



a reflective craftsman



SUMMER 2009 ISSUE 5 NEWSLETTER FOR DR. THOMAS HAWSON DESIGNER/MAKER/ARTIST

MY DREAM WORKSHOP

ALMOST

The mill workshop renovation and building project is proving to be a big job, and due mostly to distractions it is taking longer than expected. Completion is now planned four months later in January 2010, not far off schedule for a two and a half year project. The machines are now positioned in the layout they hope to finally rest and a central dust extraction system has been installed. The first project to go through this fully operational set of machines are the windows and doors that will protect them from the elements, at the moment only plastic sheets provide for protection.

I have made a commitment to finish the workshop project without accepting any further outside work until it is complete. When the workshop is complete I will host an opening party and exhibition to promote the furniture making business. Over the years to come I also hope to develop a series of short art and design related courses, with guest artists and myself as the course leaders.



Mill workshop veiw.



Mill barn workshop veiw.

FREYJA RENE HAWSON



Freyja at her workbench experimenting with wire, aged 1 year 9 months. Fergus (freyja's brother) mitre sawing at 4 years in the background.

Freyja Rene Hawson was born at Hundalee Mill Farm, on the 10 September 2007. Jenny (my wife) had a little girl we nick-named squirt, now more than one and half years on Freyja has proved to have quite an impact on everything, foolishly I thought the second child would be easier than the first. Life is wonderful! At what age do you think children should start experimenting in the workshop?



Fergus spoke shaving new shaft for his rake at 3 years.

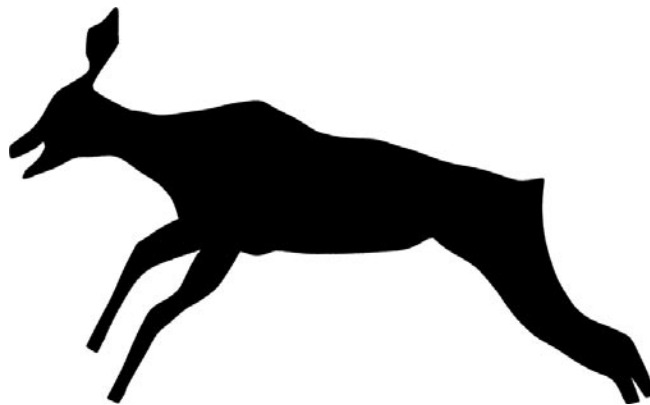
ART OF THE HUNTER

Last summer I put aside 2 months to make art, as a break from all the building work. This effort was encouraged by the artist's Charles Poulsen and Pauline Burbridge (who arduously built their own studios). They asked me to join them as the 'invited artist' at their 2008 open studio exhibition at Allanton in the Scottish Borders.

As a starting point I considered my outdoor recreation interests of deer stalking and kayaking. From my experience there appears to be a disparity between rural and urban perspectives on hunting for food. Although I consider the humane culling of wild deer for food perfectly normal, not everybody does. Not wanting to try and provide a argument legitimising my case, I simply set out to make art to express my will to hunt, and the empathy and sympathy this brings towards my prey and the environment. It was hoped that the work would convey to non-believers of hunting for food, something they may have not yet considered.

The kayak is the Inuit seal hunters Arctic Ocean craft made from the few materials found in that harsh wilderness. It is also an inspiration to many historic explorers and the modern day recreational kayaker. Most modern sea kayakers are aware of the hunting origins of the craft, but now it is their means to get close to a wild and mostly natural environment from which we can draw inspiration and experience a contrast with every day life. As a committee member of Visual Arts Scotland I was encouraged by fellow members to put my kayak forward for selection. To my surprise the kayak was chosen by the selection panel as an artful craft worthy of display for the Visual Arts Scotland Annual Show at the Royal Scottish Academy 2008.

To empathise with my prey I made a deer dance costume from wood, deer blood, deer skin and natural pigments, all sourced by myself locally. I have so far performed the deer dance at St Boswells Primary School, Jedburgh Festival 2008, Pauline Burbridge and Charles Poulsen's open studio and this year for the Visual Arts Scotland Annual Show at the City Arts Centre, Edinburgh. Why do I humiliate and embarrass myself in such a way, you might ask? The answer is that I love deer.



My cave painting, wall montage.



Tom in 'Deer Dance' costume.



Kayak during selection at RSA, Edinburgh.



Tom's kayak.



Inside the kayak.

make
your
own

SKIN-ON-FRAME KAYAK

The exhibiting of the skin-on-frame Greenland kayak raised a lot of interest. People asked if it was for sale but unfortunately I was reluctant to sell the kayak because it was made to measure and I had not yet proved its sea worthiness. I made the Inuit kayak replica not only as a form of artful expression but also as a means to try out the idea of providing courses for clients to make one for themselves. To date there has been requests for more information regarding such a course. Such a kayak is made to measure and many people in the UK have made them to develop their Greenland rolling skills and to extend their recreational paddling experience. However not everyone has the confidence, space or means to make one of these boats in a little over a week and I hope to be able to facilitate that dream for others sometime next year. So if you or anyone you know

may be interested in such an opportunity as a week long holiday in the Scottish Borders let me know and I will put you on the 'to-be-kept-informed' list.

Through membership of the Lothian Sea Kayak Club I am undergoing training and going on day trips with them. Before I will host a course I hope to be able to prove the sea worthiness of a skin-on-frame kayak to LSKC members and myself. Sea kayaking is, it should be said, a dangerous sport, appropriate training and experienced company being the minimum requirement before going on the sea. My first sea exploration trip was in July 2006 round the Summer Isles on the West Coast of Scotland organized by the John Muir Trust and Myles Farnbank, an experienced sea kayak guide and outdoor educator. Myles shared my interest in

wanting to build a skin-on-frame kayak and readily accepted an invitation to join me in building one of his own. So in January 2008, at minus 9 deg. C. in my workshop, Myles became kayaking knowledge provider and guinea pig to my woodwork instruction and we each made a kayak. During this first attempt at building a kayak and practicing the idea of hosting a course a lot was learnt. In the event that such a course goes ahead it is planned that an experienced kayaker, be it Myles or another, will be at hand to assist me by filling in the gaps of my experience, and help make the course an enjoyable and rewarding one for all.



Myles Farnbank considers his first steam bending moves.

JENNY'S POTTERY STUDIO

As I write this Jenny is hard at work developing her pottery, ordering glaze for her first glaze firing with her new kiln. At the early stages of setup Jenny is sharing my uncompleted workshop. However there are plans to make one of the outbuildings into Jenny's very own private pottery studio. Watch this space, perhaps by the time of the workshops grand opening, some of jenny's rare and exclusive pottery will be on display and for sale.....!!!???



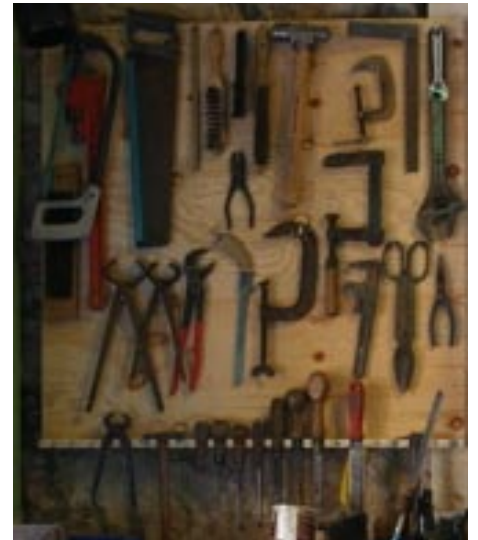
Jenny showing off her work in progress.



Jenny's pots.

GUEST WORKBENCH

In the half built workshop James Wyness a local musician, composer and extraordinary-musical-instrument maker has struck a deal with me. James is building a guest workbench and restoring some of my late uncle Michael's treasure chest of hand tools, so that he and other future guests to the workshop have somewhere to create their dreams. The guest workbench, hand tools and basic accommodation will be offered to visiting artists who would like to participate in a short residency, and annual open studio exhibition. If you are interested in such a residency in the rural ambiance of Hundalee Mill Farm for a few weeks next summer, apply now for consideration.



James' tool rack



Hundalee Mill Farm.



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