

THE SUSSEX WOODCRAFT SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER January 2026

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Chairman's message

A belated happy New Year to you all. Last year was another good year for the society with enjoyable club nights with some interesting speakers covering a wide range of topics. Like all clubs though, our numbers are slowly reducing and due to this club funds are quite tight. We will have to implement some ways to increase our bank balance as we need to be able to cover costs for the hall hire, insurance and speakers fees etc. We are not going to increase membership this year but to raise a little more at our monthly meetings. I would like to ask for a donation from members towards the tea and coffee which of course includes a lovely chocolate biscuit!

Thank you once again to all those who support the society and come along to our club nights. And thank you to the committee who support me with the running of the society. It is very much appreciated. As you know we are now on a break until March 11th 2026. We have some more interesting talks lined up for this year and on our return Adrian Jessup has kindly offered to do a talk for us on rocking horses. Hopefully we may be able to encourage some new members to join!

In this newsletter we have a write up on our October and November club nights, Christmas quiz and also on our exhibition and sale of work at Henfield hall on November 22nd.

One extra change this year is that I would like to invite people to wear name badges at the meetings. Last year one of our members suggested this as newer members don't know everyone's name so this would help people engage in conversation and know who they were speaking to. The new badges will be with the signing in sheet for people to wear on the night and can be left there on leaving and will be stored in the library between meetings. They will have magnetic clips so will be easy to wear. If anyone has a pacemaker that may be affected by the magnets we will provide a lanyard instead!

Our next newsletter will include a members profile, something we would like to set up again to help introduce members and to find out a bit more about our fellow members. We are also happy to receive articles or just pictures of members work to add to the newsletter, so please send them to Katrina and myself at pbmhh@btinternet.com.

Finally I would like to remind members it's time to renew your membership with Phil, either by contacting him, details at top of newsletter or paying at our March meeting. (£30 individual, £35 couples)

I look forward to seeing you all in March
Paul



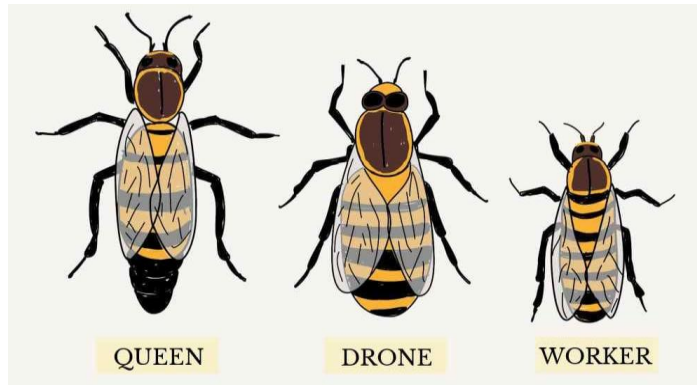
SWS October meeting

'What goes on inside a hive'
Daisy Day



We were treated to an unBEElievable talk by Daisy which had us all 'buzzing' at the

end of the evening!!



Daisy is one of only two master beekeepers in West Sussex. She has kept bees for over 20 years. Her and her partner have over 120 hives in 11 different locations – woodlands, orchards and gardens. Looking after the bees is her full time job.

She explained that bees are complex and intriguing creatures.

We learnt that drones are the boys – they are not needed in the Winter and are kicked out of the hive. They don't 'appear' until about April. Drones don't sting and their only object in life is to mate with the queen.

The workers are all female and are infertile. They clean the hive and then glands develop to feed the young. Later, glands develop to produce wax, in order to make repairs. They also have defence glands – stings. The workers go out to forage – they live for about 6 weeks. In that time they produce about one teaspoon of honey.

There is one queen in the hive – she is the mother of every bee in the hive. The queen can lay perhaps 800-1000 eggs a day, leading to possibly 50,000 bees in a hive. The workers feed and groom the queen. Pheromones given out by the queen keep everyone calm. If the hive becomes congested, the queen's pheromones weaken and the hive becomes unstable. In this situation, the bees might swarm – let by the old queen. The new queens hatch and fight to the death. The strongest will head the colony going forward.

Swarms which are collected are not sold – there is an old wives tale – you don't discuss money in front of the bees.

Pollen is the bees' protein, to feed the young. Nectar is a secretion from flowers. The bees suck it up and add enzymes. It is sealed up in the hive to keep it dry – this is pure honey. If it is not sealed, it starts to ferment and produces mead. The honey is the bees food for the Winter, If all of the honey is taken then the beekeepers replace it with sugar syrup.

Bees have an array of different dances which they do, including waggle and round dances. They do this to exchange information. A bee comes back to the hive and does a fantastic dance to get the attention of the other bees. This dance tells the others where there is a good source of food, enabling others to go out and collect from the same source.

There are many threats to bees including wasps and Varroa mites. With the Varroa mites, viruses

pass from the mites to the bees. Oxalis acid is used to kill the mites.

Asian hornets are another great threat to bees. They can devastate a whole hive. Bees have a defence against European hornets – if a hornet enters the hive, the bees will surround it so that the hornet overheats and dies – it is basically 'cooked'. The bees however do not have any forms of defence against the Asian ones. If Asian hornets are seen, they should be reported.

Daisy talked about how we can help bees – pollinators are vital:

- Plant bee friendly flowers – crocuses, snowdrops, helebores which flower early
dahlias and ivy which flowers late
- Leave a wild area in your garden
- Don't spray plants with insecticides

And of course – you can help by buying local honey which is full of goodness



Queen cell – recognised
because it hangs down

SWS meeting – November

Members' evening

We decided that for our November meeting, we would try a slightly different format. A message went out, encouraging members to:

- bring something along which they had made recently or members had never seen
- bring something wooden of interest
- a hidden hobby

We were astounded by how well the evening went and the number of members who contributed to the evening. We had great feedback from everyone who attended. It was extremely interesting to see some very unusual objects and to listen to some unusual and entertaining stories about members hobbies, carving beginnings and past

careers.

Below are a couple of 'snippets' from just a few of the members who took part.

Wendy Quantrill brought along a wooden troll which was given to her parents. She was fascinated by this troll as a child. It inspired Wendy to take up carving herself. Her father took her into his shed where he showed her a vice and two carving gouges. This is where it all started for her – many, many years ago!!

John Bennington gave a fascinating insight into the art of woodcuts – relief printing techniques in printmaking. John showed us a woodcut, the picture which was produced in the printing process of the woodcut and also the book from 1872 showing the woodcut picture printed on the front!!

Ian Russell showed us some of his lovely painted toys. He told us about the book which he has written which will be coming out early this year. It was very interesting listening to some of the 'rules and regulations' which he has to adhere to with his toy making. For example – every toy has to have a label denoting what it is and what age child it should be for.

Hopefully when Ian's book is out, he will give us a more comprehensive talk at one of our club nights about his work.

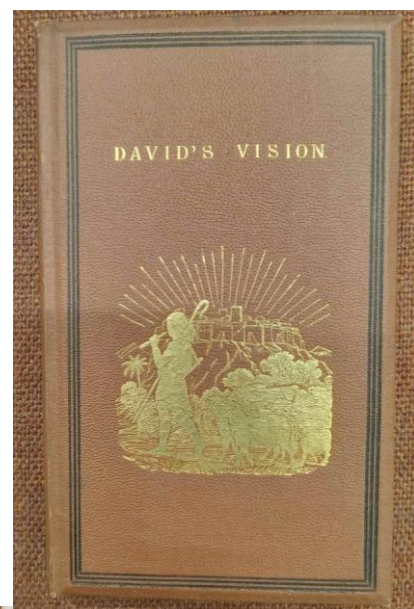
Our thanks go to everyone who made the evening such a success. It was such a success, we are thinking to have a similar evening later on this year!!



The woodcut



The design on paper



The design on the book



Some of Ian's toys



The troll that 'started it all' for Wendy

SWS show – Henfield

22nd November

Again, this year we held our annual show and sale of work at Henfield Hall. There were fewer members selling and exhibiting this year and it was a shame, again, that visitor numbers were very low. However, those people who visited gave some great feedback and seemed very interested in the items on show and the quality of all the work. There was a good selection of work by members including carving, scroll saw work, turning, marquetry, rocking horses and toys. Generally, members sold well and a good day was had by all.



Before the show started

December meeting – the Christmas Quiz



Another good evening – with fierce competition between the teams taking part. At the end of the evening however, it was the team that included Ian Russell (sorry – can't remember the names of all the team members) which triumphed. A special mention must go to Simon Harman and his daughter who formed their own team and did amazingly well considering there were just the two of them.

For those who didn't manage to get there – a few of the 'maths puzzle' table round questions are below:

1) $B + G = 18$
 $B - G = 8$
 $B \times G = ?$

4)

2)



Move two matchsticks to make the calculation correct.



What is the value of the dots on the hidden faces of the tower?