

THE WOODCARVERS *Gazette*



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Winter 2014

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NOTICES

BWA AGM 2015

The details for the 2015 BWA AGM are as follows:

Date: 16th & 17th May 2015

Venue: Sacrewell Farm Centre, Thornaugh, Peterborough, PE8 6HJ

Proposed change in membership fee

This is proposed by the national council of the BWA for the AGM. From June 2016 the membership fee of The British Woodcarvers Association will be £25; the capitation will remain £10. Any member who would like to comment on this please send your thoughts to any National Council member by 1st February 2015.

National Council Vacancies

Bryan Corbin - Treasurer and Lynn Kimm - National Secretary will be stepping down at the 2015 AGM. Anyone who would like to fill these positions can find out more from Bryan or Lynn. Candidates names with a proposer and seconder, (all with membership numbers), may be sent to the National Secretary.



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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Winter 2014 issue of The Woodcarvers Gazette. I hope that there will be something in this issue for everyone but as always, please send me your suggestions and comments; I'd like to improve where I can.

In this issue you will find four interviews with professional carvers, three of them from across the pond in the US. I hope that you like me, will find their stories and carvings inspirational. I have written a few articles this time around but if you have an article that you would like to see in print or perhaps if you just want to rant about a particular subject, just get in touch and I'm sure it can be included.

Whilst on the subject of getting in touch, I am aware that I am always asking for people to contact me electronically. This is because it makes it much easier to include photographs and other content in the gazette. I don't mind if you want to write to me in the post however, I am always happy to include photographs and write-ups sent to me in this way. My postal address is 66 Wisbech Road, March, Cambs, PE15 8EF.

There are a couple of book reviews and a product review in this issue. I'd really like some feedback on what you'd like to see here. To that end I have put a poll on the gazette website about what you would like to see more of in the gazette. So far, the most popular item that people would like to see more of is How-To Articles. I will try and get more of these squeezed in to future

issues. If anyone would like to write a How-To article for the gazette then please send it to me either by email or using the 'contact the editor' form on the gazette website.

Other polls on the gazette website include what are your favourite native and exotic woods to carve. It's no surprise really that Lime is by far the most popular native wood with Oak, Birch and Pear in joint second place, a significant way behind. The most popular exotic wood seems to be Basswood, with Black Walnut in second place and then Lemonwood coming up in third place. The poll asking voters which (in their opinion) is the best sharpening method, has so far come out with Oil stones being the most popular with water stones second.

I have included some of my favourite winning carvings from the International Woodcarving Congress this year. Why not enter yourself next year? Speaking of competitions, there is a little competition for members on page 10 and don't forget to get carving your entries for the carving competition at next year's European Woodworking Show at Cressing Temple, organised by BWA Essex!



Jason Townsend

Website: **www.thewoodcarversgazette.co.uk**

OUT & ABOUT



We recently visited Little Moreton Hall in Congleton, Cheshire. The Hall itself is one of the finest Tudor houses still standing, and as you can tell from the picture whilst it is standing, there are some crazy angles going on. It's a National Trust property and my sons and I can highly recommend the tea room's food, and the lovely knot garden there. In fact there is still a moat around the edge too; a lovely place.



If you have seen any fantastic carvings on your travels, write in and share them here in Out & About

By Sarah Lawrenson

REVIEW

Veritas Carver's Vice

This patented carving vice is actually quite compact, the whole thing coming in a box about 6x6x6". I have previously tried a cheap carver's vice and was not at all impressed with the results. Everytime I went to hit my gouge with a mallet, my whole carving moved a few millimetres until I had to re-position the carving after just a few strikes. This vice was not at all like that though - despite its diminutive frame, it holds the carving plate (and your carving) in place nicely.

The system by which you tighten the vice is really well thought out and I didn't feel like I was getting a work-out every time I tightened the lever. There is about 3" of height adjustment that you can make and the notches for adjusting the angle are more than enough for what I wanted. The construction is of a very high quality and it didn't feel at all like traditional blue or green workshop equipment; it felt very fit for purpose.

You can secure the vice to your bench using four large screws or bolts but you can also purchase an optional dog-hole mounting kit to fit the thread in the base of the vice. The vice is supplied with a 90mm plate, with which you can screw

your carving to. You can purchase a smaller 50mm plate as well (and that might be handy if you want to change from one carving to another if you get a bit stuck).

Veritas are a Canadian firm who make a lot of highly desirable wood-working tools. Although they don't make a great deal of products aimed at the carver, this product is to be desired in my opinion. I like the idea that you could mount this vice on your bench top or to the side of your bench.

With the relatively low price of this tool and its excellent quality, it is conceivable that you might want several of these in your workshop. All-in-all, a great quality item that I can recommend.

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My thanks to BriMarc for the chance of reviewing this item from Veritas.

By The Editor

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BWA WWI REMEMBRANCE PROJECT

The carvings that have been made as part of this project have been put together into a small exhibition that is going to be travelling around the country to promote the BWA. Hopefully, there will be a viewing opportunity for all those who want to see it.

When I started the project, I didn't really know where I was going with it but I thought it would be a great chance for members to contribute to a national project and a chance to commemorate the tragedies of World War I. I think that the project has been very successful and would again like to thank all of you who have made a carving for the project.

The exhibition has already been on show in the shop at The Green Howards museum, in Richmond, North Yorkshire and was then moved to Catterick Garrison (The biggest army base in Europe) where it was in situ for Armistice Day. It was displayed in the Help for Heroes building which is called Phoenix House, and is the recovery centre for wounded soldiers.

David Shires, the BWA Press Officer has since taken it to be displayed at Darlington Building Society, where it was formally sited by The Worshipful the Mayor of Darlington, and his Mayoress. From there David took it to The Northern Woodworking show at Harrogate where it stood in the Coniscliffe Carving Club stand.

The exhibition is now going to be travelling to several other regions of the country. I believe that the exhibition will be displayed at the Cowper and Newton Museum with Paula Noble on 15th July 2015 before going on to the North Wales and Borders region in late July 2015. I believe that the exhibition will be with the Hampshire region in February 2015 and with the Essex region in January 2015.



The WWI Project exhibition stand



David Shires with the Worshipful the Mayor of Darlington, and his Mayoress.



The exhibition stand at The Northern Woodworking show

By The Editor



African Elephant
By Mike Trezek



Here are some more photographs showing some of the other entries from this year's International Woodcarving Congress in the USA. The photographs were all taken by Marc Featherly.



Alexander
By Roman Cirignani



Pixie Place
By Judy Simmons



Tranquility
By James Wall



Outrun the Wind
By Don Bent

Mouse Patrol
By Kelly Salow





Michigan Smallmouth Bass
By James Spencer



Siblings
By Bill Bartolic



Memories
By Gerald E. Lesch

Summer Sanderling
By Stanley Matusik



Stoic
By Bruce Futterer

An Interview with Gerald Adams

How did you get started in woodcarving?

I started professionally in 1986 having been fired from my furniture making job! I had been carving small bits and pieces for the furniture and though the boss didn't want me working on site (I had been self-employed, making musical instruments before and had my own ideas how the factory should be run!), he did give me lots of work and remained my biggest customer for the next ten years. I brushed up my skills with a year's course at the London College of Furniture. I started teaching several years ago, and really enjoy it, passing on my experience and the social side of the weekly classes.

What was the first thing that you whittled or carved?

I started off carving the heads for musical instruments, particularly hurdy gurdies, which is how I began in woodwork.



Do you have a passion for carving certain woods?

Favourite wood is obviously lime, just carves so beautifully. I have just finished a couple of huge Chippendale Curtain pelmets at 4.3 metres long, all leaves and scrolls, to be gilded before they go to Russia.



To date, what is the carving that you have been most proud of?

Those pelmets were a good job but my favourite has to be the big pirate bed carved in oak a few years ago.



Chair back

Where do you get your inspiration when carving?

Most of my work is traditional classical carving, so I spent many hours/years going around country houses and churches examining and recording the details. I have been doing a sculpture course in clay the last few years for fun, and this has helped enormously with my outlook on woodcarving.

Where do you do most of your carving?

I do almost all of my carving in the workshop, which is luckily about 50 yards from the house, so my daily commute is not too bad! Very rarely I will have to go



Hard at work...

out on site, which I hate because I always forget some vital piece of equipment.

What is the first thing you tell your new students?

To relax and enjoy themselves; not get too worried or precious about a piece of work. This is something I have learnt from the clay modelling (of course this is easy in clay as you just screw it up and start again!).

Do you have any pet hates about certain woods or tools?

I had to make some heavily carved Queen Anne chairs once in some sort of African walnut, never again, cedar of Lebanon makes me sneeze. Tools I generally love, I am a bit of a toolaholic, and can usually find a use for a good tool.



The Pirate bed



Part of an elaborate pelmet

My pet hate is those cheap carving sets that are almost unusable, and must put so many people off. I always say to buy three really good tools, and gradually add as you find out what you need.

Do you have any anecdotes about your wood carving?

When I employed people a few years ago, we always had a running joke about the amount of people who would phone up on Christmas Eve saying "Short notice but could you carve a pixie, reindeer, father Christmas..."



Carved stool

By The Editor

By Vince O'Donnell

BWA Cleveland

The recently formed region in Cleveland is going really well. Our numbers are increasing at a steady rate and at the moment we have around twenty new members.

The region was formed in September 2014 after invaluable help from Eileen Walker and David Shires. Anyone considering starting a new region need only ask. The help is out there and available. After initial inquiries, the need for the region was identified and the club was started.

There is a real mix of carvers at the club, ranging from new starters to the more experienced members of the group, and we have a good mix of men and women attending the club on a regular basis.

At the moment we don't have any events planned but we are hoping to arrange some demonstrations in the New Year.

The club meets on Thursday afternoons at St. Cuthbert's Church Hall, Billingham Cleveland, from 1.00pm - 4.00pm.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to any carvers visiting the area.

BWA Essex @

Blackwater Country Show - 22nd June 2014



This show now seems to be a regular event in our calendar of events. The weather plays a big part in this particular show and it didn't let us down, it was a glorious day. The crowds were large, the interest in us was very rewarding and the day went really well. No bell ringers this time round but a couple of very friendly stands either side made the show a very jolly one. Well done to those who took part namely Gerry Guiver and his wife Wynn, Clinton Lee, Bert Miles and yours truly bringing up the rear. As the picture below shows the crew were on parade, the stand was full of goodies and they gave an excellent account of the BWA and Essex region in particular.

By Ken Veal

BWA Durham & North Yorkshire @ Hutton Magna Village Hall

Our Region has been working with the Teesdale Landscape Partnership Craft and Skills in the Community Programme to deliver a woodcarving course to the members of the public to encourage the revival and use of traditional crafts.

In mid-October, club member, Alan Suddes, tutored a one-day course to six people at Hutton Magna Village Hall. The morning session included the history of carving, tools used and the different

types of wood used for carving. The rest of the day was a practical session and under Alan's expert guidance each course member successfully completed a relief carving of an oak leaf.

Feedback from the course members was excellent with comments such as :-

'Will remember it forever, and hopefully do another course again'



Alan Suddes dispensing his knowledge to the students



Students hard at work



Carvings completed by the students on the day

'Outstanding afternoon, thank you'

'I really enjoyed it, so much fun'

'Excellent trainer with a lot of knowledge'

Such was the response, a further course is now planned for February.

By Duncan McConnachie

MEMBER COMPETITION

BriMarc have generously donated a Flexcut Carvin' Jack multi-tool as the prize for a BWA competition. This competition is open to all BWA members. In order to enter the competition for your chance to win the Flexcut Carvin' Jack, all you need to do is carve something out of a **6" x 1" x 1"** piece of wood and send in a photograph of your finished carving along with your details. You can use any type of wood and you can carve anything you like (it could be balls in a cage or a chainlink or an animal or anything you can think of). You can submit your entry by emailing the editor or using the 'contact the editor' form on the gazette website. I'd like a photograph of your carving, your details, the type of wood you have used

and a description or title for your carving. The closing date for entries will be the **20th February 2015**. The winner will be the carving most liked by the editor. I don't feel that I have the ability to judge the best carving or most technically accomplished, hopefully doing it this way will give everyone a good chance of winning.

The flexcut Carvin' Jack comes with a leather holder, a slip-strop and a piece of Flexcut Gold honing compound. It's worth a whopping **£110** and is brand new.



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BWA Norfolk & Suffolk

It is with regret that our founder member has had to retire from our group due to ill health.

Harold Bailey joined the British

Woodcarvers Association just over 20 years ago and has been an established member ever since. Harold has been both inspirational and encouraging to all, especially beginners.



He has been the backbone of our club, doing a variety of tasks and always willing to attend craft shows and do demonstrations.

A very capable and accomplished artist, from wood turning and carving to painting and even cross-stitch; who would often undertake commissions and could always turn out a phenomenal display of variety.

He is a much thought of and respected member of our club whose attendance will be much missed.

Our thoughts will be with him at this difficult time.

By Lynda Watts

BWA Durham & North Yorkshire @ Durham Flower Festival

On 30th August, Club members attended the Durham Flower Festival at Houghall Campus, East Durham College on the outskirts of Durham City.

This was an inaugural flower festival and we were pleased to be asked to support the event.

The festival boasted a large range of amateur exhibits plus trade stalls selling craft and gardening products.

As we were one of the few stall-holders doing craft-based demonstrations we



received a lot of attention and interest from members of the public who all seemed very impressed with our display of carvings. We were kept busy for most of the day answering questions resulting in the recruitment of one prospective member.



Overall the event was a success for both our Club and the organisers of the festival and it looks as though this will grow into a nationally renowned horticultural and floral event which we will be pleased to support in the future.

This has been my first year as a new Regional Leader and we have been attending new venues this year within our catchment area in a bid to promote our Club and the BWA. With the assistance of an active and progressive committee it seems to be working. Membership is now up to 66 members. In recent weeks we launched our own Coniscliffe Carving Club website www.coniscliffcarvingclub.org which is a great tool to refer prospective members to, when enquiries about membership are made.

By Duncan McConnachie



From left to right are Duncan McConnachie, Mick McCabe, Vince O'Donnell, Ray Taylor, David Shires



An Interview with Janel Jacobson

Janel Jacobson is a talented sculptor, potter and woodcarver. Her work has spanned some four decades and includes many fine pieces of carved jewellery.

Why did you start woodcarving?

Carving began for me in the mid 1970's during my years as a potter, using clay as the carving material until 1995 when I changed to carving wood. Early carving exploration began with shallow-relief carving on dry/damp stoneware clay pots and tiles that I had made. Each year for ten years I reserved a period of time starting with a week or two, which increased to two months from each year, always returning to making useful pottery that was sold for my income. In the mid to late 1980's, I focused on carving small wheel-thrown, porcelain clay, lidded boxes became the focus. During the early 1990's I began to carve small sculptural, 3-D porcelain pieces alternating with the small lidded boxes. In 1995 I chose wood for carving because the wide range of materials offered so much more to the 3-D pieces, in tactile and visual warmth, and its ability to be carved with great detail.



'Pin Oak Sentinel'

Time spent carving is recorded daily in a little notebook, using a count-up timer for when I am actively carving. The carving time for any piece is directly related to the complexity of the compositions, and varies from one piece to another. The time for completion may range from a day or two up to two to three months of steady work. I work seven days a week and have no sense of what a weekend off is, and I still love carving. Each interaction with the wood and subjects becomes a conversation with many facets: encouraging light and shadow to achieve and define the forms, details and textures; interactions between tools and the grain of the wood can be a



'Katydid pair' carved porcelain lidded boxes

What is your favourite item to carve?

Frogs are often-carved subjects used in combination with various backgrounds. Compositions with frogs or insects may include vegetative scenes such as branches, leaves, and occasionally flowers. The backgrounds are a major part of any carving, as seen in (pin oak sentinel), setting the scene for the frog to be present in. With the vegetative background focus might be on contrasting decaying, dead wood with a living branch and leaves, or a springtime flush of new leaves and apple blossoms.

How long do you spend on an individual carving, is it something you can time?

dialog between the feel of the tool as it cuts or shaves and how it sounds, whether chattery or smooth. Time melts away as the conversation evolves, and when the dialog ends, the piece is finished.

Are you inspired by the art of any artist in particular?

There are many carvers whose work I admire and enjoy. Among my peers there is one person, Jim Kelso, whose work moves me each time I see it. His ability to envision and then express the essential, serene elements of subject and story, and having divined the intrinsic, positive qualities from his chosen material has more than once brought tears to my eyes when I have viewed new pieces of his.



Janel at the carving bench

Do you prefer deductive craft (like woodcarving) to that of constructive craft (like clay)?

Having carved both clay and wood, I appreciate both approaches. Most of the shallow-relief clay carving was deductive, though some fine details were added by incising a line for a thin leg or antennae which was then carved as a very slender, raised line. Towards the end of the clay carving years, I resisted the temptation to add back clay for those details. I began to prepare for the rigors of completely subtractive work in wood, even though I had not yet decided to make the change to using wood.

Where do you do most of your carving?

My studio is about 14' x 19', and is less than 1/4 of the studio building that I share with my husband, who is a potter. Over the years, I have acquired a wonderful variety of shallow drawer cabinets for tools, small bits of materials and what ever else fits into them. We live in a tiny, rural town that is among the oldest in Minnesota. We are near a small river that is connected to a larger, border river that then connects to the northern woods of Minnesota and Wisconsin by the protected, forested lands along its course. From my carving bench, I look out upon trees and my gardens where perennial plants and annual vegetables grow each summer. It is peaceful here.



Janel's Angled oval-face tools



Janel's Equal sided, three-edged tools

Which of your tools are you most fond of?

Quite a while ago I acquired a book *Bone Carving: A Skillbase of Techniques and Concepts* by Stephen Myhre, who is a bone and stone carver from New Zealand. In this book he presented a style of tool that made sense to me. I first made inexact versions of those tools and found them to be useful. Later, a friend gave me a couple of tools that were made by Stephen which are now among the most used tools on my bench. They are the basis for a broader variety of three-edged tools at the core of my tool set.

While learning to make these tools I have found value in the many permutations, or "failures" to reproduce accurately the original tools. The early tool making attempts resulted in different angle

my carving journey. The three edged, triangular core tools are one important part of the tool set. Angled oval faced tools are used as gouges and curved scrapers, and flat, straight and skewed chisels are also important tools used in the workflow.



Janel's Flat chisels

Shaving/undercutting tools have been made from various cylindrical rods that range in diameter: from a sewing needle to 3/8 inch O-1 drill rod. I repurpose Sears Craftsman pin punches and dental tools using whet stones to shape and sharpen the 3/32 – 1/4 inch diameter tools to retain the temper.

The angled, oval-face tools function well as both scrapers and gouges. That they are sharp on both the end and sides allows strokes to be taken, starting from either the left or the right when making a shaving/scraping motion with the grain of the wood.

a narrower cutting/scraping angle and two alternate, wider shaving edge shapes. The cutting/shaving edges can be nearly straight or curved to suit the tool's overall purpose. Such tools have wide ranging functions, from wood removal in chip form almost like a knife to delicate sheering/scraping/shaving for smooth surface finishing without sandpaper. The smallest diameter tools are indispensable for fine detail work and undercutting for greater definition. Some of these tools may also function as gravers to create lines, as materials permit.

Flat, straight, and curved chisels and gouges are used in a fairly straightforward manner to remove wood in small chips. I use them throughout the carving, from roughing in with the wider tools, to defining the minute details with the smallest widths.

Three-edged tool carving is done with the hands in contact with one another much of the time. I am right-handed. My left hand thumb serves as a fulcrum and the right hand middle finger is placed opposite the left thumb with the tool shank in between. The right wrist, fingers and forearm work in concert to twist, cut or sweep the tool in the direction that is required by the grain of the wood. I prefer the tool to move from left to right so will turn the sculpture around to orient the changing grain properly.



Janel's Two & one sided, Three-edged tools proportions, blade lengths and edges, whether straight or curved, that were departures from the original two tools. Many of these have become unique and useful contributors to my carving experience.

Can you talk us through your small tools with triangular blades?

All of my tools are essential partners on

Three-edged tools for Shaving/scraping/undercutting are made from cylindrical rod, having three faces that form a triangle with any choice of angles and length to create a range of tools. The faces can be equal with equal angles; or one face can be from wide to very narrow in width with the other two faces

being opposite, mirrored shapes, creating



Tool-holding hand position for use with the three-sided tools

Has making your own tools been an important part of your carving?

Absolutely, yes! The need for tools that work as I want them to has never been satisfied by the range of tools commercially available to wood carvers. Learning to create my own tools has been liberating. I find that with each new carving I wonder about how other tool shapes might be useful when my tool set becomes inadequate for the tasks before me.



'Summer Singer' colored with artist oils

Do you have a favourite wood to use?

Boxwood, a very hard and dense, light colored, fine-grained wood, is my favored choice for carving when details are many and important. Other dense, fine-grained hard woods that offer color and grain variation are of interest to me as well, but boxwood remains the most often selected and used. Currently I do not color the boxwood, preferring reveal the interplay of sculptural light and shadow.



'Turtle and Peeper' in Mountain Mahogany

What is the woodcarving that you have been most proud of?

You cannot expect me to answer that question with a single piece! There are so many pieces that have been memorable to me, both while being carved and for what they became upon completion. From the first significant pieces in clay, then in wood and up to the most recent pieces, all are a part of my journey as a carver. I hope to learn and to grow from each piece carved.



'Dragonfly' carved from Pacific Madrone, Base: Quilted Maple



Close-up of 'Dragonfly'

Do you have any tips for woodcarvers looking to start carving miniatures?

This is a very big question to answer, since tips to me are actually each teaching points worthy of much greater discussion. I will mention a few:

Tools are essential for the carver. Sharp tools are imperative. Learn to use whet stones, whether the water or oil stones, or diamond embedded cards. (I use water stones and diamond cards.) Stropping can be done with leather that is charged with an appropriate stropping powder, or by simply using as cereal box cardboard with honing compound rubbed onto it. Cut the wood with the grain, not against it and listen to the sounds that these actions make. You can hear the difference, and feel it too.

Plan ahead. Draw your subjects. Find images to refer to. Start with a simple subject. It may help to create a 3-D version from plasticene clay before struggling with the wood. Test the finish options on a scrap of the same wood that is smoothed to the degree you plan to do with the completed carving.

Use the internet as your global library: there are forums on the internet that have discussed netsuke and small-scale carving with topics that include making tools, various techniques, materials and finishes.

Magnification can be helpful for more accurate tool placement. Good, movable lighting will accentuate the light and shadow that you are carving into the wood. Good, variable height seating helps to reduce neck and back strain. I use a 4x4 inch cedar timber carving peg. For small pieces I use a white mounting putty that will adhere to the wood peg and the carving well enough to reduce the tension in my hand while carving the small and hard wood pieces. For larger pieces, I use a rough leather, sand-filled bag.

Keep your tools sharp, and cut away from your flesh!

For more information on Janel, please have a look at her website www.janeljacobson.com

By The Editor



'Centipede' carved from Ebony with the eggs carved from Jet

The Woodland Trust - Trees of The Year Announced

The Major Oak in Sherwood Forest has been crowned England's Tree of the Year by The Woodland Trust. The tree, made famous by Robin Hood, beat off fierce competition from Old Knobbly in Essex and the Ickwell Oak in Bedfordshire to poll 18% of almost 13,000 votes cast in just eight days in November.

A Perthshire pine at the heart of a conservation success story has won the title of Scottish Tree of the Year 2014. Lady's Tree is a 100 year old Scots pine at the Scottish Wildlife Trust's Loch of the Lowes reserve near Dunkeld. It's been home to a famous osprey known as Lady for nearly a quarter of a century. Over that time she has fledged an incredible 50 chicks.



The Major Oak, Woodland Trust/Phil Lockwood Photography



Lady's Tree

The Welsh Tree of the Year for 2014 is the iconic Lonely Tree of Llanfyllin. Standing on top of Green Hall Hill just to the east of Llanfyllin, this majestic Scots Pine used to dominate the skyline, watching over the town for over 200 years. Local people would visit it to carve their initials, propose marriage or scatter ashes. But in February it was blown down in the gales. Taking advice from experts, the local community came together to tip over 30 tonnes of soil over the roots. The aim is to ensure that any intact roots can still function, allowing the tree to become a phoenix, continuing to live and grow but from a reclining position.



Lonely Tree of Llanfyllin from llanfyllin.org

By The Editor

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The Medieval Carvings of St. Clement's

The Church of St. Clement in Outwell, Cambridgeshire looks to all the world like the average parish church on the outside. Indeed, on your first glance around the interior, it looks quite average. The details suggest something quite different though. Ecclesiastical woodcarvings that remain from before the 16th century reformation are few and far between, the majority of adornment having been stripped from the churches and the walls white-washed. In St. Clement's, there are some wonderful remnants of medieval woodcarving that managed to survive. It has to be said that these woodcarvings are all in the roof of the church or fairly close to it. I can't say for certain but I imagine that this is why the carvings survived; either they were too high to get at or they were thought to be structural in some way.

The woodcarvings take the form of angels carved into the roof structure and sets of figures carved into the roof posts which sit atop stone corbels in the nave. There are several churches in the fens that have winged angels carved into the roof and St. Clement's has many. There are angels carved into the hammerbeam braces and winged angels carved on wall plates between them. Many of the latter have been painted in yellow and red, whereas the rest are black in colour, due to being carved in oak and the preservatives that have been applied to them over the years. There are twelve pairs of figures in the nave and these are barely visible at all from ground level. Whatever the resinous finish that

has been applied to them has made them very dark in colour and with the contrast from the windows, it is very difficult to make out any detail by staring up at them.



Dr. Claire Daunton, from the university of East Anglia, stumbled upon these carvings in 2006 when doing some research on the very fine and rare stained glass at St. Clement's. The church has some wonderful late-medieval stained glass, which includes a scene of a Magi. She asked friend Mike Dixon to take some photographs of the woodcarvings and was able to start analysing them. An article on the woodcarvings appeared in the Times in 2012 and many other articles and a TV appearance followed, raising the awareness of them. That year, The Friends of St. Clements were set-up and a grant from English Heritage followed in order to make repairs to the roof to protect the woodcarvings. More recently, scaffolding was erected so that the woodcarvings could be inspected in more detail and a conservation plan drawn up.

Dr. Daunton, is still doing research into the woodcarvings but she believes them to be very significant, not just for the fact that they have survived. The pairs of figures in the nave seem to be rather unique and their interpretation is still puzzling. The church was remodelled sometime between 1420 and 1440, with the construction of a tower and the raising of the roof line. Documentary evidence is scant regarding this remodelling but it is likely that the changes were made during this period and that the pairs of figures in the nave were carved at this point in time. Dr. Daunton says 'Each pair of figures appears to set an apostle alongside either a demon or a human figure which has some element of deformity or eccentricity'. Unlike other examples, in these pairings the demons tower over the apostles, rather than the other way around.

The large figures which include deformed or evil figures, devils, and humans with animal features, can be identified by distinctive marks or disfigurements. The smaller figures can be identified as apostles by the item or symbol that they are carrying. Hugh Harrison, the conservation surveyor has this to say about the pairs of carvings: 'The front views of the groups may be distorting their significance. When seen from the side the larger figures act as terminals to the whole ashlar post and arch brace junction, almost like stub hammerbeam carvings. Their form accommodates all the mouldings of the posts, and





in many cases their hands grip the engaged columns forming the major outer mould of the ashlar posts. The roll mould is given prominence by its base thus becoming in architectural terms an engaged column. The apostles are now seen as completely separate figures framed by the engaged columns. When closely examined, it will be seen that there is specifically no physical connection between the dominant figures and the apostles; the hands of the main figures are either holding the engaged columns or resting on the woodwork above the shoulders of the apostles. They are independent sculptures related to the architecture of the roof woodwork.'

There is obviously a play between good and evil going on between each pair of carvings, which 'might indicate a comparison of virtue with evil or errant human behaviour, or it might be a typically medieval form of ludic argument or antithesis which helps to argue out and demonstrate the good and the not so good which is in all of us'. The interpretation is complex and Dr. Daunton has put forward several

possibilities. Do these carvings suggest evil triumphing over good (the opposite to most contemporary imagery)? Perhaps as Dr. Daunton suggests it is 'the case that, in spite of the huge threat posed by evil, the apostles remain untouched by the taint of sin?'. Perhaps the architecture has more bearing (no pun intended) on the interpretation: 'The larger evil figures have the appearance of being burdened by the weight of the roof, whereas the figures of the apostles stand tall and proud'. The history of the local area may play an important role in the interpretation as well: are these carvings a response to the Lollard movement in Norfolk (Outwell is about 4 miles or less from the border of Norfolk)? Similar figures appear in the roofs of churches in Fincham, Norfolk and Mildenhall, Suffolk: but there is no other scheme liked that of Outwell according to Dr. Daunton.

It will always be impossible to know what went through the minds of the carvers or those that commissioned them but Dr. Daunton rightly says that reasonable guesses can be made based on knowledge of the religious and secular climate in those times. Whatever the correct interpretation, the woodcarvings at St. Clement's are significant and hopefully more research will be carried out, which may lead to dating the woodcarvings more firmly in time. Sadly, the congregation at St. Clement's is small and much work needs to be done to clean and conserve the woodcarvings for the future. The Friends of St. Clements are busy trying to raise the funds to have the conservation work carried out. Hugh Harrison has identified significant beetle



damage and poor historical repairs to some of the carvings. It is hoped that eventually dendrochronology can be used to date the carvings. Work to repair damage by the death watch beetle infestation is likely to need the whole roof to be cleared of active infestation. This is a lot of work and the Friends are currently looking at a total of about £250,000 to £300,000 that needs to be raised. Hopefully, they will be able to reach this target and conserve these wonderful woodcarvings.

Special thanks to Dr. Claire Daunton for providing me with her report on the woodcarvings, to Hugh Harrison (www.hugh-harrison.co.uk) for providing me with his report and the photographs you see here and to Kate Jackson, chair of the Friends of St. Clements (www.stclementsoutwell.org.uk).

By The Editor



An Interview with Mary May

Mary May is an American woodcarver and stone carver who currently runs an online woodcarving school. She has studied at the City and Guilds Art College, London and travelled extensively.

How did you get started in woodcarving?

My interest in woodcarving started when I was traveling in Europe back in the late 80s. I was amazed at the carvings in the cathedrals and castles - both stone carvings on the outside, and woodcarvings that decorated the insides. I remember wondering if I was born several hundred years too late to learn this art. Is it even being taught anymore? When I returned back to the US, I looked in the phonebook under 'woodcarving' and found a master woodcarver from Greece called Konstantinos Papadakis, who taught classes one night a week. There was no turning back! I knew immediately that if I could somehow find a way to carve wood for a living, I would find it.

What is your favourite wood to carve?

I teach a lot, so basswood or butternut are good woods for students to start with because of the softness of the wood, and the forgiveness of the grain. After that, I would say black walnut is my favourite wood to carve. I used to carve in mahogany a lot, but good, straight-grained mahogany is becoming very difficult to find, as many restrictions are being placed on logging. Domestically, black walnut is very plentiful and

wonderful to carve. I even have a few walnut trees in my yard!

What has been your favourite carving to date?

Last year I carved a nativity scene (Crèche) for a local monastery. I was given 1 month to carve 3 half life-size sculptures - Joseph, Mary and Jesus. The wood I used was pawlownia, which is a very soft and fast growing wood, but somewhat stringy and fussy to carve. With the extreme time limit, I dove right in. The wood had some real issues with it where some of it was rotten. I had to grind this rotten wood away and still fit the figures in the remaining wood. As a result, it forced Joseph to sort of lean on his staff with his hip leaning also. I would not have thought to position him like this if I just had a nice, clean piece of wood. The challenge in the wood created so much more life in the sculptures as I worked through and around the problems and issues in the wood.

Where do you draw your inspiration from?

When I travelled in Europe, the carvings that I saw in the churches and cathedrals were by far the most inspiring for me. At the time, I was not a Christian, but simply appreciated the beauty and majesty of these incredible buildings. I would sit for hours enthralled with the intricate carved details - at times I would be brought to tears. Now, as a Christian, I find myself so much more touched by this beauty - because it has become more personal. As I do my own carving, I often feel the Lord guiding and steering my hands.

Where do you do most of your carving?

I have a small workshop in my back yard that my husband, Stephen, built for me. It grows a little more every few years, as my "clutter" seems to grow also. It started out as a modest 12 ft x 12 ft shop and is now 12 ft x 30 ft, where I can close off certain areas if I am stone carving. Stone dust and wood chisels is not a good combination!



You have travelled extensively with your carving, where has been the best place to carve?

Studying at the City and Guilds college in London was an amazing experience. Just being around others who loved carving - both students and teachers - was so inspiring. I also really enjoyed





my time working in Malaysia where I did mostly stone carving. I now get to travel about once a month to teach at different schools across the US - and even Germany! Just the opportunity to do that and teach the one thing you love to do - no matter where it is - has been amazing.

Do you prefer to carve small things or large things?

I have not carved many large sculptural woodcarvings, but when I do, I really enjoy it. Most of my carvings are smaller (less than 2ft) and are more classical decorative elements for furniture and architecture.

Do you have a top tip to pass onto your fellow woodcarvers?

When you find that one thing (might be woodcarving?) that you can lose yourself in for hours, that is a discovery of something you truly love. Grab on to it, hold tight and enjoy!

Do you prefer carving sculptural items or furniture items?

I really enjoy both, but they are completely different worlds. From a business stand-point, I have had more requests for furniture details, and that has also been where a lot of my teaching has focused on. When I have an opportunity

to carve my own design, I tend to go more sculptural.

Do you have any woodcarving anecdotes or trials and tribulations?

As the economy struggled several years ago, commissioned pieces started to become much rarer. I ventured more into the world of teaching, and am so glad I did! I discovered that there were others out there with the same passion for woodcarving that I had. I was not alone in the world! Several years ago I ventured even farther into the teaching realm and started an online video school where I add an instructional video every week - keeps me busy! I discovered the best way to be successful in this economic environment is to be as flexible as possible and never say 'NO' to opportunities or ideas that come your way.



For more information about Mary and to look at more of her work, please go to her website: **[www. marymaycarving.com](http://www.marymaycarving.com)**



By The Editor



Simple Carving

Wizard's Wands from Yew

As an alternate Christmas present for those with children or grandchildren who are fans of Harry Potter and all things magical, I thought it might be nice to share how I would go about carving a Wizard's wand. A Wizard's wand is quite a simple thing; it needs to be about 9 or 10" long, have a handle at one end and a point at the other end: Basically it's your classic pointy stick.

For this carving I have chosen to use English Yew and will do my carving with a knife. A lot of people may have Yew trees in the garden so there is a good chance that you may come across a Yew branch that has been pruned, which you can then dry out for use as a carving medium. The Yew that I am using is from a job lot of offcuts that I purchased from someone who was making blanks for woodturners; all of the odd-shaped pieces and offcuts were of no use to him or woodturners but are ideal for the kind of carving that I like to do.



I have cut some blanks from a Yew board, each blank is about 1/2" thick and about 9 and a half inches long. Some of the blanks have waney edges and some are bent but that will all add to the character of the wand. Yew is particularly useful in the making of things like wands because there is a strong contrast between the sapwood and heartwood and there is a good chance of knots and other figuring. All of this will make a wand that has plenty of character.

I have chosen a blank that is part sapwood and part heartwood (there is also a bit of inner bark on part of it too). For whatever reason, whether I made a mistake on the bandsaw or something else, this blank has a kink in it, which I will make use of: A dead-straight wand can look a little dull sometimes. It must also be remembered that due to using a piece of wood taken from an irregular board that is part sapwood and part heartwood (with lots of knots as well), that after I have cut a nice straight blank for my wand, the blank may warp as the tensions between features in the wood are released.



I am starting by rounding one end to fashion a handle. I am going to do this by removing a triangular section from each of the four edges to make an octagonal shape. I will smooth the eight edges to make the handle round.



For this handle I have decided to make it taper from the end of the handle and carve a ball to delineate the handle and wand. You can let your imagination run freely here and carve any shape of handle that you can think of.



I have chosen to carve a spiralling pattern on this wand. Firstly I remove a triangular section from each of the four corners to start making the wand round. I then carve some spiralling trenches into the wand. I am letting the design form naturally here rather than imposing a precise pattern on the blank. I have started in the middle of the wand because I am not yet sure how the wand will begin and end



I continue to cut spiralling trenches along the length of the wand, removing more wood toward the tip of the wand because I want it to taper to a point. The spirals are all of different sizes and the trenches start and stop in places. This is as far as I am going to carve this wand.



After I am happy with the shape of the wand, I sand it down and seal it in Danish Oil before lightly polishing in creamed beeswax. Hopefully it will provide someone with a bit of entertainment, although I am not able to promise that just anyone will be able to do magic with it...



Here are some other wands made from the Yew blanks pictured above. They're all a bit different and quirky, there's no end to the possible shapes that you can come up with.

By The Editor

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BWA Warwickshire

From small acorns, big oaks grow

It's always a pleasure to see a wide age range of members working with wood in our thriving clubs across the country.

Sharing practical tips, creative ideas and enthusiasm, the more experienced carvers of each group help to keep this traditional skill alive in an age when digital technology – such as 3D printing – has come to dominate so much of our everyday lives.



Elliot and Nicky with Ron Burn

At Warwick Woodcarvers, there are five young people who regularly attend the Wednesday evening sessions held in the workshop of a supportive local comprehensive school.



Emily Hall with Rachel and Rebekah Dimmock

Emily Hall (13) joined after her mother visited the carvers' stand at a local event, and sisters Rebekah and Rachel Dimmock work side by side at the bench. Rebekah has ambitions for a career in engineering.

Elliott Parry 'absolutely loves' his woodcarving hobby, developed when whittling sticks with a penknife could no longer offer sufficient expression for his ideas. He's busy on a bird sculpture, and together with mum Nicky, they're both developing their techniques with guidance from group mentor Bryan Joynes and other longstanding club members, such as Ron Burn who's 91 and still carving.



Hard at work...

Apples for the teachers in Warwick

To help support Apple Day this year, Warwick Woodcarvers attended a local event to promote what we all know to be a thoroughly enjoyable traditional craft. Barry Bates, Bryan Joynes and Eric Rees were on hand to showcase members' work, demonstrate technique and inspire visitors; welcoming a new girl, Emily Hall, who joined the club.

Apple Day is celebrated every October across the UK, following an initiative in 1990 by the charitable organisation, Common Ground (www.commonground.org.uk). Its focus is the relationship between nature and culture, championing the belief that people can make a positive difference to their own localities.



Have you ever carved apple wood? Its light coloured, very hard and fine-grained; so holds detail well. Why not send in your pictures!

By Andy Sylvester

The Northern Woodworking Show 2014

This year two of our regional groups attended the Northern Woodworking Show at Harrogate and had stands: They were BWA Yorkshire (Wooldale Carving Club) and BWA Durham & North Yorkshire (Concliffe Carving Club).



From the left are David Shires (BWA Publicity Officer), Mark Davis (BWA chairman) and Duncan McConnachie (Regional Leader BWA Durham & North Yorkshire)



The BWA Durham & North Yorkshire stand with the WWI Project Exhibition stand



Some of the WWI carvings by members of BWA Durham & North Yorkshire

By David Shires

BOOK REVIEW

The Works: A History of Rippers Joinery Manufacturers of Castle and Sible Hedingham

by Pam & Adrian Corder-Birch

ISBN: 978-0-9567219-2-1

The Works is a history of Rippers Limited, a joinery company with origins from the late 19th century, the family who ran it and the people who worked for it. Primarily a local history book concerned with the villages of Castle and Sible Hedingham in Essex, I think that this book is worth a look for anyone with an interest in timber yards and their history. The companies covered by this book are at the other end of the scale to what most carvers come into contact with but I found it fascinating looking at the sheer scale of what companies like this get up to.

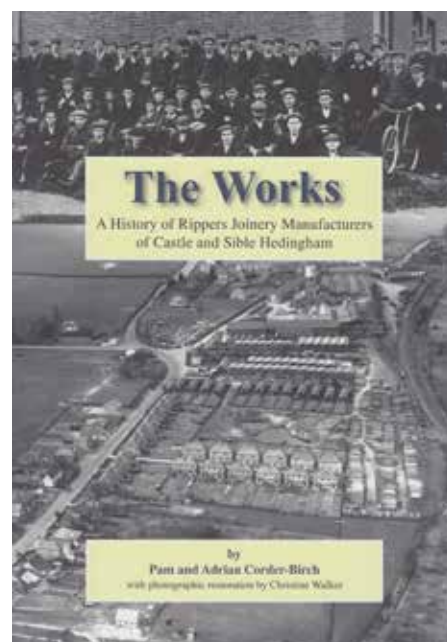
This is not merely a tome about a joinery company, for it is also a history of the Ripper family (at least those connected with the companies). I think that most people will be envious of the extensive genealogy in this book and amassing such a history must have taken the authors much time indeed. With the analysis of each family member, the information is tied nicely to the part that they played in the Rippers companies. Key figures from the companies' history (that were not part of the family), have also been included for completeness.

This is a thoughtfully researched and very well published history of one of the significant joinery and timber companies of Essex and indeed England. I use the word significant because the companies of which the book documents, had a huge impact on the villages of Sible and Castle Hedingham and were major players in the production of joinery and timber products. Before reading this book, I was unaware of the significance that Rippers had on the local landscape and economy. Glancing at some of the many wonderful photographs (restored by Christine Walker) within this book; the scale of *The Works* becomes readily apparent. In the early 20th century they showed the best of intentions as an employer, building some 94 houses for their workers in Sible Hedingham. Although the local railway was small and only ran from Chappel and Wakes Colne to Haverhill, it connected to a large network and Rippers had their own

sidings to help cope with their enormous output. The aerial photograph on the cover and page 41, illustrates the scale of this industry particularly well. Driving through Sible Hedingham today, it is difficult to imagine that so much of the village and what is seen today, is the result of *The Works* and the endeavours of the Ripper family.

The companies operated for nearly a century up until the 1970s, where we see mergers and take-overs and the eventual demise of *The Works* at Sible Hedingham; helped in no small part by the closing of the Colne Valley & Halstead railway in the 1960s. The book takes us from early endeavours to later triumphs. The Ripper family and *The Works* made such an impact on Sible and Castle Hedingham, that it is only fitting that their role be documented. This book is a wonderful attempt to do just that and as a reader with no connections to the Hedinghams, the companies or the families, I find this to be an engaging historical account of the local people and industry. Local might not be the most appropriate word though because lumber from all over the world found its way into *The Works* and the products from here, were sent across East Anglia, England and the world. Products took many forms, from building components to aeroplane propellers, staircases to kitchens.

Among their regular work, Rippers helped the war effort in the 2nd Boer War, First World War and Second World War; manufacturing joinery products of all kinds. Indeed, *The Works* was large-enough to run its own fire brigade during the Second World War. Sadly, the scale of *The Works*, meant that it was singled out by the Luftwaffe and bombed in the Second World War. Men from *The Works* ran social clubs and manned the Sible Hedingham Fire Brigade. The authors have tried to include information on as many employees as possible, although to include an authoritative roll-call was not possible, a good deal of former 'men of the works' have been included. It is pleasing to me that so much information has survived and that it



has been possible for the authors to write this book. This book is a fascinating look into the past.

Available from the authors: corder-birch@lineone.net

By The Editor

BWA Hertfordshire

Here are some photos of the BWA Hertfordshire regional groups. There are currently two distinct meetings, one in St. Albans and one in Luton.



The St Albans Group

Meeting on the 2nd Sunday of the month, 9-1pm, Marlborough School, St Albans



The Luton Group

Meeting on Wednesdays, 7-9pm, Stopsley School, Luton

By Paula Noble

An Interview with Jennifer Marlow

Jennifer Marlow is a woodcarver who learned to carve on the island of Nantucket off the coast of Massachusetts and now resides in Nova Scotia where she has a carving workshop.

How did you get into woodcarving?

As a kid I'd do a bit of 'hold this', 'sand that' for my father when he was home from sea. We grew up in an old farmhouse here in Nova Scotia (where I currently live with my 8 yr old daughter) and so this house was always in some stage of renovation. I think my appreciation and connection to wood came from living in this house. Although I built the odd bookshelf or such, it wasn't until I was in my early thirties that I took my attraction to wood seriously. Whatever I did with wood, I wanted it to be portable and without setting up a fancy workshop with big machinery. I wanted to carry my tools, not house them. I was on Nantucket Island in Massachusetts working in a beautiful historic Inn when I decided to check out the library for anything on woodcarving. I followed that up with contacting the Nantucket Artist Association to see if there was anyone teaching the craft. I was directed to a fulltime woodcarving shop walking distance from the Inn. I went for a visit to find an old-time carver doing his craft very intently and by the look of his hands had been doing it for a long long time. I asked if he or the shop held lessons and that I'd like to learn. Not very talkative was this fellow but I managed to get a 'come back tomorrow

when the boss is around'. The following day the 'boss' was indeed there so I again asked if there was anyone teaching woodcarving... well no but I was told I could come up in the afternoons. Paul McCarthy & Billy Rowe were very generous toward me, teaching me not only to carve but other tricks like how to fillet a 'Striper' (bass fish).

What is your favourite wood?

I carve mainly white pine. Although it's the wood I learned on, I like that it offers a lot of variation, often within one piece. For the most part it's soft but it can be finicky in the direction you carve. Carving a channel with a knife can be challenging until you learn how to 'feather' the wood strands. I typically dye my sculpture and like how it's a bit of a guessing game as to how it will penetrate depending on pitch levels. That said, I also enjoy carving mahogany for a very different reason. It's very uniform compared to white pine but boy does it hold a beautiful sharp edge. I love carving mahogany signs mainly because the lettering looks so nice. ...and then there is that rich colour...

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

The most frustrating wood I've worked



with is red pine (or maybe it's Douglas Fir!?!). A friend called me to say they were renovating her family 'cottage' into a year-round house where they would raise their kids. She offered me some wood and said it was from the exterior walls. I got there and gathered these gorgeous 3'-4' pieces of what she called 'pine'. I still have a piece it's 14" wide x 4" thick! These planks were lined up vertically to create the exterior walls back in the day. That kind of construction excites me even though I know nothing about home building. Anyway, thought I'd carve a 3 foot sperm whale out of one of these so I went ahead and cut it out on the bandsaw, through those nice square nails and all (oops). I began carving this creature and all of a sudden it became a beast....just downright awful to carve. The prominent rings created this start/stop motion. I think I actually finished the whole piece by hand but I know anything else I made from the wood, saw my mini-grinder.

What has been your favourite carving to date?

I don't know if I have a favourite piece since there are several elements that come together to create one. I can tell you that in almost every piece the actual act of carving is the beauty to me regardless of what it ends up being. One of my recent pieces, the blue sperm whale with the blue glass and carved piercings, just happened. I was given a stunning piece of 'drapery glass' that still had the factory 'rolled' edge on it from a



glass artist friend. This piece of glass was kicking around my shop for over a year. Meanwhile I was carving a three foot wall mount sperm whale and was just about to begin sanding it since the carving was done when that glass caught my eye and I then knew exactly what to do with it. I incorporated it within the body of the whale but I initially was just going to cut out a window and insert the glass. I used a drill to help remove material but what I ended up doing was carving those holes with my micro tools and it created a landscape. I loved carving around those holes. I could hardly stop. I also decided not to sand the piece and to leave the tool marks. I'm doing that more often now.

Where do you do most of your work?

I have a cosy heated workshop in my garage that is insulated, has natural light and a woodstove, a nice bench in the middle. I do have several tools that are stored in mobile boxes that can double as additional benches or work horses. In the evenings I can work in my house at a bench I made using the base from an old singer sewing machine. The cast iron provides nice ballast. I can sit just about anywhere and carve in my lap too.

What is your favourite subject for carving?

The second carving I made was a sperm whale and 12 years later I still love carving sperm whales. It as a subject is relevant because I learned to carve in Nantucket and that island built their economy on the whaling industry. That way of life saw the whalers leave for years at a time and so this resonates with me as my late father was a sea captain who went to sea a couple months at a time while my late mother raised three kids, ran the house and was an active community member. When I moved back to Nova Scotia from Nantucket, Humpbacks seemed to be the prominent whale through whale-watching adventures. I began carving these and eventually noticed how complimentary they are to the sperm whale. The form



of the humpback to me is lyrical, arching, sweeping while the powerful sperm whale is more linear both in movement and in form. Come to think of it one of my favourite carvings is a small humpback that is mounted on glass and partial frame; the key to this one is that I didn't sand it and so the tool marks make it look even livelier. Back to the sperm whale: I've been reading Moby Dick on and off for years and a couple years ago created a small body of work based solely on the chapter 'The Whiteness of the Whale'. It's unlikely I'll exhaust this literary text before I die...perhaps my white whale ;)

Do you draw inspiration from any particular artists?

My work, like everyone else, is influenced but by who or what it's difficult to pinpoint. I tend to look at a lot of abstract sculpture but I don't carve that myself....yet...? I look at Henry Moore, Giacometti, Louise Bourgeois Hepworth, Arp even Serra. I love looking at and am amazed at Grinling Gibbons' carving, I absolutely love it but I don't have a desire to carve in that style. I love Ian Norbury's work but again you wouldn't find me carving like that. I prefer line and form over representation I guess.



There is a nautical theme to a lot of your carvings, where does this come from?

I touched a bit on why the nautical style would greatly influence my subjects in the above but to sum it up I would say there are three reasons for this – being a sea captain's daughter, growing up in Nova Scotia and learning to carve in Nantucket.



For more information on Jennifer Marlow and to see more of her work, please go to her website: www.jennifermarlow.com. The photographs in this interview are by Robert George Young Photography.



By The Editor

A Carving derived by Committee

The following carving was, as the title suggests, was derived by a Committee. I was after a subject that contained movement and told a story, hence the racehorses. However I fell at the first fence when the images I chose to copy were hand painted drawings taken from a book titled Great Horses, written by Maurizio Bongianni and illustrated by Piero Cozzaglio. However, as good as they appeared to be, I failed to find their detail adequate for carving.

Still back to the Committee. I started this carving at a group session with the Rockingham Forest Carvers and it wasn't long before I had quite a gathering around my bench giving me all sorts of advice. How many horses should I have, which way should they run, should I include a Grandstand, where should I place the winning post etc. etc.? An enjoyable and humorous gathering that certainly helped me on my way, I think! I eventually sorted out their various suggestions keeping some, rejecting others and set to. Of course, as anticipated, it wasn't long before I realised I knew very little about horses. It was brought home to me yet once again that to carve any animal, bird etc. well you really do need to do your homework and learn the basis of their anatomy.



1. The Initial committee-agreed layout



2. A start is made with the fluter



3. Second horse moved without committee agreement



4. The carving with the original reference material



5. Where do we place the third horse, ask the Committee!



6. The committee-agreed revised layout

It wasn't long that after heading down this road the Committee soon reduced in numbers. The paintings were placed to one side and a whole mini library of relevant photographs and other material was gathered in their place. After struggling for many weeks the carving slowly took shape and as it did so the members of the Committee slowly returned. The time had now arrived when their comments were more than welcome. Constructive criticism should always be welcome. Nothing annoys me more than a person saying that the carving is simply wonderful without saying why. We all recognise the need for praise but it is a rare occasion when things are perfect so let us take on board comments from others with good grace. Therefore, a sincere thank you to all members of the RFC Committee that monitored and advised on this carving. We got there in the end, I think?



7. "Success is a journey not a destination. The doing is often more important than the outcome" - (ASA Long Term Athlete Development 2010)



8. Switching to improved reference material



The finished piece: Committee approved. Fait accompli

By Mick Stidever

Life with the Lions National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire

Recently a very special Lion made an adventurous trip from Essex to Staffordshire escorted by two august members of Essex region BWA, namely Ted Jeffery and Ken Willoughby. They were charged to transport said lion to the National Memorial Arboretum for installation in the shelter presented by the Lions Clubs International. The two escorts were warmly and enthusiastically greeted by the President of the club and his wife together with 2 officials. The hand over was solemnly made, a photographer was duly summoned to record the auspicious event and at that point the whole assembled company smiled as one. The resulting pictures record the happy event.



Ted Jeffery, The Lion and Ken Willoughby

The lion itself was made by Peter Benson and his team of able assistants to a commission from the Lions Club and is a further addition to the numerous carving projects presented to the Arboretum by this group of dedicated carvers. Unfortunately Peter was not able to travel up to Staffordshire on this installation event as he was held back (firmly) by a new hip replacement. By all accounts the lion was very well received, much admired and will be a wonderful addition to the dedicated memorial. I don't suppose for one moment Ted J and Ken W will be the only ones who will lay their hands on this chap! Very well done to all those involved in this project.



By Ken Veal

the ART of Kolrosing

Kolrosing (pronounced coal-rose-ing), is a Norwegian tradition for embellishing wooden items. There may be similar traditions of surface decoration from many cultures but this Scandinavian tradition is probably the most well-known. It involves incising fine details into the wood with the tip of a knife and then rubbing a dark material into the cut marks to leave a permanent adornment in the wood. It is a nice technique for utensil objects which are intended to get used. Many examples from antiquity can be seen due to the way that this decoration lasts. It is a great alternative to pyrography for those who like the idea of a more traditional way of adding surface detail.

The procedure is to carve out a pattern on the surface of your wood (be it a flat piece of wood or a carved or turned object) and then fill the cuts. Traditionally, coal dust was used to fill the cuts but a good substitute is ground coffee. Once the cuts have been sealed, you must sand down the wood that has been raised around the cuts to make the surface nice and flat again before sealing the wood. Sealing the wood ensures that the pattern is picked out really well and protected along with the wood.

Del Stubbs from Pinewood Forge in North America, gave me a Kolrosing knife and instructional DVD to try out. The knife has been created specifically for the purpose of Kolrosing and Del has worked closely with Judy Ritger to perfect the design of these knives. They are made from M2 High Speed Steel and have a turned handle very similar to a calligraphy pen. The idea of this knife is that it has a short fat blade that helps to make wider than usual cuts to allow the production of dark thick lines in Kolrosing. The handle allows you to move the blade through the wood nicely and supports the tight turns that you will need to carve high detail. This is a great quality knife and I really liked the finish on the turned handle.

The instructional DVD 'Kolrosing with

Judy Ritger', is a quality production and very helpful to people new to the craft. I hadn't come across Kolrosing myself before Del put me onto it, so I am quite the beginner and the target audience of this DVD. I found the instructions that Judy gave to be very useful and Judy herself is a good tutor. If you're going to start Kolrosing and would like some instruction, I can certainly recommend this DVD.

My experience with Kolrosing has

Kolrosing 5/16" Knife



been pleasant and it is something that I would like to use on my carvings in the future. The technique is straightforward but takes practice. Judy demonstrates a great technique where you hold the blade away from you and use your thumb to push the back of the blade to exercise greater

control over your cuts. This is quite important because any slip of the blade will create a cut and it is the cuts that are going to be filled and therefore any mistakes will be highly visible.

control over your cuts. This is quite important because any slip of the blade will create a cut and it is the cuts that are going to be filled and therefore any mistakes will be highly visible.



The Editor's own attempt at Kolrosing



Available from: www.pinewoodforge.com



Available from: www.pinewoodforge.com

The photograph on the left shows my first attempt at Kolrosing. I used a pattern from a book and traced it onto a piece of Silver Birch. Before tracing the pattern onto the wood, I carefully sanded the wood to make the surface smooth (to 1000 grit). I used a piece of carbon paper to trace my pattern onto the wood. My first mistake was to trace the pattern off-centre on my piece of wood (which was 100mm square). I blame this on using the carbon paper which meant I couldn't see the piece of wood very well under it. It's not much of an excuse but to avoid my mistake, I could have used tracing paper or cut the piece of carbon paper to size so that I knew exactly where the centre of my piece of wood was. I used the Pinewood Forge Kolrosing 5/16" knife but I struggled to follow Judy's technique of having the blade face away from me. I thought that I would try using the blade facing me and using the knife like a pen. This worked to an extent although I made a few mistakes and the pattern I chose involved making some very tight turns.

I think that Silver Birch was not a great choice for my first attempt because it is quite a bit harder than Basswood. In her DVD, Judy is able to cut the basswood like butter but I struggled to make my cuts very thick at all in the Silver Birch. After carving my pattern, I filled the cuts with Ground Espresso coffee which worked well. I then sanded the wood again with 400 and 1000 grit paper. I then sealed the wood in two coats of Danish oil and a brief touch of creamed beeswax. The result overall is pleasing but practice will definitely be worth it. This small piece will make a passable coaster.

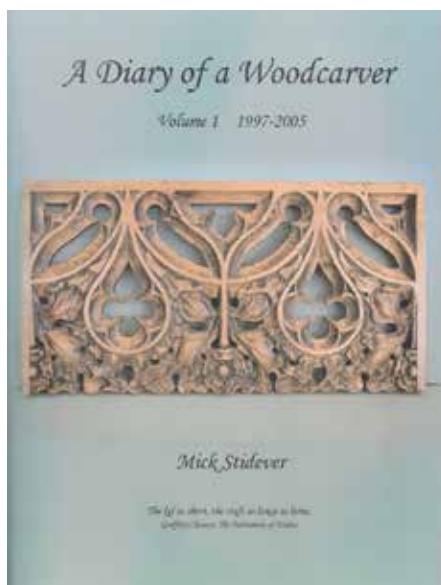
Why not give Kolrosing a try and submit a photo of your finished item to the Members Gallery in the next issue of The Woodcarvers Gazette.

By The Editor

BOOK REVIEW

A Diary of a Woodcarver - Volume I: 1997-2005 by Mick Stidever

ISBN: 978-1-78507-084-6



This book is the first of three planned volumes by Mick Stidever, an active BWA member. The book takes the form of a diary of his woodcarving experience for the most part. The book starts off in 1997 when Mick retires from full-time employment and sets out on his woodcarving journey. This volume ends in 2005 after some 47 carving projects. Mick is clearly talented and one wonders if his 45 years at General Electric is a case of Art's loss and Industry's gain.

Although this book is a diary of Mick's adventures in woodcarving, it is interspersed with his outings to various locations to admire and be inspired by artists and carvings along the way. There are also many heart-warming and very touching accounts of events in the life of his family and in particular his gold-medal-winning Paralympic daughter Jane. The book also relays accounts of Mick's experiences on several courses that he has undertaken, which may be of interest to anyone looking to spend money on choosing the right woodcarving/woodworking course.

The book is illustrated with many colour photographs; indeed too numerous to number. Mick has taken the trouble to photograph each of his carvings after completion (and in many cases at various stages of completion) and he offers up his own critique of each piece. It is a nice insight into the mind of a fellow carver

and interesting to watch his progression from his beginnings is the art as he slowly becomes more accomplished.

I think Mick tackles most forms of woodcarving in this book so there is plenty of variety in both the forms created and the subjects undertaken. He is obviously a keen diarist and some of the details are very insightful. I liked the fact that he noted down how many hours he had spent on each piece. This is most comforting to the novice carver (I include myself in that category), knowing that some of the wonderful pieces in this book were not just knocked-out in an hour or two but instead required commitment and many hours hard labour.

I am not personally a fan of reading other people's diaries. I know that there are many out there that delight in the latest Michael Palin release but those sort of books are not for me. Having said that, this book is different; it feels more like a journey and I found it an interesting read – joining Mick on his journey through the craft. I have no problem in recommending this book to others and am looking forward to the next volume.

By The Editor

TIPS

Regular readers will probably have noticed that I am a huge fan of trees and wood. I love unusual woods and learning about them. I often buy pieces of wood that have been cut for woodturners that are not often carved by people. These could be woods like Pink Ivory or Bocote. I like to learn about the wood I am carving and aside from a couple of books, I have found one resource invaluable. Eric Meier has created **www.wood-database.com** which has many many woods listed and is growing all the time. He has also written several excellent articles which are well worth reading.

By The Editor



MEMBERS GALLERY

Abstract Sculpture

By Len Mapp



Carved from a Mahogany

Woodpecker

By Dave Taplin



Carved from Yew

Cobra

By Peter Schofield



Carved from Walnut

Cheetah

By David Lumb



Carved from Lime

Day and Night

By Pam Pritchard



Carved from Red Mallee burr, this is an interpretation of M.C. Escher's tessellation 'Day and Night'

Fish Bowl

By Travall Towriess



Carved from Lime

Gruffalo Name Plaque

By Travall Towriess



Carved from Lime

Woodpecker

By Travall Towriess



Carved from Bubinga, on a Eucalyptus branch on a base of brass

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

Fruit Bow & Fruit

By Jim MacMorran



A web-tyle pierced fruit bowl with fruit

Dove of Peace

By Jan Brain



Carved from Lime

Higgledy-piggledy house

By Linda Johnson-Boxall



Carved from Lime

Supper Time

By John Peel



Carved from Lime

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see website for details*

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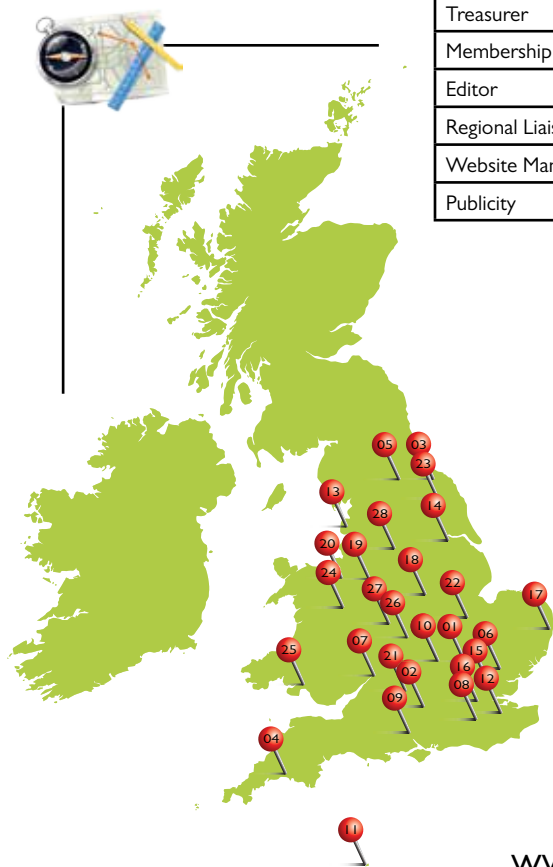
G&S SPECIALIST TIMBER

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