

VILLAGE and DISTRICT NEWS

The creation of still life from a block of wood

THE doctor's wife was chained to the 'phone for the smooth running of the surgery but did not mean she was immediately close by.

In fact, an artistic talent took Ann Parr into the cellar of her Broughton home where, using a great deal of well directed physical effort, she has, over the years produced wood carvings that in their pure, clean cut lines, display the full beauty of the English hardwoods that are her favourite medium.

Ann Parr, whose husband has now retired, is an artist through and through (even the knitting carelessly abandoned on an old chair in a sunny kitchen was composed of beautifully observed shades and in intricate stitches).

Probably, she would admit that her first love is painting but, as she says, that, of necessity takes you away from the house and even at the end of a garden over-looking the countryside that ever-demanding telephone bell would probably be unheard. So, wood carving it had to be and obviously there were compensations in the cold and wet of an English winter and spring and sometimes summer! The artist was indoors.

There was one lack to the cellar confines — a steep staircase which had to be taken at speed but there was some compensation, such exercise is good for the body and heart!

The second push that accelerated the doctor's wife into woodcarving was a set of beautiful old wood-working tools owned within her family and which became her property.

Early pieces were a goose, kept within the family because later repairs were needed to head and broad webbed feet; a

rabbit, standing tall with ears on high and 'a weasely sort of creature'.

The last two also remain at Broughton because of past associations. The rabbit has gained a beautiful patina because for many years it sat on the doctors surgery desk and patients had seen it as a restful and peaceful point in an appointment for medical matters. Unconsciously, they had stroked the carving as they talked to Dr Parr.

The same had happened with the weasel, a much smaller carving that had been positioned above a visitors' book. Each visitor had given his sinuous back a quick stroke before moving on. Otherwise Ann Parr bids farewell to her work, either through sales at regular shows organised by the Romsey Artists association or through commissions, without a backward glance.

Inspiration comes from the curve of a hand or arm pictured in paintings or photographs, from the wonderful curves adopted by animals at rest or feeding or simply from shapes 'seen' in the blocks of wood that are stored in a garden shed for future work.

The doctor is seldom allowed to pass a wood yard without his wife making a reconnoitre through stocks for future carvings and she admits it is difficult to find the foot high blocks that she requires. Much of the English hardwoods is sawn into planks and consequently lost to the carver.

Her works stand about a foot high the biggest she attempted was a life-sized sheep's head and that was bought immediately and

went on public view.

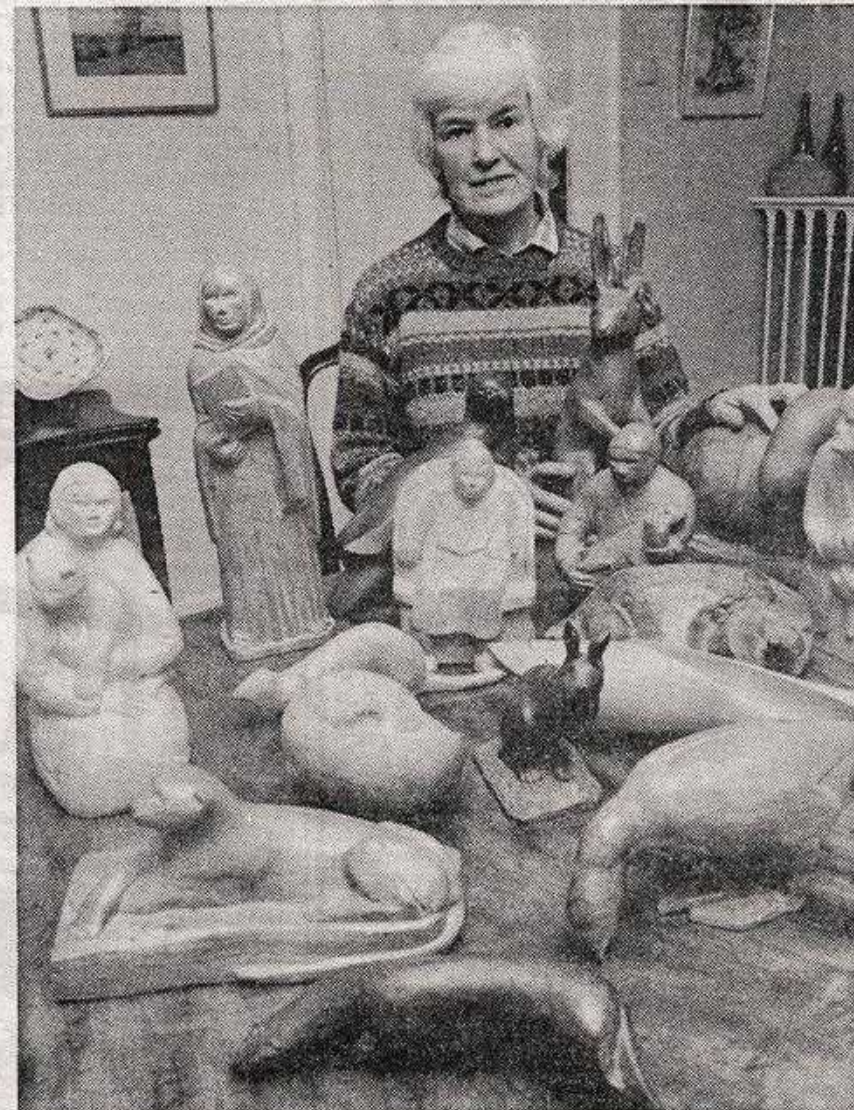
Despite a recent 'tragedy' when after hours of hard work a figure of a cat had to be abandoned because its tail fell off, Ann Parr admits to wood carving as a 'love and pleasure' that she does not intend to forego.

By Ann Shaw



Ann Parr busy in her workshop.

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Ann pictured with some of her carvings.

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