

Alice Buttress leads the carvers into the arena at the start of Carve Carrbridge 2018.



**Results - Carve Carrbridge 2018**

1. £500 and a Stihl chainsaw - Michael Tamoszus
2. £400 - Peter Bowsher
3. £250 - Martin Kalman

Best New Entrant: £200 - Martin Kalman  
 People's Choice: £200 - Michael Tamoszus  
 Carvers' Choice: Michael Tamoszus



Michael Tamoszus brandishing the Carve Claymore next to his carve Girl in the Wind.

# Clean Sweep at Carve 2018

**GERMAN CARVER MICHAEL TAMOSZUS FOLLOWED UP HIS NUMBER ONE FINISH AT THE RECENT ENGLISH OPEN CARVING COMPETITION BY ACHIEVING A CLEAN SWEEP OF ALL THE TOP PRIZES AT THIS YEAR'S CARVE CARRBRIDGE. JAMES HENDRIE WAS AT THE EVENT.**

**M**ICHAEL, who hails from Herrenberg, on the edge of the Black Forest, took the prizes for First Place, People's Choice, and Carvers' Choice, with his stunning carve 'Girl in the Wind'. It was a popular result with the 3,500 strong crowd and his fellow carvers. If the football World Cup failed to bring silverware for Germany then Michael's hat trick of success literally had him running rings around the opposition, to borrow a football expression. To continue with the football theme Michael's first half of carving in the competition saw him enter the break with a half-time lead, he drove home his superiority in the second half and delivered the winning goal with a finished carve that quite uniquely captured the 'movement' in his carve. Michael certainly got silverware in the form of the famous Carve Claymore sword, as well as a Stihl chainsaw and

£900 of prize money for scooping the three awards. Carve favourite (he wouldn't thank me for saying veteran!), Pete Bowsher was runner-up, and first-time Carve Carrbridge carver Martin Kalman from Slovakia came in third place. Martin also picked up the Best New Entrant award. Michael himself won the new entrant award in 2009, so watch out to see if Martin can emulate Michael's success at future Carve Carrbridge events! This year's event was the 16th Carve Carrbridge and the 4th that I have covered for essentialARB. As I drove up the A9, through the rain, on Saturday 1st September I was wondering if the event might be hampered by the weather. However, once I got to Carrbridge the weather was dry, and if not sunny was certainly calm, and rain-free. Carve 2014 had been affected by rain but the carvers just did their thing under the cover of makeshift gazebos!



John Hayes' main carve was inspired by watching a YouTube video on Carve Carrbridge.

Martin Kalman picked up the Best New Entrant and 3rd place overall in the competition.

Martin Kalman's carve 'Horse Family'.



BSW was one of the main sponsors and suppliers of the logs to be carved on the day. Dave Mills, the mill manager of BSW Boat of Garten sawmill, confirmed that unlike last year the logs were Douglas fir and not Sitka spruce. He reckoned that these were "bigger logs, that would be harder to carve, but that the end carves would be of a better finish." This was almost immediately confirmed when I caught up with nine-time Carve entrant Jonny Stableford. He told me that it was his first time carving with Douglas fir and that he didn't think it would be "As stringy as the usual Sitka logs." He also said that the chat amongst the carvers was that it would be harder to carve than Sitka. "Pete Bowsher is of this opinion," said Jonny, laughing, though confessing that he was not quite sure if that was a bit of 'pre-



Pete Bowsher, who was runner-up, working on his carve Bezerker.

competition gamesmanship' on the part of Chainsaw Pete or if he was being serious! Catching up with Stephen Blair who, as well as being part of the 'village' team that pulls Carve Carrbridge together, is also a local arboricultural contractor, he too confirmed that carving with Douglas fir would present different challenges. "I have found the logs bigger and harder to lift as I have used my machinery to set up the logs for the carvers in the arena. I think it might be more brittle and the carvings might not be as intricate but the end carve and finish will be much better." Watching the carvers in the ring prior to the start of the competition is always fascinating as each of them goes through certain rituals and preparation techniques to get ready. I watched Tom Harris-Ward, runner-up in 2015, meticulously start up and run each of his chainsaws. He then went to his toolbox to check everything was there and to hand. After he had finished I asked him if what I had watched was routine for him. He told me, "I like to have the saws warmed up and I know that they will be ready to use when I need them. It's just something that I do to make sure that I am as ready as I can

be to carve from the off." On the subject of carving with Douglas fir, he said he was used to carving with it and that he was quite content, but it is a harder wood to carve and would take longer to get through. Tom also gave me an insight into what to look for in a carve, telling me to look out for the 'negative space'. He explained that this was what you take away from the log to leave a finished carve. It's the space that you leave or openings in the carve that help to define the carve's actual shape and form. As last year's winner Raimondas Uzdravis was not back to defend his title it fell to local carver and this year's only female carver, Alice Buttress, to lead the carvers into the ring to get the event started. MC Graham Allsop got the carvers off promptly at 10.30 am to start their first two hours' work on their main carves. The field of carvers for 2018 saw a mix of returning carvers and six new carvers, with the usual global mix of carvers from across the globe. As well as carvers from Britain, there were carvers from the Czech Republic, Eire, Canada, Slovakia, USA, and Germany. Wladek Ligocki, the winner in 2016, was back, along with Igor Kucera who he was described as 'being on tour with'. The first carver to the competition from South America was present, in the form of carver Arian Bois. Interestingly, last year Arian was part of a team that helped to carve the annual IceHotel in Sweden. From the pre-competition biogs it was clear that the carvers came from a variety of different backgrounds unrelated to carving and included an ex-police chief superintendent, ice carvers, a former opera singer and a carver who holds a Guinness World Record! Some of the carvers work full-time at it, while others combine carving with other forestry or arboricultural work. As always, the carvers were only allowed to use chainsaws and burners to enhance their carve, but no other power or hand tools to aid them. Doug Jeffery, one of the organisers, told me that once again this year was oversubscribed with carvers who wanted to take part. "We keep four places for new carvers each year and places for the competition are given to carvers by drawing lots from those who have registered to take part in the event. Those carvers that are left are placed on a reserve list in case there are any dropouts before the event." It soon became clear early on in the competition that the colours of the carves, because of the Douglas fir logs, were going to be quite special. Very early, the crowd and myself, could see the shapes of the carves emerging - a unicorn carve, a deer with antlers, and a number of benches in various shapes and sizes. There were also, as usual, some eagles and bears. Wladek Ligocki was using a small-scale model of a 'Braveheart' figurine to carve a life-size example.

As always happens at Carve Carrbridge the first couple of hours go really quickly; this year was no exception. Having a quick chat with some of the carvers at the lunchtime break, it became clear that the Douglas fir logs were proving harder to carve. Pete Bowsher and Tom Harris-Ward both told me they were running behind schedule and were not quite where they wanted to be at lunchtime.

While the other carvers had gone to lunch, new entrant John Hayes was still in the arena changing chains on his saws. He said he'd found it a tough first 15 minutes or so carving the logs, although he was delighted to be taking part at Carve Carrbridge. "This competition was the first carving event that I saw online and ever since that I have wanted to take part in it." As a tribute to the competition his carve was to be a representation of that online image - a figure holding the famous Carve Claymore along with the famous Carrbridge Old Packhorse Bridge.

I asked John about his Guinness World Record carve of a Viking sword back home in Ireland. "It was carved from a fallen Douglas fir tree that we managed to recover. I kept the root on it to show that it was a tree that had fallen naturally. The end carve is 23 metres long and it beat the previous 20-metre record for such a carve.

I just wanted to do a carve that was different and this one certainly is!"



Wladek Ligocki and his main Braveheart carve.



Inside the arena during Carve 2018.

Welsh carver and second-time entrant Garry Tutler said Carve Carrbridge was a 'quick competition'. Unlike a lot of the other carvers he had carved with Douglas fir before, although back home it was mostly oak and larch that he carved with. "The Douglas wood is great to carve with, you can get real detail into the carve." It was clear to see from Garry's carve of a series of bears on a tree with a beehive that this was true.

Over lunch, I caught up with one of the judges and some other members of the Carve organising team and the conversation turned to how important 'originality' was as a determiner for good carves.

Carves that stood out from the rest by not being 'run of the mill' stood a greater chance of attracting higher scores. We weren't to know at this stage that Michael Tamoszus's carve would fit the bill completely. James Ross has been a photographer at Carve Carrbridge over the years, and it was interesting to look back over some of the early competition carves and see just how the carvings have evolved and become more complex over the years.

For the afternoon session the weather brightened up and the crowds were regally entertained as the push went on with the carvers to complete their carves in the allotted four hour period. I noticed Roni MacDonald completed his unicorn carve with time to spare while others were carving right up until the final hooter went off!

I grabbed a quick word with Mike Burgess, who was a newcomer to Carve last year and the son of carver Tim

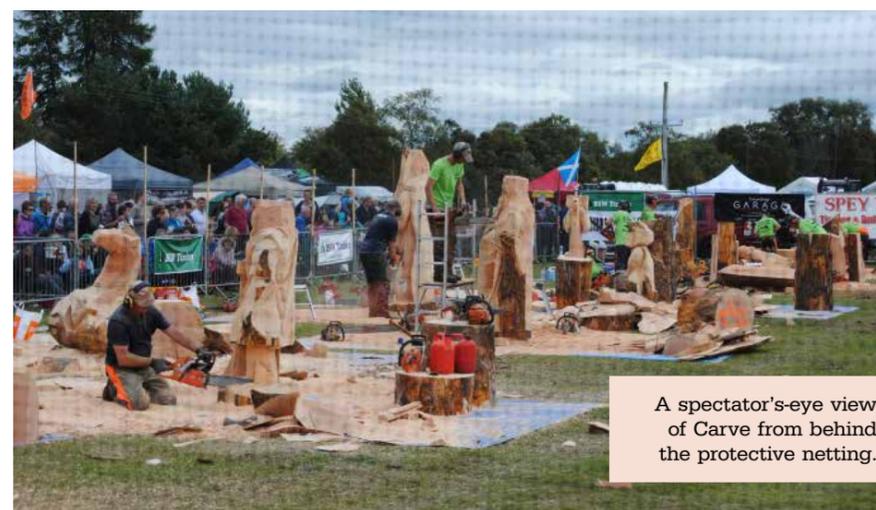
Burgess, whose carve of a knight last year saw him take the runners-up spot. He told me that he had enjoyed working with the Douglas fir logs, although they were bigger pieces of wood than last year. His end product was a nice looking bench, which was certainly worthy of his four hours of toil with his saws.

There is always a hive of activity in the half hour between the main carve and the quick carve competition that follows. Judges take time to carry out final checks on the end carves and mark scores while the carvers only have a short time to draw breath, check out their saws and start to get their smaller logs ready for the quick carve competition which allows them 30 minutes to produce a finished carve.

The crowds now really focus on the main arena rather than the various stalls that surround it as the quick carve allows a great chance to see carves of owls, eagles, rabbits and the odd Highland cow appear right before their eyes. They also know that the competition is reaching its climax and that the award ceremony and auction of the carves will follow, not to mention the grand raffle which this year had 26 prizes!

It was clear both inside the arena and outside with the main crowd, that Michael's carve was something quite special. It was no great surprise when he was announced as both the People's Choice as well as the Carvers' Choice. His success in these two parts of Carve ensured that, for the fourth year in a row, an overseas carver has been selected by fellow carvers as the Carvers' choice. Becoming the People's Choice, Michael stopped Pete Bowsher from taking that accolade for the third year in a row.

Martin Kalman was a popular winner of the Best New Entrant award with his 'Horse Family' carve and he became the second carver from Slovakia to take this award in the last four years. The climax



A spectator's-eye view of Carve from behind the protective netting.

of Carve came with the announcement of the main prizes and once more Martin was called up to receive the 3rd prize. He was extremely pleased with this and raised his hands to the crowd and waved with the broadest of smiles. Given that he used to be a member of an opera choir I wondered whether he might be tempted to burst out into song to celebrate his success!

Carve Carrbridge is synonymous with

Pete Bowsher and he continued his fine overall record by taking the runner's-up spot with his carve Bezerker. Pete has been in the top three positions for the last four years and has a stunning overall record having won Carve eight times. He has also in the past completed the clean sweep of prizes which Michael was to achieve at this year's carve. Michael's success was confirmed when he was

announced the overall winner of Carve 2018.

As always after the award of the prizes there was the auction of both the main carves, proceeds from which go to the carvers themselves, and the quick carves, where any monies raised stay with the village of Carrbridge. It is quite a sight to see a professional auctioneer on the back of a pickup truck taking the auction and drumming up interest from the crowd that stayed right to the end, curious to see just what the carves sell for.

A free delivery service of up to a 50-mile radius certainly helps to make people consider bidding. Some stay in the village itself, indeed Carrbridge has its own carvings trail with over 30 carves that visitors to the village can view by following a map provided by the Carrbridge Tourism & Business Association. After the auction the crowds began to leave, the stallholders packed up and the carvers headed to their traditional ceilidh for a night of entertainment after an intensive day. I headed back down the A9 knowing I would be returning next year to enjoy my fifth Carve Carrbridge.

Put it in your diary: Carve Carrbridge 2019 - Saturday 31st August 2019. [www.carvecarrbridge.com](http://www.carvecarrbridge.com)



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