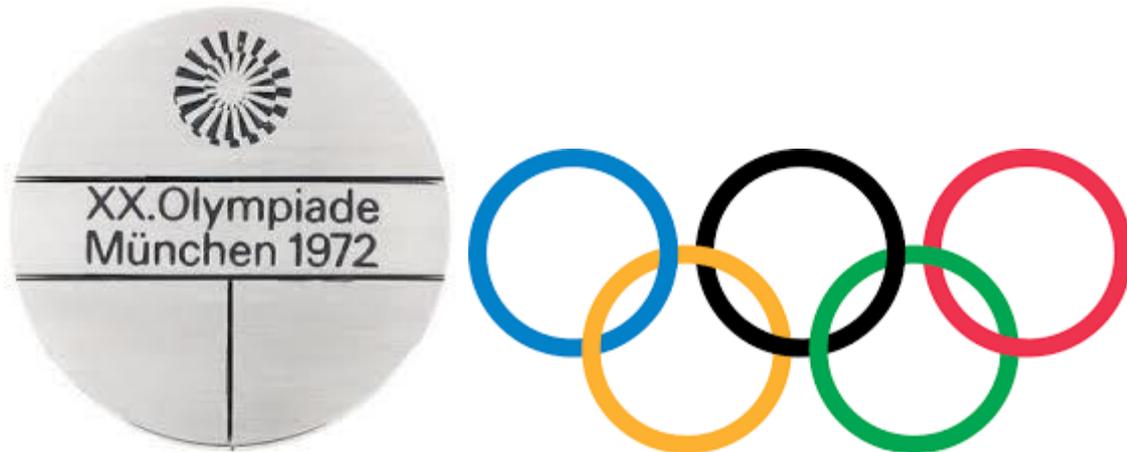


# TALES OF THE RIVERMAN 114



This week is the anniversary of the Munich Olympic Games. Being a sport enthusiast, and with friends competing in the rowing in the Games, I was glued to the television. A shockwave reverberated around the world when members of the Israeli team were taken hostage and subsequently killed. I was highly honoured when I was asked if I could make a sculpture in memory of these athletes, for the Glasgow Maccabi.



I wrote the following for the presentation in Giffnock, Glasgow.

“1972, I am six years out of art school, and teach art in a Glasgow school. I do a lot of rowing and sculling, my favourite sport. Rowing, Art, and helping my father with his prevention rescue and recovery work, on the river, have taken over my life. I make sculptures for restaurants, firms and private collectors, spending other leisure time, sculling at races all over the British Isles, and sometimes Europe.

If lightweight rowing had been in the Olympics at that time---I might have been competing at Munich.

However, I was in Glasgow, training in the morning, teaching at school during the day, in the evening training again, helping on the river, then watching bits of the Olympics on the television at night, usually only just getting home in time to see the results.

We all know what happened at roughly 0430hrs on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 1972

I well remember the shock, the disbelief, the horror of fellow sports fanatics having their lives caught short, in the spring of their Youth. I watched with the rest of the civilised world as nearly 90 thousand spectators and athletes attended a memorial service at the Olympic Village



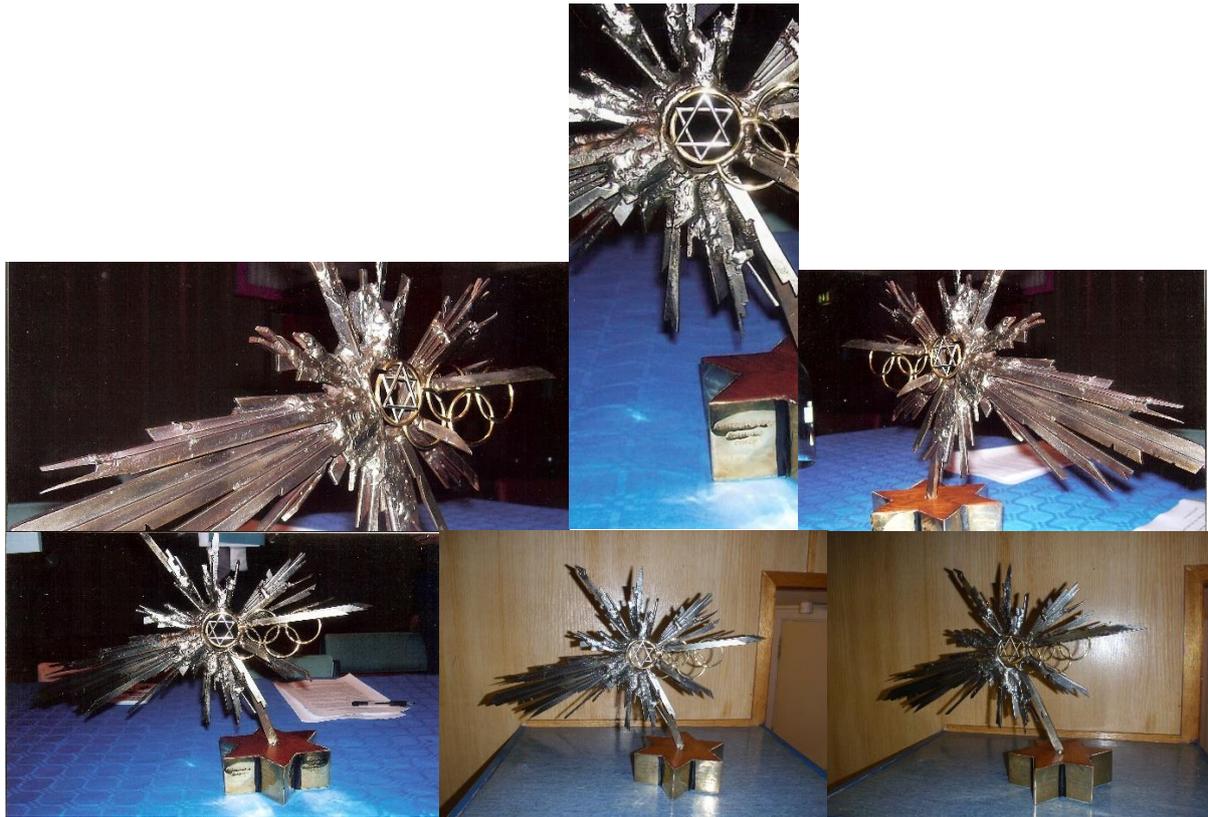
When approached by Tony Faber (a Glasgow jeweller and friend) and offered the honour of making a memorial. I jumped at the chance.

Making a sculpture for sport was perfect for me and the idea of the explosion lent itself to my style of work

As the image grew along with the five Olympic rings, four whole and one broken containing the Star of David, I was able to almost forget the horror of the event and lose myself in the enjoyment of the sculpture



Then my father got involved making the base for the sculpture. He used a piece of wood from one of his old lifeboats, cutting the Star shape carefully from this lovely piece of old red timber.



I must admit to feeling a shiver going down my spine when we realised that the 12 sides of the Star gave a side for each of the names of the athletes and coaches, plus one side for the presentation name. The base, the plinth, lovingly cut by my father, the great boatbuilder and worker in wood Ben Parsonage, who spent his life helping others. Unusual for a piece of my sculpture, the metal was highly polished, which I think in this instance suits the work. Reading through the names of the wrestlers, weightlifters, the fencer, coaches and the judge, youngsters near my own age, brought home the reality of what had happened

I know that there are great memorials, in the airport at Furstenfeldbruck and at the site of the Olympic Park, but I am extremely proud, of my work, my little piece, and for having been allowed the privilege of making it.

There are so many memorials, such sad stories.

If only we could live in peace.

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