

West Riding Woodcarvers' Association



April 2015
Newsletter Issue 235

Patron
Dr Ingrid M Roscoe
Lord Lieutenant of
West Yorkshire

Life members
Albert Hobson
Jane Renshaw

John Hudson, with a talk entitled *'My work as an English Country Potter'*.

There were the jokes of course; the saggar maker's bottom knocker being one of them. And John Hudson kept up the amusement with a Yorkshire potter's tales spanning 49 years - falling out with his family; digging up tons of yellow clay, discovering after a lengthy career teaching that he knew nowt...

The stories kept the March Shepley audience of woodcarvers chuckling all morning.

But what is more remarkable about John, apart from his wry sense of humour, is that he has an extraordinary talent for not only throwing his own pots, but for reproducing classic pots from the early Greek, through Roman times, the bronze age and onto more recent pots made in the historic pottery places like Stoke-on-Trent.

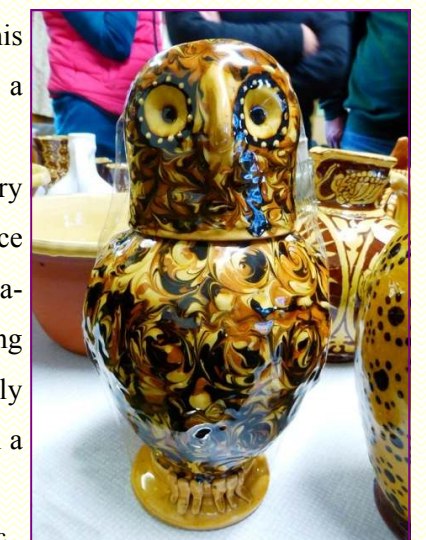
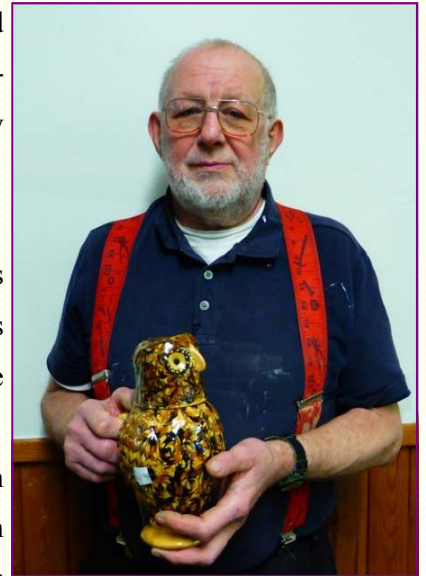
His work is on show in some of the fine houses of the United Kingdom including Hampton Court Palace Kew Palace in London, Barley Hall in York and Shakespeare's house in Stratford-upon-Avon. John's talent for reproducing fine specimens from pottery history is due to his considerable interest in medieval pottery and European historical ceramics and he ensures accuracy with the help of an extensive library of books and papers, ranging from pre-history to modern times.

His pots are in demand for museums, re-enactors and restored properties and he crafts them using the techniques originally used by the potters of the past.

John can tell at a glance if the potter was left or right-handed - it's to do with the way the spirals go - and for his own pots, works closely in the tradition of an English country potter making earthen-ware slipware. When television programmes like Time Team and Meet the Ancestor need an authentic-looking pot, it's to John they turn; and he was even commissioned to make a Thomas Toft replica pot for the television series 'Lovejoy'. And he has crafted ceramic tiles for the roofs of ancient building and the floors of old churches.

John reckons his pots are his children - he has produced more than 200,000 of them - and his legacy is some of the finest craftsmanship, produced in the Calder Valley, but with a reputation all over the world.

So what is a saggar maker's bottom knocker? Saggars are used to hold and protect pottery during kiln-firing, and by placing various substances in a saggar it is possible to produce dramatic visual effects on the finished pottery. Producing saggars to the correct specifications required was a skilled job and needs a craftsman - the saggar maker. However, making the bases of the saggars is a less skilled job which can be left to a lesser craftsman, namely the saggar maker's bottom knocker, who makes the bottom of the saggar by placing clay in a metal hoop and literally knocking it into shape. Of course, you knew that.



Saturday May 9th: I am very pleased to report that we have agreed with **Mick Stridever**, very well known amateur woodcarver and author, to come along to talk to the club before we shut down for the summer recess.

Some people will know Mick, not only from his articles in the Woodcarving magazine but, possibly more so, through his three books entitled '*Volume 1,2 & 3 Diary of a Woodcarver*'.

These are available on Amazon at £14.99 each but I'm sure Mick will be bringing lots along with him for sale.

Invitation to all West Riding Woodcarvers members.

Graham and Paddy Readhead have very kindly thrown open their home and garden on Saturday 13th June 2015.

Invitation from Paddy as follows:

Members and wives/partners are cordially invited to the home of Paddy and Graham Readhead on Saturday 13th June 2015

We will be serving coffee, biscuits and Graham's famous cheese scones from 10.15 until 12.30 approx .

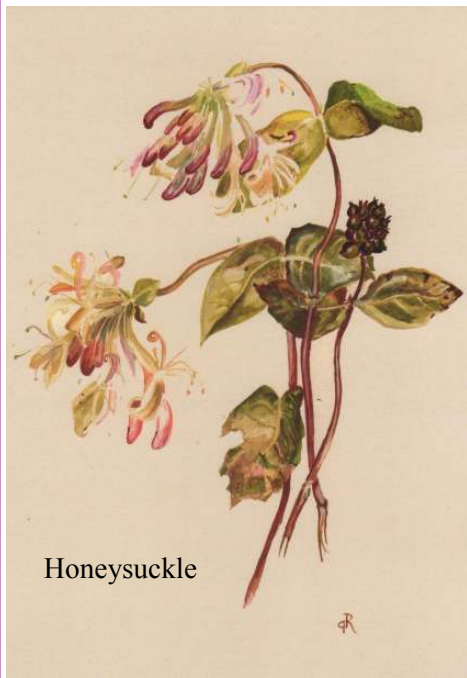
Paddy would like to show you all her exhibition of Greetings cards printed from her flower paintings. There is, of course, no obligation to buy anything! Just come for a chat and enjoy Graham's cheese scones.'



Clematis

Best wishes, Paddy Readhead
Fixby, Huddersfield

(contact John for further contact details)



Honeysuckle



Graham's famous cheese scones - who could fail to want a scone cooked by this gentleman!



It is my sad duty to inform all members that after a long illness with pancreatic cancer Barbara Bromhead passed away on the 1st April.

BROMHEAD BARBARA. On the April 1st, 2015. Suddenly but peacefully at home, Barbara aged 83 years. Dearly loved and loving wife of Frank, a much loved mum of Andrew and devoted grandma of Rose. A dear sister of Marion and a much loved aunt. A Service and Committal will take place on Thursday, April 9th at Huddersfield Crematorium, Fixby at 3.15 p.m. Family flowers only please by request, but donations for Kirkwood Hospice would be appreciated.

Our thoughts are with Frank and his family at this very sad time.



All Saints carving class is now closed until September but I'm sure that the two evening classes, at QEGS Wakefield and Brooksbank, Elland, could accommodate a few more carvers as they run through to the end of May 2015.