

West Riding Woodcarvers' Association



March 2011
Newsletter Issue 195

Patron
Dr Ingrid M Roscoe
Lord Lieutenant of
West Yorkshire

Life members
Anne Hobson
Albert Hobson

May 14th 2011- Howard Boyd: Over the last few months we have been finding it difficult to bring good speakers to the club whose fees fall within our budget, but have persuaded Howard to make a return visit this month at a fraction of his normal speaker's fee. Many of our members will most certainly remember the last time Howard talked to the club in March 2008. His somewhat controversial manner, incredible sketches, his human, abstract and life size carvings coupled with his larger than life tales made him a speaker hard to forget.

Howard informed me on the phone that he has just returned from London where he had been awarded the honour of Freeman of London. I'm sure he will be telling us all what the honour was for but I understand that it is connected with his interest in timepieces and his carvings' commissions for the great and wealthy.

During our conversation Howard mentioned how extremely impressed he was with the quality and breadth of variety of the members' carvings on display during his last visit, so could we please ensure that we have a good turn out of carvings for his visit this time round.

Just to remain on this subject for a moment, Jane, Adrian and quite a number of our members, who have been around for a number of years, have recently commented that the quantity of carvings on display has greatly dwindled over the years from when the monthly display tables were loaded down with members' work. Also it would appear that the same small band of carvers supply the majority of the display carvings month by month, and I admit, with my poor turn over of work, I'm not one of them. Could we please see if we can all contribute to the table display, be it new or old carvings, that you may think everybody has seen a dozen times before, or items relating to woodcarving. It is worth remembering that the carvings on display offer the member, displaying the carving, the admiration of his/her fellow carvers, help to inspire the less gifted and offer a chance for friendly suggestions for improvement.



Sent with this newsletter, or enclosed if received in an envelope, should be the minutes of the last AGM, a new copy of the Constitution with a note at the bottom of the last page referring to the recent alterations, and an updated copy of the latest members' photo and phone number listing.



A letter and a copy of the above has been sent to Dr Roscoe with a comment stating that her adoption as Patron of the club was accepted unanimously by all present at the

AGM. In replying Dr Roscoe stated how pleased she was to be Patron of the club, asked to be informed about all our future projects and wished all our members well for the future.

Royal Armouries: I had an email, on the 20th April, from Jonathan Riley that read "John. The lighting job is now in hand. As soon as it is complete, Cheryl Graeme who is the general manager here in Leeds will inform you and get you over to have a look.

All best, Jonathon R".

We shall have to wait and see what the results are and if the work in hand covers some display information about the panels. But it would appear that our perseverance has started to move things along.

It is my sad duty to inform you of the sad passing, after a long illness, of our good friend Eric Schofield. Many will remember Eric for the excellent carvings he did for the Kirkwood and Overgate panels and his pleasant and gentle friendship in various carving classes.



Eric's funeral is at the Lepton Methodist Church at 1:15pm on Friday 6th May. I understand that, prior to the church service, there will be a private, family only, internment service at the crematorium.

Children's Hospice: It was very gratifying to see the number of hands raised at the AGM when those present were asked if they were willing to produce a carving for this forthcoming project. It would not have been a surprise to see quite a few people taking a well earned break after the Royal Armouries' panels. I think though that we all appreciate the plight of the children, and their families, who use the services of the hospice and this is our way of making a small contribution. We are waiting for a meeting to be arranged, after which, we will then gather our interested members together.

Yorkshire Post: You may have noticed that the article Virginia Mason did for the Halifax Courier appeared again in the centre pages of the Saturday magazine of the Yorkshire Post. It's a shame that they didn't contact us for an update. It would have been nice to inform Yorkshire that we have handed over £8,000 to the children's hospice. Never mind at least Graham and myself got our photos in again. Alright calm down dears. Everything comes to those who wait!!!!

I'm always asking for interesting articles for the newsletter, but get very few, but low and behold John Farrar has supplied me with one that should fill this page with riveting facts about a recent project that he took on for the RSPB at Old Moor, near Barnsley. He has even given me a lovely photo of himself, probably jealous of Graham and I being in the Yorkshire Post.

The only thing John didn't do was type the blessed thing out but supplied it in long hand. So instead of saving my precious time I am now going to try and decipher his handwriting (he was a teacher!) and type it all up. Well, here goes, sit back and be enthralled.

In Memoriam by John Farrar.

An enquiry to our woodcarving group, following the excellent publicity afforded us by the media after our very successful and popular completion of the war panels, found me contacting the R.S.P.B. Old Moor site at Wombwell near Barnsley. They were looking for someone to work alongside them in the creation of a memorial for one of their founder members, recently deceased.

Our secretary had mentioned this to me knowing of my enjoyment of letter carving and, so as not to upset the balance of his delicate and occasionally belligerent demeanour, and being fully aware of his powers of delegation, what else could I do but take it on?

The initial meeting with the hierarchy at Old Moor found me amongst the severed remains of a recently felled ash tree which they hoped would make a suitable memorial. Straightaway I was obliged to point out the limitations of carving into end grain and spider cracks but agreed to go ahead to satisfy their request. I would just do the lettering.

Consequently, for two days in mid-April, when the weather was in everyone's favour, I cut off the worst of the chainsaw scars and sanded the remaining surface so as to transcribe the previously designed lettering. This took me to lunchtime on day one. Afterwards I roughed out the lettering in preparation for the last cut which took up the remainder of my time there and apart from some final nips and tucks the job was completed by early afternoon on day two.

My contact at Old Moor, Julia Makin, kept popping out to inspect progress as did many other members of staff and also several of their volunteers. Julie had mentioned my task on her daily 'blog' and word soon got round. So much so, that I found myself chatting to staff and visitors alike all through the exercise. All of them were most sociable and interested in the techniques of the letter carving and it was a pleasure to chat under the umbrella of a canvas gazebo erected for my protection from the weather.

Any ornithologists reading this may be interested to know that amongst the birdlife on site (quite apart from the delightful Julia) was a secretive bittern. Someone did manage to capture it on camera whilst I was there.

Old Moor is a very attractive site and well worth a visit. I can vouch for the commitment and sociability of the staff and the conviction they all demonstrated in working for the R.S.P.B. It proved to be a most enjoyable experience.

John F



Many thanks John. It goes without saying that I don't recognise the words 'delicate and occasionally belligerent demeanour', well delicate maybe. It's a shame there will be one less of us at Brooksbank from next September!!!!

On a more serious note John did come round for a cup of coffee, and anything else he could scrounge, and asked if we had any suitable display boards that he could take with him to promote the club. The simple answer is that we don't. This is something we have time and again spoken about without really doing anything constructive. With the display at Brighthouse Methodist church in June I would suggest that we use some of the club funds to purchase a suitable banner.

Next moths newsletter will carry a piece about a carving done by Alan Raynor, who has now become a member, on a carving he has done for National Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft near Doncaster. You may remember that Alan is blind. And then I might just do a nice piece about Kate and Wills, well everybody else is!!!