



NEWSLETTER No 153

Summer Edition

(May, June and July 2026)

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www.solentguildofwoodcarvers.org.uk

“Keep Calm (and Blame the Grain)!” by Tim Curtis

Welcome to the Summer newsletter!

In this edition we will look back at the busy last three months that have been punctuated by various demonstration events; remind ourselves of the Craig's winning entry in the Bill Pinney Shield competition; look at the first of our occasional articles: “Variations on a Theme”; and celebrate the lives (and some of the works) of two members who passed-away in the past months.

But first ... hot isn't it?! Is it time to put down the chisels and knives, pick up your bucket and spade, and head to the beach? If the answer is 'yes' then don't be thinking that your carving activities need to be put on pause. Swap your Pfeil, Asley Isles and Flexcut tools for a bricklayer's trowel, spirit level and a plastic funnel (honestly – I'll explain in a minute) and look forward to getting the sand between your toes whilst you build (or, more accurately carve) sand castles to be proud of. Bear with me, I've not gone mad, I've been reading old copies of the *Wood Carving* magazine and in the March/April 2001 edition and there is a wonderful article by the American woodcarver, Justin Gordon and his sand carving exploits.

If you're unfamiliar with his work then don't be thinking we're talking about what happens when you fill a bucket up with sand, turn it upside down and stick a flag in the top, Justin's work is stunning. Over the page is one of his sandcastles – along with an example of how you can make a sand sculpture look like a chainsaw carving. I'm not sure that Southsea beach (the sandy bit) is ready for my efforts but never say 'never'!



Quite genuinely, a spirit level and a plastic funnel are tools of Justin's sand-carving trade.: "A funnel makes the best tower tops ..." says Justin the article, "... and you can also use the rim of the funnel for carving out the concave surfaces as you'd do to recess a tower top into a roof line". He adds a melon baller, cake icing nozzles and a water sprayer to his kit-bag.

Those of you with access to computers (and a moment or two to spare) look him up and see some of his creations.

Whilst you take in the rest of this newsletter, I'm off to the beach. If nothing else, it might make it rain!

Tim

Chairmans Report

I hope everyone has been enjoying the recent hot weather, and managing to stay cool. We are now well into our demonstration season, and it has been wonderful to see members taking part in events and helping to promote the Guild.

Sadly, we have also received the sad news of the passing of one of our former members John Tappy, and the passing of one of our current social members Charlie Perkins. On behalf of the Guild, I would like to express our sincere condolences to their families and friends. They will be remembered with great affection and gratitude for their contribution to the Guild.

Looking ahead, we have our Annual competition to look forward to. This is always one of the highlights of the calendar, and I encourage as many members as possible to take part. Whether you are competing or simply coming along to support others, it promises to be an enjoyable and rewarding event.

Thank you all for your continued enthusiasm and support. I wish everyone a successful and enjoyable remainder of the demonstration season and see you all on 5th September.

Jess Jay - Chairman

The Bill Pinney Shield

Timing was against us with the Bill Pinney Shield being awarded about two days after the last newsletter so it is only now that we can celebrate Craig's achievement (although it has been on the web-site since early May).



Well done again Craig. And a reminder, Craig's suggestion for this year's competition is "A Musical Instrument" – with the additional caveat of it has to be (or have been) an instrument that

is made of wood (or has wood in its construction) – so no Trumpets or Trombones, however impressive they might have been.

Normal rules apply regarding size and completion dates etc – all details on the website.

I also want to take this opportunity of congratulating Brian, Peter H and Ray for finishing joint second, and Peter K for coming in third.

Here are nearly all* of the entries ...



*NOTE: I said above “... nearly all of the other entries” above because two entrants were left at their relevant homes on the day of the competition and so didn’t make it to the judging table. A real shame for those members (you know who you are) but better luck next year – hopefully.

Demonstration Season

Manor Farm

Manor farm is becoming a nice little sideline for us so that we can keep our presence out there especially whilst we look forward other shows to attend.

Although the lighting is a little dull we are getting used to setting up and carving in the Longstock barn. The duty manager is very accommodating supplying us with as many tables and chairs we need reducing what we have to take.

Early July was one such occasion. It was quiet at times with the number of interested visitors ebbing and flowing depending on the weather. Across the day we had a steady stream of people though.

On one Sunday we were visited by a member of a newly formed Fareham woodcarving group who was interested in joining us. The weather on the 11th July was already particularly warm but it didn't seem to put people off. We even had an occasional breeze through the doorway so that made the whole day very enjoyable.



I thank those who have attended the sessions there and there always space for more.

West's Wood Fair

After an early start to get the gazebos up and the display ready members had a quick wander to see what was available. If you've never been before it really is a significant event nowadays with many, many stalls of various crafts (being demonstrated as well as selling items), various traders along with a wide range of eateries and displays. Saturday morning's weather was damp with a heavy mist rolling along the valley. Despite this, a steady stream of visitors came in. Although it was a quiet start for us as most people took to the lower track first and we soon had a steady stream of people coming in to see us. We were also visited by various members of the waterside carving group on a day trip from the New Forest.

As the day progressed we were able to take down the screening and allow people a better view of the display.

Sunday saw an improvement in the weather and due to slightly fewer members we let one of the gazebos serve as shade/shelter for passersby. This actually provoked people staying with us longer and very interesting conversations were had.



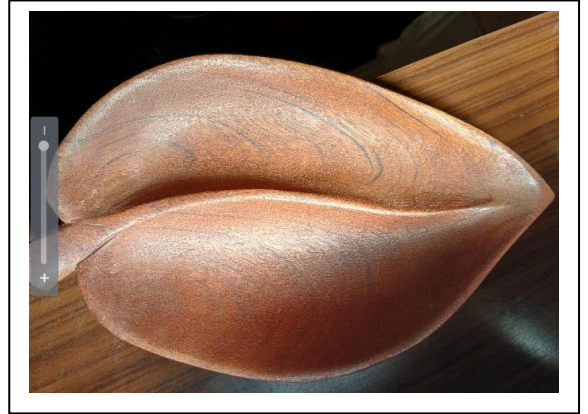
A warm thanks to all those who attended and to Ray's wife Judith who came along to experience it.

George

Variations on a Theme

During my browsing of old issues of *Woodcarving Magazine* I came across a number of articles by our very own John Vardon. John's series for beginners included instructions and guidance as to carving a leaf bowl. Many of us have started with such a project and some of you have been kind enough to share with me photos of your work.

Sandra's first project from, in her estimation, about 26 years ago still holds good memories for her ...



... while Terry's Yin and Yang quite rightly won the novice award at the Queen Elizabeth Country Show a couple of years ago.

Johns own variation on the theme of leaf bowls went to a completely different level when he carved a bowl-within-a-bowl-within-a-bowl-within-a-bowl etc!



And finally

Let's remember the lives and works of John Tappy and Charlie Perkins who both passed away in the last three months. I knew neither men and so I am deeply grateful to John Vardon for this summary of John.



John joined the Guild in the 1990's and was a member until 2022. He joined the committee in 1997 and was Chairman from 2000 to 2002.

In the 1998 Hampshire County Council provided facilities to host websites for various local organisations. The Guild was one of them. John Tappy created the initial website and managed it until 2014.

In 2004 the Guild carved a carving to commemorate the bi-centenary of Nelson's great battle of Trafalgar. John carved the lettering in the centre of the carving.



John provided carving tuition as part of a course at Portsmouth University. (Jess may be able to provide more information)

He was heavily involved with the Hayling Island Amateur Dramatic Society, Portsmouth Choir, Hayling choral society, and several others organisations.

Charlie Perkins

Again I'm grateful to John (Vardon) for most of the following summary.

In John's own words, Charlie was an "exceptional carver". Records don't show when Charlie joined the Guild but it was certainly before 1985 and he was a member up to his death.



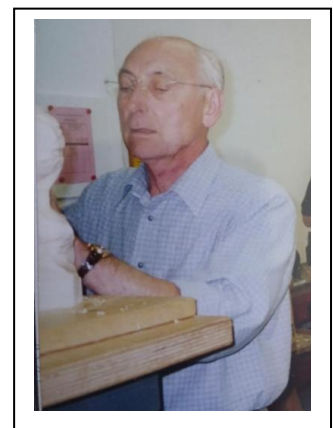
In 1985 Charlie was awarded silver medal at the Woodworker Show for his carving of Mirror Image. He was also awarded silver in 1995 but not sure for which carving.

At the Guild's annual exhibition in 1985 when the 'best-in-show' was competed for was won by Charlie for his carving of 'Reflection'. He was awarded the James Bell Trophy.

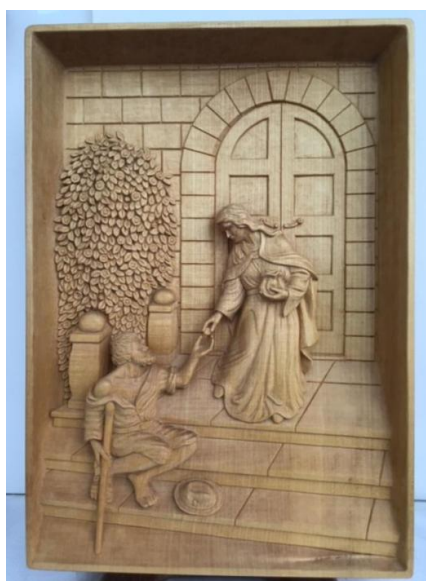
He also won in the following year with his carving 'The Lovers'. Voting was by members and the public. He also won best-in-show in 1988 and 1996.



Sandra reminds us that Charlie was also one of the group of Guild members who went to Austria some years ago. Here he is during that trip.



Here are some more pieces of Charlie's work. John Vardon reminds us to particularly note the detail in the flowers and leaves on two of the carvings.



Carve-in Sessions

As is always the case, please check the Latest Information page of the Guild's website for the most up-to-date details as arrangements can change at fairly short notice due to circumstances often beyond our control. That said, at the time of going to press, the carve-in sessions at the Grammer school resume again after the summer break on the 5th of September.

The next issue will be circulated on or about the 31st of October 2026. If you've anything that you'd like to be included in that edition, please let me know before the 25th of that month. All articles and submissions, whether a couple of lines or a couple of pages, will be gratefully received.