



The Edgehog

Issue 1 - 2016

www.kgsa.co.za

May 2016



Photography: Dirk Loots

Makiti Folder made by Bertie Rietveld

Blade - coloured Dragonskin Damascus

Bolsters - Coloured Meteorite

Handle - Mammoth Ivory

Photo by Dirk Loots

Knifemakers Guild of SA — Annual Knife Show

Open to the public : 19 August 3pm - 7pm

: 20 August 10am - 3pm

@ Mosaiëk Lifestyle Centre, Danielle Street, Fairlands, JHB

Save the date:

August 6 2016

You are invited to

Herbst Knifemaking Academy for the launch of the new design for the 2017 Non-Guild member Competition.

Starts at 11am — free entry to the event

Gawie will give the outline of the competition and the wonderful prizes to be won.

Carel will give a talk on the Knifemakers Guild

Bertie will show you the new design to be made for the competition and will have the knife on display and he will give you a few pointers on making the knife and answer questions.

To donate a prize for the 2017 non-Guild member competition : contact thinus@herbst.co.za

Cutting Competition

The Randburg Knife Club is running a cutting competition at the launch of the Non Guild Knife Competition.

The blade specs are:

Overall Length: 375mm max

Blade width: 50mm maximum

Blade length: 250mm max

You must know the blade steel, heat treatment and handle construction to compete.

The knife must have a lanyard hole and lanyard. The outer rim of the lanyard holes must be rounded to avoid the lanyard holes cutting the lanyard. The lanyard must be fixed to the wrist.

The blade may not have any holes in the cutting length of the blade or any weights on the blade itself.

All knives need to be approved by the officials before the competitor is allowed to enter the competition.

Hidden tang knives may be used but the heat treatment of the blade and tang must be disclosed by the competitor.

All knives must be tested by the competitor in the wood chopping exercise before being allowed to compete.

Production knives are not allowed in the competition due to the fact that their design and heat treatment are not known.

The knife must have a finger guard or design that prevents your fingers slipping onto the cutting edge of the blade.

The competition will consist of the following stages

Wood chop: Chop through 38mm by 114mm construction grade pine beam twice.

Rope cut: Cut through a 20mm and 30mm thick sisal rope.

Water bottle cut: Slice through 10 300ml water bottles.

Tennis ball and golf ball cut: Chop through a moving tennis ball and golf ball.

water bottle slice: Slice through a 300ml waterbottle from top to bottom.

Apple can: Slice through an apple and soda can.

Foam Tube: Slice through a foam tube.

Dowel chop: Chop through a 19mm dowel stick.

If you are interested in competing, please PM Alan Mitchell on the Randburg Knife Club Facebook page.

You need to pre-register as you cannot sign up to compete on the day of the competition.

There is a R150 fee per competitor to cover the event costs.

The order of the stages will be provided on the day of the competition.

Judging will be time based and unsuccessful attempts will earn time penalties.

Great prizes to be won !!

First prize: Shaya Forge Damascus billet donated by Bertie Rietveld

Second prize: Ultimate Platen donated by the Herbst.

Third prize: Knife photograph by Dirk Loots

CHAIRMAN

CAREL SMITH

VICE- CHAIRMAN:

WILLIE VENTER

Chairman's Chat

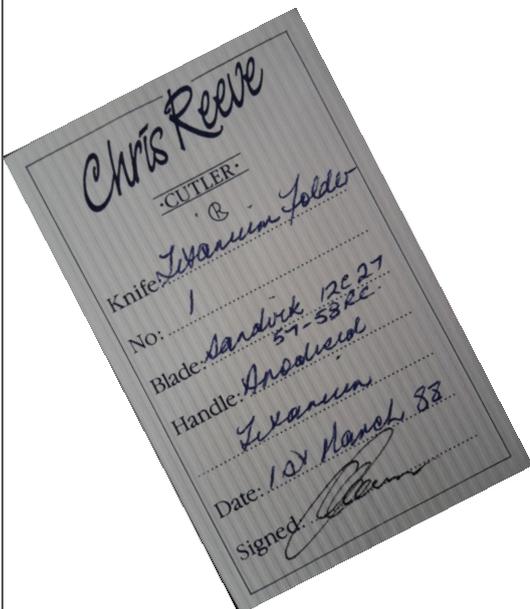
Our Chairman, Carel Smith has taken a bit of sick leave to recover after surgery. He's doing well and if you'd like to send him a get well soon message please use the contact details above.

So we asked Willie Venter, our Vice Chairman to send us something for this column and he was delighted to send information and photo's of knives in his collection.

A bit of background.....

Knifemakers number their knives for different reasons, some do it to keep record of how many knives they make during their knifemaking career and some do it to keep record of each particular model they make, regards to steel type, handle material etc. But record keeping aside, for collectors it is very special to have knife no.1 of a particular model in their collection. And Willie has just such a knife made by a Guild member that has gone on to great heights, Chris Reeve.

Last year at Blade Show, Chris was inducted into the Cutlery Hall of Fame, where he rubs shoulders with other knifemaking greats such as Ron Lake, Bob Loveless, Michael Walker, Bo Randall and others

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Reflections:

The Titanium Folder and Beyond

Chris Reeve made his first knife in 1975, a knife filed entirely by hand. Chris apprenticed, then worked, as a Tool and Die Maker so his natural inclination was towards methods which could facilitate the production of a greater quantity of knives, without sacrificing quality in any way. That first knife laid the foundation of what would become a world renowned knife manufacturing business that would relocate half way around the world from his native Durban, South Africa.

In January 1984, Chris turned to making knives full time, by which stage his One Piece Range of fixed blade knives was already gaining popularity. Most of the small production was sold in South Africa but during the course of the following year, knives were exported to a distributor in the United States. During these years, Chris focused on production methods for the One Piece Range but he also made purely custom, handmade knives. The Liner Lock folding knife was popular but his design thoughts began to concentrate on a knife that was simpler, with no extraneous parts, a folding version of a One Piece knife.

And so the Titanium Folder came into being. By removing the liner/bolster/handle slab combination of the Liner Lock and having only a solid titanium front and back handle slab with a lock cut into the back, Chris designed a concept that would spearhead the future of folding knives. Titanium Folder #1 and #2 were sold to good friend and collector Willie Venter in March 1988. Photographs of Folder #1 are attached to these Reflections; regrettably Folder #2 went missing somewhere between Boise, Idaho and South Africa after it had been sent into Chris Reeve Knives for service. Our records indicate the 38 Titanium Folders were made prior to the Reeve's emigration from South Africa to the United States in 1989. All of these were made by hand with no use of production equipment.

The "Titanium Folder" was renamed "Sebenza" (the Zulu word for "work") in 1990. Features of the Sebenza have developed, changed, improved over the years but it is consistently considered the yardstick against which other knives in the industry are measured. In 1991, Chris Reeve Knives purchased a CNC Machining Center and gradually the Sebenza transitioned from a purely handmade knife into a production knife. The Sebenza is appreciated worldwide for the simplicity of its design, the quality of its materials, its strength/weight ratio and the very close tolerances to which it is manufactured. All of these factors combine in a high performance folding knife that is used and collected by a loyal group of customers.

ANNE REEVE

September 30, 2015



Knife adjudication for Guild membership by Blade

- Albie Wantenaar

I received a call from Andre Lesch asking me if they could personally bring a new applicant's knives for Adjudication and that they would come through and hand deliver the five knives after work that evening . I eagerly awaited the two gents to arrive as this would be my "first Adjudication" since being newly appointed to the Guild Adjudication Team , little did I know that this would be an event that would go down in the Knifemakers Guild history books !!!

Early that evening Andre Lesch and Theo Lyon arrived , for security reasons they parked in my courtyard at the back. Most knifemakers want to visit the "man cave" so on the way through the house to the workshop we put the shoebox with its contents on the dining room table and went to the Workshop.

We had a good old chit chat in the "Man Cave" oblivious of the events that were taking place in the dining room !!!

My Bullterrier "Blade" had other ideas , this foreign thing on the dining room table had something inside that didn't belong - and he chose to investigate!!

Anyone that knows bullterriers, knows that they have one mission in life - seek and destroy anything and everything their jaws can get hold of !! Blade's not content until it's destroyed . We soon learnt to bully proof most items like the TV remotes , pillows , shoes , feather dusters , brooms, plastic buckets etc . Put them out of reach so that Mr "Blade" can't reach them , (can't get it, can't stuff it up !!)

About an hour later we emerged from the workshop only to find the lawn littered with lovely yellow dusters and an empty shoe box !! I knew immediately what had happened, Mr "Blade" had decided to do his own quality check on Theo's Guild entry knives.

Oh no! What now ! These are the man's pride and joy , he has spent hours and hours to perfect these beautiful knives & sheaths and now my bullterrier has destroyed them. Damn it !! How do I explain this to the rest of the Adjudication Team .

While trying to apologise to Theo and Andre and offering to purchase the damaged knives, we picked up and assessed the damage. Only two knives had small teeth marks in the handles, but one sheath had been

horribly chewed up, Blade obviously wanted to test the quality of the leather and stitching!!



I checked if Blade had cut his mouth on any of the knives , luckily no damage to his mouth !!!



The next day the Adjudication Team got together John Arnold , Erich Vosloo and myself, I explained what had happened and the bite marks were overlooked, the five knives passed without hesitation not because of Blade's Adjudication, but because of the excellent mentorship of late Andre Lesch and the fine craftsmanship of Theo Lyon.



An Unusual knife

- Johan Geyser

During one of my work-related trips to China recently, I stumbled upon a curio shop in Beijing whilst waiting for a tour agency to open in order to book a trip to the Great Wall.

I entered to while away the time and saw these unusual knives. Unfortunately the owner could not speak any English but through a client in the shop, I learned that he referred to the items as 'fish knives'.

Another fellow then entered and told that it was actually a knife used to score the capsules of poppy blooms in the evening, so that the latex emanating from these cuts could be harvested/scraped off in the morning. These scrapings contain the opium latex which is then processed further to produce heroin, morphine and other opioid substances.

China has had a long history as a producer of opium and two wars were fought with the English concerning this trade.

The knives were roughly made as can be seen – basically a friction folder from what appears to be a mild steel with a fairly blunt cutting surface and a spike at one end.

I am unsure as to the purpose of these knives. The largest one seems just too large to have been used to score poppy pods, but who knows...

On the other hand, they could very well have been used on sailing vessels and may well have been "fish knives".

The owner considered them to be antiques and as his price was not right for me, I did not buy one.

Perhaps somebody can shed light on these interesting items? Please send your ideas to edgehog1@gmail.com and we'll publish them in the next issue for all to enjoy.



SA Knifemakers Book Project

Knifemaker Alan Mitchell and photographer Dirk Loots are taking on the task of putting together a book of ALL South African knife makers along with pictures of their knives.

Although this is a long term project, they would be very grateful for the support of the knife making community.

The project will involve Guild and Non Guild members and will showcase some of the excellent skills of the knifemaking community along with photos of the top end knives made in South Africa.

If they do contact you for more information on yourself and your knives, please assist them in any way you can.



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Achievement

Today I realised that my hubby, Bertie Rietveld has been making Damascus for 25 years !!

Before this there were many attempts but in 1991 the first usable Damascus was made.

I remember the search for steel and tools and a home built furnace. I remember the frustration of a delamination too. The scrap heap got higher and higher with all the attempts because Bertie is a perfectionist and won't quit until it is 100% correct.

In winter 1991, Bertie had success with making damascus,. He had no mentor, there were no courses and classes and no internet as yet, either. Everything he learnt and tried was a result of research in books and trial and error.

I remember the first ladder patterned piece that was used for the first dagger and it was stunning ! It turned heads at the Guild Show and everyone wanted to know where the steel came from and were surprised when he said that he had made it himself.

I'm proud to own a knife that was made using a piece of that first damascus billet—it's a miniature knife made into a brooch.

He had a flypress that used to "walk" through the workshop after each forging session. I'd come home and the flypress would be at the front door and after the next session she would be halfway down the workshop. Now he has a dedicated forging shop with 2 large hammers that are well fixed to cement foundations and plenty other tools to work hot steel.

Since 1991 he has made a lots of damascus steel and experimented with steels and patterns and has also made it available to other knifemakers to use and enjoy.

As I pack the car with more parcels of steel on their way to international knifemakers, I can't help but feel proud of this achievement.

Congratulations Bertie and Shaya Forge Damascus.

Melinda Rietveld



Meet The Bush Princes

They are in the classic shape of the Bush King but are not miniatures but rather 2:1 scale renditions.

Made by Piet Grey



Ignorance and Spare Time

- Andre' Erasmus

It was only a few years ago that I spent a lazy Sunday afternoon browsing the internet, looking at hunting rifles, knives, daggers and such. Following a link posted by some knife maker, I ended up on a well known SA knife making website. Pictures of some very good looking knife blades and handle materials rudely yanked out of my semi-conscious browsing. Basic cigarette box maths revealed that it must be very cheap to make a knife, as the parts prices were very reasonable compared to what I paid for my few handmade knives. After all how difficult could it be? Really?

A few blades, wooden blocks and even pinning rods were promptly ordered. The parcel arrived a few days later and was quickly unpacked. That's when the trouble started. Here I was, with none, zero, nothing, zilch know-how about knife making, staring at 2 perfectly shaped blades. Well, Google is your friend and YouTube quickly showed me that the blades must be heat treated in a forge. No, I didn't have a clue about the heat treating regimes required for stainless steels and back then haven't even heard about digitally controlled kilns.

Now remember, all of this is happening in Klerksdorp, where we have ample supplies of large mining equipment, farming supplies, meat, bread, milk and brandy; lots of brandy. (No we don't eat veggies down here, that's what pork is for.) The rest all have to be imported from the metropolis named after our garden engineer, Johannes.

Our friendly local pharmacist, oom Pille, agreed to find some Plaster of Paris, which arrived about a week later. My mini forge was made by mixing the Plaster of Paris with sand from the pool's sand filter and a little water and smearing the insides of a paint can. Now I remember why the pool's filter doesn't work so well anymore. Anyhow, this contraption was left to dry for a few days and was then connected to a LP gas torch.

The picture with different colours of heated steel didn't help at all in the bright Northwest sun, but I heard somewhere that the blade must be heated until non-magnetic and then quenched in oil. So I grabbed a bucket of used engine oil, scaled the prized fridge magnet that the wife bought on our last holiday and got to work. Well let me tell you, stainless steel melts the cheap curio magnets long before the blade gets to being non-magnetic, so I just gave it everything and heated those blades as much as I could, before dumping them in the oil can.

The smoke coming out of those few litres of oil must have been visible for miles, but thank goodness nothing caught on fire. A few fire engines came screaming past after about half an hour, but the oil was not smoking (much) anymore by then. We did not have any bugs in the backyard for almost a year after that.

I know nothing about heat treating or tempering steel, but wasted quite a few good quality drill bits in trying to drill holes through the blade handles. So I assumed that the blades must have hardened. Then it was time for shaping the blades to a cutting edge. Filing the blades had very little impact and the angle grinder was close by, so that became my weapon of choice. After hours and days of grinding, I eventually had a rough blade that I could stick some wooden handles to. Two new hardware stores opened in that time, both selling various types and styles of grinder blades in bulk at a discount. That the knife blades probably overheated hundreds of times, wasn't that important anymore.

So after weeks of hard work, I ended up with something that looked almost like a tool that would have been made by Neanderthal man with a rock. Sure it was ugly and couldn't cut anything, but it was my creation and I absolutely loved it. It was fairly obvious by then, that some serious skills are required for this job. Relations at home was starting to show signs of strain about the disappearance of Swambo's (She Who Always Must Be Obeyed) dishwashing liquid and dishcloths which magically made their way over to the workshop. Knife making is a dirty job and requires only the best cleaning materials!

The problem was that the bug bit and it bit hard! I started reading anything vaguely knife related, studied YouTube videos and just had to find out how to properly make those gorgeous knives we see on photos every day. Fortunately I found a kind and very, very patient gentleman knife maker that taught me about some of the basic techniques and machines. This course unlocked some of the mysteries of knife making, but also raised my awareness as to how little I actually know.

So readers beware this bug is extremely dangerous, it removes your spare time and cash like dishwashing soap removes metal dust from a workbench. It makes you use your holiday savings on machines, steel, sandpaper and pretty blocks of wood. It lets you spend your weekends at knife shows, selling your latest creations to get cash to buy more materials and machines. There is no cure known to man and the smile on the face of a knife collector, as he opens the box containing his newly crafted knife, only adds fuel to that fire.

How did you start making knives ? How did you start collecting knives?

Send your stories to edgehog1@gmail.com now

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Heavin on tour

- Heather Harvey

On our recent trip to demonstrate at the Cape Knife Club, we included a “shop-tour”. Besides needing to deliver a knife in Knysna to a client, we visited with Peter and Joyce Steyn in Welkom, Des and Lynda Horn in Onrus near Hermanus, Ettore Gianferrari and Hilton and Loretta Purvis of Constantia. Our past student, Stan Hohowsky, was our host for the weekend while we presented a two-day class on Bladesmithing for the club.

The club utilises the model engineers club house and it was filled with lots of keen knifemakers. It was nice to present to a group of knifemakers who were largely unexposed to forging. Most of the bladesmith activities and demonstrations take place in Gauteng and the Capetonians miss out. The full program consisted of forging, flat grinding, differential heat treatment, convex cutting edge geometry, Bladesmiths metallurgy and intro to Damascus slide show, a discussion of stabilizing handle materials and spark testing was also included. As you can imagine, our bakkie was loaded to the brim with anvils, hammers, oil stones etc. Although being a lot of work we really enjoyed our time in the Cape and hope to see more guys forging down there in the near future.

Things that remain memorable about our shop-tour include Des’ wonderful sea view from his workbench, Peter Steyn – the most organised shelving system for all those loose goodies, Stan’s ability to cram in so much equipment into his town-house garage. Ettore wowed us again with his amazing Damascus billets and daggers. Hilton gladly shared some Photoshop hints and tips and gave valuable information for our Addo Elephant National Park stop over on the way home. He and Loretta are regulars to the park and know all the ins and outs. We fitted in so much in our few days away from home – the time flew by. Thanks to the Cape Knife Club for inviting us to share what we love with them.



Panto Peter Steyn



Ettore, Loretta, Heather, Hilton and Kevin



Kevin, Heather and Des



Kevin, Heather and Stan



Knife Photography by

Dirk Loots

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Dirk is the official photographer for the 2016 Guild Show..

He will be there on 19 August to take photos of your lovely knives made by our members and the Show Competition category winners.

10 Things not to say to a knifemaker at a Show....

10. I'll just get my friend to make me one of those.
9. You know what you should make....
8. Do I get a discount if I buy two?
7. I can make that myself
6. Why does it cost so much ?
5. How do you make this?
4. Will you donate to our event? We can't pay you, but it will be great exposure.
3. My nine-year-old-makes this kind of stuff too.
2. Kids, this is what happens if you don't go to varsity.
1. I can buy that at the flea market for R100

What's the funniest thing you've heard / seen / experienced at a Knife Show ?

Send it to edgehog1@gmail.com now :)

Edgehog

Any knife-worthy articles, news, club news, knife pics...

Please send for publication :

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Good news for South African Bladesmiths!

At a Knifemakers' Guild of Southern Africa committee meeting, it was decided that Guild member, Stuart Smith (Johannesburg), is now also authorised to conduct the performance test (cut and bend test) for entry into the guild with forged knives. Kevin and Heather Harvey (Belfast, Mpumalanga) are the other two authorised testers.

Note, this is only for the performance test and that the four completed knives, along with the performance test knife go to John Arnold and the adjudication committee for the rest of the evaluation. Knives can be sent to any of the testers for testing if you live far away. For any further information please contact us or Stuart Smith.

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When I see lovers' names carved into a tree I don't think it's cute, I just think it's strange how many people take knives on a date.

Knifemakers Guild Book

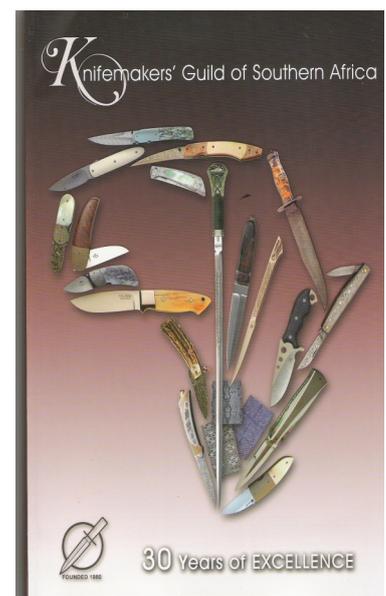
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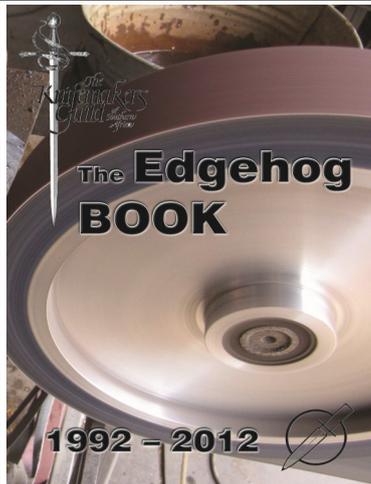
Contact

Melinda 071 303 5259 edgehog1@gmail.com



Meet the members of the Knifemakers Guild and see beautiful photo's of their knives.

Read the history of the Knifemakers Guild of SA. Established in 1980.



The Edgehog Book

The book costs **R 280.00 softcover + courier fee**

To purchase:

Contact

Melinda 071 303 5259 edgehog1@gmail.com

The Edgehog book contains articles written for Edgehog newsletter between 1992 and 2012.

The articles are written by the knifemakers about their personal experiences with knifemaking in South Africa. There are plenty of workshop articles and tips n hints.

When buying from an artist/maker, you're buying more than just an object/painting. You are buying hundreds of hours of failures and experimentation. You are buying days, weeks & months of frustration and moments of pure joy. **YOU AREN'T JUST BUYING A THING,** you're buying a piece of heart, part of a soul, a moment of someone's life. Most importantly, you're buying the artist more time to do something they are passionate about.

The last word:

The only adequate preparation for tomorrow is the right use of today