

# West Riding Woodcarvers' Association



Life Members  
Albert Hobson  
Jane Renshaw

Patron  
Mike Painter

November/December 2019  
Issue 273

Club Meeting November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

## Life Amongst The Carnivorous Plants

By Chris Smith



November might not be the month we expect to be turning our minds to Horticultural pastimes but for our speaker it was the ideal time. The hectic show season is winding down so there was finally time to come and talk to us about his passion for plants of the carnivorous persuasion!

Peter "Wack" Walker and his Beautiful Assistant, wife Helleentje joined us at the end of a multi Gold Medal winning season at RHS Shows around the country. Wins this year include another coveted Gold Medal at the Chelsea Flower Show. Peter entertained us with his personal story of a journey that started by leaving the UK to find work in Holland in a brick factory through a Horticultural epiphany breeding better fruit and veg to starting his own nursery.

A chance opportunity at a plant breeding center lead Peter into a life in horticulture as he learnt from a particularly engaging manager the hows and whys of propagating plants to improve their characteristics. Following Peters apprenticeship in plant breeding a number of general horticultural jobs followed.

Peter is now one of the top growers and breeders of the type of plant which thrives on eating insects. We all know the Venus Fly Traps, real name *Dionaea*, which are natives of West Coast America, Peter however brought along less well known species; Cobra Lillies, fellow West Coast dwellers and Sundews, the most widespread carnivorous plant family. The habits and tactics these fascinating plants employ to lure, capture and ultimately digest their prey was a revelation. Living mostly in impoverished growing environments each plant has developed it's own shape to gain nutrients from insects that they can't get through their roots like other plants.

Wack's Wicked Plants became Peter and Helleentje's full time job when Peter's plant collecting outgrew his available space and it became clear that there was future in running a nursery full-time. They are now based at Scampston Hall.

If you are out that way it is well worth contacting Peter to have a look at his polytunnels. The Hall itself has a garden that is worth a look along with a stop off in the café for coffee and cake.

### **Christmas Luncheon, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019.**

Many members gathered at Crow Nest Golf Club for the annual Christmas Luncheon. We were treated to an excellent film made by Melvin Cooke; "African Bonanza" about the wildlife of the Kruger National Park in South Africa. Melvin got very close some of the biggest and most endangered species that Africa has to offer. A very entertaining start to proceeding indeed.

Lunch was excellent again and I would encourage members to attend as we are becoming small and smaller group.

Our Patron, Mike Painter attended the luncheon and had plenty of time to chat to members that were present. Most had met Mike before and some he knows very well.

There was the usual raffle for a seemingly endless table of prizes the proceeds of which goes to Help for Heroes.

### **Arthur Brook**

Just after our Christmas Luncheon we received the sad news that Arthur had died following a short illness. Arthur was a keen and accomplished carver, dancer and until not so very long ago, Badminton player.

His funeral will take place at Huddersfield Crematorium at 12:30 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January. Several members have told me they will be attending, if you would like to join them it would be good for the club to well represented for the funeral of a much-loved member of our club.

Looking through Arthur's gallery on our website this carving seems both appropriate and a fitting demonstration of his skills.



I'm sure we'll always remember Mike Painter knocking a huge lump off one of Arthur's carving and Arthur's reaction – "Bloody Hell!"

### **Next Meeting, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

Mike Chambers has offered to give us a demonstration of his sharpening techniques for our January meeting. I'm sure that old hands and beginners alike can gain a lot from attending as sharpening is critical to completing clean crisp carvings. No doubt there will be many interesting points that we can all incorporate into our sharpening regimes.

### **Dame Ingrid Roscoe**

We have received an email from Dame Ingrid over the Christmas period saying she has missed sharing Christmas Lunch with us and how much she enjoyed being our patron.

Dame Ingrid is in good health and looking forward to the year ahead. She wishes us all a very Happy New Year.

## **Thompson Dagnall**

Eagle eyed John Murphy spotted this link on Thompson Dagnall's website to a YouTube video from our favourite folk singing, guitar playing sculptor. Worth a watch!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NEHlctwhNTw>

If you press Ctrl and click the link it should open straight into the film. Have a look...