

West Riding Woodcarvers' Association



April 2018
Issue 260

Patron
Dame Ingrid M Roscoe
DCVO FSA
Lord Lieutenant of
West Yorkshire

Life members
Albert Hobson
Jane Renshaw

Shepley March 10th 2018: Jose Sarabia Professional Wood and Stone carver.

Carving out his life in wood

José Sarabia's story of his lifetime's work

You would never guess from admiring José Sarabia's exquisite work that he was a reluctant woodcarver. But years ago, when all his friends in the Madrid orphanage where he was raised chose to be tailors, he wanted to join them.

José, the March speaker at Shepley for the West Riding Woodcarvers' Association, explained that his ability in fine art and design persuaded his teachers that wood carving should be his chosen apprenticeship.

Even so, José, who now lives and works in Selby, North Yorkshire, still was not convinced that woodcarving was the career for him. He decided that what he really wanted to do was to teach languages. So after his apprenticeship he left Spain intending to learn English here in the UK and then French in France - and then return to his native Spain.

But matters of the heart got in the way when he met the young British woman who was to become his wife. While working as a waiter in the UK, José's woodcarving talent was spotted by the restaurant manager. José brought his tools from Spain and very quickly was given work at the Stockton-on-Tees arts centre.

And so instead of Saville Row or such-like benefitting from his talents, José went from young apprentice to master craftsman, eventually creating rich wood carving pieces for restoration, reproduction and bespoke commissions for the stately homes of England.

And for almost 50 years, José has used his redoubtable skills to create works of art in wood, usually lime, jelutong or oak as well as marble and stone, from small works of art to historic carving restorations and original pieces which now grace some of the finest buildings in the land.

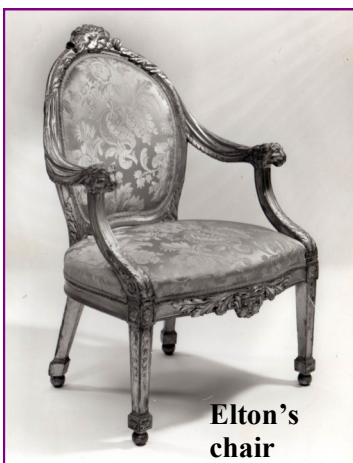
José, who designs many pieces himself, has worked on carvings for Kensington Palace, the Mansion House in York, Hampton Court Palace, and Spencer House in London owned by Earl Spencer, brother to the late Diana, Princess of Wales.

The highlight of his career was a commission to make new carvings for the missing pieces of an ornate mirror originally crafted by the famous Yorkshire-born furniture maker and carver, Thomas Chippendale. The mirror dated from the 1700s.

Chairs for Sir Elton John and an embellished wardrobe door for Dave Gilmour of Pink Floyd have featured in his portfolio of work as well as carved images such as a Buddha or a long-eared owl in jelutong to be cast in stone for use in architecture, landscapes or even as garden ornaments to be found in your local garden centre.

The wealth of work created in his half century of carving suggests that whoever those teachers were, who persuaded him away from tailoring into working with wood, made exactly the right choice.

* Interestingly and perhaps controversially, José said that when sharpening his chisels, he had no time at all for the figure of eight sharpening technique as it did not sharpen the edge of the chisel evenly.



Elton's
chair



Spencer House Table

* To view José's work see his website: www.bespokecarving.co.uk Janet Smith

Future meetings 2018/19

April 14th:

Annual General Meeting. It is desirable that all members attend this meeting where the future of our club is decided.

May 12th:

Jim Robison of Booth House Gallery, Holmfirth. Practical demonstration and talk on ceramics. Booth House was first opened in 1975 as a studio and sales outlet for sculptor and ceramicist Jim Robison.

September 9th:

Full practical carving day with tuition on chisel sharpening. After the success of the January meeting, where there was a good turn out of carvers for a practical full day carving session, it has been agreed that this will be repeated.

So in September, to start our season and carving classes off again after the summer recess, it is agreed that we hold a Meet & Greet open house combined with a practical carving and tool sharpening session together with a pea and pie lunch.

October 13th:

Return of Mike Green. Emeritus Professor of Forensic Pathology. Not decided what his talk will cover yet but will probably be chosen from Murderous Medics and Naughty Nurses, The Search for the Crew of the MT Gaul, Grave Robbers or Depiction of Desire, Debauchery and Disease.

November 13th:

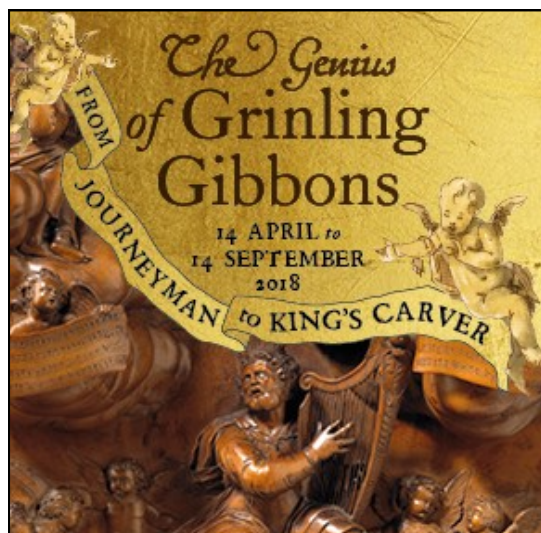
Stuart Smith. Once again we welcome back Stuart who has previously given us two extremely entertaining and informative talks on both the Yorkshire Ripper cold case investigations and the Battle of Monte Cassino. On this occasion Stuart will be presenting his new talk on the Merchant Navy and its involvement during the war years.

December 8th:

Christmas Luncheon. Speaker Mr Cook with an illustrated talk entitled 'African Wildlife Bonanza'.

January 2019:

Mike Smith. Mike is a lino cut print maker who lives in Addingham. For more details see his amazing work on www.mikesmithprints.co.uk The robin below is a copy of one of Mike's lovely prints.



Anne Ellwood has just informed me about this new exhibition to mark the unveiling of the King David panel.

From Journeyman to King's Carver: The Genius of Grinling Gibbons opens at Fairfax House, York on the 370th anniversary of Grinling Gibbons' birth. Saturday April 14th 2018 to 14th September 2018.

<http://www.fairfaxhouse.co.uk/whats-on/the-genius-of-grinling-gibbons/>

Certainly worth a trip over to York.



Finally, but sadly, I have to refer to the sad loss of yet another of our long serving and very well liked and respected members.

On the 4th April 2018, at Saint Patricks catholic church Huddersfield, the funeral took place of **Mike Ryan** who has been a member of our club for quite a number of years, a member of the All Saints carving class and a regular attendant at our Shepley meetings. Mike and his wife Catherine were always present at our Christmas Luncheons. His funeral service was well attended by members of our club.

I'm sure everybody will agree that Mike's contribution to our classes and meetings will be sadly missed.

Our thoughts are with Catherine and his family at this very difficult time.

