

THE WOODCARVERS *Gazette*



Published by the British Woodcarvers Association

Volume 3 - Issue 9

Summer 2015



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Anna Korver
Dale Green

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Graeme's Commission by Anna Korver

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(Free to BWA Members)



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NOTICES

BWA Membership Renewal

A timely reminder to you all please that your £20 Annual Membership Fee is due on 1st June. Only renewals received through my front door by Tuesday 30th June will qualify for the Capitation Payment of £10 to your Region. Renewal can be paid by:

Standing Order:

For those of you who already pay by Standing order thank you very much, but please check that your Standing Order is set up to pay the BWA by the middle of June. I still have a few Standing Orders that are paid at other odd times during the year. If you wish to start a new Standing Order Payment please pay by Cheque this year and then contact me for an updated Standing Order Mandate to commence on 1st June 2016 at the new annual rate of £25.

Postal Renewal:

Send a Cheque for £20 direct to the Membership Secretary along with the Form included with this copy of the gazette (further copies can be downloaded from the BWA website).

Put your Membership Number on your Cheque please.

Through your regional Leader:

Many Regional Leaders are willing to collect Renewal Payments. Check with them, if indeed they have not contacted you already.

Many thanks,
John Tybjerg (BWA Membership Secretary)

New BWA Treasurer

Our new treasurer is Ian Ford. Ian joined the BWA in the very early days, confirmed with a membership number of 73, and at that time took an active part covering a number of different National Council roles.

A good number of years went by with no carving and no contact with the BWA, other than the regular and much appreciated arrival of the Gazette. However, with changed circumstances a couple of years ago carving came back on the agenda and always being one to get fully involved, he found himself volunteering as BWA Treasurer; not a position he's held before, but hopefully he is well suited (being a qualified accountant for more years than he's been in the BWA).



Ian says 'I'm very much looking forward to working for the BWA again and hopefully continuing to find time for carving – one of my current pieces on the go is a 70 year old Christine Keeler; what is it with me and older women? - See page 28 for another example'

We still need a volunteer to fill the role of National Secretary though!

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Summer 2015 issue of The Woodcarvers Gazette. I have had trouble fitting everything into this issue that people have submitted to me. If I haven't included your article, please don't be offended, I will make sure it's in the next issue.

Hopefully there will be something in this issue for everyone but as always, please send me your suggestions and comments; All submissions of content are welcome, particularly photos and write-ups on the events and exhibitions that your local clubs attend. If you would like to write a how-to article or write about a carving you have recently completed, that would be very welcome too.

In this issue you will find several interviews, one with a female carver from New Zealand, a couple from the US, a caricaturist from the US and an interview with famous author Richard Mabey.

In the last issue I again made a typing mistake and talked about an article on 'craving a seashell'. Apologies for this and to any aspiring woodcarvers!

The AGM minutes are included with this issue of the magazine and there is a feature about the AGM

starting on page 28. If you didn't go to the AGM please let a national council member know why so that we can improve numbers in attendance next year.

There is a new member competition on page 26 to carve something out of a Birch 'egg'.

There is also the launch of a new project that I am excited about on page 21: The BWA Spoon Project.

I hope that you will all consider entering items for both the member competition and the Spoon Project.

Will Barsley has written another fascinating article on woodcarving in the East and I have written an in-depth article on Mark Davis, the BWA Chairman so that newer members can get to know him better.

Happy carving until the Autumn issue!



Jason Townsend

Gazette Copy Deadline and Contact Details

To submit content to the next issue of The Woodcarvers Gazette, you can email the editor using editor@britishwoodcarversassociation.co.uk or send items in the post to **Jason Townsend, 66 Wisbech Road, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 8EF.**

Deadline for the Autumn Gazette is the **15th August**

REVIEW

To purchase see: www.eternaltools.com

EVE Diamond Abrasive Polishing cloths

This set of three polishing cloths by EVE are impregnated with diamonds and are very flexible. In the pack you get one sheet each of 2,400 grit, 4,000 grit and 12,000 grit. The sheets are 75mm x 140m and I would cut them in half because I find that size to be most useful. You could probably cut them into thirds to make the go further really.

The first question that you might be asking is 'what would I want with such fine grade abrasive?' and to answer that you would probably have to look away from most wood. Using such a high grade of abrasive is only going to be beneficial where you have a very close grain and want to achieve a glassy look to your finish. Woods like

Ebony and Pink Ivory have just the right closeness of grain. Still, it is quite an effort to go through coarser grades of abrasive to be able to get the best out of these polishing cloths. I would only want to do this for a special carving.

One suggestion on from Eternal Tools is that you could cut pieces of these cloths and use glue to make custom tools. These are high quality cloths and their flexibility makes them very useful. Together with the Micro-Mesh Pads, you will have a complete fine grade abrasive tool kit.



Micro-Mesh Pads

This set of nine abrasive pads are impregnated with silicone carbide grit. They range from 1,500 grit all the way up to 12,000 grit. They are double-sided with a soft foam in the middle, making a sort of sandwich. This means that they are quite flexible but the foam does hold its form so you could use them to polish rounded surfaces as well as using them to polish a flat surface.

I really like these little pads and the fact that they are double-sided is a great idea. The colour coding is not quite as easy to work out when using them as the chart would have you believe; black and grey are quite similar for example. As these are 'pads' and not sheets, it is difficult to use

them where you want to get into corners and crevices but you could trim them to a particular shape to achieve this.

I can see that wood turners would definitely enjoy using these pads to polish their creations; being a pad makes them ideal to hold against a spinning cylindrical form. I do think they have a place with the wood carver as well though. I have two work-in-progress carvings that easily benefit from these pads; one is a Tagua nut carving and the other is a carving in Whitby Jet. They are only simple carvings but they are materials that you can really apply a high polish to. I would definitely recommend them.



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TIPS

Here follows a bit of advice on storing water stones. A dash of vinegar or disinfectant should be added to the water to prevent algae growth but household cleaners, however, should not be used since they attack the stone's bonding. In

order to prevent cracking, sharpening stones should never be exposed to frost! When using highly calcareous (hard) water, don't let the stones dry out too often otherwise lime builds up and reduces the efficiency of the stones.

Sharpening stones should be handled carefully. Keep them flat, clean and free of oil since oil prevents the stones from absorbing water, limiting their abrasive effect.

By The Editor

By Roland Laycock



BWA WWI REMEMBRANCE PROJECT

The WWI Remembrance Project is still touring the country. BWA Hampshire recently had it on display in the loft of Bursledon Brickworks Industrial Museum at their recent exhibition there.

I believe that the exhibition is currently with the Gloucestershire region and will be on display in Olney at the Cowper & Newton museum on July 19th.

The display will then travel on to North Wales in late July and August before hopefully being on display in Imber Church, on Salisbury Plain in late August.

By The Editor



The WWI display alongside the Hampshire display



The WWI Project exhibition stand



Some of the Hampshire region's carvings



More of the fine carvings on display

OUT & ABOUT

I spent a lovely couple of days down in Warwick with my sons at Easter and found these lovely items at Warwick Castle. The first is the Kenilworth Buffet in the Main Hall and is made from a solid oak tree cut from the Kenilworth castle estate a couple of hundred years ago! It was carved by local craftsmen for the 1851 Great Exhibition.



Details of the 'Kenilworth Buffet'

The second is a carved copy of a famous battle painting 'Battle of the Amazons'. The original painting is by Peter Paul Rubens (the Flemish painter c 1730) and was reworked as a carving in pear wood by master carver Simon Cognoulles.

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



'Battle of the Amazons'

By Sarah Lawrenson

European Woodworking Show 2015 - Group Tickets

The European Woodworking Show is back in September this year on 12th & 13th September.

are available for £6.50 per ticket and are available by phone **01473 785946** or email **info@ews2015.com**

for advance bookings it will not be available on the gate.

Group bookings for 10 or more people

Please note that this offer is only available

By Joy Allen



THE WALL



A woodcarving spectacle is taking place in the heart of Tasmania, deep in the interior of the island, almost in the middle of nowhere. In the small town of Derwent Bridge, sculptor Greg Duncan is carving the history of the Tasmanian Highlands in the form of a sculpted wall. It's not an ordinary wall. Greg built a special building to house his work of art; a 100m long and 3m tall wall of wood.

Greg Duncan was born in Belgrave, a country town in Victoria's Dandenong Ranges. Greg has always had a fascination with sculpting in wood. In 1982, he decided to take up sculpting as a full-time career.

"I am self-taught," Greg says. "At first I began working with timbers such as mallee and redgum. They were a real education and they taught me the differing characteristics and qualities of timber as a medium. My first pieces were small; and after making all the mistakes a beginner can make, I began creating bigger works. At that time, back in the Eighties, I never thought I would end up working on a sculpture 100 metres long!"



Greg and his family moved to Tasmania in 1994, first settling in the Channel area south of Hobart. After running a successful studio for nine years, Greg decided to pursue his dream of creating a large-scale work in the Tasmanian Highlands. "I was captured by the beauty of the Highlands right from the start. When I first visited here in 1990, I knew this was the place I wanted to be. The area has a fascinating history, and that is what I want to document through my carving of The Wall."

The wall is constructed from 100 panels of laminated boat-grade native Huon pine 100mm-thick. Each panel is 3m



tall and 1m wide. The wall is split up into two parts, back-to-back and each measuring 50m long. Greg estimates that this gargantuan woodcarving is going to take 10 years to complete. After five years of work, the carving of The Wall in the Wilderness has reached the halfway mark.

Tasmania's Premier Paul Lennon described The Wall as having world significance; others have likened Greg's undertaking to Michelangelo painting the Sistine Chapel. So far, Greg has carved scenes depicting the workers of the Hydro-Electric Scheme and of the forestry industry, and scenes concerning the environmental plight of the wedge-tail eagle and the extinction of the Thylacine (the Tasmanian Tiger).

"I'm not trying to push any particular line," Greg explains. "I just want to bring the history of the area into the light. There were mistakes and successes in our past. If I am trying to say anything it is that we must learn from the past, good and bad, in order to move into a better future. I want The Wall to be an educational as well as an artistic experience."

Hopefully some readers of this article may venture to Tasmania and soak in this wonderful sculpture. BWA National Council member Graeme Murray (originally from Tasmania himself), has been to see The wall on his last visit to Tasmania and although he is able to describe the spectacle and scale in much greater detail, he sums up his impression

of the wall as "It's unbelievable!". He definitely recommends a visit to The Wall if you visit Tasmania.

It's difficult to capture the scale of a 100m-long carving in photographs but hopefully you are able to get some idea of the scale in the photographs presented here.

To learn more about The Wall, please visit the website **www.thewalltasmania.com**

By The Editor



An Interview with Dale Green

Dale Green is a passionate caricature carver from the USA with many awards to his name.

When did you start carving?

One Saturday about 20 years ago, my wife saw a sign advertising wood carving classes at a local store so we stopped in. On a whim, I bought a few tools and registered for a class – quite certain it would be a disaster. That was the beginning of a passion for wood carving – and tool collecting - that continues to grow.

How did you learn to carve?

I was determined to learn everything and took advantage of all the local classes and then began traveling across the United States to attend classes taught by the most recognized carvers.

How do you describe your style of carving?

I tried many styles of carving but it didn't take long to realize that caricature carving was for me. I enjoy creating a humorous scene that tells a funny story. The highest compliment I receive is when someone laughs at my carvings.

After a few years I began designing and carving my own caricature figures, some of which have been featured in Wood Carving Illustrated and Carving Magazine. My carvings have won numerous First Place and Best of Division awards, including "Best of Show" at the 2012 and

2014 Caricature Carvers of America competition and Editor's Choice Nominee for Best Design, Wood Carving Illustrated Magazine.

In 2014 I received the honour of being elected as a new member of the Caricature Carvers of America, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the art of caricature carving. My wife, Kerry, and I live in Holladay, UT with our 2 dogs.

Who has been the biggest influence on your carving?

Several well-known caricature carvers here in the U.S., including Phil & Vickie Bishop and Chris Hammack.

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

The most important tip is to have sharp tools. Carving with dull tools leads to frustration, poor results, and often to new carvers just giving up.

What is the most important thing

you tell your new students?

Don't be afraid to make a mistake – it's just a piece of wood. We all make mistakes and learning from them teaches us to be better carvers.



Crowding Home Plate



Don't Drink & Drive

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

I don't use power tools when carving and am of the opinion that it is important to have tools with the best quality steel as they will hold an edge longer and require less sharpening. I think it's important to spend a little more on good quality even if that means you build your tool collection slowly.

What is your favourite wood and why?

My favourite wood for carving is bass wood from the linden tree. This is a nice soft wood for carving that holds the detail very well with little grain and no knots. I have also used butternut, a darker wood, and sugar pine with quite good results. Overall, I use bass wood 95% of the time.



Rabbit's Revenge

Tell us a bit about your workshop or where you do your carving

I recently constructed a new workshop in my back yard where I carve and teach classes. When planning the new workshop I wanted to have plenty of light in both day and night, and room for a dedicated carving area, tool sharpening, and storage. I believe having a comfortable place to carve leads to more carving.

What finishing technique do you prefer?

I seal all of my finished carvings with Watco natural Danish oil before painting with acrylic paints. I mix 1 drop of paint to 10 drops of water to let the wood grain show through. Once the paint is dry I spray the entire carving with Krylon matte finish.



Soup's On front

For more information on Dale or to see more of his work, please visit his website: www.dalegreenwoodcarving.com

By The Editor

BWA Durham & North Yorkshire Eddie Morgan Shield

The Eddie Morgan Commemorative Shield is awarded annually to a club member who has made the biggest contribution to the club in the past 12 months. At this year's A.G.M on the 24th Feb the award was presented to our popular membership secretary John Scott. The award was presented by last year's winner Keith Hardisty. Both John and Keith work tirelessly to enable the club to run smoothly and it was a real pleasure to see the surprise on John's face when he was awarded the shield.



Keith Hardisty and John Scott

By Cherie Kemp

By Georgia Simpson

BWA in photographs

I am a photography student and contacted the BWA at the beginning of the year looking for subjects for her photography project. I got in touch with my local BWA group and popped along to observe and photograph a class. Here are some of the images that I took for my project. To have a look at more of my work and projects, please see my website: georgiasimpson.wordpress.com



Living Crafts

Art, Design & Innovation

Blessed with gorgeous weather, the Living Crafts Show at Hatfield House in May was as popular as ever. We were represented by BWA Herts and BWA Essex and were delighted to receive many visitors to our stands. A huge thank you Michelle Bolton from BWA Essex for encouraging folk to join our BWA Herts region group – her enthusiasm was infectious!

With so many arts and crafts stalls for us to wander around and feel inspired by, the day was just perfect. Manning a BWA stand at these events is such a privilege – we are part of a team of talented woodcarvers and get great pleasure from sharing tips, techniques and stories and encouraging new carvers to join us. Soap carving was definitely an effective activity to start conversations with us. I can highly recommend it for other shows we attend in the future. Huge thanks to everyone who came along to support us – my thanks go to Stan and Lynn Kimm for organising us from the BWA Herts group.



Part of the Essex stand and enthralled visitors



Part of the Hertfordshire stand and more enthralled visitors



The soap carvig had many people giving it a go



Adam and Sarah Dunmur with Jean Harper

P.S. Congratulations to Adam Dunmur from the BWA Herts region for his recent marriage to the beautiful Sarah in Aldbury, Near Tring. It was a gorgeous day, with wood being a theme throughout! This is a photo of Jean Harper from BWA Gloucester with the happy couple for whom she carved a lovespoon. We wish them both every happiness for the future!

By Paula Noble



Beginner's Corner

In this section, we are aiming to showcase the work of novice wood carvers and to provide advice and projects to help the beginner. Your early carvings are very useful to you as a means to see where you have made mistakes in design and execution. Indeed, learning-by-doing is invaluable in the art of woodcarving.

Project #1

This is a project taken from the book *A Manual of Wood Carving* by Charles Leland, published in 1909. It is a project still relevant for the beginner today and aims to teach the beginner the rudiments of using a gouge.

For this project you will need a deep narrow gouge (a #9 at 1/4" is suggested as an example). You will also need a few pieces of flat wood, a pencil and a ruler (a combination square may also be of benefit). In the photos I have used two pieces of wood 100mm x 100mm x 10mm. The book suggests using pieces of wood 6" square but it is entirely up to you.

The idea is to mark parallel lines onto the first piece of wood about 10mm apart. Then mark parallel lines perpendicular to those you have already made so that you have a grid. Fasten the piece of wood to the workbench using a cramp or other device: 'Never attempt to carve anything unless it is fastened to the table. Pupils who do this fall into the habit of holding the panel down with the left hand, and the result is that the tool slips sooner or later, and inflicts a wound which may be serious. Always keep both hands on the tool.'



Parallel lines cut into a piece of Silver Birch

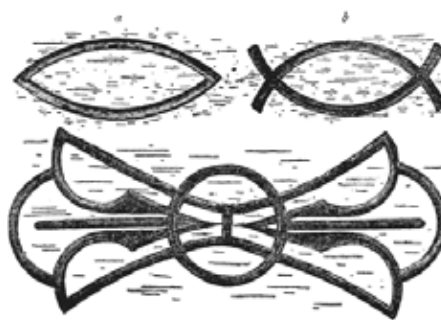
Using your gouge, cut along the first line but do not cut all of the wood away at once: 'A very little should be removed at first, so as to make a shallow groove, then this may be cut over again till the incision is perfect.' Repeat this on the lines that are parallel to the first and then set about doing the same to the perpendicular lines.



Parallel diagonal lines cut into a piece of Basswood

Mark out the second piece of wood with parallel diagonal lines 10mm apart and then a set of parallel diagonal lines perpendicular to the first set. This should give you a grid of diagonal lines. As with the first piece of wood, start by carving one line with the gouge until you have a perfect incision. Then repeat with the parallel and perpendicular lines.

The purpose of these exercises is to develop dexterity and confidence that you can put to use in subsequent projects. Once you have tried the straight lines and parallel lines, it's time to throw some curves into the mixture. Leland suggests the curved patterns shown in the sketch but you can pick out any patterns that you like to practice with including hearts and trefoils. You can then attempt some celtic knot patterns.



Some suggested curved patterns to try

To read Charles Leland's complete book, please see Project Gutenberg here: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/42949

Two members who recently joined the BWA Durham and North Yorkshire group are Gareth Shepherd, whose first carving is the spoon you see here and Roger Winfield, whose second completed carving is a Toy Soldier, carved for a young family member as a Christmas present.



'Spoon' by Gareth Shepherd



'Toy Soldier' by Roger Winfield

John Worthington is a member of BWA Lancashire. In the early 1970s he was an apprentice wheelwright but after a few years the role died away and he moved into an engineering role. Apart from DIY, he hadn't gone back to woodwork until last year when his wife bought him a weekend woodcarving course at Alston Hall for his birthday. He fell in love with wood again. His first attempt from that weekend, he plans to complete at BWA Lancashire carving sessions, is rather aptly of a wheel. John says this of woodcarving: 'After a 40 year gap I am a beginner again, working with wood. It is so infectious with such a great sense of achievement no matter how the carving turns out.'



John Worthington's 'Wheel'

WEIRD & WONDERFUL WOOD

@ Haughley Park
16th & 17th May

This year's Weird & Wonderful Wood event at Haughley Park in Suffolk was very popular and was great fun to attend. The BWA was represented by the Norfolk & Suffolk region who had a couple of tables in the barn. They had carvings on display and were demonstrating carving to members of the public. People also had the opportunity to try soap carving.

There were many excellent stalls and craftspeople in attendance. The carvings on display on the different stalls ranged from small jewellery pieces to wonderful chainsaw pieces. There were lots of other wood crafts including a lot of indoor and outdoor furniture on display. There were some incredibly artistic pieces and many wacky unusual pieces.



Anna Cullingford, BWA Norfolk & Suffolk

Weird & Wonderful Wood is an ideal show to take children along to: There were lots of entertainers including stilt-walkers, jugglers, musicians and an entertainer that was a huge hit with the crowd. I made the mistake of walking past him with my camera whilst he was entertaining a huge crowd on the hill. He accosted me and proceeded to dress me up as 'Wally' from the Where's Wally books, in a woolly hat, glasses, stripy jumper and walking stick. He got me to go and hide amongst the crowd and photographed me. The sculptures at the show are always a big hit with children and this year the sculpture was a huge elephant made from faux foliage.

If you get chance to visit the event next year, I thoroughly recommend going for a look (although it does seem to clash with the BWA AGM).



Elise having a go at soap carving



Florence having a go at soap carving



Carvings on display from BWA Norfolk & Suffolk



The barn, packed full of visitors

By The Editor





Can you find Wally in the photo above?



Some of the sculptures on display (all up for sale)



Some of the chainsaw carvings up for sale



A spoon carving workshop



The hall in the background



Rather a large Dragon's Head



Some of the many many visitors



Stick making



CARVING TOGETHER

Harley & Midge Schmitgen

Harley began his first forays into woodcarving at the age of 18. He was working in a shop specialising in stone monuments and memorials, designing and sandblasting his creations into granite. He decided to try sandblasting wood and started to create flowers in wood. This was his hobby and side-line to monument carving. After a while he was asked to exhibit his flowers at a woodcarvers show. His creations were a big hit but he was fascinated with the carvings on show by other carvers. He decided to try using knives and chisels and has been hooked on carving ever since.



'Sonny' by Harley

Initially starting out by carving caricatures, Harley moved into thin reliefs. He is currently working in-the-round and in relief with a semi-realistic style. He is also starting to do decorative carving on furniture, fireplace surrounds and other items. Harley has taught woodcarving in seminars since the early 1980s but it wasn't until 2001 that he met Midge. They eventually married and began their woodcarving adventure together. They now teach seminars together and try to share as much of their experience as possible.

Midge specialises in carving realistic animals. As an artist she started out working in oils and acrylics, painting landscapes and wildlife. She now paints her own carvings and those of Harley as well. At their seminars, she teaches her painting technique as well as carving.



'Wolf Heads' by Midge

Together Midge and Harley look at woodcarving as an art form and try to create pieces that would be suitable for exhibition in art galleries and the corporate space.

Harley was inducted into the Caricature Carvers of America in 1991 and took emeritus status in the fall of 2008, something that he is very proud of. Midge has been carving wood since 1997. Together they still design and produce rough-outs for students and other carvers to carve, something that is more popular in the US than over here in the UK.



'Colour me Red' by Harley



Here they have answered some of the questions that I put to them about their carving and working together:

What is your favourite wood to work?

Our favourite woods are Basswood and Butternut.

What is your favourite style of carving?

We have done all types of carving; we like in the round and also relief. Midge likes to carve animals and I like carving humans and western-style figures.



'First Watch' by Midge

What is the favourite carving that you have done?

We are not sure that we have favourite carvings. We like most of the carvings that we have done and definitely wish that some of them we had kept.

Are there ever any squabbles over tools?

There's never a fight over tools, we just try to make sure that they are kept sharp for each other.

What do you find is the best thing about working so closely together?

The Harley and Midge woodcarving team of husband and wife it is great. We are both able to come up with ideas and bounce them off one another, this is a great tool, the usefulness of which should not be underestimated.



'Pack Rat' by Harley

Do you have any tips for carvers out there who want to improve their carvings?

The best tip we can give other carvers is never to give up, keep trying and practice practice practice. Working out



'Afternoon Watch' by Midge

your ideas in clay first it is a great way to improve and develop your own style.

They are still on their woodcarving journey and continue to learn together, often trying out new techniques and finishes. They are keen to pass on their knowledge and offer the following tips for those starting out in carving: You WILL make mistakes but keep practicing and learning, go to classes and read books. Join a club and keep connected with other woodcarvers. When you attempt a carving, make sure that you know about your subject; get all the information you need on that subject, don't rely on



'Going Home' by Harley & Midge

other people's artwork because it may not be correct. In caricature carving for example, you can't exaggerate something unless you know what it realistically looks like. Work with clay; it helps you to be creative. Before long you'll develop a style of your own.

So many trees, so little time...

To find out more about Harley & Midge or to see more of their carvings, please visit their website: **www.harleyandmidgewoodcarving.com**

Harley Schmitzen & Midge Schmitzen

By The Editor

On the Paul Ross Radio Show

I was pleased to be asked recently to appear on the Paul Ross (brother of Jonathan Ross) Radio Show on BBC Radio Berkshire to talk about woodcarving. I was asked to take some of my work in although I didn't think it would work terribly well on radio!

The show went live on the afternoon of May 1st. It was an interesting albeit fairly brief experience but I did manage to plug the BWA and our local carving group!



By Roger Edwards

BWA Cleveland

Cleveland carving club is temporally relocating to a different venue from 22nd June. This is due to work being carried out at our usual venue.

The new venue is: St. Aidan's, Tintern Avenue, Stockton on tees, Billingham, TS23 2 DR

By Vince O'Donnell





Malaysia & Thailand

A CARVING ODYSSEY

A journey across Asia to explore and document the art of woodcarving

In the second instalment of this unique four part series we will explore the secrets of Malaysian carving, meet some exceptional craftsmen, and delve deep into Thailand's rich culture of intricate carving. Join me as I travel across Asia, in part by bicycle, to meet local woodcarvers and learn about their diverse methods, tools and inspirations.

MALAYSIA

After an exciting month exploring the woodcarving scene in Bali and cycling the length of peninsular Malaysia, I arrived at the Akademi Nik Rashiddin (ANR) in the north-eastern state of Kelantan. ANR is a treasure trove of Malaysian woodcarving, nestled in the quiet coastal village of Kandis, just a few hundred metres from the beach and surrounded by fertile fields interspersed with coconut trees and grazing livestock.



ANR is at the forefront of the battle to protect Malaysia's traditional art of woodcarving from disappearing altogether: A challenge faced by many around the world as the forces of modernisation and mechanisation continue to diminish the knowledge and skill of ancient crafts practised by our ancestors.

ANR is managed by Rosnawati Othman, wife of the late Nik Rashiddin Nik Hussein (1955-2002). Nik Rashiddin was an exceptionally skilled woodcarver and dedicated much of his life to researching the true roots of Malay woodcarving; a considerable accomplishment given that Malaysia has seen a multitude of foreign

powers in control over the last millennia, each leaving their unique mark on its culture.

Knowledge and not just skill was important to Nik Rashiddin; he said that knowing ones history and roots is of crucial importance and thus he strived to preserve the traditional methods of Malay carving.

'With a sense of history, and a pride in our past, we will have a deeper love of life, a love for our lineage – what more our origins' (Spirit of Wood, 2003).

Nik Rashiddin travelled extensively in southern Thailand and Indonesia, searching for patterns and motifs that would provide clues as to the carving heritage of northern Malaysia. The Langkasuka motif seen in the ANR logo is one such relic discovered by Nik Rashiddin that provides a link to the ancient kingdom of Langkasuka.

The Spirit of the Wood

One aspect of great importance to the traditional Malay carver is that of 'Semangat', roughly translated as 'Spirit', 'Life force', 'Soul' or 'Essence' (Spirit of Wood, 2003).

In Malay tradition, Semangat is contained



A decorative quail trap restored by Nik Rashiddin Nik Hussein



Author and carver Will Barsley

within all living things and inanimate objects. For traditional Malay carvers, this significantly shapes what type of wood they use, how they store it and even what days are best for carving. For example, it is bad to carve on a rainy day.

The Mystical Keris

On first glance, the Keris is merely a decorative weapon, a tradition that has been passed down through the



Zarir Hjabdullah carving a floral relief



An intricate floral carving by Zarir Hjabdullah

generations. However, many believe that the Keris holds supernatural powers and remains a symbol of power and status.

A carver making a Keris would spend an incredible amount of time designing it specifically to match the character of its owner. To create such an item requires immense skill and hence is said to be the pinnacle item for a Malay carver to produce.

'Through it we can chart the cultural, philosophical and socio-religious evolution of Malay woodcarving as well as Malay civilisation' (Akademi Nik Rashiddin).

Zarir Hjabdullah

During my time at ANR I met Zarir Hjabdullah, a carver taught by the famous Wan Su Othman, who was amazingly still teaching at the age of 105!

Zarir's workshop is refreshingly simple with just a table, clamp and set of chisels. He chooses to carve all of his work from his front porch, watching the world go by as he chats to his neighbours and family.

For more on Zarir see his facebook page - **Zarir Wood Arts (Rupa & Jiwa).**

Norhaiza Noordin

I was also lucky enough to have the

chance to meet Norhaiza Noordin, undoubtedly one of the most renowned carvers in Malaysia and said to be one of few remaining experts in the traditional art of Malay carving. Norhaiza states 'I strive to emulate the same feeling the ancient woodcarvers would have felt'

Taught by Nik Rashiddin Nik Hussein, Norhaiza's unique knowledge and skill in traditional Malay carving is in high demand, not only in Malaysia but also internationally. He is currently working on a new set of doors for the parliamentary building in Kuala Lumpur and has recently finished a large commission at the Oxford Centre of Islamic Studies in the UK.

For more on Norhaiza visit:

norhaizanoordin.wordpress.com



A huge panel with Islamic scripture carved by Norhaiza



A Keris Tajong carved in bone by Nick Rashiddin Nik Hussein

For further reading on Malaysian carving, including the work of Nik Rashiddin Nik Hussein, I highly recommend the book **'Spirit of Wood: The Art of Malay Woodcarving'** by Farish A. Noor (2003).



Mr Sombat carving a mythical sea creature

THAILAND

After celebrating Christmas in Malaysia, I headed north to Thailand, where I had heard there was a rich culture of exceptional woodcarving. After a lot of research I discovered that the best place to meet carvers was around the city of Chiang Mai, located in northwest Thailand.

The Elephant Specialists

My first stop was the incredible elephant woodcarving museum and workshop

called Baan Jang Nak, located 20km south of Chiang Mai.

Baan Jang Nak was established by Mr Wiriya, who began carving seriously at the age of seventeen. Early on in his apprenticeship he fell in love with carving elephants and ever since has decided to focus solely on this subject.

Mr Wiriya has now been carving elephants for the last forty years and, as such, has become renowned throughout Asia as a specialist elephant carver. The Baan Jang Nak workshop is very much family oriented, with many of the carvers

being either brothers or brothers-in-laws of Mr Wiriya.

I was absolutely blown away by the quality of their carvings, and have rarely seen such creativity and realism combined. It felt like the elephants could easily come to life and wander off!

A Passionate Collector

My next stop was the home, museum and private collection of Mr Charoui Na Soonton, located 19km south of Chiang Mai. Although not a carver himself, Mr Soonton's passion for the craft and determination to preserve the heritage of Thai carving compelled him to collect over a thousand masterpieces, all now on public display in his home.

One of Mr Soonton's most trusted carvers is fifty-year-old Mr Sombat, who has been carving for most of his life. He specializes in mythical sea creatures and dragons and almost always carves in teak.

What struck me most about visiting Mr Sombat was the contrast between his simple surroundings and the unbelievable detail in his carvings. Having no idea what to expect when first entering his tiny bamboo built workshop, words cannot describe the feeling of discovering the incredible masterpiece he was working





on inside (see opposite page).

The quality and authenticity of the carvings are of the upmost importance to Mr Soonton and, as such, he relies on just a small number of highly skilled carvers to produce his desired work. He gives them incredible freedom in both time and money 'whatever price they ask, I give it to them and there is no time limit either'.

Thailand's Scottish Carver

It was with great delight that back in November 2014 I received an email from Douglas Hastings, a Scottish woodcarver, who spends half the year living and carving in Thailand and the other half in the UK. I gratefully accepted his invitation to visit him at his home in the northeast and spent a wonderful three days getting to know him and hearing the inspiring tale of how he came to be carving in local Buddhist temples.

Hearing of Douglas' passion and talent for woodcarving, Prha Suteep, the head



Douglas Hastings



An astonishing carving of Mr Soonton's depicting a Thai river market

monk of the nearby Forest Temple, invited Douglas to carve a series of eight Buddha's – one for each day of the week (there are two Buddha's for Wednesday; morning and evening).

Impressed by his work, the head monk asked Douglas to carve a set of eight Nagas, a serpent/dragon like creature that often sits atop temples to ward off evil spirits. It was an unforgettable experience meeting Douglas, and in fact all of the carvers I met throughout Malaysia and Thailand. I hope through these images you are able to capture a glimpse of the incredible skill and passion of these carvers.



One of Douglas's Naga's sitting atop the Forest Temple

Mekong into Laos, where I meet a group of indigenous carvers called the Ta Oy. I then continue into Vietnam to discover a number of unique carving villages.

Email: carvingcountries@gmail.com
Website: www.carvingcountries.com

In the next article, I journey along the

By Will Barsley



The South East WOODWORKING & POWER TOOL Show

BWA Kent Wormshill & BWA Hamlet Wood Maidstone Kent County Showground, 7th-8th May

The BWA was again represented at the South East Woodworking and Power Tool Show in March by members from both Hamlet Wood Maidstone and Kent Wormshill regions.

We had up to seven members carving and talking with the visitors over the two days. The visitors showed a lot of interest in our work and we were able to give them lots of advice and information about the BWA.

It was a very successful couple of days. We were able to convince a number of people to take up carving and also found a few carvers who have been working alone at home.

As a direct result of our presence at the show we have already gained six new members at Hamlet Wood with at least one other expected to join us after his trip to Australia. Wormshill region have also gained one or two new members.

By Mick Mills



Dennis Smyth talks about his green man carving



Maidstone & Wormshill carvers



Peter Camis & Mick Mills talk to visitors



Alison Greenway discusses love spoons with a visitor



Peter Camis, Mick Mills & Pat Sproule



Mick Mills speaks to visitors



Part of the display at the show



Some of the carvings on show



The BWA stands at the show

OBITUARIES

Harold Bailey

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you of the death on March 16th 2015 of Harold Bailey, founder member of the BWA Norfolk and Suffolk branch, and a member of the BWA for over 20 years. He had been ill since September 2014.

Norfolk and Suffolk is a small group of about 18 or so members, and the majority of these attended his funeral in Gorleston, along with a member of Essex branch who knew Harold in the early days. As mentioned in the article in the BWA Gazette, Winter 2014, which carries a profile of him, Harold was a talented woodcarver, good all-round craftsman and a true gentleman. He will be greatly missed by us all.

By Anna Cullingford

Bill Johnson

More sad news from Lancashire I am afraid, it is with regret that I have to report that Bill Johnson from our Region, and who previously attended North Wales region, passed away mid-May. Bill had reached the ripe old age of 93, and whilst he was frail he was much younger in his head, being a wonderful storyteller with a glorious sense of humour. Bill was very much a family man, and over the 5 years that he came to us, his lovely daughter and companion Ann brought him over from Manchester, and joined in with us generally doing some needlework or brewing up!



Bill Johnson

He was a very talented carver and was quite a perfectionist, who was not afraid to simply start again if he didn't think his piece up to scratch. He very much enjoyed courses with Sharon Littley (shown with him at our Lovespoon workshop) and a beautiful cat he made whilst with her at Alston Hall won our Christmas competition! Bill will be sadly missed by all our members, and it was summed up very nicely by one of our members Yvonne 'she will miss him and his cheery smile'. Indeed we all will.

By Sarah Lawrenson

Bill Mander

I am sad to report that one of our founders and long-time leader of our group, Bill Mander, has died.

Bill (aged 85), had a background in teaching and having an interest in local politics was one time Mayor of Reading. In the early days of the group, he was able to secure funding from the council and the Southern Arts Association. He also found our first home at a school in Reading.



Bill Mander

He was an excellent carver and led the group's involvement in a number of community carving projects. Sadly in recent years he suffered serious mobility problems but attended our group meetings regularly until about 12 months ago. Our condolences go to his widow Margaret and his family. He will be sadly missed.

By Roger Edwards



BWA Spoon project

At the AGM, the idea was formally put forward to have a new national BWA project in the form of carved spoons. The project is open to all members and I hope that most members will give it a go and submit a spoon.

There are three categories of spoon and you may submit up to three spoons. The categories are:

- Love Spoon (a spoon with symbols e.g. Welsh Love Spoons)
- Utensil Spoon (a spoon designed to be used)
- Art Spoon (any spoon that does not fit the other categories)

I plan to curate the project and produce a book showing the spoons of the project and saying a bit about each spoon and its creator. I hope that we will be able to publish this as a BWA book but if there is not enough interest I will make it an eBook.

You can let your imaginations run wild with this project. The only constraints are:

- It must have a 'bowl' and a 'handle'.
- You must nominate one of the three categories for your spoon(s).
- A spoon can be as large or as small as you like.
- You can use any wood(s) that you like
- You must provide some details about the spoon and yourself in writing with the spoon.

This is an opportunity for all professional and semi-professional members to have their contact details (email or web address) published along with a professional photograph of their carving(s). Ultimately I hope that we will be able to find a permanent home for the project somewhere in the country for the public to see. Before a permanent home is found it is hoped that a touring exhibition will be organised.

The aims of the project and book are:

- To showcase British woodcarving talent
- To showcase the talent that we have within the BWA
- To promote woodcarving and the BWA

The deadline for the project is TBA but please start submitting your carvings to me now using the address on Page 3

By The Editor

Meet BWA Chairman Mark Davis

Mark Davis has been Chairman of the BWA since 2013 and has been a member of the Hertfordshire regional group of the BWA since 2005. Mark can often be seen wearing his trademark 'Spoon Hat' with a variety of Love Spoons dangling from its top.

Mark was born in 1933 to father Frank who was a Pharmacist and mother Irene who was a Beauty Consultant. Mark did his National Service in the RAF before training as a Pharmacist like his father. Mark's professional background includes working in the pharmaceutical and healthcare careers and as a fully certified professional training consultant.

For some 60 years Mark has pursued his hobby of woodworking. He enjoys carpentry, joinery, wood turning and wood carving. He has won several awards for his turning and carving. In 2013 he joined The Worshipful Company of Joiners & Ceilers as a woodcarver. In addition to woodwork, Mark also gives talks and raises money for several charities.

Mark's passion, if you were not aware of it already, is that of Welsh Love Spoons. He has been carving Love Spoons for some 40 years and is well versed in the folklore of Love Spoons. He has written several articles on Love Spoons, both their design and meaning. He gave a



Mark in the early 1980s

workshop on Love Spoons at the BWA AGM in 2014 and hopefully he can be persuaded to provide another workshop again soon.



Plaque for the London School of Pharmacy

Mark's father was a keen woodcarver and Mark was always keen to follow him into the craft. Mark was keen on woodwork from his teenage years but didn't try woodcarving again until his then secretary announced her wedding in 1977. Mark had been looking into the folklore of Love Spoons and had himself received a Love Spoon (together with his wife) for their 10th wedding anniversary a few years before.

He decided that he would carve a Love Spoon for his secretary and her husband to be. The touch paper had



The first (left) and twentieth Love Spoons



Mark at the 2015 AGM in his 'Spoon Hat'

been lit on his fascination with Love Spoons and he continued to carve Love Spoons. His twentieth Love Spoon was made for the same couple two years later for the anniversary. Mark has gone on to carve more and more Love Spoons of near infinite variety.

In addition to Love Spoons, Mark also has a passion and talent for wall plaques. His father carved a large plaque for the London School of Pharmacy. Since joining The Worshipful Company of Joiners & Ceilers, Mark has carved several commemorative plaques. However, he has turned his hand to all sorts of carving styles, from abstract sculpture to caricature, from ornamental to relief.

I posed some questions to the Chairman to learn a bit more about him and his carving. Here is what he had to say:



Plaque for Air Training Corps Squadron 241

What is it about wood and carving that keeps you interested in carving?

Wood to me is a very evocative, tactile material which comes in so many different, fascinating and intriguing patterns. Not only that, trees and

mankind have always had a symbolic relationship and it is that approach which has inspired much of the work that I do and which I shall share with you today.

Who has been the biggest influence on your carving?

Well, my father Frank Davis was very keen on woodwork. He qualified as a pharmacist and then, as a hobby, he studied woodcarving at evening classes in Loughborough in 1922. He specialised in carving plaques, such as the coat of arms of the London School of Pharmacy. For me at that time, it was not only observing and learning the skills of carving, but as importantly, it was a means to illustrate a story behind the reason for the carving that inspired me then and in the future.

Would you say that lovespoons are the aspect of carving that really got you hooked?

Quite possibly. The thing that grips me about Love Spoon carving is that it is so highly personal. You can create something for a couple that is so personal that it is truly unique and you cannot get a duplicate of it. This is why you never find love spoons in antique shops. Once they are given they stay in the same family and become family heirlooms.



Mark with his winning Spoon at the 1985 World Class Woodcarving Competition

Tell us a bit about Welsh Love Spoons

In 1976 my wife and I were in the Wye Valley on holiday and during a visit to a tourist shop we saw this book, 'The Story of the Love Spoon', by the Curator of the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagan's near Cardiff. My wife asked me to buy it so we could understand the meaning of all the symbols in the design of our

anniversary love spoon. We read it, put it on the bookshelf and thought no more about love spoons until a year later. Let me just add this 'nugget' of history by going back some 300 years. The giving of love spoons was originally part of the courtship ritual amongst Welsh peasant lads, in particular. This is where we get the Victorian expression 'spooning', which means making love of a sentimental kind.



Spike Milligan's Epitaph - 'I told you I was ill'

The Welsh word for lover is 'sponar' which literally means 'spoon maker'. Indeed, our word 'spoon' was derived from the Old English 'spon' which means 'a chip of wood', thus implying that a spoon was made from a single piece of wood, as love spoons always are. "My view is that a Welsh Love Spoon in particular should reflect the style of the language which is soft, lilting and expressive. The whole design should have gently flowing lines all the way through. I think the concept of a love spoon - when you take it back to the old peasant origins, whether Scandinavian or Welsh - is a very simple one and therefore my philosophy is to keep the designs simple with a logical development of the story going from the top to the bottom of the spoon"

Where do you do most of your carving?

My carving is done either in the workshop (in my garage), or the conservatory. I also take carvings away with me to work on while on holiday... very relaxing and satisfying!

What finishing technique do you prefer?

I use a matt varnish to seal the wood. Then apply three coats of good quality wax polish to give a satin shine to the finished item.

What is the carving that you have most enjoyed doing?

The most enjoyed woodcarvings have been many of the love spoons which have been personalised gifts to family and friends, plus my first, sculptured, caricature of Spike Milligan sitting on a scale model of his Celtic Cross grave

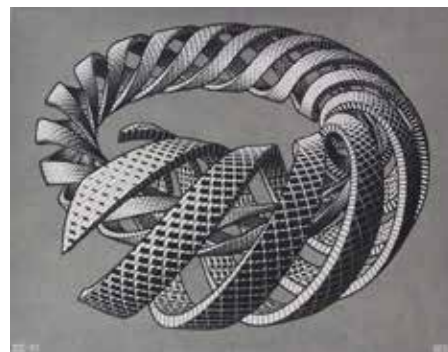


Mark's winning spoon

Lilly and Japanese Rush in a vase including wood flowers in a vase, and made out of 8 different recycled pieces of timber. More recently two carved plaques for the Livery Company, to which I belong, as gifts to organisations with whom the Livery Company has developed long-standing affiliations/ working relationships. One further plaque is in- progress as I write.

What aspects of woodcarving would you like to explore in the future?

Well, in 1955 Mark C Escher, a Dutch graphic artist known for his often mathematically inspired lithographs, produced woodcut spirals which represented the evolution of a perfect and complex object ... namely an unwinding, banded cone floating against a grey background. This is a design intensely challenging in both concept and execution. It will challenge fully the senses and intellect!



M. C. Escher's Spiral Lithograph

If you want to get in touch with Mark about any aspect of the BWA or if you are looking for advice on a Love Spoon, you can reach him using the contacts on the rear page.

By The Editor

My Workshop...

Stuart Bailey

In 2006, as my 65th approached, I began to be a little concerned about how to spend the 12 to 14 hours per day my full time job consumed. For the past 50 years I had been working as a dental technician and not had time to pursue any lasting hobbies. One Saturday my wife and I were near Uckfield in Sussex and saw a small sign for the Bentley Woodfair, so on Sunday we turned up and that's where my introduction to and love for carving began.

A bunch of carvers (I now know they were the Bentley Wildlife Carvers) were demonstrating mainly bird carvings. All very helpful and friendly, just like the carvers I've met over the last seven years. So that's when I realised that my previous experience might be put to good use!

The first thing I did was buy a shed – 16' x 10' Log-Lap with 6 opening windows and 10 fixed. I lined the interior with 8mm chipboard to the walls and 3mm MDF to the ceiling, behind which I packed loft insulation. It was still very cold last winter, possibly due to the shed being raised off the concrete slab by 4" bearers. I had an electrician wire it for lighting and 4 double power points – I could have

done with more but I use four gang extensions instead.

I have two benches, one has a Record carpenter's vice on one end, with an Axminster carver's vice at the other. The other 'bench' was made from an old pine kitchen table, to which I added legs made from 4" fence posts. I use this mostly for smaller work and have a selection of Flexcut blades and palm tools on a little plywood stand.

There are also two Swann Morton handles, a No. 3A, the plain metal one, and a No. 5A with the blue plastic sleeve. They both take the same blades but I tend to use the 5A as it's more comfortable over a longer period. I use No. 11 blades mostly, but some 15s.

Next to me on my right are 4 machines, 2 cable arm types, one with a 1/8" collet



and the other a 1/4". The other two are both micromotors, one, with a 3/32 collet, being a left over from the dental technician days, the newer one, which I bought from Woodworks Craft Supplies and am very pleased with, has a 1/8" collet.





Under the bench is another of my old pieces of gear from my dental lab, a Nilfisk vacuum cleaner. I've had this one since 1983 and it's more than paid for its slightly higher initial price by its total reliability. It's not a proper dust extractor but seems to do the job pretty well. There's also an Axminster Jet AFS-500 Filter up on a shelf to my right to take out the finer dust.

Behind me is an old pine cupboard for storage, on top of which are two bench grinders. One has a coarse wheel at one end (hardly ever used), and the other end has a felt wheel. The other motor just has a stitched calico mop, both of these are used for honing.

Further along, after a small stack of wood, there is a sideboard base (off eBay!) with an IKEA bookcase on top, housing some of my carving books and 'bits' in progress – or not! Next to that is a small pillar drill, then a 6' high shelving rack for the radio and CDs, paints, brushes, gardening 'bits' and any old rubbish not currently in use!

Finally, back to the other side there is a small bandsaw – probably not a good buy

because I can't seem to cut a straight line on it, even after ploughing through the excellent 'Success with Bandsaws' by Eric Graves.



Next to that is a scroll saw, which I use mainly for fretwork on love spoons. Again I probably should have paid more and bought a better quality saw – one learns, hopefully!

On the main bench I keep a selection of gouges, of which I probably use only about 10 or 12 regularly. I gather that most carvers tend to buy more gouges and knives than they will realistically ever use! Mine are a mix of mainly Taylors, Ashley Isles, plus Kirscher, Stubai, Dastra,



with a sprinkling of old ones picked up at wood fairs, such as Addis, old Marples, Moseley and Simpson, etc. I like buying old gouges and putting them back into use as most of these blades will give years of pleasure to us amateurs.

I do a wide range of carvings, as you will see from the pictures and I have a notebook in the shed on which I keep track of the time spent on each one (for example the Grinling Gibbons style carving took 629 hours).

By Stuart Bailey

MEMBER COMPETITION

The next member competition for The Woodcarvers Gazette is to carve something from a 45mm x 65mm Birch Egg.

You don't have to provide the eggs yourself; please tell your regional leader that you want to take part by the end of July and the eggs will be sent to your regional leaders for you to collect from them.

You can carve anything you like out of the egg and the piece of wood needn't remain egg-shaped. You could carve an animal, a fruit, a hatching egg, or anything that your imagination can come up with.

When you have carved your egg, please pass it to your regional leader and then I will arrange for them to be sent to me for photographing.

Once I have all of the entries, I shall name a winner of the editor's prize and then hopefully, with a little help we might be able to donate the egg carvings for a

charity easter egg hunt next year or something.

- The deadline for you to let your regional leader know that you want an egg is July 30th.
- The deadline for carving your egg and handing it back to your regional leader is 31st October.
- The eggs are 45mm in diameter and 65mm in length.
- You can request a fully egg-shaped egg or you can request one with a flattened bottom.
- The eggs are Birch which is a little harder than Lime.

I am hoping that you will all consider making an entry for the competition.



 **Flexcut**
CARVING TOOLS

REVIEW

Power Grip 7-Tool Set

This set of Power Grip tools contains seven tools: four gouges (sweep 9 @ 3mm, sweep 9 @ 7mm, sweep 6 @ 9mm and sweep 3 @ 9mm), one straight chisel, one skew chisel and one v-tool. The tools come in a nice little cardboard box and the handles are finished quite well. I believe that you can buy Power Grip tools in several pack sizes but this 7-tool set is probably best if you are looking to buy some.

The tools themselves are made from laminated steel, hardened to 63 HRC. They come sharpened but the tools are not of the highest quality so the blades are not shaped very well. I would recommend sharpening them when you get them to make sure that the blade shape is satisfactory.

These tools are made in Japan and are a sort of medium size tool; not as small as micro tools like the Nano chisels reviewed in the last issue or the Peter Benson tools but are smaller than regular gouges. The

blade length is 32mm and the overall length of the tool including blade is six inches. Because of their intermediate size, I found it a little difficult working out how best to hold them. Holding them like a pencil is possible and they can also be used in a two-handed technique: your left hand stabilising the tool and the right pushing (if you are right-handed). I believe that they are intended to be used as a palm-tool though and work best when you are pushing them along with your palm.

The Power Grip tools are a lot cheaper than most other palm-tools and as such are very attractively priced. Overall, this is a good low-budget set of tools and a cheap way of getting into Japanese-style tools. They will be a good addition to anyone's collection of tools

To purchase please see: www.dictum.com



 **DICTUM**

By The Editor

Glyn Mould

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AGM 2015

This year, the BWA AGM was held in the East Midlands at Sacrewell Farm Centre, just off the A1 east of Peterborough in Cambridgeshire. Sacrewell is a working farm which has a lot of rare breed animals and is set in some wonderful countryside. Attendance was down on previous years with about 30 members present, representing about 13 regions of the BWA.

The AGM commenced with tea and coffee in the meeting room from 10am to about 11am. The formal meeting of the AGM then took place and closed around 1pm. BWA Chairman Mark Davis made an excellent presentation that summed up events of the last year for the BWA. This was followed by reports from the other officers. Ian Ford had volunteered to replace Bryan Corbin as treasurer of the BWA shortly before the AGM and was co-opted onto the council, to be ratified at next year's AGM. National Secretary Lynn Kimm is stepping down from her post and we are still looking for a volunteer to replace her.

Members in attendance this year were very helpful in their suggestions at the AGM, contributing much to discussions on the membership fee and other topics that came up. It was decided that from 2016, the membership fee will be raised to £25. This will enable the BWA to cover its costs and contribute to projects rather than just ticking over.

At this year's AGM we had the judging of the competition that was launched in the Winter 2014 issue of The Woodcarvers Gazette, where members were asked to carve something from a piece of wood 1x1x6" in size. Some members attending the AGM bought entries with them to enter into the competition, whilst members that were unable to attend had their entries represented by photographs that they had submitted. The competition prizes were awarded at the end of the AGM just before lunch. The Editor and Chairman both awarded prizes for their favourite carvings. All of the entries are shown over the page.

The Editor was photographing the competition entries before the formal meeting started and the new treasurer Ian Ford had bought a couple of carvings along with him which the editor also photographed. One was a brilliant caricature with a big nose and the other was a wonderful carving from a 4ft piece of Lime of a rather stern looking Northern Lady. She stood at the rear of the room and praised scorn on all those in the meeting, attracting much comment.

After breaking for a buffet lunch in a smaller meeting room, Glyn Mould gave a lecture in the larger meeting room. His topic was about taking carving forward and trying to make it more relevant. Your editor got slightly confused and started off listening intently to Glyn's lecture before being sequestered by Web Manager Graeme Murray because he had forgotten that he was supposed to be in the BWA national council meeting next door. The photographs of Glyn in his lecture here were kindly taken by Alan Robinson after the Editor had been taken away.



Glyn Mould

Later in the afternoon, members were invited to take a trip to the village hall in nearby Elton for a preview of the annual exhibition of Rockingham Forest Woodcarvers. The exhibition was very impressive. There were so many competition-grade pieces on display; it was very inspiring and humbling. The whole of the village hall was packed with carvings. I didn't count how many carvings were there but there was a hundred at least I suspect.



'Good Northern Lass' by Ian Ford



'Who Nose?' by Ian Ford

Thank you to Glyn Mould and Rockingham Forest woodcarvers for hosting the AGM this year.

By The Editor

BWA Rockingham Forest Annual Exhibition 16-17th May

Rockingham Forest is not one of the largest BWA groups and as such they focus their attention on a big annual exhibition rather than attending many different events. I am currently part of the Rockingham Forest region but have not attended a meeting or exhibition until this one. I was very impressed by the carvings; their quality, variety and just by how many there were on display.

I believe the show is held the same weekend each year and I thoroughly recommend a look if you get the chance.

By The Editor



COMPETITION RESULTS

Thank you to everyone that entered the competition to carve something from a 1x1x6" piece of wood, launched in the Winter 2014 issue. Judging took place at the AGM in May. Stan Kimm was awarded the Chairman's Prize by Chairman Mark Davis for his carving 'Hickory Dickory Dock', which was carved out of a piece of Laurel. The editor's Prize was awarded to Bob Breakwell for his carving 'Out of the Wood', which featured ten individual elephants.



The Editor's Prize was donated by BriMarc and was a Flexcut Carvin' Jack



The Chairman's Prize was donated by Flexcut USA and was a special edition set of Forged Knives

Out of the Wood

By Bob Breakwell



Hickory Dickory Dock

By Stan Kimm



Spork

By John Thompson



Tortoises

By John Hollerbach



Gippy Guido

By Janet Robinson

**Knot**

By Geoff Stimson

**Bird in Flight**

By Mark Davis

**Dog in a Log**

By Stan Kimm

**England, Wales, United**

By Bob Breakwell

**Safety Match**

By Ken Veal

**The Climber**

By Martin Cameron

**BWA**

By Martin Howells

**Coffee Scoop**

By Jason Townsend

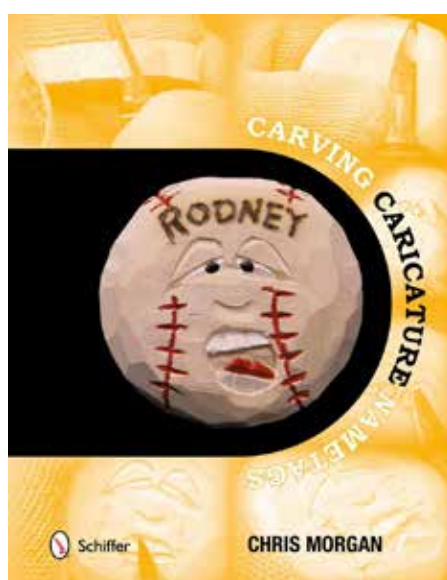


BOOK REVIEW

Carving Caricature Nametags

By Chris Morgan

ISBN: 978-0-7643-4187-8



This is one of the more unusual carving books that I have seen. It is a book solely about making carved nametags, the sort of item that would be useful to wear when demonstrating at an event or when running a stall. A pyrographer friend has a wooden nametag which she has emblazoned with her name and flourishes. I thought it might be fun to do have a carved nametag for when I attend shows and fayres. My nametag is still a work-in-progress due to time constraints but I found this book useful for ideas.

I'm not too sure about the use of the word 'caricature' in the title of this book. When I think of a caricature, I think of an exaggerated, sometimes comic take on a form like a face, person, animal, etc. This book is quite basic and shows the author

carving a couple of nametags which in themselves are quite basic. The patterns in the book are not really useful and it would have been nice to see finished examples of them. The part missing from this book is advice on mounting nametags. I would probably opt for a brooch-mount which are cheap and easily obtainable from eBay and craft shops. It would have been nice to see some advice and options like pin mounts, key rings, etc.

I would recommend this book for children though, the patterns in the book are more likely to appeal to them and the nametag projects are very affordable (being easily completed with just a knife and an offcut of Lime or other suitable wood).

By The Editor

An Interview with Anna Korver

Anna Korver is an artist from New Zealand working in wood, stone and other materials. She graduated from Canterbury University (in New Zealand) in 2003 and co-owns her own gallery. Her works are very feminine in their nature and sculptural in their form.

How did you get started with woodcarving, have you been carving long?

I've been carving quite a long time. I learned to carve wood with my dad who carved as a hobby - his style is the very traditional English chip carving. I started when I was 4 but only played around with it until I went to University where I took it up more intensively and then started on stone carving too. Some of his friends when I was young were professional wood workers and furniture makers so I got to see it as a practical profession.

What is your favourite wood to work?

It varies and often depends on the design I'm working on. I do like the lighter and

darker woods compared to the middle tones as far as colour goes. Some of my favourites are Japanese poplar, Ash, Beech, Maple and Limewood, Walnut, Kauri, Totara, Jarrah and Puriri. In New Zealand it's a bit 'take what you can get' as far as sourcing wood so I'm never too picky, though it's easier to source English wood in the South Island and Native wood in the North where I'm based now.

Where do you get your inspiration from?

Mostly from myself, my experiences and social interactions, but also from nature.

What is your favourite woodcarving tool?

An Arbortec blade.



in Kawerau each year which is amazing and the Center of Fine Woodworking in Nelson. There's a lot of passion in New Zealand for wood especially as it's one of the traditional materials for the Maori culture as well.



'Duality'



Pohutakawa and gold leaf dress

What has been your favourite carving to date?

That's a really hard question, after some thought....probably Lunar spear, it's one of the few that I wouldn't change.

Is there a big woodcarving community in New Zealand?

Yes. There's a big community of wood sculptors, we all do symposiums together all over New Zealand. There's also a big group of wood turners, furniture makers and other specific areas. We have the National wood skills competition



Elm figure



Black Poplar wall figure

What woodcarving techniques do you prefer to use?

These days I work almost exclusively with chainsaws and hand held electric carving tools, this is because I work full time as an artist so time's a factor as well as trying to minimize wear and tear on my hands. I really love to carve the figurative works with chisels though but I tend to leave this for surface finishes now.

Do you consider yourself influenced by any particular artists?

Not specifically for my designs, I have been inspired by many artists in the sense of seeing this as a viable profession which gave me courage to continue especially in the beginning. I have huge admiration and respect for many artists though, as far as the contemporaries my favourites include Anish Kapoor, Antony Gormley and Bruno Walpoth.

Do you have any advice for those wishing to produce carvings for sale?

Yes I have some advice as this is a common question from my students - Without getting too specific... If you love what you do, you're guaranteed someone else will too so keep to your own unique work, this is what will make you stand out, get your work out there - no one will come and find you in your studio, be humble - take critique and don't worry if galleries or exhibitions say no the first few times; just take the opportunities when they come along.



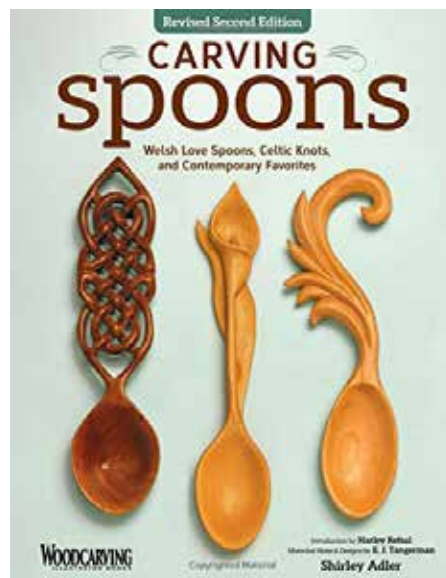
'Whisper'

For more information on Anna and to see more of her work, please take a look at her website: **www.annakorver.co.nz**

By The Editor

BOOK REVIEW

Carving Spoons
Revised Second Edition
By Shirley Adler
ISBN: 978-1-56523-850-3



This is a revised second edition of Carving Spoons by Shirley Adler. The second edition was first published in 2003 and this revision provides a pleasing facelift to the book. The layout of this revised edition feels much fresher and up-to-date than the second edition. I have used the swan element of one of Shirley's designs on my own spoon which I adapted. I am also in the process of carving her African Lilly spoon. I thought this would be a useful spoon to try and carve because I am not good at carving flowers and the African Lilly looked like an 'easy' flower to start on.

This book covers Love Spoons and Art Spoons and contains about 45 patterns. The patterns are clearly laid out for photocopying and the instructions for carving the example patterns are well constructed. Anyone who is interested in carving Love Spoons or Art Spoons will enjoy this book. There are some useful tips in the book and the finishing techniques are also worth reading for those new to carving.

By The Editor

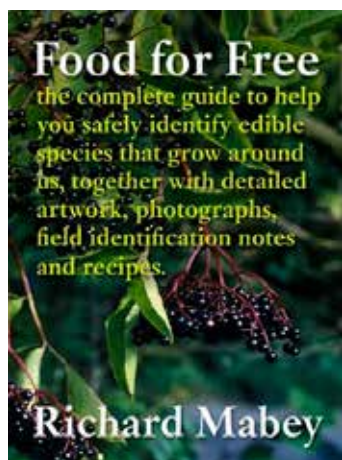


An Interview with Richard Mabey

Richard Mabey is the renowned author of many books including the famous book *Food for Free*, featured on TV whenever anyone is seen foraging for food in the wild. He is an expert on the nation's flora and shares some of his wisdom here:

Did trees feature heavily in your childhood?

I pretty much lived in, under and around them for first 12 years of life. Our garden in the Chilterns backed on to an abandoned landscape park once owned by Graham Greene's uncle.



Did you have a treehouse as a child or do you have one now at all?

No, but we had dens high up in Cedars of Lebanon and under the roots of tipped up sweet chestnuts.

Have you ever tried any woodcarving or other forms of woodworking?

I'm a dab hand at whittling paper knives from Elder

Do you think we under-use and under-value our domestic timber resources?

Both, but we're getting better.

Do you have a favourite



The Oriental Plane at Emmanuel College

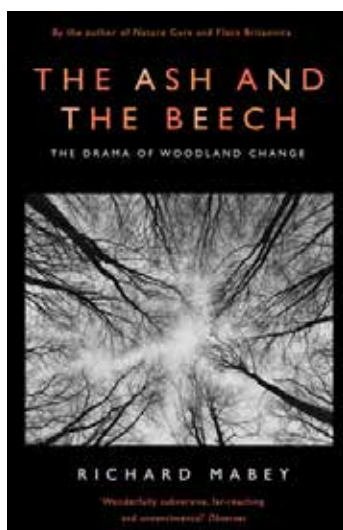
(individual) tree and what does it mean to you?

I don't really go in for 'favourite' this and that, but I'm always moved by the great oriental plane at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, for its refusal to be confined by human boundaries.

You can find out more about the Oriental Plane at Emmanuel College here: www.emma.cam.ac.uk/publications/OrientalPlane.pdf

Do you have a favourite carved wooden object in your home?

I'm fond of a turned bowl in Spalted Beech, and what it says about the negotiations between growing wood and growing fungus: Takes all sorts to make an ecosystem.



Should we be taking drastic action to increase the amount of woodland in the UK?

Not drastic action, no. Plantations aren't 'woods', though they can be valuable in other ways. The environmental priority, for a multitude of reasons, is to increase the area of wetland.



What do you think is the biggest threat to woodlands in the UK?

I'll risk being unpopular here and say that a much overlooked threat to woodland is the indiscriminate planting of trees, which reduces genetic diversity, introduces diseases with imported stock, and diverts attention from the much better route of establishing treeland by natural regeneration etc.

Should visits and stays in woodland be made as important as the almost compulsory trip to France for schoolchildren?

Don't approve of any sort of compulsion. Just getting kids outside would be enough.

What do you think about the rise in use of wood-burning stoves in the home again?

We've got one, so I can hardly complain. But I think their environmental friendliness is overplayed. If you're burning a 50 year old fallen tree, for example, it will be another 50 years before its released carbon is sequestered back. Too late, too late...

To learn more about Richard and his books please visit his website: www.richardmabey.co.uk

By The Editor

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MEMBERS GALLERY

Venice

By Ann Lewis



Carved in Lime

Windsurfer

By John Francklow



John started carving this to remind him of his thinner self when he found that his wetsuit 'had shrunk' over winter. The figure is n Yew, board and sail in Lime and the base is in Chestnut

Street Art

By Ken Tarn



A satirical look at British streets. A chips tray with a discarded drinks can and broken bottle

Corinthian Helmet

By Ken Veal



Carved from Lime with an Ebony base

Figure with Hat

By Ann Lewis



Carved from Lime

Dancer

By Gerry Guiver



Carved in Lime from an Ian Norbury book

Dancer

By Ted Gordon



Carved in Oak

Wolf

By Gerry Guiver



Carved in Lime

Flower Block

By Ronnie Allen



Carved from a Mahogany

Clock

By Dave Taplin



Carved from Cherry

Lovespoon

By Phil Cross



Carved in Lime

Abstract

By Ron Kinerman



Carved in Lime

Whale Cane Topper

By Tom Bell



Dali Watch

By John Francklow



Carved in Yew and on a rock found on a Greek island

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

Little Owls

By Phil Cross



Carved from Oak and Lime

Dung Beetle

By John Francklow



Carved in Lime and sprayed with iridescent paint. The globe is Yew and the base Chestnut

Farmer at Gate

By Ronnie Allen



Carved from a Mahogany

Quick Carving

By Ted Jeffery



Carved from a Mahogany and Sycamore

World War I Plaque

By Brian Turner



Carved from Oak

Swan

By Brenda Simpson



Carved in Lime

Sitting Lady

By Brenda Simpson



Carved in Lime

Otter

By John Martin



Carved in Lime



BOOK REVIEW

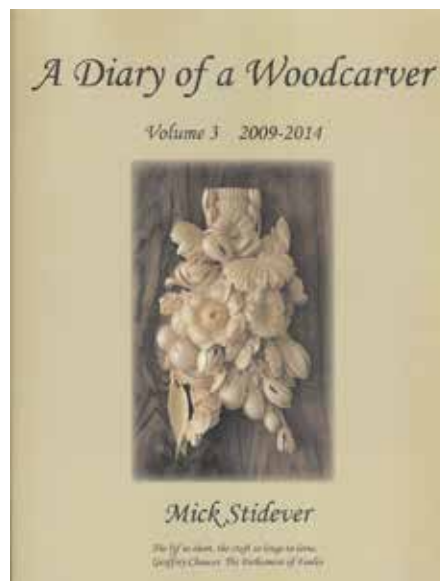
A Diary of a Woodcarver - Volume 3: 2009-2014

by Mick Stidever

ISBN: 978-1-78507-214-7

Mick Stidever has produced another fine tome in the form of the third book in his trilogy of Woodcarving diaries. These diaries do make interesting reading; it's fascinating reading about how someone else tackles the problems that arise during the course of a carving.

The 'Swag' carving in the style of Grinling Gibbons that adorns the cover is great carving, like the others in the book. These books make a great statement about that which one can achieve with perseverance and dedication. The range of subjects that Mick tackles in this book is rather humbling; I hope that one day I will be able to tackle some of the complex subjects featured in the book; the foliage carvings in particular.



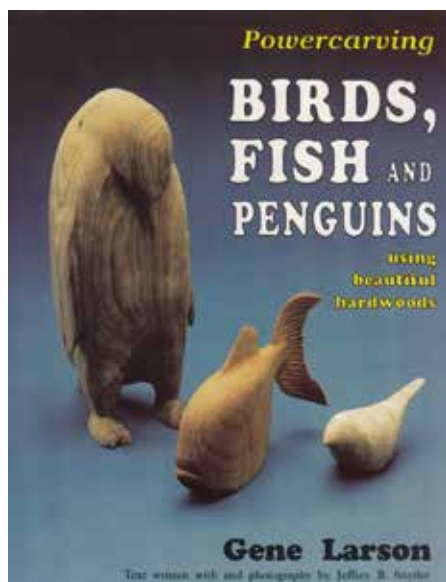
By The Editor

BOOK REVIEW

Powercarving Brds, Fish & Penguins

By Gene Larson

ISBN: 0-88740-565-7



Originally published in 1994, the cover of this book looks a little dated. The photographs inside the book though are of high quality and very instructional. The photographer Jeffrey Snyder seems to have captured the different stages of the example carvings very well. Being relatively new to power carving, I would say that this book is good at showing the techniques used in powercarving

with handheld rotary tools. There are many photos within this book that show Larson's hands: I found this very useful for seeing how he held the carvings when making them. They are all in-the-round and due to the relatively safe nature of handheld rotary tools, the carvings are not clamped at any point during carving but are instead held in the hand.

There are some negative points about this book however. The example carvings (one bird, one fish and one penguin) are fairly basic and the penguin and fish patterns are not very attractive in my opinion. Some twenty years after initial publication, rotary tools have moved on a bit and as such this does date the book somewhat. The variety of rotary 'bits' available now from TCT rasps to carbide burrs is significant so it does put this book in a beginner's category. I do think it is a useful book though for someone starting out in powercarving and the use of hardwoods other than Basswood is refreshing.

By The Editor

BWA @ The Cowper & Newton Museum, Olney, Bucks

BWA Members will be at The Cowper and Newton Museum in Olney on 19th July demonstrating and exhibiting their work. Any members of the BWA are welcome to come along.

Our museum gardens will be looking particularly gorgeous that time of year and of course there will be free entry to the museum for any BWA woodcarvers who can join me in demonstrating their carving talents. I will bake a cake too!!

The museum address is Orchard Side, Market Place, Olney, Buckinghamshire MK46 4AJ. The event kicks off at 10:30am and going on until about 4:30pm.

By Paula Noble

BWA @ Chirk Castle, Wrexham, Wales

This summer, the North Wales and Borders branch of the BWA will be having their annual two week stint at Chirk Castle, a National Trust property set in the beautiful countryside around the English and Welsh Borders. Admission is free and there will be our usual live demonstrations and display of club members work.

We are of course still ready to spend the day chatting to anybody showing an interest in what we do, or maybe help out with any problems you may have. In addition this year there is also the attraction of the Medieval event that is taking place within the grounds. Our club are involved and several club members are each carving a scene with a medieval theme to ultimately form a Tapestry.

The event runs from July 25th until August 9th. Details may be obtained from either myself Ron Cannell (tel: 01244 546912), or David Brown (tel: 01745 825041).

By Ron Cannell

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For more detailed information on a regional group, please see the website



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