

Due south

For this month's club-based feature we profile the work and activities of the Solent Guild of Woodcarvers & Sculptors

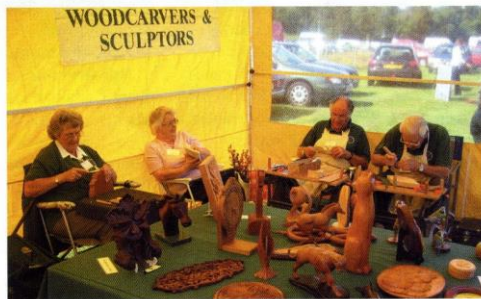
In May 1978 four men, all students at a further education woodcarving class in Portsmouth, met at a house in North End to discuss the possibility of forming a Guild of Woodcarvers. The idea was the inspiration of the late James Bell, one of the four, who felt that more recognition and encouragement should be given to this art form.

On the 18th of May that year 20 people attended a meeting at Cosham Park House at which the Solent Guild was officially inaugurated. The objectives of the Guild were (and still are) to further the aims and interests of woodcarvers and sculptors and offer encouragement to beginners.

Some members are professionals but the majority are amateurs who find carving a challenging but satisfying hobby.

The Guild holds social meetings at the Havant Arts Centre, usually on the second Wednesday evening between September and May (except January when an annual dinner is arranged). All day 'carve ins' are held in the workshop of Portsmouth Grammar School on one or sometimes two Saturdays each month between October and May.

An annual exhibition is held, usually in May. Each year in the summer months the Guild is invited to exhibit and demonstrate at various venues in the Solent area.



Membership details

Membership is open to anyone interested in woodcarving or sculpture and details may be obtained from the Secretary Roger Mawby, 25 Anglesey Road, Gosport, Hampshire PO12 2EG or the Treasurer Patricia Kyari, 24 Warfield Avenue, Waterlooville, Hampshire PO7 7JN
Website: www.hants.gov.uk/solent_guild_woodcs/

25 years not out

To celebrate its 25th anniversary the Guild carved a plaque for presentation to the borough of Havant in Hampshire. It consisted of 10 small plaques, each depicting a scene in the borough and surrounding a centrepiece showing a relief map of the area. The project was the brainchild of John Vardon, who also carved the centrepiece (see photo 1).

2 - Ray Baker an ex-chairman carved a picture of the *Hayling Billy*, the nickname for a steam train that ran between Havant and Hayling Island. Although the service stopped in the 1960s it is a fondly remembered local feature. Despite failing health Ray managed to finish it and attend the handing over ceremony at Havant civic offices.

3 - Ray White, another ex-chairman, carved a coat of arms of the borough. To fit the scale of the overall plaque it had to be smaller than ones he had previously carved. The fine detail needed was a significant challenging requiring small and very sharp tools.

4 - Andrew Huebler carved *Langstone Mill*. Using photographs he created a mock up to ascertain the depths of relief needed to capture the architectural features of the building. The small window panes and railings around the wall of the mill were particularly demanding.

5 - Joan Sargeant carved a representation of the *Staunton Beacon*, a memorial to a favourite horse owned by a previous owner of the Staunton Estate. Her approach to the carving was to use a tracing taken from a photocopy of a photograph.

6 - Bert Cox created *The Heroes* panel derived from the sign of the hero's public house. It depicts soldiers returning from the Battle of Waterloo who stopped in what is now Waterlooville.

7 - Jess Jay carved a scene of the ancient *Emsworth Harbour*, famous for its fishing and shellfish industry, and included the sailing club, harbour wall and moored boats.

8 - The sport of windsurfing was invented on Hayling Island and John Tappy, another ex-chairman, carved a relief showing of a *Windsurfer at Speed*.

9 - Pax Benger, our current chairman, carved *St Faiths Church* in Havant town centre. This was his first relief carving, as normally he carves birds and fish in the round.

10 - Alan Crockford, President of the Guild, carved the lettering for the plaque. The letters were about 10mm (3/8in) in height – absolutely minuscule.

11 - On 17 October, 2002, the Guild's chairman formally handed over plaque to the Mayor of Havant in the presence of 50 of the Guild's members. It is now prominently displayed in the reception area of the civic offices.

