



NEWSLETTER

No.129

SEPTEMBER 2025

www.watersidewoodcarvers.co.uk

COMMITTEE CHIPPINGS

As you will see below, we have had a busy summer and welcomed Emily, Ele (Eleanor) and Jim (about to join us) as a result. Maggie has also been on Radio Solent and possibly South Today, extolling the virtues of woodcarving and giving our club a plug. Thank you Maggie and well done for winning the top spot at Bakewell with your owl!

A gentle reminder that quarterly fees of £15 for Noadswood Workshops are now due. You can pay by bank transfer to Waterside Woodcarvers, Sort code 60 – 20 – 40, account no 61264490. It would be interesting to hear if any members would prefer to pay £60 for a whole year of Noadswood Workshops in future. The separate £10 annual Membership Fee would still apply for all, whether attending workshops or not.

Those attending Noadswood may have heard that our electrical equipment needed annual PAT testing. The kettles have been tested (thanks to Age Concern) and have their stickers. The school had the grinders assessed and told us we cannot use them without a safety guard. Until this is resolved, Paul will keep the grinders and take tools home to sharpen them. Thank you Paul.

We hope you are all making good progress with your Wood block 'Toys'. Remember there are three categories: you can enter your creation as a novice, intermediate or experienced carver. We look forward to seeing a wonderful array of carvings at the Xmas do. If you are unable to attend, you can hand in your carving to another member to display on your behalf.

The December social at St Andrews is likely to take the usual format. Bring a seasonally wrapped gift for the raffle and receive a raffle ticket in exchange. Extra tickets will be available to purchase. There will be a buffet (any help for this is always welcome). We will have the woodblock challenge items on display and all attendees may vote for their favourite in each category. We also hope to have a quiz of some sort and an indoor game (suggestions welcome) to keep us all on our toes! This event is free to members and £5 for non-members.

MARCHWOOD FETE

On the 5th July we attended Marchwood Fete for the first time in two years - last year's having been cancelled. Although well attended, we felt that the event is aimed primarily at children and young parents who, to be realistic, are not really potential members of our club and for that reason we probably won't be doing it again. This was however, the first occasion that we got to use our polypropylene ropes and wooden pegs to hold down the marquee. We obtained this kit following a previous visit to the fete when we ended up being extremely grateful to the Scouts who lent us some ropes to combat the windy conditions on that day.



DIBDEN PURLIEU SHOW

On the 26th July was Dibden Purlieu Flower and Craft Show and in the woodcarving section we had a 100% increase in entries on last year with four instead of two which meant that our own Allan Mechen had a bit more work to do as competition judge. The winner turned out to be Paul with a barn owl.



EXBURY FETE

The 2nd August gave us some fine weather for our second visit to the Exbury Fete and Flower Show having first attended last year and again we had a spot close to the clubhouse in the shade of some trees. We had well in excess of the 8 people required to put up our large marquee and were soon set up ready with a display table of carvings ready for the midday start.

The show is always well attended with all sorts of stalls, activities and attractions as well as plenty to eat and drink from various outlets, not to mention the flower show itself where it's fascinating to see what people have been making and growing. Hopefully with our wonderful carvings, our colourful team shirts and all the chatting to the public, we will have attracted a new member or two. We certainly advertised our presence in the community.



ANNUAL EXHIBITION

The 9th August was the date for this year's annual exhibition and we had 16 members turn up at St. Andrew's around 10 o'clock to prepare the hall for an 11am start. All the usual attractions were in evidence such as the touch table, the sales table, Maggie's pyrography demonstration, the voting table, the raffle and of course a great display of everyone's carvings.

58 people took part in the public vote and just about every carving on the table received a vote but the winner was Paul's Nuthatch.

88 raffle tickets were bought in anticipation of winning Paul's cherry Wren raising £176 towards club funds. The bird was actually won by our recently-joined member Annette.



HYTHE OF ACTIVITY

Having missed out last year, it was good to go along to Hythe High Street on the 6th of September to take part in the annual event for local community groups to showcase their activities and recruit new members. Several of our number turned up to man the display table under the gazebo and to make things more interesting we had devised a card game whereby visitors had to match a playing card to a carving to win a pyrographed and painted wooden coaster kindly made and donated by Andy Mac. We have certainly welcomed one new member as a result and, who knows, maybe more in the future.



SEPTEMBER SOCIAL

Those of us whose membership goes back a long way can remember Dave Dibden visiting us once before and it was great to welcome him back to entertain the more recent members with tales about his life working in the woods.

Up until recently he was part of the Pondhead Conservation Trust which is situated near Lyndhurst. It is an inclosure that has not been grazed by livestock and so contains much more biodiversity than the surrounding forest. Dave led volunteers in managing the Hazel coppices, understory and tracks and in so doing, helped to preserve the old woodland skills of making hurdles or bessom brooms and suchlike and to illustrate this he got down on the floor and used his special tools to demonstrate the carving of a flower in elder.

He has now left Pondhead and works on the nearby Barker Mills Estate but nevertheless kindly offered to give us a tour of Pondhead which we have arranged for the first of November.



HINTS AND TIPS

Recently, while doing some pyrography on one of her carvings, Maggie started experiencing really painful eye irritation. When she had recovered and started to investigate what might have caused it, she came to the conclusion that it was the burner tip coming into contact with some superglue that she had previously applied to the work which caused cyanide gas to be given off. So let that be a warning to you if you are doing any pyrography.

It's also worth pointing out that superglue (and any other glue) will seal the grain making it difficult to use colouring such as wood stain or fabric dye so I guess the message is to be very careful where you put the glue on your work.

If you have any hints or tips on the subject of carving or finishing (or anything else for that matter) that you think would be of benefit to fellow members, then please get in touch with your editor.

Nathaniel Hawthorne