

Woodcarver

GAZETTE



British Woodcarvers Association

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THIS PRECIOUS EARTH

The *This Precious Earth* exhibition was launched at The Festival of the Tree in Westonbirt last August, where Maureen Hockley took the opportunity to capture all the carvings 'on film' for your delectation.

Since then the collection has been on display at Birmingham, Yorkshire and Kent, due next in Shropshire. The aim is for the tour to continue until May 2008 when it will finally reach Hemel Hempstead where AGM 2008 will be held.

Although around half the 38 pieces were animal carvings, they were very diverse in style, and the remaining carvings certainly ranged far and wide, some including other media and unusual finishing techniques. Truly an inspiring exhibition with something for everyone, and a clear underlying message.



LEFT *Precious Earth* organiser and Gloucestershire leader Bryan Corbin's Icarus. An impressively large walnut relief incorporating a stained glass 'Earth', its effect is quite overwhelming when hung high, as it was at Westonbirt.

Just a reminder of the winners at Westonbirt as they were both featured in the last Gazette. Below is Stan Kimm's Gaia & her endangered children, while Lyn McCracken had the 'winning hands' (right) entitled *It's in our hands*.



RIGHT
Steve Smart can always be relied on to come up with a finely honed form and a superb finish. Kestrel in Cherry shows exactly what I mean.



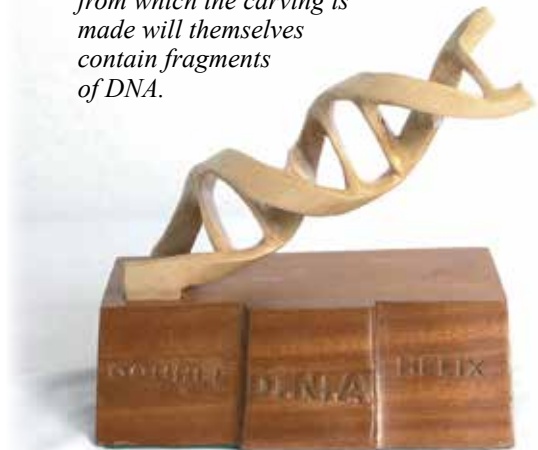


LEFT
Grizzly, by John Beart was a contrast in almost every way to David Pledge's Polar bear, [RIGHT] which was carved in Poplar, an unusual choice of wood, but one that worked beautifully for this particular subject.

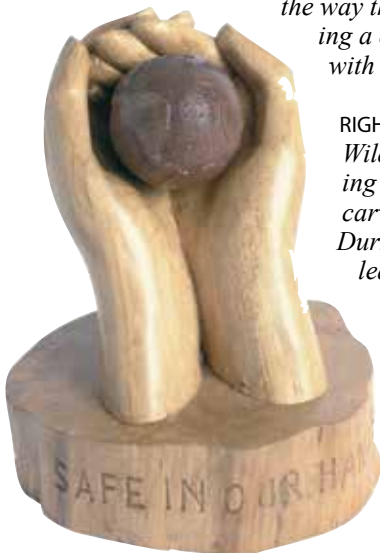


ABOVE Ted Jeffery produced a veritable tour de force. Mainly lime and mahogany it comprises in-the-round carving, relief, lettering and I suspect the 'Earth 'was made on a lathe (on the principle that 'the world is always a 'turning'!). The wording is from the Louis Armstrong song 'Wonderful World'

BELOW Double helix was carved by George Wroot. It shows a section of DNA, the chemical that forms a plan for (practically) all living things on Earth. Intriguing to think that all the once-living wood cells from which the carving is made will themselves contain fragments of DNA.



BELOW William Paton, also working in lime and mahogany, carved these hands cupping the world. I liked the way the globe nestled in the palms, giving a caring feeling very much in line with its title, Safe in our hands.



RIGHT Reginald Quick's Wild Boar is a charming and very popular carving. David Shires, Durham & N.Yorks leader, assures me that it would have walked away with any People's Choice competition when the exhibition was on in Yorkshire.





LEFT Kent carver, David Cooper makes (and sells) exquisite mirrors. This walnut example features the leaves and flowers of Water crowfoot

BELOW Earth & nature – finely balanced. An unusual and interesting sculpture by Roger Pearce. It is also a fine balance between nature's contribution to the piece and Roger's own carving work.



BELOW Margaret Johnson contributed the only chip carving of the exhibition, Flowers and grass. It is made from camphor-laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*), and its delicate, free-form chip carving has proved hard to photograph and reproduce so as to do justice to the original.



BELOW LEFT Tear drop by Geoff Dixon; black American walnut and silver. The large, dark leaf forms a perfect foil for the silver tear drops... or are they just dew drops and the sadness ours?



BELOW RIGHT Jean Bitmead used a variety of woods to make Leaves of the wood. The highly realistic leaves are like a snapshot. It is one aspect of nature's diversity, so familiar and ephemeral that it is often undervalued.



LEFT Mark Davies took a unique approach to the exhibition theme. His Floral display is a celebration of natural beauty, but is also made from a selection of eight timbers, all themselves recycled pieces. As good an example of 'the medium is the message' as I have seen.

BELOW Endangered by Peter Sperry (mahogany) represents what E J Tanagerman used to call 'a polyglot panel'. Different subjects, around a theme are fitted together to form a satisfying relief design.





ABOVE Cruising into hot water by Keith Traves. This shallow relief carving in lime shows a great whale approaching; the perspective and background lend drama to the scene.

BELOW Also by Keith Traves are a pair of boxing Hares in walnut. He calls this piece Penultimate round.



ABOVE Heron flight was Malcolm Dye's depiction of beauty in nature. The natural lime of the bird contrasts well with the dark base, the surface of which is so evocative of rippling water.

RIGHT Sue Navin's subjects are normally horses, but this time she chose a Mountain gorilla and worked in walnut. Looks like he has a lot on his mind, which is none too surprising



RIGHT Derek Edwards carved a chunky alligator from lime-wood; it seemed to be a carving that the visiting public found hard to ignore. The surface is meticulously detailed and gives the piece a real, scaly feel. .



LEFT Tiger, tiger burning (not so) bright is John Pryke's sardonic title for his carving.

RIGHT Another little, big cat was Ian Wardle's Black panther, carved in lime then 'ebonised'.





ABOVE Russell Parry chose to take the exhibition theme literally. Shallow slabs (fumed oak and gold leaf) tries to suggest that our concrete, urban environment is perhaps shallow in more ways than one, while the 'precious earth' is still there, just underneath.



ABOVE Jeanette Stewart took an original and exciting approach to the subject. Scenes of nature are three limewood reliefs (a beach, waterfall and woods) hung in front of a textile backdrop.



RIGHT Detail of the beach panel.



ABOVE Grim or reassuring, it depends on your inclination and philosophy. Barbara Blaise-Gosden pulls no punches in her piece, Nature's recycling lesson..



LEFT There were not many pure abstracts, but Joseph Miller came up with Signs of life, wrought from a gorgeous chunk of laburnam which lends a deep yellow glow to the piece.



RIGHT Maureen Hockley's wryly titled One small step is a fine bit of cartoon humour in three dimensions. Perhaps not that funny, since the joke is on all of us.





ABOVE And God hath spread the earth as a carpet for you that ye may walk therein through spacious paths
Dave Johnson, one of the prime organisers of This Precious Earth, contributed this monumental piece, a whole Scots pine plank with 'growing' footprints and a quotation from the Holy Koran incised in elegant, flowing letters.



ABOVE TOOT, TOOT! says Sheila Humphreys' little hedgehog. If the traffic is a bit too much for us sometimes, can you imagine how he feels about it?



ABOVE The exhaust by F T Allen, made in (bio-degradeable, renewable) lime wood. Just in case anyone hasn't noticed one of our greatest individual contributions to carbon dioxide emissions... and where a great deal of the planet's irreplaceable resources end up going.

RIGHT Bridie Tonge took water as the subject for Precious Commodity. The most essential substance on Earth, yet we so often take it for granted. Pleased to see it got a mention somewhere in the competition!



BELOW The owl and the pussycat by David Hawker. It's all there, carved in lime. But you will have to imagine the boat as pea-green.



LEFT David Nash's yew wood shark is Looking for life. It comes as a surprise to many people to learn that some shark species are endangered.

RIGHT Geoff Dixon managed to enter two carvings, in addition to helping organise the whole event. His Last dolphin (walnut, box and malee burr) is a sombre reminder of what our species is all too apt to do.



Looking forward to Westonbirt 2008

22 – 25 August Bank Holiday weekend

After the success of the event last year we have applied for an even bigger marquee at this years Westonbirt Festival of the Tree which will run from Friday 22nd August to Monday 25th (which is August Bank Holiday). I'm hoping that we will be able to convince all of the Regions that attended last year to return and possibly one or two more to fill the extra space we are trying to obtain.

Last year we had the start of the 'This Precious Earth' exhibition which provided the carvings for the middle of the marquee.

This year there is no theme but we would like to invite everyone to provide carvings for the exhibition in the centre of the marquee.

Everybody who was at last year's exhibition was impressed with the way in which the carvings were displayed. My team here in Gloucestershire rallied round and did a wonderful job of setting the carvings out in a very professional manner. Having a label for each carving giving information about it was a very important part and we would once again like to produce labels for each carving.

This means that details of the carvings must be with us at least a couple of weeks before the event to give us time to create labels ready for the show. This will also give us a chance to work out how much vertical space for relief carvings may be needed.

We will generate a simple entry form for a later issue of the *Gazette* (it will be Spring 2008, around April) or you can obtain a copy by e-mailing me. My address is bryan@thecorbins.org.uk.

The carvings will only be displayed together at Westonbirt so they can either be brought by your Regional leader if he/she is attending, or can be sent to me before the show and I will return them afterwards.

For Westonbirt 2009 we are hoping to organise another themed exhibition which will travel around the Regions. If anybody has a suggestion for a theme please let me know. I would like to set the theme before this years AGM to give everybody enough time to create the carvings.

Bryan Corbin

Gloucestershire Regional leader



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Proposals & Nominations for AGM 2008

Proposals

We have been informed of no proposals from the membership.

Nominations for Chairman

Peter Benson has accepted nomination for the post of Chairman. Nominated by David Shires and seconded by Vince O'Donnell (both Durham & N.Yorks Region).

Nominations for Editor

There have been no nominations for the post of Editor which will accordingly fall vacant.

For Discussion

Members of the National Council would like to raise the matter of having a BWA Safety Officer. Member Roger Timms has come forward to offer his help and experience in this vital area and the intention is to co-opt him to the National Council for the coming year.

Any Editors out there?

As members will see from the 'Proposals & Nominations' box (right) there have been no volunteers to take over as BWA *Gazette* editor, and the post will fall vacant after the AGM.

I will do my best, assisted by Kathy Bristow, to keep it ticking over in some form, as long as I can, but it is vital a new Editor is found if it is to go forward.

If anyone is interested but unsure what is involved, just get in touch with me. I will be very happy to discuss it in more detail so that you can gauge whether or not it's the job for you. An enquiry commits you to nothing!

Russell Parry

AGM 2008; it's your BWA so come along and show support!

The date for next year's AGM has been fixed for 17th May at 2.00 pm. The venue is **The Astley Cooper School, St.Agnell's Lane, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire**

See pages 12 and 13 of this *Gazette* for full information and booking form.

Arboretum Erratum!

In the last issue of the *Gazette* I mistyped the end date of the BWA Annual Exhibition at Alrewas. It should have read:

14-30 June 2008

Let There Be Light

Following the success of previous competitions at the AGM we intend to follow in their footsteps for 2008.

The carving competition will be to produce a Nightlight(s) Holder. The Holder must have one, or more, suitable spaces for nightlight(s) and be appropriate for either indoor or outdoor use.

People usually bring their entry to the AGM or send it with others from their Region but if anyone wanted to post an entry they could send it to me at my home address:

32, Beaufort Avenue, Kenton, Harrow, Middx.
HA3 8PF

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and light up the AGM!



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Another role for CHIPS?

Dear Carvers,

I read with interest the comments from Graham Biggs and the considered response from Russell Parry. I will also note that I am one of the carvers who hadn't considered joining the BWA before my local Adult Education based wood carving course collapsed, which seems to be the case for a number of carvers. I will also state that until that point I had only really come across the BWA as mentions in the woodcarving magazine.

Why am I writing this? Well both Graham and Russell mention the CHIP scheme in passing as a minor item. I am, however, aware that one of the reasons that the Adult Education people struggle to get funding for carving courses is that there is no evidence of progression. The funding for Adult Education comes from the government, and to get it they need to show evidence that the "students" are actually learning something and that they are progressing.

Thus a student comes in at the start of the year at one level, they do a course and at the end of it they have learnt something and so are at a higher level. My suggestion is that the BWA and a modified CHIP scheme could use this need to our advantage to provide such evidence. The BWA can provide a syllabus of basic skills that provide a basic carving knowledge to a competent carver stage (in levels) and then to provide a method of score-based progression after competency has been reached. This could then be used by the Adult Education as a basis of evidence of progression. This could be provided



to the Adult Education regions and an assessment scheme built around it provide accreditation. The assessments would have to be charged for since they would require personal time and materials. It would also be possible to provide the syllabus in a booklet for that could be charged for, but provided to BWA members more cheaply. Additionally BWA members could be allowed to download the booklet free of charge.

What does this do for the BWA? First of all it would raise the BWA profile and provide some level of income. Secondly, it may allow the rebuilding of the Adult Education woodcarving courses around the country. These courses would then act as implicit advertising for the BWA, with the form of the scheme effectively promoting BWA membership. There would be a significant level of work needed to set this up, but I would suggest that it would have the potential both to grow carving in the UK and to promote the BWA. Does anyone else believe that the idea has potential - especially someone who knows what is needed to implement it?

Yours, David Howard

An interesting idea, David. I'm not sure how this could work with any other officially recognised qualifications. I think Dick Onians is perhaps the best person to comment first on the implications of such a proposal. It could certainly be followed up by National Council.— Ed.

Wood Carving – the newcomer!

The letter by Graham Biggs and the reply by Russell Parry caused me to think. The first thought was, what is the CHIPS scheme? So I had to check! (Critique for Help Improvement and Progress, see the Spring *Gazette*) I then thought the letter and reply seem to overlook a number of realistic issues, but perhaps this oversight was not intended.

We derive pleasure from carving, I am tempted to say intense pleasure, tinged with frustration when a carving does not go according to plan. Our enjoyment is possible as we have a selection of tools, a workshop of some form and usually a means of holding the piece of wood. To the person who shows an interest he or she quickly realises that this hobby cannot be undertaken sitting by the lounge fire in an armchair, mess is created and there is an expenditure. The cost is imagined to be much more than necessary. As we all know, a good start can be made with three basic tools, not as the starter kits so frequently include six tools (and the seldom used V-tool).

Assuming the beginner makes a start then, the importance of a really sharp tool has to be appreciated and then kept that way. The consequences of the dull tool and a cut finger causing frustration, often the intended hobby stops there. This is not to overlook the often heard comment 'did you really carve that, I could never do it, it is beautiful how did you start'. But we all started somewhere. Then there is the competition from competitive wood interests, such as turning. A fin-

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Responses to Autumn's letter

Apart from the two long letters reproduced above I have had several phone calls from members about Graham's letter and my response. Here is one short e-mail I received from the Publicity Secretary.

Comment on Graham Bigg's letter

There is little I can add to Russell's very comprehensive reply except...

Really! What on earth did those members at Marston Moreton think they were doing, giving the impression of enthusiasts enjoying themselves? If they carry on behaving in this way at exhibitions they might encourage visitors to join the BWA.

Hang on a minute. Isn't that what we are all trying to do?

Maureen Hockley

ished turned article can be measured in hours and satisfaction achieved, this is in contrast to carving, where days if not weeks would be the more likely time scale.

The intended newcomer to carving is unlikely to know of the BWA or its activities, at best he/she knows of carving. If we are to kindle an interest in BWA it is necessary to first start with actual carving.

If progress is maintained and a few people get together towards the formation of a local group, then the problem is to find a venue where there is more than a few chairs, a few benches and vices or other means of holding the workpiece. Plus, how do we clear up the inevitable chippings from the carpeted floor! These clearly are no small hurdles to overcome, often with not much assistance from the normal teaching establishments used to term working and exams rather than the weekly social gathering for the exchange of ideas.

These I suggest are real live issues which have to be addressed if we are to attract the newcomer to our hobby. Can we (should we) expect any help from National Council? They are all very busy people, already giving more than a fair share of their time to BWA activities. All we could possibly expect is a policy framework of guidance, then it must be up to the Regions and potential Regions. But this policy framework should have a number of key requirements it requires from the Regions. The AGM minutes give the clue. Regions should be expected, albeit on a rotational basis, to supply articles for the *Woodcarver Gazette*. There is clearly the need for more copy in order to make the now excellent *Gazette* have a wider appeal. This request should not deter the shy writer, there are plenty of willing hands (and brains) to listen to a craftsman and to turn the story into an article. Has a structured brain-storming session ever been held on these issues with the conclusions reached incorporated into a policy for action, and then publicised?

If we take the newcomer starting up as the more difficult issue, a Warwickshire Region member has had considerable success with small relief carvings. These were of sea horses and boat profiles carved from 3in by 2in by 1/2in, the completed article finished in a matter of hours. The students were pleased, they had made progress and

had climbed the first rung of the ladder to enjoy carving and this could be undertaken in most village or church halls. However, care has to be taken to ensure that insurance implications for hands-on activities are complied with.

However, the main issue is still unanswered, that of generating the first interest and the desire to take the first step towards woodcarving, which leads me back to the original letter and the reply. Presumably the object is to raise the profile of woodcarving, I would feel that this is more likely to be achieved by methods other than changing the title or letterhead.

What is (or are) the first step/s? I read in the February issue of *Woodturning* that an exhibition titled 'Wizards in Wood' is being held in London at the Linley Gallery, Mayfair during January and February. I quote. 'This is to promote the symbiotic relationship between wood and art'. This is first class; it is the recognition of wood as an art form and is a basis on which to build.

Who are our Henry Moores and Barbara Hepworths?. How can we

as carvers achieve publicity in the places or publications that matter and will catch the interest of the potential woodcarver? We have many members who produce carvings that warrant publication against the profile of the carver. If we could find a way of encouraging the carver, the author and the magazine or similar publisher/editor to work together then I feel we could well make some impact in five to ten years. To this could be added the display of carvings (safely on a short-term basis) by local people on a rotational basis in places of note and where there is a throughput of people e.g. National Trust houses, local art galleries and popular hostelrys. If this could be started, success should be progressive and the objective would be achieved. It should also provide extra members and well needed extra copy for the *Gazette*. It would also complement CHIPS, as the new member would want to improve and this is of course the CHIPS objective.

Ron Burn



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The Hertfordshire Region members invite you to the British Woodcarvers Association AGM 2008 to be held at the Astley Cooper School, Hemel Hempstead, on Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th May.

Timetable of Events

Saturday 17 May

- 09.30 – 11.00 Arrival, refreshments, time to look at carvings and exhibition
- 11.00 – 12.30 Masterclasses; first session
- 12.30 – 13.45 Lunch
- 14.00 – 15.15 AGM
- 15.15 – 16.45 Masterclasses; second session
- 17.00 to be decided

Sunday 18th May

- 09.30 – 10.00 Arrival & coffee
- 10.00 – 11.15 Talk by Mark Davies
- 11.15 – 12.00 Time to chat and/or join Peter for a tool sharpening session
- 12.00 – 13.00 Finger buffet
- 13.30 Finish

Accommodation and Information

There is a wide range of accommodation in the Hemel Hempstead area including caravan sites, B&Bs, guesthouses and hotels.

For further information try the websites shown in the box at the bottom of this column.

We look forward to meeting you at the AGM. Hertfordshire has a wide range of attractions, including St. Albans (Abbey, Roman ruins etc.), Hatfield House and Gardens, and the Mosquito Museum (aircraft not insects!). A quick nip down the M1 will take you to Brent Cross Shopping Centre!

The AGM is always a good time to meet up with other carvers and exchange news from around the Regions.

We will also be hosting the 'This Precious Earth' Exhibition, so if you were unable to be at Westonbirt in 2007, or to see the exhibition near you, this is an ideal time to catch up with it. The standard of carving is very high with an amazing range of interpretations of the theme – well worth a visit.

We have arranged three 'Masterclasses' for Saturday and an interesting talk and tool-sharpening session for Sunday. The classes are:

- (A) **Dick Onians**
will talk about Timber, its properties and uses.
- (B) **Peter Benson**
will instruct the group in making carved clocks. This will cost £1 for the wood and £3 for clock mechanism. Bring your own carving tools.
- (C) **Maureen Hockley**
will demonstrate how to take good photographs of carvings and help you to take some photos of your own. Bring your own camera and a carving to photograph (optional)

Also Mark Davies – will give a talk on the history, symbolism and making of Love Spoons.

The weekend costs £20 per person, which includes:

- Tea and coffee
- Lunch on Saturday
- Masterclasses and Talks
- Finger Buffet on Sunday

The AGM is, of course, free for anyone just wishing to attend the session.

Please complete the form in this Gazette and return by 25th April 2008.

Stan Kimm

N.B. Ye Old Fighting Cocks, in St. Albans, appears in the Guinness Book of Records as 'a foremost claimant to being the U.K.'s oldest Inn'.

<http://www.hertfordshire.com>

<http://www.touruk.co.uk/hertfordshire/hemel-hempstead>



Booking Form for AGM 2008 & Carving Event

Venue: The Astley Cooper School, St. Agnell's Lane
Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP2 7HL

Please complete the following:

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....

.....

TELEPHONE NUMBER

NUMBER of people attending

Masterclasses

There will be a maximum of 15 places per Masterclass which will be allocated on a first come first, served basis.

Note: Peter's masterclass will be in two parts – Masterclass 1 to rough out the case and Masterclass 2 to fit the mechanism and start completing the case. If you want to do both parts of the project you must tick Peter's box for both sessions, but if you want to complete your clock at home you can choose another class for session 2.

I would like to attend the following masterclasses (tick one box from each list):

MASTERCLASS 1

(A) Dick Onians ☐

(B) Peter Benson (pt.1) ☐

(C) Maureen Hockley ☐

MASTERCLASS 2

(A) Dick Onians ☐

(B) Peter Benson (pt.2) ☐

(C) Maureen Hockley ☐

If we find a pub suitable for members to get together and have a meal on Saturday evening, would you be interested?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Please return your completed form and a cheque for £20 per person, (made out to Herts Region BWA), to:

Stan Kimm
32, Beaufort Avenue
Kenton, Harrow, Middx
HA3 8PF

by Friday 25th April 2008

If you would like a map showing the position of the venue in relation to the M1, please ring me on
020 8907 0378



Having been taken to task last year (by a non-member!) for 'wasting' the page behind the AGM reply slip, may I offer readers an entirely disposable montage of giant bamboo, growing at the Bambouseraie de Prafrance (Gard, France) and a carving of Dongfang Shui made from bamboo in Shanghai, around 1980 (from the Daetz collection, Germany, www.daetz-centrum.de). [photos © Russell Parry]

'This Precious Earth Exhibition' East Gate House Rochester, Kent.

This being the first exhibition Kent Region has presented from scratch, I suppose we hoped for better things.

Having some really fine carvings and so diverse a subject we thought people would flood in and because it was Christmas week and we hoped to raise some money for a local charity everything seemed set for a good week.

What a disappointment, we booked the room in East Gate House for the week, spent money from the funds and worked very hard setting up the display units, to make it look good and finally on the Monday we took most of the day setting up, with lights for the relief carvings for better effect and looked forward to the first day opening.



Members turned up at 10.30 am to open at 11 am. Put out the A frame supplied with notices on to pull in the visitors, by the end of the day it was reported to me that approximately 20 to 30 people attended.

The second day was no better and seemed this was to be the pattern for

the week, fortunately we had good kitchen facilities, and so tea and coffee was not a problem. Maybe we had not advertised enough, I contacted local papers and distributed flyers locally, although going round the high street on one of the days I had a job to find one, so I did another tour of other shops that day, it did not help really help as the High Street was not busy at all.

It seems a lesson has been learnt, unless you have the right location and the right time, staging an exhibition without the backing of some other event, it is not something to be taken on lightly. One good thing to come out of this is I have a contact for future events, such as the Dicken's Festival that we can attend this year.

Malcolm Dye
Kent Region

Paula the Prodigal

September 9th 2007 – what a marvellous day! I was at the Wood Festival at the Millennium Country Park in Marston Moretaine hoping to be re-inspired to return to my much-loved hobby of woodcarving.

The day was nearly at a close and I still hadn't made it into the woodcarvers' marquee. My four-year-old daughter had me painting and clay sculpting instead. With minutes to go, I popped in and was welcomed by the BWA group from Kent. Inspired by their enthusiasm, I was disappointed to learn that there wasn't a Buckinghamshire group. However, I was advised that my nearest group would be the Hertfordshire carvers at the other end of the marquee. I couldn't believe it. The Hertfordshire group leader was none other than my old friend of 18 years ago – Stanley Kimm! We used to whittle together (under the desk – I mean the chip-pings went under the desk, not us!) in our lunch hour at British Aerospace in Hatfield.

If ever there was a sign from above to get back into this wonderful hobby again, then Stan was my sign. I have since attended three workshops in Hemel Hempstead, which has become my equivalent of a 'spa break' from my exhausting but lovable daughter! My new fellow woodcarvers have been so welcoming and helpful. I can't wait for the second Sunday of every month to meet up with them again.

Stan has got me carving this leaf in relief and fingers crossed, I might be trusted with the responsibility of carving a section of the Hertfordshire county carved quilt one day too.

Paula Noble
Hertfordshire Region

What can I say? Welcome back to woodcarving Paula – and may you never stray again! – Ed.



British Woodcarvers Association

Application for membership



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First Name

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Region (if any).....

Category:- Please Tick one box only.

Hobbyist ☐

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Subscription rates: Full membership - £20

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Junior membership is available to those under 16. Junior members have full membership rights except the right to vote at the AGM

Please complete both sides of the form



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