

# West Riding Woodcarvers' Association



September 2012  
Newsletter Issue 210

Patron  
Dr Ingrid M Roscoe  
Lord Lieutenant of  
West Yorkshire

Life members  
Anne Hobson  
Albert Hobson

## September Shepley meeting - Susan Evans



Sue Evans

### Carvings that tell a story

You could almost hear the sharp intake of breath as Susan Evans owned up to that most heinous of crimes - painting wood.

As the guest speaker at the monthly meeting at Shepley, Susan, a retired history teacher, came clean right from the start.

She uses acrylic paint, washes and inks, and seals her work with a matt, water-based varnish or wax polish.

But those who tut tutted and shook their heads soon warmed to this expert and rather modest craftswoman, especially when it was clear that she had a respectful love of wood, such as elm, oak and poplar burrs, often leaving the wood unpainted to expose the natural grain.

Susan, a member of the British Toymakers Guild, makes some of the most delightful 'toys for adults' using intricate carvings often from recycled wood and yes, okay, paint. Much of her work uses automata, sometimes referred to as mechanical toys or kinetic art, and her mechanisms of choice are mainly cranks, cams and leavers.

Her beautiful pieces, however, sometimes have their origins in the most mundane: bits of driftwood, bones, pebbles, a rolling pin, charity shop beads and so on. And her escapades to retrieve some of these objects include sneaking through customs with suitcases full of New Zealand driftwood, climbing into dodgy skips and scaling the walls of reservoirs looking for odd bits of timber.

As if that is not dangerous enough, Susan has also managed to lose most of two finger tips by getting over-enthusiastic with a planer.

Susan from Thurgoland, Sheffield, is self-taught and was particularly influenced by her love of the sea as well as folk, fable and Bible stories. Delightful puffins, seagulls and animals from the ark, beautifully carved fish, mermaids and boats are all worked into quirky pieces that sell in many of the country's top craft and art shops. Commissions for her work include a large, animated Punch character for the V and A in London.

And so surely, this skilled craftswoman who combs the world for ideas and oddments to use in her inspiring work, can be forgiven for adding a touch of paint here and there. Can't she?

\*By the way, Susan kept referring to 'radiator' pine which she buys from B and Q because of its wonderful grain. We managed to get her so spell it eventually and it is 'radiata' pine. Maybe worth having a look at – and safer than climbing into a skip. **Janet F Smith**



### Shepley Meetings.

**13th October:** We welcome to the club Graham Kelly whose hobby is segmented woodturning. I understand that Graham does some quite amazing things on the lathe and we look forward to being educated and entertained while bits of shavings fly all over the room, and us.

**3rd November:** (Please note that this is not our usual second Saturday of the month). We have, by popular demand, our good friend Peter Berry for another full day workshop. Those who attended the workshop last November will remember the great time everybody had whittling away at 'Little Fred's', and throwing friendly insults from one side of the room to the other, with the Freds being eventually displayed at the Christmas luncheon. This workshop will again follow this tried and trusted format and the end results will be displayed again at the luncheon.

**8th December:** Our annual Christmas Luncheon will this year be held at the Meltham Golf club. Although the room is not totally ideal it is certainly far better than the rather industrial type room we occupied at the Brighthouse Sports Club, and the food should be much better. Attached, or enclosed if you receive this newsletter by post, will be a booking slip for the luncheon. Please fill it in and return it to Adrian.

Our Patron, Dr Roscoe and her husband, Marshall, have again been invited to be our guests. I understand that the entertainment is 'Jane's Dirty Joke' competition, so get them sent to her please, and at great expense we have for the first time a magician by the name of Albert Smith. The name doesn't quite ring bells like 'The Great Soprendo' but he is supposed to be very entertaining. We shall see!

**Carving classes:** I'm delighted to report that all four classes are up and running with no problems.

Brooksbank, Elland has 23 in the class, including Jim who acts as tutor, and this class has no vacancies. Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Wakefield has, I think, 15 in the class, including Mike who acts as tutor, with two or three places vacant. The two new classes at All Saints School, Bradley Bar are regularly attracting between 15 and 17 to each of the Tuesday and Thursday daytime classes. Each class can take another four or five members. Mike is acting as unofficial tutor and 'Responsible Person' at the Tuesday class with Dennis and Trevor very kindly helping all and sundry at the Thursday class with Janet taking on the duty of 'Responsible Person'. You will remember from the last newsletter that we have to appoint a 'Responsible Person' for each class who will be tasked with keeping a register of those present and in the case of fire to ensure that everybody has left the building safely.

Just a word about the financing of the two daytime classes. You will now be aware that the cost per person to attend *either or both* of the Tuesday and Thursday daytime classes will be £20 from September to Christmas and then a further £20 from January to the end of March 2013. Having now established that we presently have 31 who have paid their first £20, and assuming they all return after Christmas to pay the second £20, we shall receive a total income of £1,240 against the total hire charge of £1,300. Although we have a shortfall of £60 we are aware of at least two more people who are ready to join with a third, Trevor Stanley, later in the year when he has put all his bees to bed for the winter. If they all join we will be in credit.

Overall we are delighted with the way things are developing with all the classes but especially with the new daytime classes, the room is ideal, the atmosphere in both classes excellent and our relationship with the school is very good. We have gained two new full club members from the Wakefield class and, to date, three Associate Members spread throughout the classes. All in all a job well done.

**Caloundra Woodcarving Club, Australia:** For those who actually read the last newsletter, you may remember that I reported that we had, via the website, correspondence from Australia regarding a panel that the Caloundra Woodworking Club are producing. Below is a copy of the email and a couple of photos. I will report how the project progresses as I get more information from Trevor.

Dear Carvers

Trevor Greenlees is my name. I belong to the Caloundra Woodworking Club in Caloundra, which is approx 90kms north of Brisbane in Queensland, Australia. Our Club has 85 paid up members, 8 of which are in the carving group. Our club includes several women. As with all groups, many types of projects are undertaken, including box making, tables, chairs, turning etc.

Inspired by your article in the Wood Carving magazine dated March/April 2011, we approached the Caloundra RSL (Returned Services League) to see if we could do a set of carvings for them to put on display. They agreed and we started planning, following the stages you set out in your article. We have now completed 12 carvings which will be on the display board. Scenes involving Australian Service men and women, include Tobruk, Korea, P-40 Kittyhawk, Hospital Ship Centaur, Bushmaster Troop Carrier Afghanistan, Troops serving in New Guinea, RSL Badge, Field Hospital, Gallipoli, HMAS Brisbane, Helicopter in Vietnam, and Artillery used in Vietnam war. I will keep you posted as to the progress and completion of the project.

I have attached photos of my contributions to the project, namely the HMAS Brisbane and a Bushmaster in Afghanistan.

Thank you once again. Your website is outstanding.

Trevor Greenlees



**Royal Armouries Panels:** Most of you will have had an email from me regarding my trip over to the Armouries to photograph the two panels for inclusion into the information pack I was putting together to send to the National Memorial Arboretum. Below is a photograph clearly showing the panels lit by one small spotlight and the majority of the panels dead and flat. Even the lights in the corridor were out. I have been informed by Adrian that on a visit he made in July there was no lighting over the panels.



This situation will be discussed at the Management Meeting on the 4th October and with the total club membership at the Shepley meeting on the 13th October.

A letter has been sent to Major General Patrick Cordingley DSO, who is the Chairman of the Appeals Committee for the funding of the new £12 million Pavilion at the National Memorial Arboretum. The letter offers to discuss the possibility of eventually moving the panels out of the Royal Armouries and into the new Pavilion when it opens in the autumn of 2014. Along with the letter I have sent an information pack including photos of the panels, the booklet we produced, the articles from both the Woodcarving magazine and the Britain at War magazine, the video made by Graham covering the whole project and a copy of the film made by the Huddersfield Film Makers Club.