

# Farming theme feeds imaginations of masons at European Stone Festival

EUROPEAN  
**STONE**  
FESTIVAL  
LINCOLN  
2013

Lincoln had more than 6,000 visitors on 22 and 23 June to see how the 134 participants in this year's European Stone Festival were interpreting the theme of 'food and farming'.



Wim Hage from the Netherlands working on his Horn of Plenty in limestone from Lincoln Cathedral's own quarry. It won first prize in the apprentice class. Wim works part time with Ton Mooy, a restoration mason and sculptor in the Netherlands.

For only the second time, the European Stone Festival came to the UK this year when it was held at Lincoln Cathedral on 22-23 June. There were 134 stonemasons and carvers from 12 countries taking part, with work that interpreted the theme of 'food & farming', chosen to reflect the rural nature of Lincolnshire and the help given by the National Farmers Union and local hotels and restaurants in promoting the event.

The Festival has become a major part of European stonemasonry's calendar since it was inaugurated by Freiburg Technical College for Stonemasonry & Stone Carving in Germany in 1999. It travels around Europe, being held in a different city each year. The first (and until now, only) time it had come to the UK was in 2003, when it was at Canterbury Cathedral.

City's vie for the privilege of hosting the event and its venue is already determined up to 2019. After that it might return to Lincoln because the Cathedral enjoyed hosting it so much this year it has already put in a bid to do so again.

At Lincoln, the Festival was jointly organised by Carol Heidschuster, Works Manager of Lincoln Cathedral, and Sally Oliver, Works Co-ordinator. It was run in conjunction with 1,000 Years of Traditional Crafts at Lincoln Castle, which faces the Cathedral at the top of Steep Hill in the City, and a traditional food fair in between the two buildings run by the Rotary Club, giving the whole area the feel of a celebration for the weekend.

Other local organisations also pitched in, with Lincoln Hotel feeding the stone



Left and main picture. Alex Wenham carved this piece called Harvest Pedestal in limestone from Lincoln Cathedral's own Quarry that was the winner of the European Stone Festival. Currently living in France with his family, Alex is planning to return to the UK next year and will be looking for carving work. He would be delighted to hear from anyone who could use his services (alex@alexwenham.co.uk). He has worked on the Houses of Parliament, Brighton Pavilion and St Paul's cathedral.

Right. Richard Bossons' Sheep Falling Off The Cliff in Portland Perryfield Whitbed was voted second by the judges but was the piece those taking part voted as their favourite.

Below right. Nicolas Eberhardt working on his Bull in Tadcaster magnesium limestone. Nicolas, originally from Strasbourg, was a stonemason for 10 years, starting at Strasbourg Cathedral. These days he is a draughtsman, but likes to go to a festival once a year to express himself through the stone, he says.



Left. Bryan Proctor and the Lincolnshire Pig he carved in Portland Perryfield Whitbed was runner-up among the apprentices. This was Bryan's first time at a festival and he said he was "really enjoying the buzz". He is on a bursary from the National Heritage Training College working at Lincoln Castle for Robert Woodhead Ltd.

Below. Jackie Blackman, a student at City & Guilds of London Art School, was third in the apprentice section for the front end of the bookends Hog she carved in Ancaster Hard White limestone in collaboration with Ben Tabaschi from the USA, who carved the back end.







Carol Heidschuster, Works Manager of Lincoln Cathedral and joint organiser of the Festival, being presented with a case of wine from Bernward Fiedler from Freiburg.

workers during the event and the Masonic Hall accommodating them during their stay.

The Worshipful Company of Masons donated £5,000 to the event and had a marquee in the grounds of the Cathedral during it to promote the craft of stonemasonry. It was continuing its campaign of collecting masons' marks to create a register of them in order for future generations to be able to identify those who have worked on particular buildings.

In another marquee, the Cathedral Works Department was demonstrating its skills in wood and leadwork, as well as masonry.

"People didn't realise the Cathedral employs 42 people with these skills, which includes nine masons, one of them an apprentice," says Carol Heidschuster, who is celebrating her 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the Cathedral's Works Department and could hardly have had a better way of marking the occasion.

Lincoln auctioneer J H Walter donated its services to sell the works produced during the weekend at the end of the event. On the Saturday it was even involved in producing a catalogue of the works for the auction. And the auction on Sunday afternoon was attended by more than 600 people and raised more than £50,000.

The top price of £2,600 was paid for apprentice Thomas Webster's carving of an anvil. It was bought by a man who said his family used to be blacksmiths. Several other carvings went for more than £1,000 and



Sally Oliver, Works Co-ordinator of Lincoln Cathedral and joint organiser of the Festival with Carol, was presented with a bouquet of flowers in appreciation of her contribution.

bids for all the lots were in the hundreds.

The local branch of builders merchant Travis Perkins supplied 20 pallet loads of building blocks that were used to build bankers for the masons to work on.

Stone handtool maker G Gibson & Co donated prizes of its tools for the winning carvers. The judging panel consisted of Carol Heidschuster, Terje Skjeldam from Trondheim, where the Festival was held last

year, Norbert Stoffel from Strasbourg and Bernward Fiedler from the Freiburg Technical College.

Carol Heidschuster said afterwards: "The event exceeded all our expectations. The atmosphere was wonderful. The goodwill towards the Cathedral as a result of this is tremendous. We've had such a good time."

When Lincoln was chosen as the venue for

the Festival, Carol attended the next two European Stone Festivals (held in Freiburg in 2011 and Trondheim last year) to see how they were run. "I had in mind what I needed to do and could see the key thing was for publicity. By linking up with the NFU and getting the support of local businesses we got the message out.

"The public response was absolutely amazing – the emails we've had! One person said he had intended to come for half-an-hour and had stayed for five hours. He said he had bought one of the pieces at the auction on Sunday."

Want to see more? There are videos taken during the event on YouTube. ■



Above. Dean Philip Buckler thanks the participants in the Festival in the grounds of Lincoln Cathedral.



Left. Mark Luscombe's Rabbit & Mole in Whitsome Newton sandstone from the Scottish Borders.

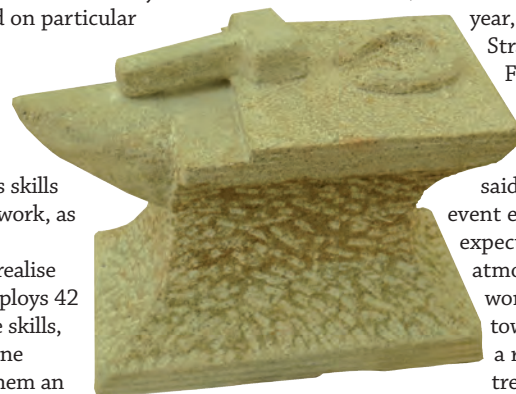


Above left. Ian Walter of Lincoln auctioneers J H Walter donated his services to the Festival to sell the participants' work, raising more than £50,000.



Above right. Prizes of tools for the winners were donated and presented by Craig Timmins of British tool maker G Gibson & Co. Craig is pictured here (left) presenting the prize to Alex Wenham.

Below. Each day of the event more than 3,000 visitors called in to watch the carvers at work.



Thomas Webster's Anvil, an apprentice class entrant, raised most money at the auction – it sold for £2,600.



Below. Niki Kerridge's Honey Bee in Blaxter sandstone. Niki said: "The honey bee is symbolic of co-operation – a communal effort between the glazing, lead work and stone masons' department of Lincoln Cathedral."



Above. A bookend Pig in Ancaster Hard White by Nina Bilbey, Senior Lecturer in Stonecarving at the City & Guilds of London Art School, who did the front end, and self-employed mason Bobbie Fennick.

Below. The sponsors who helped make it possible.



John Swift's Horse in Ancaster Hard White.



Jennifer Fisherkeller's work in Swinton sandstone.