

www.thewoodentops.co.uk

WOODENTOPS Newsletter

March 2016

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



Facebook: Woodentops Woodcarvers



Twitter: #carverofwood

The Benefits of Candlelight

And some months,
mid-month meetings
too! –see last page

By chance, a couple of weeks ago I caught the sliver of a television programme-yet another one about buying and selling antiques at auction. But this one was somewhat more interesting than most as it included an interview with a Master Violin Maker. Many of his skills are held in common with those of a woodcarver.

This particular practitioner aspired to make violins in exactly the same way as Stradivarius, even down to using the same lighting that the old master employed for checking the finish - a single candle.

The interviewer expressed surprise that such a simple and weak source could be effectively used to inspect such a complex construction operation, but the canny Master explained that artificial light is too dispersed and too coarse – a single point source helps identify flaws, in a finish particularly, and was in his view much better than electric bulbs. Worst of all are florescent tubes, which cast hardly any shadows, but even electric lights which are an intense point source (such as a bright tungsten bulb) are nothing like as good as a candle, he said. They are just too bright and can dazzle.

So next time you are checking the finish of your masterpiece, why not turn off all the lights and inspect it by candlelight? You might be surprised at how effective it is at picking up tiny flaws and highlighting the need for a final scrape or polish.

NB – But of course, pay due attention to the fire risk. The Health and Safety at Work Act did not exist in Stradivarius' day!



<http://www.violinedomitrovic.com/english.html>



Picture above, below and below left:
<http://www.classicfm.com/instruments/violin/violin-making-pictures/>



A Sculpture to Fire Your Carving Imagination

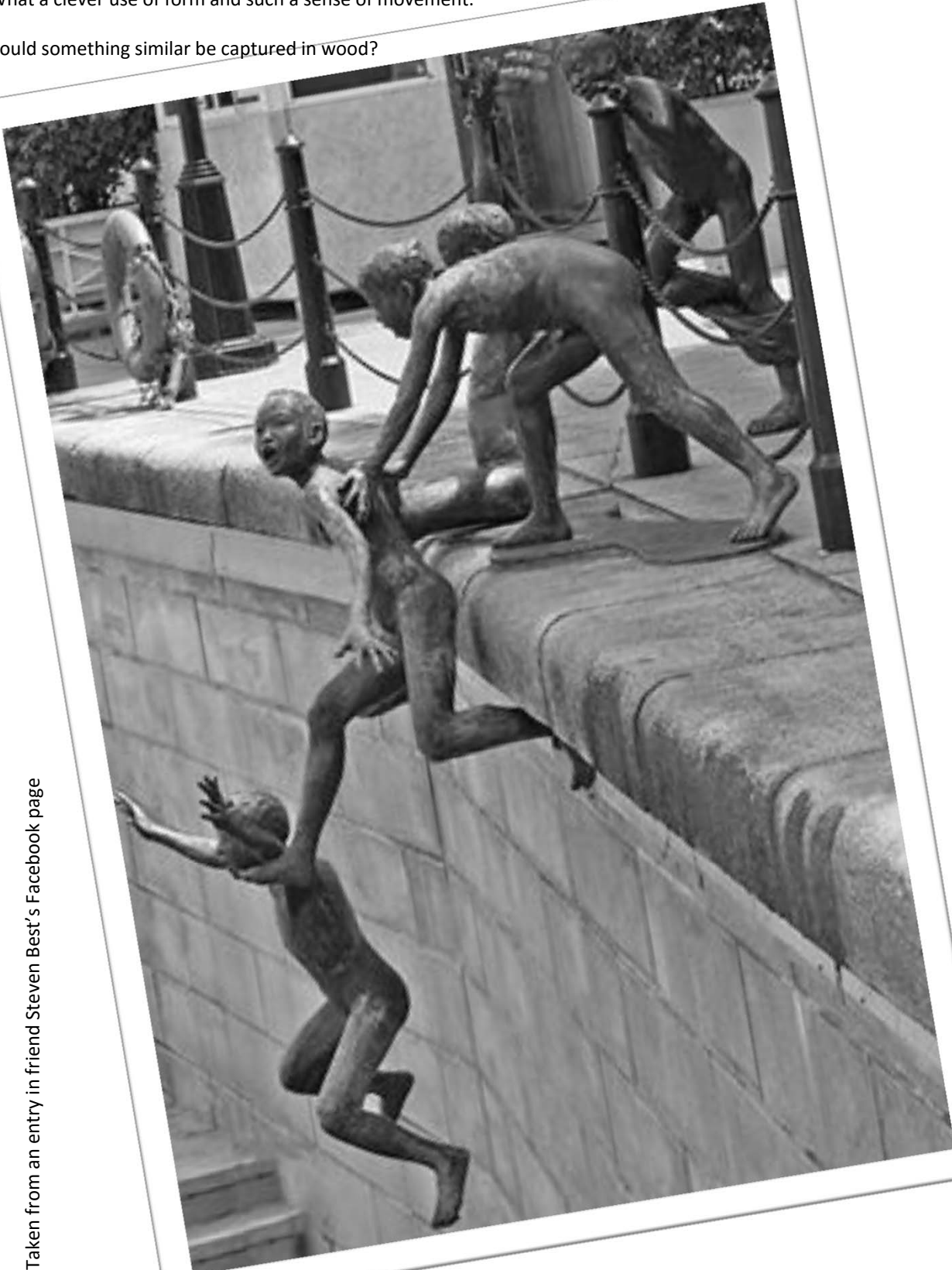
This imaginative and clever sculpture depicts scenes of early days of Singapore by Chong Fah Cheong (born 1946).

Singapore River was once the lifeline of Singapore, when the first migrant communities settled. It was not an uncommon sight to see boys swinging from trees beside the river and jumping into the water with gusto.

The boys learned how to avoid the muddy depths and the dangers of boats crossing the river, and had no fear of the polluted waters that were sometimes filled with garbage. When the Clean Rivers project was launched in 1983, families, hawkers and boats were removed from this area, and the innocent laughter of the swimming boys were heard no more.

What a clever use of form and such a sense of movement.

Could something similar be captured in wood?



Taken from an entry in friend Steven Best's Facebook page

Miscellany



Above: Intricate wood carving by Inma Garcia Arribas (See her profile on Facebook)
Unfortunately she does not say what which wood she used to carve the piece but what a great example of relief work.



How often has a gouge or mallet fallen from your bench and hit your feet. This is one reason, of course, why the wearing of sandals is banned in carving workshops (and why you see some carvers short of a big toe. (Actually, that's just a joke.) Even with your pinkies covered you are not necessarily fully protected. Lets face it, falling tools are bad news all round – and they can damage the tool as well as you.

So Club Member Chris came up with this simple but brilliant idea – keep the tools you are currently using in an old plastic tray for the duration of your day's work. There is then no way that your tools can roll or slip off.

Expletives are then deleted and your equipment remains intact. Simples!

9,500-Year-Old Tree Found in Sweden is The World's Oldest Tree

A while ago I produced a feature in this little journal about the World's Oldest Trees.

Seems like there is now a new contender. Reported recently, the world's oldest tree is now said to be a 9,500-year-old Norwegian Spruce named "Old Tjikko," after Professor Leif Kullman's Siberian husky, and this specimen continues to grow in Sweden. Discovered in 2004 by Kullman, professor of Physical Geography at Umeå University, the age of the tree was determined using carbon-14 dating.

"During the ice age sea level was 120 meters lower than today and much of what is now the North Sea in the waters between England and Norway was at that time forest," Professor Kullman told Aftonbladet. Winds and low temperatures made Old Tjikko "like a bonsai tree...Big trees cannot get as old as this."

Wonder what the wood is like to carve.....

More info: <http://www.mymodernmet.com/profiles/blogs/old-tjikko-sweden>

Photo by Karl Brodowsky on Wikimedia



BWA Birch Egg Carving Competition

The Winners of the BWA Birch Egg Carving Competition have been announced and here they are. 142 Birch eggs were sent to over 20 regional groups. 69 carvings were received back and the organiser, Jason Townsend, added a couple himself.

Remember - all were carved in an identical chicken's egg size piece of wood, so are no more than a couple of inches or 5 cm high.



Winner: Mick McCabe's Skull

Tom Young and Clive Nash submitted entries from the Woodentops, and so far have not been named in dispatches. Maybe they are saving the best till last.

Or perhaps we were just outclassed by the amazingly high standard shown on this page.



Joint Second Prize: Rod Moore



Bob Brakewell



Gerry Guiver



Joint Third Prize: Ivor Hacon



Lawrie Dempsey



Dennis Smyth

John Woodward

It is with much sadness that the death of John Woodward is announced. John was a member of the Club since its very early days.

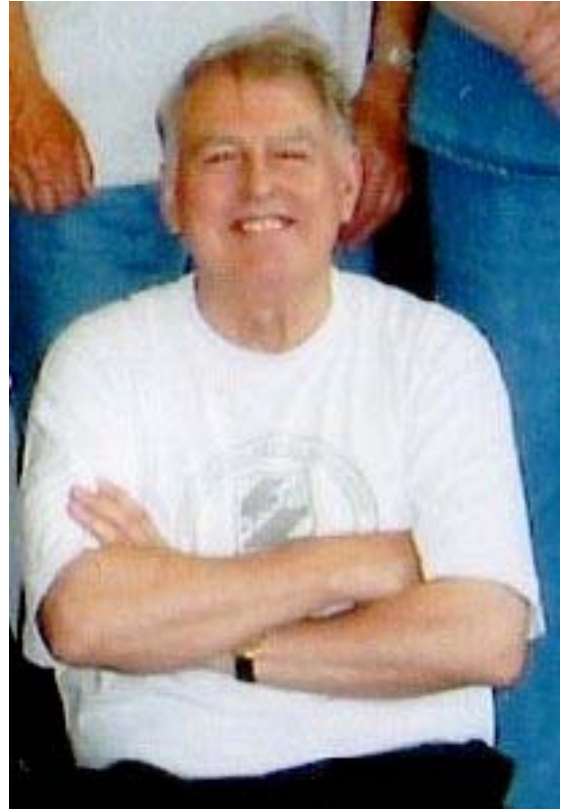
His profession was woodworker/carpenter/carver and he worked on (amongst other things) the restoration of St Mary Abchurch in the City of London, after it was damaged in the Blitz. He spoke enthusiastically about the reconstruction of the reredos (a carved alter decoration) in that church after the war, which was shattered into thousands of pieces by the enemy action. The church by the way, is still open and the reredos is there for all to view. The carving on the reredos is the work of Grinling Gibbons, the greatest of decorative wood-carvers and is the only known work of his in any London City church apart from St. Paul's Cathedral.



Always an enthusiastic member of the Club, John keenly supported old and new members alike.

Ann recalls: 'My memories of John are of a very sweet and kind man who always made me feel welcome to the club when I first joined.'

A picture of the reredos in the church he loved so much is to the left.



Letters – From Yew to Me

Hello Clive,

I haven't been along to the meetings for a while but still enjoy reading your newsletters. Your article on 'lettering' tied in with a commission I had earlier this year to design a set of themed room signs, yew, beech and laurel for a B&B in Cornwall.

Each was carved in a matching timber and to finish the set I used the off cuts to make bowls and key fobs ('Jill' who commissioned them is a beekeeper). I've included some snaps, which you're welcome to use.

Trevor.

Trevor Mayhew is a friend of and occasional visitor to the Club



Club Stuff

Cakes for 5 March meeting:

David

Cakes for 2 April meeting:

Derek

Subs are due to Cathy – capped yet again at the astoundingly good value cost of £20 per year – including all those new extra mid-Month meetings.

2016 <u>Main</u> Meetings (Carving, coffee & cake, an opportunity to bring guests and potential new members, occasional guest speakers) All 9am to 1pm, Saturdays	2016 <u>Additional</u> Meetings (No frills, just carving) All 9am to 1pm, Saturdays
5 March	19 March
2 April	16 April
7 May	21 May
4 June	[No extra June meeting]
2 July	16 July
6 August	20 August
3 September	17 September
1 October	15 October
6 November	[No extra November meeting]
3 December	[No extra December meeting]

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