



Stephen M Goldsmith FIPG forges links with "het Bossche Gilde van Goudsmeden"



I met René Van Tol Chairman of "het Bossche Gilde van Goudsmeden" at an "IPG" AGM at Goldsmiths Hall in London; I remember our first conversation well!

René wanted to know my secret and so did the Chairman of the IPG, how I am advertised all over the internet and could I do this for the IPG too!

The next time I met René was at an IPG Christmas party he also had members of his executive with him this time he called me over to chat to his friend's, as anyone who knows me understands I am passionate about polishing and the craft in general, as I try to tell everyone it's not all about me!

Everyone was agreeing with René that I am indeed a very good ambassador for my craft and René then asked me to visit Den Bosch and enthuse some of that passion on to his fellow craftsmen in his guild.

I took some persuading as I had never been to Europe to talk about what I am most passionate about. It so happened that The Design and Irish Craft Council asked me to run a master-class in the January at Kilkenny Castle, so I discovered what would be involved in running my "Road Show" and getting my polishing tools on an aeroplane.

I run short courses all over the UK and Europe now, as they are very popular, including, The Goldsmiths' Centre London, The School of Ireland Dublin, The Design and Irish Craft Council, The School of Jewellery in Birmingham, Jasso in Oxford and added VanTol & Breet Academy Den Bosch in the Netherlands to my list, I had suddenly become International as have had invites to Japan and Australia too!

So our trip to "s-Hertogenbosch" started very early one morning, our flight was booked for 6.30am from Stansted airport to Eindhoven and we were met by Johan and delivered to Van Tol and Breet in Den Bosch, where René and his wife Beverly were eagerly waiting for us to arrive, Johan offered to give us a guided tour later and he said until this afternoon!

My visit was matched up with the Gilds half yearly meeting conducted in Dutch but I got the gist of it very animated and debates taking place, I was one of the two "cabaret acts" to follow later.

Suddenly the time was upon me, I had to sing for my supper!



Never had such a setup before it was so well organised with 2 polishing machines and an ultrasonic, there was a cam to concentrate on what I was going to polish and a large screen for the audience to see the action, I was given a microphone, a projector linked to a laptop to show my PowerPoint presentation.

I had an audience of 65 including various dignitaries such as the Deputy Mayor of Den Bosch eagerly waiting to hear the words of the polishing guru from the IPG.

I was actually the warm up act for renowned Dutch Silversmith Jan van Nouhuys.

My first act was called "A legend in my own lunch break!" I use the PowerPoint presentation to tell the story of my 43 years in the trade and I include humorous stories and photos, its light entertainment and it was created because I have a lot to do with various students and thought they might like to know what it was like when I started in the trade over 40 years ago.

This went down very well to thunderous applause!

So then Jan van Nouhuys comes on he gave a lecture entitled "Skill /craft is the continuous in the Art " which was in Dutch but Jan had offered to speak in English but the chairman/board decided it cannot go all my way. There were plenty of photos accompanying his lecture so my wife and I had some idea; he was well received as Jan is indeed a real legend in the Netherlands.



There was an intermission with plenty to drink and eat; those Dutch open sandwiches are to die for.



The third act was well choreographed, I knew ahead that I was going to polish the Mayor's Chain of Office and also knew that René was going to try and convince the Deputy Mayor to have a new chain of office made for 2016. So the microphone was taken away from me while I started polishing as everyone could watch on the big screen my every move while René tried to convince the Deputy Mayor, it was very amusing, as I thought it would be best not to polish the whole chain and just the big medal, as I am well trained in the art of selling and it was not in René interest for me to make it look brand new. I cleaned his medal in the ultrasonic provided and presented the chain of office to the Deputy Mayor and he said, he did not need a new one now, I answered sorry I could not restore it in the time and everyone laughed, not so sure if he was that impressed!

Then I had a question and answer session. I must say there was lots of questions but there was one man who made flutes and he wanted to know how I would polish one, so I went up to him and dragged him on stage with me and sat him down and used his hands like a puppet to polish his flute, I always use this technique to explain the pressure needed, I think he understood the necessary pressure and the movement needed.



Some people came on stage and watched me polish a silver coffee pot and there were lots of photographs taken of me polishing with my tools.

Once my demonstration was over René presented me with a book about Hieronymus Bosch the artist whose 500th anniversary was in 2016.

Again there was great applause and my wife looked very proud as she had never seen me perform before.



I was asked to autograph the polishing machine I had used so I am indeed famous somewhere in the Netherlands!

I was then interviewed by a journalist and photos were taken and I appeared in the local newspaper the following day.

“The Guru comes to s-Hertogenbosch! “

VanTol & Breet Academy was born and I was the opening act.

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