

Issue 67

September 2023

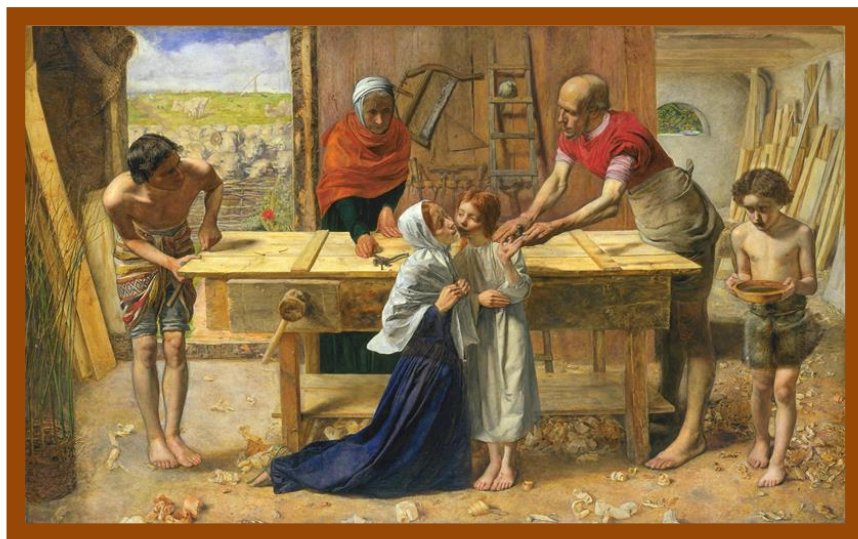
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Faith in the Moor



News, Views and Information



September 2023 'Therapy of Wood'

Therapy of Wood

The therapeutic effects of handwork, be it creating, repairing or “upcycling” are well known. How easy it is to lose track of time when engrossed in making, nurturing or mending something! And people seem to wax particularly lyrical when talking about the positive effects of handling and working with wood. (Paul Burke does just that on **p. 5**.) Perhaps it shouldn’t surprise us; trees and wood are such vital components of life on earth – in fact the Chinese consider wood to be the fifth element.

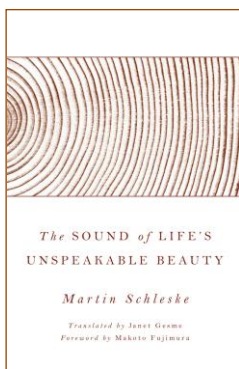


One of Paul’s guitars



A hand-made wooden ring,
Alston Community Workshop

So we have articles on wood, on carpenters and their workshops and on an unexpected use of wood (**p. 29**). Madeleine introduces us to an “Eco-warrior” of the plant world (**p. 23**).



Book recommendation,
(**p. 4**)



Bar meditates on a hidden aspect of the Art Exhibition (**p. 30**) and Dee Monk has written about a new venture from Alston Moor Community Workshop (**p. 6**) – a ray of hope for all who find making or mending things anything *but* therapeutic!



Some thoughts on Wood

I have always felt a sense of regret that at school all the boys did metalwork and the girls domestic science. There was no option for woodwork, although I did carve an elephant out of a block of wood in art. Wood is a fantastic resource, it has wonderful properties and it's natural. I love using it for building projects and often use it to mend things. I've never even been taught how to use a saw properly so I rarely make individual items from wood. I have learnt some skills by watching others and asking questions.

Although we now see trees as a means of storing carbon to try and hold back the climate emergency, there is a lot more to wood than the sequestration of carbon or just to provide fuel to keep us warm! When we look at some of our earliest buildings timber was used long before steel or iron. Looking up at some of those huge timbers in our ancient cathedrals that have been there hundreds of years makes one appreciate just how strong and versatile wood can be. Wood can sometimes survive fire where steel would just buckle in the intense heat.

A piece of shaped and polished wood is something of great beauty. It's good to hold and the smell of newly worked wood is wonderful, each type of wood has its own beauty and smell. I have a polished 12 inch ruler with twelve different 1 inch pieces of wood in it (see photo on previous page), each piece is named. It's too lovely to have in daily use.

A place I enjoy visiting is the Bobbin Mill near the bottom of Lake Windermere. In its heyday it used to make the wooden bobbins that were used to wind cotton for use in the Lancashire cotton mills. The local trees were coppiced to produce the long straight timbers needed. I really enjoy watching the demonstrations and seeing the wooden shavings flying through the air as the wood is shaped into the bobbins. I could stay there for hours. I'm really looking forward to when the Alston Men's Shed is able to have a lathe so I can learn how to turn wood into something beautiful, even if it's only a small toad stool!

Woods themselves are very important places too. Today it has been recognised that spending time among trees can be very good for our mental wellbeing. I'm fortunate that we have some trees at home that I can enjoy being among. However, my favourite local trees are the giant

redwoods in the cemetery. I like to walk that way into Alston and feel that beautiful soft spongy bark and then look up into the grandeur of those huge trees. Recent studies have shown that trees can communicate via their roots and in some cases can even give an early warning of predators to prepare other trees to build their defences up.

I have a wooden 'holding cross' that is used to help focus the mind whilst praying or meditating. It is made from a single piece of olive wood and is designed to fit ergonomically into the hand. The cross is beautiful and smooth and a delight to hold. However beautiful this might be, it is a reminder of the cross on which our Saviour died as atonement for all of us. That cross was made of rough wood and it was very heavy. This reminds me of the Stations of the Cross which we remember in Lent. For me this is one of the most moving services of the whole Christian year. To spend a while just meditating on what Jesus suffered for us I find so humbling and have a sense of deep gratitude. So although God's gift of wood can be used to produce large and small items of great beauty, we can also misuse it for acts of human torture

Richard Glover

The Sound - of Life's Unspeakable Beauty

This book, by master violin-maker Martin Schleske, is about sound, about wood, about music, about the art of violin making, but also about so very much more. The text is suffused with the author's deep and ever-searching faith in God. *"When I am working on my instruments remarkable moments happen, holy moments in my studio through which I understand differently and anew the inner and outer elements of my life."* He describes the excitement of finding a "singer" – a felled tree which, even before it has been worked, possesses a particular resonance, which the violin-maker can draw out and refine.

Janet Gesme, who translated the book from the original German, says, *"I first came across Martin Schleske's book The Sound on the day a debilitating car accident changed the course of my life. The changes that I was about to undergo were devastating, and yet "The Sound" somehow cast a beautiful, purposeful light on the whole situation. The poetic, life-giving prose walked me through one of the most difficult chapters of my own life."*

It's a wonderful, deep and thought-provoking book.

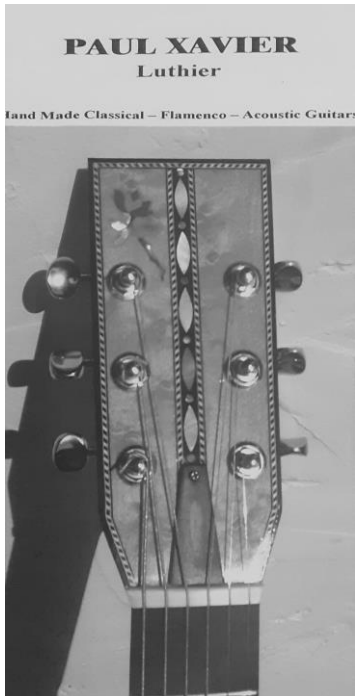
ES

Wood talks to you!

It was from a conversation with Paul Burke that the theme for this month's Faith in the Moor arose – Therapy of Wood.

Paul knows at first hand the therapeutic effect of working with wood. "Men of my generation are not very confident with creativity, but if you're trapped in trauma, depression, even suicidal thoughts, you need a counterbalance, something to keep you away from drugs, alcohol or violence. Working with wood provides that counterbalance."

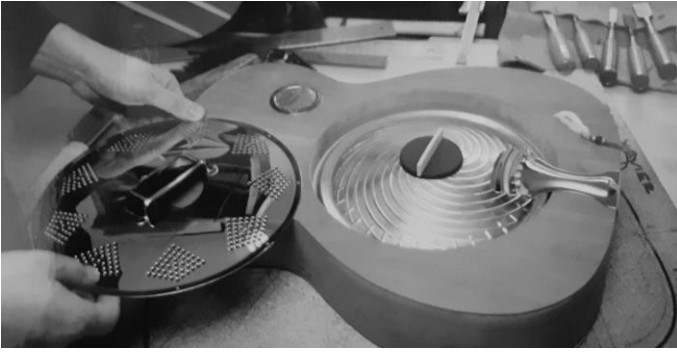
We asked, why wood, particularly? "Wood speaks. Each piece of wood has its own individual character. There is flow, and rhythm when working with wood. It gives focus. The beauty, smell and texture of the wood draw you in. It's a healing process."



Paul started with simple objects, such as nest boxes or boxes for pollinators, often made out of rough wood from discarded pallets. He says the process of "upcycling", making use of things which would otherwise be thrown away and at the same time doing something positive for Nature reinforces the healing effect.

Working with wood has its challenges of course. There are knots, shifts in the grain and other imperfections to be overcome. Getting round the obstacles is all part of the process – in life, as in woodworking. "It can be frustrating and annoying, but it's fun!" And to some extent you have to learn to "go with the grain" – as we have to in our dealings with one another.

Over time Paul's woodworking skills have developed to the extent that he now makes his own guitars. It's something his Dad started in the 70s. Making musical instruments adds another dimension to working with wood. "You can make it sing!"



Another musician in the family was Paul's uncle Gerald. He was a Catholic priest and missionary in Peru, working with slum children and doing much to try and

improve their lives. He was also a violinist and spoke 11 languages. Paul stressed the need for us to "carry each other's crosses" – as Jesus bore the Cross for us – something which Uncle Gerald obviously put into practice.

BNW/ES

Jesus in the Carpenter's Workshop



Christ in the House of His Parents,
John Everett Millais,
1849-50
(Colour version on front cover)

The painting "Christ in the House of his Parents", painted in by Sir John Everett Millais takes up the

theme of Jesus in the carpenter's shop. It shows an imagined incident where the young Christ child has injured himself with a nail whilst helping in the workshop. Blood from the wound has also dripped onto the child's foot as he holds up his hand to his mother, whose face shows her concern and anxiety not only about the wound itself but what is foreshadows.

The painting was extremely controversial when it first appeared and received many very negative reviews, the most famous perhaps being that of Charles Dickens, who condemned among other things the portrayal of Mary "so hideous in her ugliness that ... she would stand out from the rest

of the company as a Monster, in ... the lowest gin-shop in England." What disturbed the critics so much was the depiction of a realistic scene - a carpenter's shop complete with wood-shavings, dirt and sawdust on the floor – and of real, recognisable people as the Holy Family - the head of St. Joseph, for example, is a portrait of Millais' own father. Such realism was considered inappropriate for a religious painting.

The image is full of symbolic meaning. The young boy on the right of the picture is Jesus's cousin, John, dressed – according to the Biblical account – in a girdle of camel skin. He carries water to cleanse the wound, symbolising his later role as the Baptist. On the wall behind, carpentry tools again point to the instruments used in the Crucifixion, whilst the flock of sheep seen through the window on the left represent Christ's flock, the church. A dove, symbol of the Holy Spirit, surveys the scene from the ladder against the wall.

The idea of the young Christ working in his father's workshop and the link to his later death was taken up by another member of the Pre-Raphaelites, William Holman Hunt. Hunt travelled to the Middle East more than once and by his own admission was captivated by its light and atmosphere. For him it was important to portray Biblical subjects in the land where they would have taken place and to capture the setting realistically and accurately.



The Shadow of Death, Wm. Holman Hunt, 1873

This painting dates from his second trip to the Holy Land. It shows a young Jesus, still working in his father's workshop, stretching his arms to rest his muscles after sawing wood. As he does so, his shadow falls across a wooden tool-rack attached to the wall. His mother, who is kneeling on the floor beside him looking into a chest, looks up at that moment and sees

what looks like a figure hanging on a cross – a shocking premonition of the death Jesus would suffer. The chest, incidentally, contains the gifts which the Magi brought when they visited Jesus as a baby. The painting, with its bright colours and vivid detail, is full of symbolism. The star-shaped opening above the window recalls the star which guided the Magi, whilst wood shavings, carpentry tools and nails refer to the instruments of his death. The blood-red headdress in the lower right-hand corner prefigures the crown of thorns which Jesus was forced to wear before his execution.

ES

Alston Moor Community Workshop

Alston Moor Community Workshop currently runs the **Repair Café** on the first Saturday of the month, and the **Men's Shed** every Wednesday and Sunday afternoon. We would now like to introduce the newest addition '**Busy Buddies**'.

A number of residents had been asking for workshops to teach how to use general tools and power tools to enable them to fix the bookshelf, put up a bird box or bird table, make planters for the vegetables or even a bin shed. Busy Buddies is open for all adults, over the age of 18 years, to come along with a project in mind and we can provide the tools to do the job, but more importantly how to complete the job



safely, accurately and be usable! We have a couple of projects on the go at the moment; stripping a Singer sewing machine to clean the parts and rebuild the table, making a wool loom for making small rugs and seat covers from sheep's wool, and upholstering an office chair. The Repair Café highlighted a number of residents who do not know how to darn or use their sewing machine or how to fix/renew a zip. Contd p. 11



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secretary@alstonmoorgolfclub.org.uk

Contd from p. 8

These projects can be taught on a one-to-one basis or in a small group. Other ideas are learning to crochet, knit, quilt, bag mailing, darning, felt, general upholstery repairs, up-cycling furniture, woodworking, IT issues, changing your car tyres and checking pressures, plumbing projects, and decorating tips. Just a few things that we can offer advice, help, provide tools and teach techniques.

We are also looking to provide first aid sessions and cardiac resuscitation to help build confidence to provide help in an emergency. So, if you have an idea for a project, have a challenge at home you want to tackle, or just want to have coffee and chat with your buddies, come along to Busy Buddies on a Wednesday morning 10am – 1pm.

Dee Monk

Contact Dee at: Dee.monk@me.com Tel: 07912250755

The Leprosy Mission

As a small girl (a few years ago) I spent my summer holidays on a farm. In the farmhouse kitchen were two high-backed wooden chairs, - one for my Granda and one for my uncle. When they were vacated, I loved to climb into a chair, rubbing my hands over the wooden arms, feeling the lovely wood.



Recently we have been learning more about the work of the Leprosy Mission, and how those with leprosy are left unable to feel, meaning they suffer dreadful sores especially on their feet and hands. As leprosy is still a stigma, one of the present problems is recruiting leprosy nurses. However, funds are now being raised to refurbish Salur Hospital in India, and build two new classrooms. To show our support for this, our Strawberry Tea funds, which to date are £480, will be directed to that important project. Our prayer is that more people with leprosy will be found in the early stages, as a treatment is available to stop it progressing. May more patients retain the feeling in their limbs. Thank you to all who supported our local event.

Doris Nicholson

Thoughts on Jesus, the Carpenter

Jesus grew up in a family ...
the family of a carpenter.

Joseph was a carpenter and must have helped so many people ... mending chairs,
tables, making chests
useful boxes too, tools for family and farm.

At some time, Jesus learned and helped him too
and knew what it was to help people.

Perhaps Joseph would show him how important it is
to make tools good to handle,
comfortable to hold, to work with.
He'd have learned how to make sure
that a plough handled smoothly,
that a yoke would fit comfortably
and not chafe, or rub unevenly on necks and shoulders.

He would measure and adjust to make sure
the younger animal would walk happily
alongside the older one as they worked together.
Team work, young learning from more experienced elder.
He knew the yoke would need to fit well,
easy to wear, sharing the load.
He'd smooth down the wood
working hard to make sure it was a perfect fit.
His yoke would have been easy,
the burden would have been lightened.

Jesus said "Come to me all you who are weary and heavy laden. I will give you
rest. My yoke is easy. ...

What a joy to know we can share our burdens ...
share our burdens with the Lord
and he, in turn, will take them on his shoulders
and share them, and make them lighter.

Praise to you, O Lord!

Iris Chapple, August 2023

Bringing joy, light and life at Robinwood

The Robinwood Activity Centre in Kirkhaugh offers 3-day, 2-night residential courses for children aged 7-11. The courses are designed to provide exciting activities and other challenges to develop teamwork and stimulate the imagination. More details can be found on their website www.robinwood.co.uk

Bar asked Doug Green, a Group Leader at Robinwood, to tell us something about his work:

There are so many influences in the world today. Children are exposed to so much. But when children experience 3 days at Robinwood, it is a chance for them to be exposed to something tremendously positive, that they may remember forever.



My greatest motivation for being an instructor at Robinwood is the chance to bring joy, light, life and a new perspective to children that otherwise



may never have experienced this before. To show them a new way of thinking, a new way of living. To give them hope. To show how possible it is to overcome obstacles, to be resilient, to be confident, to achieve their goals.

I feel when I instruct at Robinwood, I get this little opportunity to equip children for life. This is incredibly rewarding. When I go to work for these reasons, no day at Robinwood is ever a bad day. While making a difference for living, you have fun too! You essentially get paid to make a difference, have fun, learn new skills, work outside in incredible scenery and work in an incredibly positive environment.

It's difficult not to look forward to work!

Thank you, Doug, for this insight into what is obviously a very rewarding and worthwhile job.

BNW



Madeleine sent us this photo of two of her grandchildren – not at Robinwood, but getting to know Dolly the Sheep in Newcastle ...

... whilst these two ladies were deeply engrossed in the Art Exhibition



More impressions of the Art Exhibition in next month's Faith in the Moor!

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☎ 01768 863209 ✉ dave@revmilner.plus.com



Circuit Pastor (part time): Rev Keith Speck *(day free of duties: Saturday)*

The Manse, Kirkoswald, Penrith, CA10 1EW

☎ 01768 898257 ✉ keithspck1@gmail.com

Church Steward: Mr John de la Mare ☎ 01434 382338

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Local Contact: Anne & Paul Parkin ☎ 01434 381704

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Churchwardens:



Alston Andy Morsman 382251

Garrigill Vacant – contact one of the other Wardens

Kirkhaugh Richard Graham 381367

Knaresdale Irene Boyles 381388 Carol Grieves 382472

Nenthead Madeleine Harris 382144 James Caspian 381055

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Methodist Services



Our Sunday Services are usually held at 11am at St Wulstan's.

3rd **10.30 am** New Circuit Launch at Penrith Methodist Church followed by Bring and Share lunch
5 pm - 7 pm at the Hive: Pennine Praise

10th 11 am Rev Keith Speck - Holy Communion

17th 11 am Harvest - Rev Dave Milner – combined service with St. Augustine's

24th 11 am David Pepin

See our Facebook Page - Alston Moor Methodist Church - for news.
Meeting for vital prayer every Tuesday at 9 am Old Meadow Barns.
Alpha Course starting on Wednesday 6th September in the Chat Room.

Contacts for information: John and Pauline de la Mare 01434 382338

Quaker Meeting for Worship



Quaker Meeting for Worship continues to take place
every FOURTH SUNDAY of the month at 10.30am, throughout the year.

Additional Quaker Meeting: On the second Wednesday of every month at 10.30 am from May - September. Everyone most warmly welcome to join us for an hour of silent, reflective worship at these times.

Roman Catholic Mass

St Wulstan's, Kings Arms Lane, Alston, CA9 3JF

Every Saturday 6.00 pm Vigil Mass,
Confessions available from 5.30 pm



Please refer to the web site www.stcatherinepenrith.org.uk
for further information on services at St Catherine's Penrith
and Our Lady of Appleby with Kirkby Stephen.

Church of England services & events



Worship and Prayer in September

Sunday, 3rd September (1st Sunday)

9.30 am Holy Communion (BCP) Holy Paraclete, Kirkhaugh
11.00 am Prayer & Praise St Augustine, Alston (*also livestream*)

Sunday, 10th September (2nd Sunday)

9.30 am Morning Prayer St John, Nenthead
11.00 am Sung Communion St Augustine, Alston (*also livestream*)

Friday, 15th September

6.30 pm Harvest Thanksgiving St Jude, Knaresdale

Sunday, 17th September (3rd Sunday)

9.30 am Holy Communion St John, Nenthead

**11.00 am Harvest Festival at St Wulstan's –
no service at St Augustine's**

6.00 pm Harvest Festival Evensong (BCP) Holy Paraclete, Kirkhaugh
with the Antiphon Choir

Sunday, 24th September (4th Sunday)

9.30 am Morning Prayer St John, Nenthead
11.00 am Sung Communion St Augustine, Alston (*also livestream*)
3.00 pm Messy Harvest Ss Mary & Patrick, Lambley

Sunday services online

- Join us at 11am weekly on **Zoom** using the app – or, with an ordinary phone, dial 0203 051 2874. The **Meeting ID code** is **357 123 751**.
- Or find us on **YouTube** – [youtube.com/@AlstonMoorParishChurches](https://www.youtube.com/@AlstonMoorParishChurches)
- Download the orders of service from alstonmoorcofe.org.uk/worship and the notice sheet from alstonmoorcofe.org.uk/whatson

Prayer requests and virtual candles

- If you would like someone to pray for or with you, phone Mark on 01434 382558 or email pray@alstonmoorcofe.org.uk
- Light a candle at churchofengland.org/our-faith/light-candle



Regular Weekday services

Morning, Evening & Night Prayer

- Morning Prayer: Wed-Sat, 9am St Augustine's & on Zoom
(except 27th-30th September)
- Evening Prayer: Wed, Thu & Sat, 5pm St Augustine's & on Zoom
(except 27th-30th September)
Fridays, 6pm St John's, Nenthead
- Night Prayer: Fridays, 9pm Zoom

Informal Holy Communion

- Every Thursday, 12 noon Chat Room, Alston

September Dates for your Diary (subject to change)

- Mondays, 6.30 pm Parish Prayer Group Chat Room, Alston
details from Richard Pattison
- Fri 1st, 7.30 pm An Evening with "The Breakaways"
St Jude, Knaresdale
- Fri 8th-Sun 17th AMP Heritage Exhibition *St Augustine, Alston*
- Sat 30th, 10 am St Jude's Coffee Stop *Knarsdale w Kirkhaugh VH*

Support your parish churches financially



- ✓ Make a one-off donation at alstonmoorcofe.org.uk/donate
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Thank you!

St Jude's Church, Knaresdale
invites you to

An evening with
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The warrior plant

Bamboo has entered our market place with strong environmental credentials offering aesthetically pleasing products of industrial, domestic even personal 'kind to skin' potential. Although a species of grass we might term it an 'honorary tree' - a worthy counterpart to wood in the battle against climate change.



Supplanting the phrase 'watching paint dry' with the expression 'watching a tree grow' might test us beyond endurance when their growth rates are:



The Yew 1.25 cm/year
Our noble Oak 1.88 cm/year
The Ash – Beech – Elm – Hazel
2.5 cm/year
The Sycamore 2.75 cm/year
The Pine – Spruce 3.13 cm/year.

Hardwood trees can take 100 years to reach maturity. A prolonged watch!

Somewhat short of the term 'quick drying' – 'quick growing'. However bamboo 'the fastest growing plant in the world' can compete well against both emulsion and gloss achieving an initial growth spurt of 4 cm per second, some species increasing to a height of 91 cm a day growing to its maximum within one season! Bamboo wins the growth stakes hands/roots down! This speed of growth carries with it manifold and critical weaponry against climate change:

- 'Bamboo produces 35% more oxygen than a tree of equivalent mass and can absorb as much as 12 tons of carbon dioxide per year.'
- When harvested, bamboo will re-generate itself – it does not need re-planting.
- Its root system assists in soil conservation.
- Bamboo is abnormally fire resistant, a worthy opponent to the threat wildfire.
- Harmful pesticides and fertilisers are not needed in its cultivation.

- In construction bamboo has a tensile strength of 28,000 per inch in excess of steel by 5,000 and is weather adapted, it will not corrode.
- It is light in weight so less costly to transport and can be used for flooring, furniture, irrigation systems, boats, bridges, musical instruments, woven mats, clothing or bedding.
- Its fibrous interior structure is kind to skin, comfortable to wear, hypo allergenic – to sleep within – or on [the bamboo mattress]. Bamboo, plastic-free and with zero waste, is able to displace a multitude of items which pose threats to the environment in everyday use.



Of course the bamboo grove/forest is a panda's pantry – who could resist this endearing call to arms for our vigorous eco warrior - bamboo?

MH

Wood at the Beginning and End of life

Christ was a carpenter. At school I passed two O levels, woodwork and maths. In the kitchen is my O level woodwork piece, a bookcase. I couldn't continue at school, but we did give our lives to Christ, and my maths gave me a good career in the end.

In February 2019 I was in Penrith hospital. A chaplain visited the hospital and had his own room where we could go. In that room were small wooden crosses we could hold in our hand, and New Testaments we could take. That small cross is with me now, day and night, a great comfort. As I hold it I sing the chorus by Isaac Watts and Ralph Hudson:

At the cross, at the cross
Where I first saw the light,
And the burden of my heart rolled away,
It was there by faith I received my sight,
And now I am happy all the day!



In my Bible they show the cross as a tree. The top branches are Christ glorified, the second coming, the risen Christ, and Easter. On the Trunk is Good Friday, Passion week, the suffering Christ, the ministering Christ and the Christ of prophecy. Our prayer every day is: "Thank You Lord for saving us, writing our names in the book of life."

George Mullard

Memories of the Carpenter's Workshop

In their book *"Intimate with the Ultimate"* Gerard and Chrissie Kelly explore the idea of prayer as an apprenticeship. How can we learn to pray as Jesus did? The book includes poems and exercises – as well as an imaginative account of Jesus's childhood:

Early memories of Jesus's childhood would have been drawn against the background noises of his father's work as a carpenter. To a child, the



workshop would have been a forbidden place, a place where there were sharp tools and many dangers – no place for a child. (Reading this reminded me of our trips, as children, into our Granddad's workshop, as he worked at his

saw-bench, the air full of the scent and dust from the sawn wood, Granddad with wood-shavings covering his clothes and eyebrows, and Mum or Nan urging us to be careful and keep well away from the whirring blades.) In the Kellys' account, the child Jesus takes up the story: *"I watched my father from a distance, waiting for the moments when the sun would send shafts of light through the window to illuminate the movements of his hands over the wood."* Gradually, as the child grew older, his father would catch his eye as he worked. Then eventually, one day he looked across to the child and asked *"Do you want to help? One day this will be your work, not mine" ... "It's time you began your learning."*

The child describes his father working: *"He was working the wood, smoothing it and from time to time pouring oil onto its surface and rubbing it in. Then he urged me to come closer still. Taking a piece of untreated wood from the floor, he put it onto the work table beside the lintel he had been working on. "Close your eyes" ... "Now feel this", he said. "Do you feel how it is rough, unworked?" ... "Now feel this", he said, lifting my hands onto the lintel he had been finishing. "Do you feel the difference?" The beam was smooth to the touch and warm. I trailed my*

hands across the contours of the wood, feeling every tiny swirl and groove. It was like mapping the world, following the hills and valleys, finding the pathways. But this was a world that had been washed by rain and shaped by wind until every contour surrendered smoothly to the next. It was as if the wood had a fingerprint – the markings were as subtle and as unique.”

“It’s not enough to see the difference”, continues the father. You have to “feel it. You must learn to read the wood: to know it so well that you alone can say when it is finished. And when you’ve grown used to feeling it in your fingers, you will feel it in your heart. Only then can you be sure that the work you do is as good as it can possibly be.”

Jesus continues *“Even after I left the workshop behind forever, I still worked from those lessons I learned at my father’s side.”*

“People are not unlike trees: they too have unique and subtle markings. You have to read them, to know when your work is done.”

ES



O Christ, the Master Carpenter, who at the last, through wood and nails, purchased our whole salvation,

wield well your tools in the workshop of your world, so that we
who come rough-hewn to your bench
may here be fashioned to a truer beauty of your hand.

We ask it for your own name’s sake.

Amen

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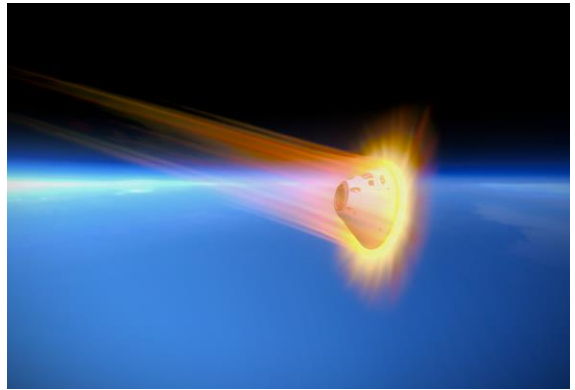
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Wood ... in Space?

Wood is a very versatile material and has a multitude of applications but perhaps the one place you would not expect to find it is in the hi-tech world of space.

In the 1960s, China initiated its own space programme and was keen to match its rivals in the US and Soviet Union in deploying spy satellites to provide regular information for its own military and intelligence services. In this pre-digital age, spy satellites were really



just high quality film cameras which then returned the film to earth so it could be processed and analysed. The crucial stage of the mission is re-entering the earth's atmosphere, when the speed of entry results in friction, heating up the outside of the craft to temperatures of 1500 °C for a short period. Some metals will melt at this temperature and so a heat resistant outer surface is needed to protect the sensitive film and prevent disaster.

The Americans and the Soviets spent a lot of effort to develop light-weight ceramic or other materials for this purpose but the Chinese did not have the appropriate knowledge or technology at the time, so they turned to a very practical solution known to them for centuries: wood.

They covered the outer face of the satellite with a 15-centimetre heat shield made of white oak, which is light-weight and does not burn easily but chars, forming a very thin layer of charcoal. As the craft descends, the outer layer of this charcoal is stripped off by the wind, molecule by molecule. At the same time, the new outer layer of wood turns into charcoal. So the nose cone is always coated with charcoal, even though its total thickness is decreasing. Very little heat gets through to the metal spacecraft underneath because both charcoal and wood are great insulators.

This simple but ingenious solution worked successfully on a series of 23 launches and returns to earth. Now, who wood've believed that?

Dave Smith

The Word on Wood



For fifty years Allan Paterson from Carlisle has combined his love of the Bible and of wood to produce unique hand-crafted gifts. He says, "I am a great believer in the

power of God's words in the Bible. They change lives and encourage people. 'The Word on Wood' is a coming together of wood and God's word. These scripture pieces make an ideal gift to encourage and comfort." The wood that Allan uses is English hardwood sourced locally. For example, he has recently acquired some timber from Eals. No trees are specially felled.



For the last nine years Allan has set up a stall at the Keswick Convention and knows that his work has been taken to over fifty countries around the world. Allan has a website where you can see examples of his work. 'The Word on Wood'. Is it too early to be thinking of Christmas presents?

ME

Meditation with a Paintbrush

Every year we hold our Exhibition of beautiful, colourful, meaningful art from a team of local talented artists. Every year a team of dedicated practical church regulars puts together the display boards, increasingly creaky and showing their age. No, the boards, not the people! The lighting bars are fitted, holding the structure together, just enough. And every year, in between the boards being assembled, and the artwork being displayed ready for the opening night, I go round, with a ladder, a brush and a pot of white paint. Over the year the boards get grubby, in a corner of the church out of reach of our cleaners. I rub off the cobwebs, paint over the fingermarks, refresh the grey areas, and fill in the blanks where chunks and shavings of wood have been torn off the surface leaving the bare board behind. The boards have been battered, nails knocked too far through pushing splinters off the other side, leaving little sharp points invisible to the quick glance when they were put away the previous year.

And every year I paint over the red-brown smears, evidence of the annual blood sacrifice to the god of art exhibitions. When carrying heavy, cumbersome boards around a tight space it's easy to graze a hand or arm on a rough edge where the surface has been stripped away, get scraped or splintered, or worst of all, catch a finger or hand on one of those lurking nail points. That's ok; Church maintenance isn't for the faint-hearted and they're a tough bunch.

But this year as I worked I found myself musing. I know all the people whose blood I am covering. I can name them. I am painting over the blood of someone I have worked alongside, worshipped and prayed with. I am painting over the blood of someone I have eaten and drunk with, and maybe even got a bit tipsy with! Here I touch the blood of someone I have laughed with, until we cried. Here I touch the blood of someone I have wept with, and held in my arms.

The women went to the tomb bringing oils and spices to care for Christ's body after the cross. To clean up the blood. Of someone they had worked alongside, worshipped and prayed with. Eaten and drunk with. Laughed and cried with, held in their arms. We know what happened to the body, which turned out not to need their TLC after all. We don't know what happened to the wood on which he died. It is believed to be St Helena, Constantine's mother, who first popularised veneration of pieces of the True Cross, imbued with the blood of her saviour. Would I want a piece of it, if it existed? Do I prefer the clean, empty cross of triumphant resurrection, the smooth holding crosses and shining jewellery crosses we wear? Those items, like the cleaned-up shining white boards, are easy to look at. The real, raw intimacy of touching human blood, unfiltered connection to pain and people, is a different prospect. It is harder to touch the human blood he shed for us than drink the divine blood he shares with us week by week, in a communion which should be just as intimate if we are really as present as he is.

I will never be the sort who worships the cross, that emblem of suffering and shame. I will never 'cling to the old rugged cross' even if it is a good tune. But my exhibition preparation has given me a new respect for the original cross; the sheer uncompromising reality of it, the wood that held our friend, in passing.

BNW

Pepin’s Puzzles

THERAPEIA is one of 3 words in the New Testament to mean healing, giving us the word THERAPY. What about *The therapy of wood*? There’s a thought! Oh what a b***t! feeling is *touch* –and *touch* ‘would’, (or should), I’m told, bring hope and much, much more. *Heart of Oak are our ships* was a call to service; the charred roof beams of wood forming a cr*ss at Coventry proclaim *FATHER, FORGIVE*; and a small olive wood cross I often hold, the gift of a fr**nd, says *rise up and live*. The Octagon and Lantern at Ely – a 700 year old m*st*rp**c* of construction in wood and the more recent 14 nave pillars of encased oak trees at the church of the Holy Trinity, Gosport, both speak of divine grace and fortitude, ever present to heal and c*mf*rt - and console.

Did you work out the words with the missing vowels? From the clues in the passage above pair these phrases and quotes below A to I. I've added a few extra ones without clues.

- A Marvel at the Octagon and Lantern

B At Coventry a charred cross

C King Solomon built the temple

D At Holy Trinity Church in Gosport

E The Hebrew Ark of the Covenant

F On a stroll my carpenter friend

G Christians *touch wood* (the cross)

H *The Hidden Life of Trees* is a

I *The Table for the Nation*
- J the 14 nave columns are of oak

K admires doors, windows and gates he made

L made of wood represents salvation

M at Ely formed of 8 mighty oaks

N from floor to ceiling with wood

O proclaims *FATHER FORGIVE*

P is made from 5000 year old black oak

Q whilst pagans honour spirits in the trees

R timely book by Peter Wohlleben

rush	bridge	cock
anemone	pigeon	cut
church	carving	sorrel
pecker	fire	chester

The words in this grid all follow the word WOOD. There are 4 categories of 3 in each -- birds, wild flowers, countrytowns, objects. CONNECT them.

Sometimes one can’t see the wood for the trees – as the saying goes. Instead of trees here are words in each of which the names of 4 species of trees are hidden twice, although one may be found three times.

UNASHAMEDLY, CROAKING, MICHAELMAS, EYEWITNESS, AWASH,
SOAKING, OVERWHELMED, EYEWASH



A giant 30 metre 5000 year old black oak was unearthed and crafted into a very long *Table for the Nation* on display at Ely Cathedral.

© The Woodworker

DP



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Starting on Wednesday 6th September, at The Chat Room on Front Street, **Alpha** is a course for the curious, looking at questions such as: “Is there more to life than this?”

Each evening session starts with a meal at 6.30 followed by a short film presentation and then discussion on the points raised in the film.

If you would like to learn more, pop into The Chat Room, where John, Pauline, Mary or Lizzie will be happy to help.

ANSWERS:

Pepin's Puzzles Missing vowels: beautiful, cross, friend, masterpiece, comfort

Pairing: A and M B and O C and N D and J E and L F and K G and Q H and R I and P
WOOD:cock, pigeon, pecker. / rush, anemone, sorrel./ bridge, church, chester./ cut, carving, fire,

Photo challenge (p. 36) Alston Community Garden – well worth a visit!

About 'Faith in the Moor'

This Magazine is a 'Churches Together' publication. It aims to share information useful to regular and occasional churchgoers, to the wider community, and to tourists and visitors. It reflects the life of the faith community in our corner of the North Pennines. Here people encourage, celebrate and debate their faith.

The different Christian churches who create this magazine get along very well, and work together in a spirit of openness and mutual regard. Faith in the Moor welcomes input in harmony with this open Christian Faith. Also from those whose spirituality is not focussed on a particular religion, and those whose faith is in the Moor itself; its people, its uniqueness, its future. We support whatever enriches our community here.



Current team: BNW = Bar Nash-Williams, LS = Lizzie Smith, ME = Mary Elliot, JH = Jeanette Haslam, MH = Madeleine Harris, RP = Richard Pattison

Oct. Theme: **'My brother's keeper?'** Deadline: **Mon 18th Sept.**

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If you would like a **large print copy** please contact us above.

On 8th July Caroline and Alisdair were married at Kirkhaugh church and have shared with us these photos of their happy day.



Bar Nash-Williams took the service and would like to say a special "Thank you" to church warden Richard Graham for his indefatigable and invaluable help.



Many thanks to Melissa Beattie for the photographs.

Iconic Images of Life on the Moor



If you have a favourite photo of life on our patch, do please send it to the eds – see over for address – and we'll use where it fits. Big or small, landmark or fleeting moment, animal, vegetable or mineral – it's up to you.



This week's photo is a challenge from Mary Elliot.

“Unexpected discovery in a beautiful spot in Alston.” Do you know where?

Answer on p. 33