

We meet at:

St John's United Reformed Church Hall
Lynwood Grove Orpington BR6 0BG

We meet on:

The first Saturday of each month
9am-1pm. New members welcome

The Woodentops is the SE London and W Kent Branch of the BWA



Twitter: #carverofwood



Letter carving

Letter carving is a sub-set of carving and requires a array of skills in its own right. Two keys to good-looking letters are **accuracy** and **proportion**.

Accuracy means making the letters as perfect as possible, following the font you have chosen. Proportion is all about spacing the letters so, quite simply, they look good. Whilst beauty is, of course, in the eye of the beholder, many think that the letters used in Roman scripts raised the art to some sort of perfection, notably in the letters on the Trajan column in Rome, which celebrates the military successes of Roman Emperor Trajan. There it is, bottom left, showing the spiralled story of Trajan's conquests in pictures and words.

Interested in doing some letter carving of your own? There are lots of resources to help you here. A seminal work on the shape of letters (and based on that Trajan Column to the left) is **Roman Lettering** by L.C. Evetts (Pitmans). Though out of print, there are copies easily available through eBay, Amazon, or other second-hand book stockists.

There are also DVDs, and Chris Pye's excellent offering here is highly recommended. It is called **Woodcarving: Letter Carving** in Rob Cosman's Master Craftsman Series, America Craftsman Publications, 1-877-967-5966



Forming letters properly and in an aesthetically pleasing way is more than just a hobby – it's a science and an art. That is why fonts are designed with such care. For this newsletter, I'm using Calibri, a sans-serif font – if I had used **Roman (as here)** the effect could be **entirely different** and if **Old English**, **different again**. For carving, a 'serif' font such as Roman is arguably the best to use, though much depends on personal style.

Serifs are the twiddly bits at the ends of every branch of a letter – see drawing above, where the serifs are circled in the R on the left – on the right is a font with no serifs for comparison.

Did you know that it was letter forming that gave **Steve Jobs** his sense of style and helped provide the design impetus to Apple? Jobs dropped out of university after just one semester after which he studied calligraphy for 18 months, trained by an ex-Trappist monk. The attention to detail, the importance of layout and style no doubt helped create the smooth lines and unimpeachable style of Apple. And I expect just as important was the art of **patience** – something you truly learn when carving letters. So pay attention to your letters and who knows where it will take you!



Seb Lester's website on lettering gives lots of ideas about letterforms and layouts, as well as creative lettering ideas.

See <http://www.seblester.com/>



Around the Club

Caption Competition

I had one entry to last month's **caption competition** from our old friend Bernard Tetchner. Thank you Bernard!



Staircase Carving



Also from Bernard:

Hi Clive,
Found this carving on the internet.
It said it was a Staircase
By Jop van Driel of
Trapart. No other
information
Thought it might come in
handy for the Newsletter
Bernard

Letter from Shane

This email came in from Shane Ravens – a very talented carver who used to be a Club member and moved away. Were delighted to hear from you Shane, and wish you the best for your new carving ventures.

Hi Clive

It's Shane - how are you, well I hope, just got the latest from the Woodentops. It's great to see you all doing well.

I've recently moved to a small village in Somerset called Winsham and I'm hoping to build a workshop this year, and take up the tools full time, and maybe start teaching in the village hall in the new year please, give every one my regards,

I also have a new web site its www.corvuscarvings.co.uk

Goodbye for now and take care.



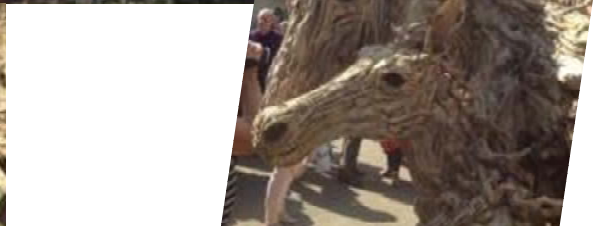
Shane has created some stunning Grinling Gibbons- style work. Check out his website.

Grahame

Ann's Grahame is unwell so she may not be able to make the next meeting. We wish Grahame the very best for a speedy recovery.

Chelsea Exhibit

In the spring, James Doran-Webb exhibited his fine art at the Chelsea Flower show and got a five star trader award for his efforts. Made of wood, these sculptures are made from 'found' items, mostly driftwood. They show just how much can be done with recycled materials.



Iron Curtain Art

This arresting relief in wood is in the Prague Museum of Communism. The brutalism of Soviet art is enhanced with the sinister appearance of a machine gun. Thank goodness those days are over for the Czech Republic.



There is some skilled artistry here in terms of layout and design, as well as execution (no pun intended!).

The carver has left a tooled finish to the relief. The wood is unknown.



The Museum of Communism in Prague is well worth a visit.

It's address is:
Na Příkope 10
Prague 1, 110 00
Czech Republic

Miniature Sculptures in 'Wood Ivory'

An Article in the current edition of US publication Chip Chats alerted me to the work of Arkady Tsesarsky . His website is: <http://www.minisculpturesbyarkady.com/>

This talented artist who carves such charming figures works in so-called wood-ivory, the tagua nut, which closely resembles ivory in texture, colour and hardness. As his website says: *He now combines the nut, very hard wood and dyeing techniques to create memorable, whimsical and sentimental works of art full of humour, passion and intensity in his beloved grotesque style.* Arkady gets inspiration from Russian and Jewish traditional characters.' This includes small figurines of Yiddish 'shtetl' villagers doing ordinary things.

Some examples are below.



And Finally...

A Practical Carved Table

How's this for a sensible carving!



From Entertainment Daily:
<https://www.facebook.com/entertainmentdailyfix/photos/a.135055893181324.15659.13483523320339/0/992746657412239/?type=3>

Jottings

The success of the no-frills Extra 'Saturday Carving Workshops' held has led to the room being booked for more of these in the new year - in fact one EVERY month!. Check the next edition of this newsletter for details of the dates, but broadly they will be roughly in the middle of the month, on a Saturday morning.



Christmas Meal

Our Christmas meal will be at 'The Chelsfield' pub and restaurant in Chelsfield on Saturday 5 December in the evening. Terry has the menu - choices will be submitted after our November meeting so do please let Terry know your choices. If you can't come to the November meeting, do call Terry about this - his number is below.



Cathy advises that our November Meeting will be held in the SMALL hall - this is because at our last meeting the Club voted (following a request by the Quilters) to allow the Quilters to use our large hall on this one occasion only as it's a special meeting for them.



Cake Rota

November Jane

(I remember her delicious cakes from last time she provided them. Yum!)



Our website

Discussions still proceed



Egg carving

Those of us carving wooden birch eggs as a part of the BWA competition now only have a few weeks to go - the closing date is **13 November**.

2015 Meetings: all 9am to 1pm, Saturdays

Christmas Meal

7 Nov

5 Dec

5 December

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Ann



Next meeting : 7 November 2015