



A Club in South East London  
for people interested  
in wood carving

Visitors are very welcome

Website:  
[www.woodentopwoodcarvers.co.uk](http://www.woodentopwoodcarvers.co.uk)

 Woodentops Wood Carvers

 #Carverofwood

# WOODENTOPS

## Newsletter

June 2017

**We meet at:**

St Johns United Reform Church Hall  
Lynwood Grove Orpington BR6 0BG

**We meet on:**

The first Saturday of each month  
with additional 'carve-only' meetings  
on many other months.

Full details of our meetings and  
much more on our website.

## Who Carved the Heads?

These varied and imaginative heads were seen on the Caribbean Island of Mustique, haunt of Princess Margaret in years gone by. They adorn the fence adjoining the sea on a very pretty frontage. They must have taken a long time to carve, and are carefully preserved against the weather. But who carved them? No-one seems to know.

Mick Jagger owns a house here, as does Tommy Hilfiger and, allegedly, Cliff Richard. Perhaps one of these had a hand in the exercise. For sure these celebs. must admire them as they stroll from their private jets to their mansions.



# Grain and Knot – a London Carving Company

In the Summer of 2013, Sophie, who runs Grain and Knot, attended a spoon carving and bush craft workshop.

Inspired by the techniques learnt, she returned home the very next day with an axe, much to her family's amusement. After giving some spoons away as gifts, friends and family urged her to pursue this avenue and to create a brand for her woodworking. A few cut fingers and splinters later Grain and Knot was born.

Loving spoon carving so much, Sophie would do it in any spare moment that she had. In the Spring of 2014 Sophie left her position in trend forecasting and took the opportunity to take Grain and Knot to the next level. After completing the Prince's Trust Enterprise Scheme, Sophie is now working as a full time woodworker, and is fully supported by the Prince's Trust.

Based in London, Grain and Knot runs workshops, including on the art of crafting a spoon from reclaimed timber. Workshops last around 2.5 hours and are held monthly at various pop up locations in London. From what I can see, these workshops are held in various locations in South or East London. Details on the website - <http://www.grainandknot.com>.



## Going with the Grain

### The Grain In Wood and Why It Is Important When You Carve

(Loosely adapted from an article by Tom Caspar in American Woodworker September 2003, issue #102.)

Carving against the grain can cause splintering or tear-off. At the very least it can lead to a rough surface. So it is best, where possible, to carve with the grain. But how do you *find* this, as grain direction is not immediately obvious.

Wood is composed of long fibres that typically run at an angle to the surface of a piece of wood. Splitting the wood reveals the direction of the fibres, but probably won't want to split that prized chunk that you have set aside for carving!

The patterns of ovals and lines made by the growth rings are regarded as the grain of the wood. The trouble is, the fibre direction does not always run the same way.

Small cells called rays, which radiate from the centre of the tree, are the true indicators of fibre direction. The general angle of the rays on the plainsawn face of a board generally point in the same direction as the wood's fibres. Rays in oak are easy to read because oak rays are quite prominent. Beech and sycamore also have large rays. Cherry, maple and many other woods have rays that are paler and much smaller, but you can find them if you look closely.

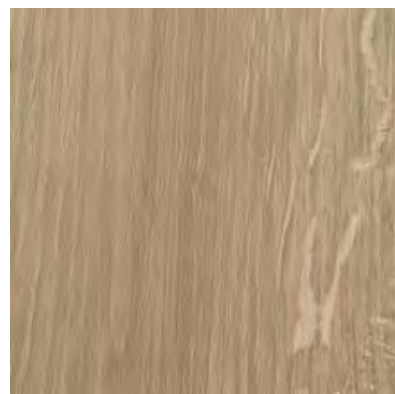
Some woods, such as ash and walnut, have rays that are too small to see. If you can't see them, look for vessels (cells that look like long, dark dashes) to indicate fibre direction. Mahogany, lime and birch have clearly visible vessel cells, as do many other woods.

And if you can't see rays or vessels, go with the angle of the dark lines that form the "Figure" of the wood. If you follow the concentric growth rings around to the face or edge, they become the lines and ovals that lend each board a distinctive figure.

In short, a brief survey of your wood can be really worthwhile before you carve. Spend that few minutes in preparation before your next carving project.



Medullary rays in oak – across the grain (above) and with the grain (below)





# Roger Timms

Regretfully, yet another obituary. After a long battle with illness, Roger Timms died last month.

Roger Timms was a stalwart of the Woodentops for many years and was always ready to share a story. He loved to enter discussion, even if there was the danger of it becoming a full blown argument! Indeed, with Roger leading the charge, the group's debates about the extent (or not) of our insurance cover ran for months, indeed years. Some of us might have said it felt like decades. Roger's experience as a Trades Union representative with London Underground stood him in good stead when making his case.

Roger was custodian of the library of our carving books while with the Woodentops and he represented the Woodentops at the BWA (British Woodcarving Association). For a time he was Membership Secretary for the whole BWA.

His ready wit, good humour, generosity and strength to stand his ground will be hugely missed.



## The World's Most Dangerous Tree?

MANCHINEEL TREE - POISONOUS  
DO NOT EAT THE SMALL GREEN APPLES  
DO NOT STAND UNDER TREES WHEN IT RAINS  
AVOID TOUCHING LEAVES, FLOWERS AND SAP  
SOME TREES ARE MARKED WITH RED PAINT AROUND TRUNK

This sign was spotted several times in Mustique, the Caribbean Island. It is a pretty sparsely populated place (apart from the odd celebrity) and perhaps this sign helps explain why. Wikipedia says of it:

All parts of the tree contain strong toxins, some unidentified. Its milky white sap contains phorbol and other skin irritants, producing strong allergic dermatitis.<sup>[5]</sup> Standing beneath the tree during rain will cause blistering of the skin from mere contact with this liquid (even a small drop of rain with the milky substance in it will cause the skin to blister). The sap has also been known to damage the paint on cars.<sup>[6]</sup> Burning the tree may cause ocular injuries if the smoke reaches the eyes.<sup>[7]</sup> Contact with its milky sap (latex) produces bullous dermatitis, acute keratoconjunctivitis and possibly large corneal epithelial defects.<sup>[8]</sup>

The fruit is possibly fatal if eaten; however, "fatalities from ingestion are not reported in the modern literature"<sup>[9]</sup> and "ingestion may produce severe gastroenteritis with bleeding, shock, bacterial superinfection, and the potential for airway compromise due to edema. Patients with a history of ingestion and either oropharyngeal burns or gastrointestinal symptoms should be evaluated for admission in hospital. Care is supportive."<sup>[10]</sup>

When ingested, the fruit is reportedly "pleasantly sweet" at first, with a subsequent "strange peppery feeling ..., gradually progress[ing] to a burning, tearing sensation and tightness of the throat". Symptoms continue to worsen until the patient can "barely swallow solid food because of the excruciating pain and the feeling of a huge obstructing pharyngeal lump."<sup>[2]</sup>

What is it like to carve? I'll leave that to others to find out!

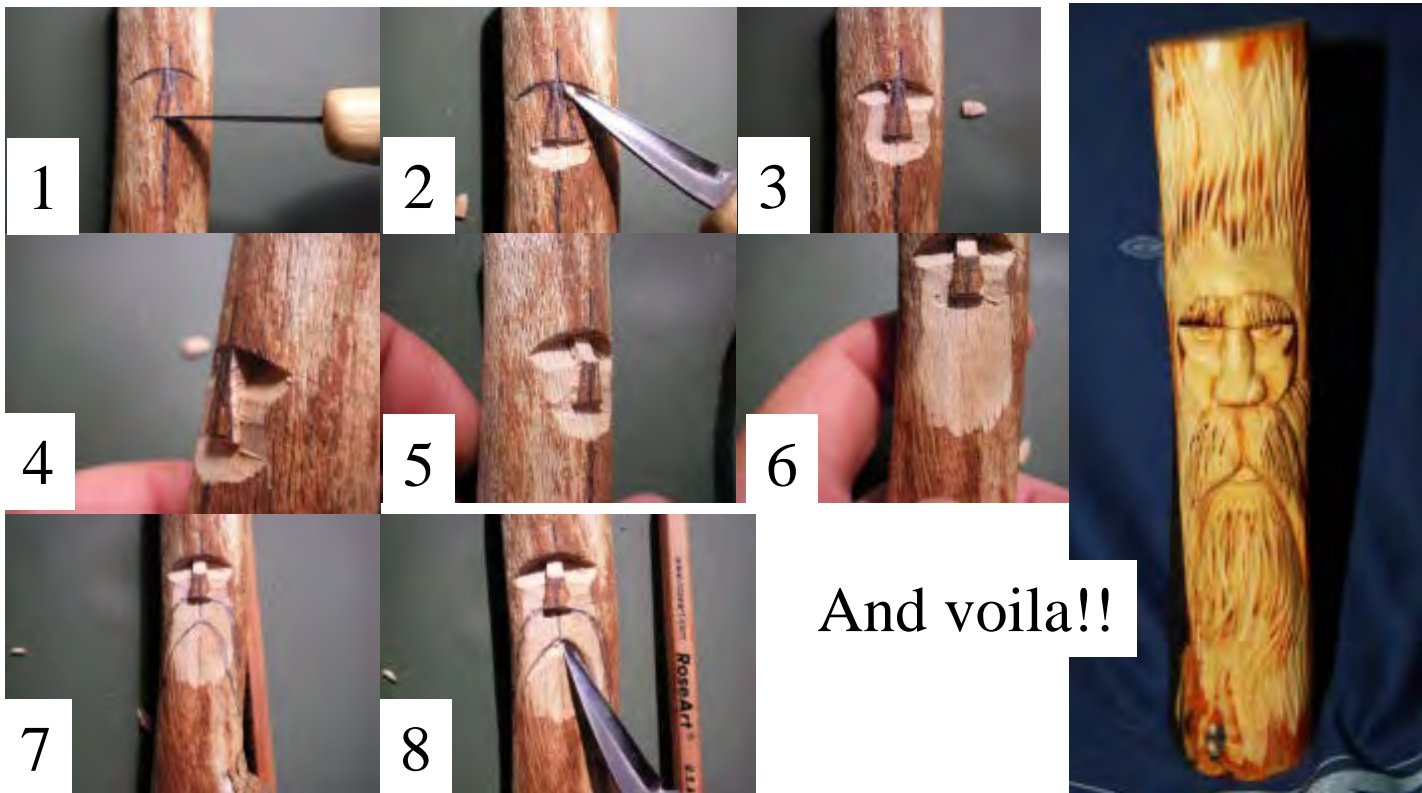
## Properly Storing Your Carving (or any other) Magazines

Subscribing to a magazine leads to a problem – you want to keep them for future reference but how do you store the blooming things? With Woodcarving Magazine you can buy a special binder form the publishers, but you have to fit the mags in with fiddly strings which are hard to use and can tear the paper. But here is a much better solution! The Magi Clip slips into the centre of the magazine and then you hold then in a ring binder. Simple! Tis easy, cheap and it works!



# From Facebook (through Woodentops Wood Carvers Facebook page)

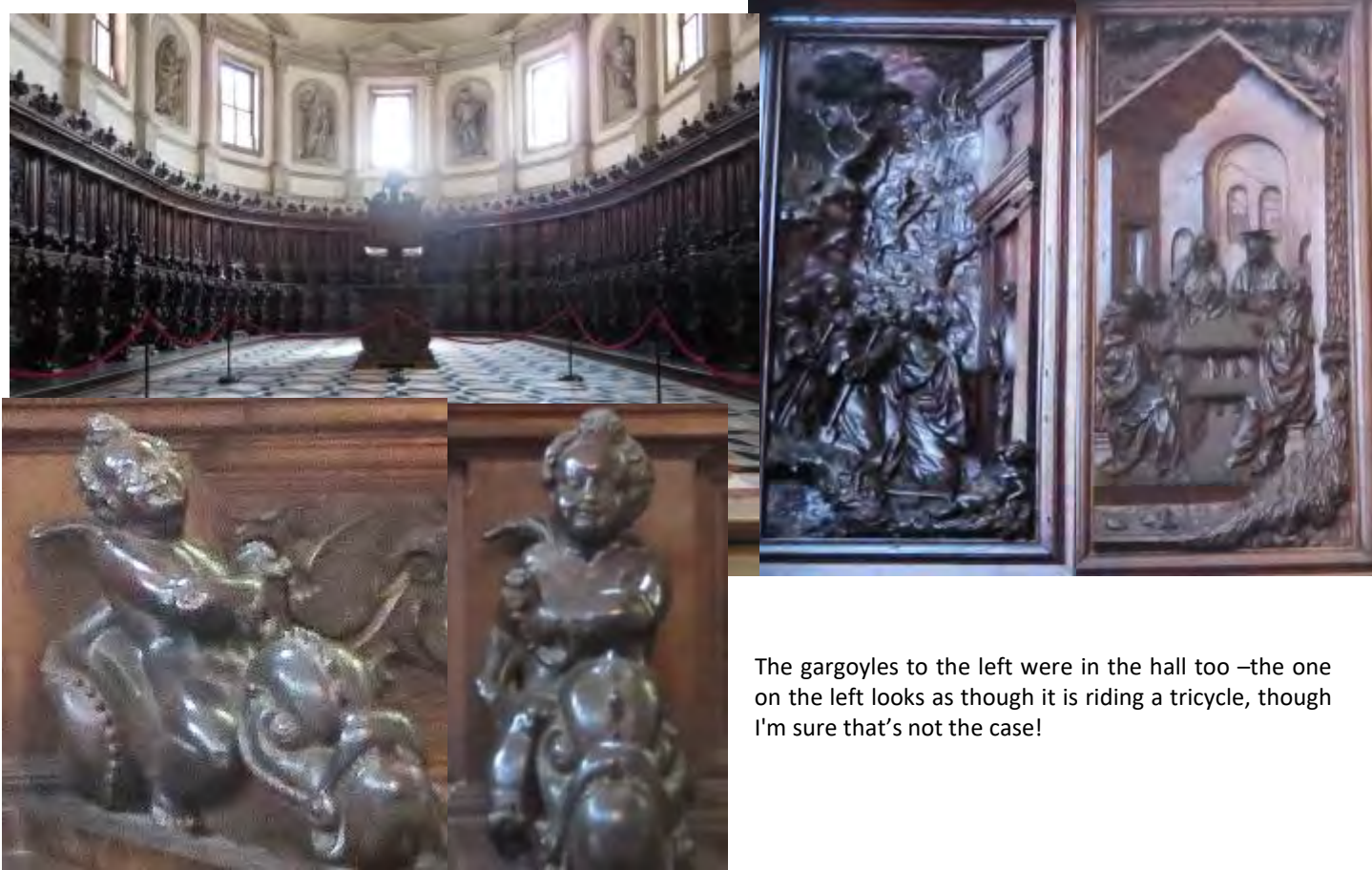
Wood Spirit Tutorial Part 1, by <https://bushcraftusa.com/forum/threads/wood-spirit-tutorial-very-pic-heavy.14448/page-5>



## More Carvings From Venice

Last month we showed some shots taken by Cathy from inside San Giorgio Maggiore church (on the island of San Giorgio) which has magnificent wooden relief panels depicting Bible stories.

Below are a couple more of those marvellous panels, and a shot so the hall itself.



The gargoyles to the left were in the hall too –the one on the left looks as though it is riding a tricycle, though I'm sure that's not the case!



## Club Matters

**The Club AGM** will be held at the June meeting, that's 3 June 2017 at around 12 noon, within the Club's normal monthly meeting. This is an important event in the Club's calendar. Whilst we hope it will be short, it's an opportunity to express YOUR views and to consider enhancing your experience in the Club by volunteering to help on the Committee.

Agenda

### Agenda for Annual General Meeting of 'The Woodentops'; 3 June 2017

The meeting will be held after the usual 11am gathering at which items of common interest are generally discussed. At this point, non-members can retire to another room for the duration of the meeting if they wish to do so (but it's not planned to be a long affair).

Agenda

1. Leader's Report
2. Treasurer's Report
3. Secretary/Newsletter Editor's Report
4. Committee Changes
5. AOB

### Competition or Project for the Woodentops?

This was discussed at the last meeting. Club members were asked to think about a project or competition that members could participate in.

Possible ideas:

- Relief carvings (all same size blank used) on the theme of Brexit
- Something to support (and then perhaps be sited in) a local charity or other 'Good Cause'.
- There must be many more thoughts that you have about possible themes.
- **So do let us know at the next Club meeting, or by email (e addresses below)**

### Cakes for June meeting: Mary



From our Treasurer, Cathy: The renewal date for membership of the **British Woodcarvers Association is 1 June**. Please could any members who wish to renew, and would like me to submit their payment for them, bring their subs to one of the May or June meetings, or pass them to me by 24 June. The cost is £25 per year (£5 for junior members). I can take cash or cheques made payable to BWA (SEL & WK). I have a list of current paid-up members which I will bring along to the meetings. Benefits include an excellent carving magazine sent to all BWA members

## T'Committee

Leader:	Ann High	01689 859617	highmorton@tiscali.co.uk
Treasurer	Cathy Thomas	01689 829646	Thomascathy@virginmedia.com
Secretary/ Newsletter	Clive Nash	0208 4648902	clivewoodentops@outlook.com
Beverage provision	Mary Paddick	07929 051373	Marye.paddick@sky.com
Committee	Terry Vincent	01689 827680	terence.vincent@mypostoffice.co.uk
Committee	Tom Young	01689 851500	thomas.young67@ntlworld.com

**The next 2017 Main Meeting**  
(Carving, coffee & cake, an opportunity to bring guests and potential new members) will be from  
**9am to 1pm,  
Saturday 3 June  
2017**

**There are additional mid-month meetings (No frills, no coffee/cake just pure carving)  
All 9am to 1pm, Saturdays**

**The next 'No Frills' Meeting:  
Saturday 10 June 2017  
(Held in the Church 'Link' area)**

**All our meeting dates are shown on our website  
[www.woodentopswoodcarvers.co.uk](http://www.woodentopswoodcarvers.co.uk)**

