

West Riding Woodcarvers' Association



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Issue 248

Patron
Dr Ingrid M Roscoe
Lord Lieutenant of
West Yorkshire

Life members
Albert Hobson
Jane Renshaw

Melanie Wilks Artist and sculptor

Diminutive **Melanie Wilks** has a huge talent. Her impressive sculptures dominate the industrial landscape of the gritty towns and cities of West Yorkshire - particularly Morley and Leeds.

Many of her public works are larger than life - like the coal miner at Lofthouse representing the town's industrial past - and this has involved Melanie working outside in all Yorkshire weathers, standing on scaffolding, while she hand carves a lump of stone almost twice as high as she is.

Melanie was the speaker at the West Riding Woodcarver's October meeting, where she enthralled the club with photographs of commissions, and descriptions of her extraordinary work, bringing to life images such as a woman weaver outside Morley Town Hall, and at Huddersfield art gallery, a representation of former slave woman Harriet Thompson, who helped hundreds of others from the American plantations to freedom.

After a degree in fine art Melanie, who works from a studio in Dewsbury, began specialising in sculpture and honed her already burgeoning talent with an MA in Fine Art Sculpture at Manchester University. For the past 25 years, Melanie has worked mainly in Yorkshire stone, on commissions as her reputation grew, and also creating work for her own artistic self expression. As a fine artist, Melanie produces drawing for her sculptures and refers to them as a guide, while she is carving, but mainly works from the eye.

'I measure with a slide rule but sometimes although the measure might be accurate, to look right I trust my eye more than a measuring tool,' said Melanie.

Melanie has carved with coarse sandstone, rose alabaster, marble and red St Bees sandstone.

'Stone is of course a natural material like wood,' she told the woodcarvers. 'With stone, however, you are not governed by grain, but by the peculiar characteristics of each block. You may come across a fault, a piece of iron or a shell - and you have to work around it.'

With public commissions she researches the ideas presented by her commissioners, so for Churwell near Leeds, Melanie carved a magnificent water nymph as a nod to the village's natural spring. And for Morley, the laughing and dancing Ernie



Wise, now graces the main street, changed from her original idea of him in top hat and tails to a song-and-dance man at the suggestion of Ernie's widow.

Melanie also uses her talents to teach and at her studio in Dewsbury holds workshops throughout the year at which beginners are welcome.

Janet Smith



North of England Woodworking and Machinery Show 18th, 19th & 20th November 2016.

We are planning to pick up the panel from the children's hospice on Thursday 10th November and transport it to my garage. This will give us a full week to ensure the mechanics are in full working order before we take it in Derek's van to Harrogate on Thursday 17th November.

We shall shortly be contacting, by email or phone, all members who want to get involved in moving the panel around and in setting up and stewarding.

It is essential that everybody stewarding on our stand is wearing his or her black club polo shirt or green jumper. Margaret has a supplier of polo shirts and jumpers, if you need one please have a word with her, without delay.

The latest Woodcarving magazine, as promised, had a small write-up about our appearance for the first time at the Woodworking Show.

We need carvings for the display and would be grateful if people could bring along carvings to the November 5th meeting at Shepley. Alternatively hand your carvings to either myself, Adrian or Margaret well before the 17th November when we will be transporting our display material to Harrogate. Please identify your carvings clearly with your name and pack suitable for transportation and storage.



5th November 2016 - Michael Painter. I was talking to Michael the other day and his intention is to follow the format that we adopted on his last visit. This will be a lecture by Michael in the morning followed by a practical carving demonstration in the afternoon.

This is a full day meeting, well from 10:00am to 3:00pm with the usual pea and pie lunch being provided by the ladies. £5 will be collected on the door to cover the speakers costs and the lunch.

Please bring along plenty of carvings for the display. This is a request from Michael as he usually likes to comment on various features of our work. He has especially requested that Arthur brings along the latest carving he is working on.....!

Assuming he brings it, it will be interesting to see how Michael's carving of the Sistine Chapel has progressed.



Royal Armouries, Leeds.

I had a call from Edward Impey, Director General & Master of the Armouries, the other day apologising for not following up on our request to enhance the two WW1 & 2 panels.

Prince of Wales Hospice, Pontefract.

Adrian and I attended a meeting with seven of the senior managers at the hospice on Monday 17th October 2016.

They are extremely interested in our producing a panel for them along the lines of the panel we did for Kirkwood Hospice. Should this go ahead we should be planning to start carving in September 2018.

Our annual **Christmas Luncheon** will again this year be held at the Crow Nest Park Golf Club, Coach Road, Hove Edge, Brighouse. For those who are not conversant with the location of the golf club the post code, for your Sat Nav, is **HD6 2LN**. If you need a map, just log onto www.info@crownestgolf.co.uk.

As with all golf clubs they have a strict dress code requesting that visitors refrain from wearing denim jeans, trainers, collarless shirts or baseball hats. Suits aren't necessary but a smart jacket would be appreciated for the men. The ladies, as always, will be immaculately gowned or in nice trousers.

Coffee and biscuits will be served at 10:00am for a start at 10:30am. Our speaker for the day will be **Tilly Dagnall and her mum Jacqueline**. Tilly has a multitude of talents that covers printmaking, painting and sculpture and mum Jacqueline is a leading expert on anything to do with plants and garden/flower display. Certainly one for our ladies this year.

I am very please to report that our Patron, Dr Ingrid Roscoe, her husband Marshall and their driver Glenn, will be with us once again.

We would again ask that we have plenty of members' carvings for the display, old ones and new ones are always welcome. I'm sure Ingrid and Marshall, and our guest speakers, will be interested to see what we have all produced over the year.

As usual, our annual Christmas raffle, in aid of Help the Heroes (as voted for at a previous meeting) needs your assistance with prizes. Please turn out those expensive, but never used or wanted, presents and bring them along to raffle for a worthy cause. The ladies will be on hand to receive your gifts and sell you tickets.



I am again sending out separately a menu for the luncheon and we have been asked, to assist with catering, if we would state our requirements from a menu of starters, mains and sweets. On arrival there will be tea, coffee and biscuits and, at the end of the meal, coffee and mince pies. The price this year has slightly increased to £25.00 per person. Would you please state on the attached sheet your choices and return them to Adrian at the address provided, or as usual just give them to him at a monthly meeting. Early indications are that the numbers this year are,