

David Newnham



I was born in 1936 in Norbury, London and have no siblings.

I lived through the blitz before I was sent to Leicester - just in time for the Coventry blitz.

I passed the 11+ and went to Mitcham Grammer, which was quite a long walk, about 4 miles each way.

At 16 I left school to join the G.P.O. as a YIT !! (Youth-in-Training). A 2-year non-apprenticeship.

After National Service I went back to the G.P.O. as an installer in homes and offices.

I left the G.P.O. and started working as an engineer for a new company, designing and drawing car park layouts and multi-story, and installing parking control barriers etc., started with only 3 people - director, secretary and me. Left there after 10 years building a small workforce.

Joined Modern Telephones as an engineer for a Norwegian intercom, again building up personnel.

After about 10 years I joined a German mobile 'phones company, specialising industrial intercom. and PA., it was very interesting work, I have worked on the Orient Express in Belgium and Germany, worked in Sweden involved making an Oil Rig named 'Beatrice' - now it is off Aberdeen, Scotland.

In August 1992, still working hard, came the stroke - at 56 years!! The rest is history, it took 3 years to finally overcome the grieving process, Dyscover was instrumentally of help.

Now I go bowling (short mat) and Dyscover, I used to go to woodcarving class but it is too far to go and there is nothing like it in Sussex

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The British Museum
The Gayer-Anderson Cat
Bronze cat from Egypt, c. 664 – 30BC
Presented by R.G. 'John' Gayer-Anderson (Pasha)
and Mary Stout Height 38cm
Carved by Dave Newnham Xmas 2004

The 'cat' is carved **with one hand only**. The wood is a piece of **seasoned lime** which has a **crisp, fine grain** and abled to give very detailed work. The tools used are normal carving chisels, but **I cannot use a mallet** (obviously) and **have to cramp everything**. Of course, I had to learn to use tools left-handed

A good carver will not use sandpaper. And, yes I didn't sand it, I used a scraper. The finish - **I used some home-made stain to give a contrast** - tea and coffee grounds, then bee wax and polish.

The inspiration for the 'cat' is simply that I liked the photo (British Museum) and things Egyptian, after all, the first completed carving (post stroke) was Queen Nefertiti (?) which I showed at the 2007 'AphasiaNow' conference

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Acanthus leaf (a test piece for woodcarver)

The left picture is my first attempt. At the end of the meet, when I was leaving and clearing up, I picked-up a discarded half formed, badly carved piece which I took home and just forgot it. The right picture (post stroke) I thought if I could carve that then I would carry on.

Praying hands

The 'praying hands' - is unfinished work - and was my second attempt of carving - pre-stroke. The back of the hand is showing pencil marks where it hasn't been carved to a finish. Maybe - one day I will attempt to finish it.

