shape	Normal	Handle Shape	Lozenge
Blade Length	60mm	Handle Material	Birch
Blade Type	Laminated Steel	Overall Length	170mm



The Mora 120 sells in its thousands. It is a staple of many woodcarvers who work with greenwood. It has a normal shape blade with a full-length tang and steel Ferrule.

The blade has a length of 60mm and as such I find it quite difficult to use for a lot of my woodcarving. It has a thickness of

2.7mm so you can put your thumb quite happily on the back of the blade to push it but your hand that holds the knife can seem quite far away if you are trying to make very detailed cuts.

Where the Mora 120 comes into its own is when making long sweeping cuts when you have a lot of wood to get through.

This is especially useful when working with greenwood, where you would typically cleave off a piece of wood with an axe and adze which leaves a lot of waste wood to get through with your knives. The quality and feel of this knife are excellent and it's easy to appreciate why it is so popular.

Mora 106 Knife



Available from: www.toolsandtimber.co.uk



Blade Shape	Normal	Handle Shape	Lozenge
Blade Length	82mm	Handle Material	Birch
Blade Type	Laminated Steel	Overall Length	190mm



The companion blade to the Mora 120 is the 106, which shares many features with the 120 and is like an elongated version. Again, this blade is excellent for long

sweeping cuts and has a thick blade that you can put your thumb on the back of comfortably. I would say that this too is a great knife for carving greenwood but is

a little on the long side for carving harder seasoned wood where you may already have removed a lot of the waste wood with saws.

Chris Grant MiniMaC Knife

Available from: www.makemethis.chris.co.uk



Blade Shape	Normal	Handle Shape	Bulb
Blade Length	86mm	Handle Material	French Box (but varies)
Blade Type	52100 bearing steel	Overall Length	200mm



I featured Chris Grant's knives in a previous issue and have now had the chance to use one of them.

Although this is the largest knife in this super test, it is still squarely aimed at woodcarving. The quality of the blade and the finish is superb. The handle is comfortable and the blade is very

substantial. If I were carving greenwood, this knife would be fantastic for getting rid of excess wood and shaping my carving. The very broad blade allows the user to put a thumb behind the blade to help with detail carving.

Chris' blade is fantastic but larger than what I'm comfortable working with on

hard seasoned wood. This knife is easy to look after though and the ergonomic handle suits a knife of this weight. No other knife here suits carving in the great outdoors more than the MiniMaC Knife; It is a substantial and very well made piece of kit.



Pfeil Small Canard Knife

pfeil

Available from: www.classichandtools.com



Blade Shape	Sheepsfoot	Handle Shape	Whale Tail
Blade Length	30mm	Handle Material	Plum
Blade Type	(undisclosed)	Overall Length	162mm



The Small Canard Knife from Pfeil is a great detail knife with quality Plum handle and a blade that has been ground very thin.

This style of knife is that which I am most comfortable using. The Whale-tail handle

fits very easily in the hand and the blade length it excellent for adding those fine detail cuts. The blade is riveted in place for those who want a knife that they can be sure will last a very long time without the need of maintenance.

The width of the handle could have been a bit wider, which would have made the handle a bit more ergonomic. The blade is ground nice and thin to help with detail work but I would have liked the finish on the back of the blade to be a little better. All in all though, this is a great detail knife

Pfeil Rosenmesser

pfeil

Available from: www.classichandtools.com



Blade Shape	Wharncliffe	Handle Shape	Inverse Arch
Blade Length	50mm	Handle Material	Cherry
Blade Type	(undisclosed)	Overall Length	180mm



The Rosenmesser is a staple of the Pfeil chip-carving range. It has a similar blade to the Small Canard knife but has a blade length of two inches. The construction

of the knife is also similar but uses a cherry wood handle. This is a great knife for roughing out and removing excess wood. The handle could do with being

a bit more ergonomic but is none-the-less very comfortable. A great all-round knife.

Pfeil Detailshnitzmesser

pfeil

Available from: www.classichandtools.com



Blade Shape	Tapered	Handle Shape	Inverse Arch
Blade Length	45mm	Handle Material	Cherry
Blade Type	(undisclosed)	Overall Length	180mm



The Detailshnitzmesser shares the same handle and construction as the Rosenmesser. The shape of the blade makes it ideal for detail work. In fact the

straight cutting edge of the Pfeil knives reviewed here, all lend themselves to detail work and the thumb-push cut. I wouldn't recommend this knife for all

purposes but as a companion to the Rosenmesser, it is ideal. Good quality and construction.

Stubai 510501 Carving Knife



Available from: www.greatart.co.uk



Blade Shape	Wharncliffe	Handle Shape	Inverse Arch
Blade Length	40mm	Handle Material	Ash
Blade Type	(undisclosed)	Overall Length	200mm



The Stubai 510501 is very comparable to the Pfeil Rosemesser. The main differences being the depth of the blade (which is greater on the Stubai) and

the handle (which is slightly longer on the Stubai). Both are from their chip-carving ranges. The Stubai is a much heavier knife than the Pfeil and feels

more substantial with a longer and wider handle. A great all round knife for carving but for some applications, the handle feels a little too long

Stubai 510505 Carving Knife



Available from: www.greatart.co.uk



Blade Shape	Wharncliffe	Handle Shape	Inverse Whale Tail
Blade Length	40mm	Handle Material	Ash
Blade Type	(undisclosed)	Overall Length	200mm

The Stubai 510505 is much like the 510501. In fact this knife use the same blade as the 510501 but has a different shaped handle with a different finish.

Having the two knives side-by-side gave

me the opportunity to compare the shape of handle. The sort of inverse whale-tail shape of this knife give you more control than you have with the 510501. Both knives are comfortable in the hand but the 510505 feels much

more comfortable when i put my thumb on the back of the blade. Of the two, the 510505 would be my choice. A great knife for using with the thumb-push cut.

Stubai 510404



Available from: www.stubaidirect.com



Blade Shape	Wharncliffe	Handle Shape	Whale Tail
Blade Length	40mm	Handle Material	Black Walnut
Blade Type	(undisclosed)	Overall Length	165mm

The Stubai 510404 is sold as a blade only, so please excuse my crude handle. This blade is equivalent to that in the 510501 and 51055 knives but is slightly thinner.

The straight cutting edge makes a good detail knife but the depth of the blade means that this knife will be equally good at getting rid of lots of excess wood.

This is a good blade and there is enough blade that (should you choose to), you could grind to your own desired shape.

Stubai 510402



Available from: www.stubaidirect.com



Blade Shape	Normal	Handle Shape	Whale Tail
Blade Length	60mm	Handle Material	Black Walnut
Blade Type	(undisclosed)	Overall Length	185mm

The Stubai 510402 is also sold as a blade only, so please excuse my crude handle. The shape of this blade is normal but with a slightly concave edge towards the base of the blade. I'm not that

comfortable with a blade of this shape but it does have excellent reach due to the long and thin shape of the blade. This is definitely more of a detail knife and not suitable for all applications. The

blade is well made though and the finish on the back of the blade is great for putting your thumb against.

Kirschen 3358000 Carving Knife



»KIRSCHEN« WERKZEUGE
Spitzenprodukte deutscher Qualität

Available from: www.axminster.co.uk



Blade Shape	Wharncliffe	Handle Shape	Inverse Whale Tail
Blade Length	32mm	Handle Material	Hornbeam
Blade Type	(undisclosed)	Overall Length	180mm

The Kirschen 3358000 Knife is quite similar in shape to the Stubai 510505 but it has a shorter handle and the blade is smaller. This knife looks ideal for chip carving and detail carving alike. The

handle gives a good feeling of control and the blade is well finished. The handle is well thought out and has been designed very ergonomically. The top of the handle near the blade has been made

flat which helps to grip when placing the thumb there. The handle on this is the same length as the Pfeil Rosenmesser which feels more comfortable than the longer Stubai handles.

Ray Iles Whittling Knife



Available from: www.OLDTOOLSTORE.CO.UK

Blade Shape	Normal	Handle Shape	Lozenge
Blade Length	50mm	Handle Material	Beech
Blade Type	01 Tool Steel	Overall Length	175mm



The Ray Iles Carving Knife is very well made. The handle is a lozenge shape and the same length as that of the Flexcut KN34. The blade has a normal shape and is quite wide which makes it comfortable to put your thumb on. The handle is

comfortable and the lozenge shape is realised well. This knife is well suited to working greenwood as well as seasoned wood. Although for reasons that I have gone into earlier, the curved cutting edge doesn't suit my style of carving. The

blade does remain thick for most of the length of the blade, making it comfortable pushing the very tip with the thumb or finger.

Cape forge #3 Detail Carving Knife

Available from: www.capeforge.com

Blade Shape	Tapered	Handle Shape	Inverse Whale Tail
Blade Length	32mm	Handle Material	Angelique
Blade Type	W-I Steel	Overall Length	180mm



The Cape Forge Detail Knife has a mirror finish on the whole of the blade and the handle is exquisitely finished. The handle is quite an unusual design, being like an inverse whale-tail. It would be rather

uncomfortable for chip-carving but is surprisingly very comfortable when using it to make thumb-push cuts. This knife has a good weight about it but might be too heavy for some. I would definitely

recommend this knife to someone who is going to be doing a lot of detail work using thumb-push cuts. Using the knife to make paring cuts is also very comfortable. An excellent detail knife.

Nic Westermann Clip Point 25mm

Available from: www.nicwestermann.co.uk

Blade Shape	Clip Point	Handle Shape	Whale Tail
Blade Length	25mm	Handle Material	Black Walnut
Blade Type	Bandsaw Steel	Overall Length	155mm



The 25mm Clip Point Blade from Nic Westermann is supplied without a handle so please excuse my crude handle. The blade is expertly made and has a very comfortable bevel on the back of the blade to aid comfort. Compared to

the Stubai Blades, those from Nic are supplied highly polished and have a very high quality feel about them.

This blade is very good as a detail knife although I didn't like making paring cuts

with it but that may be down to the angle that I have set it in the handle. The bevel on the back of the blade where it has been clipped is so good that it feels very comfortable making thumb-push cuts with the very tip of the blade.

Nic Westermann Small Sloyd

Available from: www.nicwestermann.co.uk

Blade Shape	Normal	Handle Shape	Whale Tail
Blade Length	55mm	Handle Material	Black Walnut
Blade Type	Bearing Steel	Overall Length	175mm



Nic's Small Sloyd Blade is also supplied without a handle so again please excuse my crude handle. This is an excellent companion blade to the small Clip Point

blade. It is ideal for long sweeping cuts but the long thin shape of the blade make it very useful in detail carving as well. Again, the bevel on the back of the blade

really does make it very comfortable to use. This blade is good for working greenwood and seasoned wood as well.

Ben Orford Small Pick Knife



Available from: www.benorford.com

Blade Shape	Drop Point	Handle Shape	Lozenge
Blade Length	25mm	Handle Material	Elm
Blade Type	01 Tool Steel	Overall Length	142mm



The Ben Orford Small Pick Knife is one of the smallest in this test, having a blade length of 25mm. The blade is made very well indeed and has a lovely bevel on the back of the blade which aids comfort.

The handle is a simple faceted lozenge

shape and is not quite my cup of tea. However, it would not be difficult at all to carve the handle into a more desirable shape.

As for using the knife, the stubby little blade is great for detail carving. It is a bit

thicker and deeper than other small detail blades though and seems to be a blade you'd choose if you wanted a shorter blade but still needed something you could put some force behind. A great little knife.

Hock 1" Carving Knife



Available from: www.classichandtools.com

Blade Shape	Sheepsfoot	Handle Shape	Inverse Arch
Blade Length	25mm	Handle Material	Bubinga
Blade Type	High Carbon Steel	Overall Length	143mm



The Hock Tools 1" Carving Knife is a great little detail knife as well. The blade is ground very thin and the curve on the back allows for a good reach.

The handle looks quite plain but is actually very comfortable in the hand. The riveted design looks like it should last a long long time. The choice to have the

back of the blade align with the top of the handle is great for chip carving and for thumb-push cuts.

Hock 1 1/4" Detail Knife



Available from: www.classichandtools.com

Blade Shape	Tapered	Handle Shape	Inverse Arch
Blade Length	31mm	Handle Material	Bubinga
Blade Type	High Carbon Steel	Overall Length	150mm



This companion blade to the Hock 1" Carving Knife has a slightly longer blade but is clipped to a really fine point. As a detail knife, this blade is very very fine.

The handle is the same as the 1" Carving Knife and is comfortable to use. In fact Both knives are very comfortable when using the forefinger or thumb on the back

of the blade. This is a great detail knife and I would recommend it to anyone who is looking to do some very fine detail work.

In summary, there are no bad knives here. Everyone is going to want a knife that is specific to their needs and the knives shown here cover quite a broad set of needs. I can recommend all of these knives for one purpose or another,

they are all of very high quality. I hope that all the information that I have presented here is accurate but please accept my apologies if I have got anything wrong. Happy carving!

By The Editor



BWA South Wales

On the weekend of the 16th and 17th August, 2014 The South Wales Region took part in the recent Tree Festival at the Botanical Garden of Wales, Llanarthne, Carmarthen.

The Gardens arranged for secret judging of our carvings on display and the first prize went to Mr John Maiden for his character carving, second prize went of Mr. Ian Edwards for his Lovespoon and third prize went to Mr. Jeff Frohwein for his carving of a woman.



The Botanical Garden of Wales



Demonstrating to members of the public



Third prize went to Jeff Frohwein for his carving of a woman



Club members at a recent meeting - the spirit's still stong!



Ian Edwards is awarded second prize for his Love Spoon



Some keen youngsters taking an interest



Daniel Jone (our youngest member) accepts the Gold award on behalf of John Maiden (our oldest member and chairman

By Bryn Payne



Some of our extensive display





Judges also chose one carving, from all the entries, to be their personal favorite and receive the coveted Judge's Choice Award. Warren Rauscher's carving 'Lotta Chips' in the Ornamental Carving Category was chosen by Judge Rick Harney. Ed Sowulewski's 'B-O's Fish Wagon' in the Caricatures Category received Judge Fred Coglow's Award. Chris Howard's 'Guardian' carving, in the Impressionistic/Free-form/Stylized Carvings

21, 2015. To view photographs from this and previous years, or for more information, including judges, seminars and lodgings go to www.awcltd.org.

Susan Alexander gives us a brief run-down of the 2014 Annual International Woodcarvers' Congress:

Fred Cogelow, Rick Harney and Josh Guge judged more than 500 carvings in over 85 categories at the 48th Annual International Woodcarvers' Congress, held in Maquoketa, Iowa, U.S.A.



'Cross Hobbled' by John C. Sharp

Carved from black walnut, 'Cross Hobbled' by John C. Sharp, won Best of Show; 'Harvey,' a relief carving by Debra Bergum, took First Runner-Up and the bird carving, 'Trout Hunter' by Randy Hansen, was awarded Second Runner-Up.



'Trout Hunter' by Randy Hansen

(wood is predominant) Category received Judge Josh Guge's Award.

Affiliated Wood Carvers, Limited, (AWC) is a non-profit corporation whose primary purpose is to promote the fine art of woodcarving through the sponsorship of the International Woodcarvers Congress. In its 48th year, The International Woodcarvers' Congress is the longest running, judged, wood art show in the United States. The Congress is held the second full week in June each year at the Jackson County Fairgrounds in Maquoketa, Iowa. It is a week-long celebration of the woodcarving arts.

Activities during Congress Week include:

- Competition in over 85 categories
- Open-to-the-public Woodcarving Show
- Educational seminars that cover a variety of carving and related subjects
- Seminars for the non-carver
- Annual Awards Banquet
- Judges' Critique Sessions
- Annual AWC Membership meeting

The 49th Congress will, again, be held in Maquoketa, June 13, 2015 through June



'Harvey' by Debra Bergum



'Lotta Chips' by Warren Rauscher



'Guardian' by Chris Howard



'B-O's Fish Wagon' by Ed Sowulewski

For more information about Susan, please visit her blog: www.letstalkcarving.com

By Susan Alexander



An Interview with Peter Vernon

Peter Vernon is a sculptor and member of the Somerset Guild of Craftsmen.

You have described yourself as a wood shaper rather than carver; what are the main tools that you tend to use?

I use a bandsaw with 6mm wide blade to cut out initial shapes, I also use this machine to virtually carve with but I have to be very careful not to catch the blade in the piece of work - not for the faint hearted!. I have also designed and had made a machine to hold various sizes of drum sanders and buffing wheels which I use to refine the shape and achieve the finish I am looking for.

How did you get into woodcarving?

I actually trained as a silversmith and metalworker when I left school in the 1970s - I never got on with wood at school! I had an inspirational metal work teacher at Sidmouth Secondary School and through him I developed a love for working in that medium. It wasn't until I was made redundant over 10 years ago that I started working in wood. Initially I purchased a small wood-turning lathe when I was still in full time employment as a means of relaxing in the evenings and at weekends and also having an urge to create things again after 25 years as a brewery technician.



Duckling in natural pippy English Yew with Brass inlay

What is your favourite wood?

I love woods with character and interesting patterns. I am presently working with some very nice ripple figured Sycamore and some English Elm with nice burred bits in it. I also like working with bog oak and bog yew - I find it amazing to be working with wood that is thousands of years old. But I suppose my favourite wood has to be yew. The natural colours and patterns make every piece unique - it also takes the stains I use beautifully.

What is the worst wood that you have worked with and why?

I now only work with British Hardwoods - in the past I experimented with foreign woods but I am much happier working with woods that I am confident about their source. I suppose the very worst wood I have worked with would have to be eucalyptus. After it has been planked and starts to dry it will twist and split like no other wood I have ever come across, I would be lucky to get any useable timber from it after it has dried - most will end up on the log burner!



Peter holding one of his Manta Ray sculptures which was made from Ash

What has been your favourite carving to date?

It is usually the piece I am working on at the moment. I am still very excited about new ideas and continually experiment with shape, design and colour. I have kept pieces that are good examples of my work and because of that I can see how my work has evolved over time.

Where do you do most of your work?

I have a small workshop in the grounds of our cottage which also has a wood store attached. I also rent a barn close by where I store most of my sawn timber



Long-tailed Cat in Vernised English Yew with brass inlay



Otter sculpture made from Vernised Sycamore on Vernised wild Cherry



Tern in Vernised English Yew with brass inlay

which is stacked onto pallet racking to air dry. I also have my own Lumbermate sawmill there which I use to convert a lot of my own locally sourced timber.

What is your favourite subject for carving?

My heart is in the countryside and nature - my inspiration comes from a lifelong love of wildlife; I am a country boy at heart. I do like making my bird sculptures. I try to capture the features of the bird that makes them distinctive - like the flick-up tail of a wren. Other favourites of mine would have to be the Stingray & Manta Ray sculptures.



Runner Duck in natural pippy English Yew

How did you come to inlay metals in your sculptures?

I like to experiment and inlaying metals was a natural progression. Brass seems to work particularly well with most of the timbers that I use.

Working with wood is being taught less in schools, would you like to see it make a comeback?

I do feel sad that schools seem to promote academic achievement at the expense of practical skills. I think that being able to be creative is very important and, yes, working with natural materials will help pupils to appreciate their value

and the importance of sustainability.

Are there any artists who have been of particular inspiration to you?

I have always admired the work of Sir Peter Scott who painted birds from nature and who managed to capture flight patterns and the individual characteristics of birds.

I am very lucky doing what I do and enjoy every minute of it. I supply five galleries with my sculptures and most are fairly local to me including the excellent Dandel Gallery at Abbotsbury who specialise in contemporary woodwork. I no longer do any exhibitions, craft fairs or commissioned work which frees me up to spend more time here at our little cottage in the country.

By The Editor

BWA Lancashire

Just wanted to let the other Regions know what a top meeting we had in June: We had an all-day session with a chap called Steve Tomlin from Kendal. He is an advocate of keeping traditional crafts alive and part of the Heritage Crafts Association. He came to do a 'fan bird' demonstration in the morning (a fascinating bird made from just one piece of green wood, using no glue just clever use of wood!) and a practical session in the afternoon, which turned out to be making a mini-broom using a piece of hazel cut down just the day before. Apparently, before we had a go only a handful of people up and down the country could do it..... Well now I 6 more can! Steve delivered his session in such an interesting and lively way, we all had a great time, and the fish and chips at dinnertime gave us plenty of energy for the practical session!



His website is well worth a look at www.tevetomlincrafts.wordpress.com and he offers courses making spoons, chairs, fanbirds..... and scything!



By Sarah Lawrenson

MEMBERS GALLERY

Owl

By Peter Schofield



Peter Schofield with his large Owl carving

Abstract

By Chris Lewis



Chris has carved this abstract sculpture from Mahogany

Horse

By Gerry Guiver



A Horse based on an Ian Norbury design

Turtle

By Ken Griffiths



A Turtle carved from Walnut

Bound

By Gerry Guiver



Bound hands carved by Gerry from Lime

Bishop

By Ruth Whiteside



A Bishop chess piece carved from Lime

Chinese Warrior

By David Lumb



Chinese Warrior carved from Jelutong

If you have a recently completed carving or a carving that your fellow members may not have seen and would like to submit it for the gallery in the next issue, please email editor@britishwoodcarversassociation.co.uk or use the form on the website www.thewoodcarversgazette.co.uk

Couple

By Gerry Guiver



A wedding gift for Gerry's nephew that he carved from Walnut

Harvest Mouse

By Steve Smart



Carved from Walnut, the harvest mouse is life size

Dolphins

By Derek Drain



A pod of Dolphins carved from Lime and the polychromed

BWA Essex @ Westcliff-on-Sea

It has become clear to me over the last few months that many of our members do not know the origins of the Westcliff branch of our club. In 1999 we had our first very successful three week exhibition in Southend Library and it became very obvious to the committee at the time that a good number of retired folk would join our club if there was some venue near to the Southend area meeting during the week. As I lived in the area, it was put to me that my church might be able to accommodate us, but with our limited funds we would be struggling at first to get enough members to finance the rent.

I put the problem to my church and asked if we could rent the church hall, but at a reduced rent. The church elders were very kind and realised that it was an opportunity for outreach and said we could have the hall on two Mondays a month for free until we could afford to pay. However, I suggested that as it would be me organising the project and I did not want to be involved with dealing with cash that we would charge £3 per member for the day and all the money that we took would just go to the church funds.

We opened in 2001 just after our second exhibition at the library with six folk attending and the church got the £18 takings which hardly covered the cost of heating the hall.. We now have an average of 18 folk attending at £4 so we now cover the church rent but we still give the church all the money after deducting the cost of tea and coffee which only seems fair as the church suffered a loss for the first few years. It is a very happy branch of Essex and of course all members are welcome to attend. We do not have as many facilities as at Mountnessing, there is no library and we do not supply free cakes etc. hence we keep our subs at £1 00 less than Mountnessing, but you do get tea or coffee three times per meeting.

We have attracted many new members over the years and have been responsible for increasing the Essex membership by a significant amount. We now have 31 folk on our register (fortunately they do not all turn up at once), which is over a third of our total membership, this has increased the capitation to the region by a considerable amount I do sometimes become concerned that Westcliff is thought to be a separate club, it is not, it is an integral part of the Essex Region and we should be very proud that Essex is such a successful region that we need two venues to accommodate all of our members. If you have never visited Westcliff, do come and visit, you will be made very welcome.

By Ted Jeffery

Under The Sea

By Heather Leach



Underwater seascape carved in Walnut

Avro Vulcan

By Chris Lewis



A Vulcan Bomber relief carved from Oak

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