

# Spirit of Mayflower: Language of Sculpture Exhibition

Artist and sculptor Rachel Carter has been tracing her local ancestry and framework knitting connections. She has undertaken a series of artist residencies on both sides of the Atlantic. Rachel worked with adult and school groups in the Pilgrim Roots region to create this touring exhibition with the aim of drawing together family history, the Mayflower story and her own work.

Rachel is fascinated with hand processes such as weaving, knotting & tying. Macramé is an ancient technique and art form first practiced in Arabic countries and brought to Europe by merchants who traded in rugs, shawls and tapestries with knotted fringes. Sailors have used knots on board ship for practical and creative purposes for hundreds of years. They knotted twine and rope into nets, hammocks and belts to pass away the long hours at sea.



## Macramé Family Tree

'The Family Tree' hanging piece was specially created for this exhibition and consists of knotted macramé patterns stitched onto fabric. It is shown alongside family history boards taken from her research.

Scrooby in North Nottinghamshire is significant as the birthplace of the pilgrim William Brewster. **Scrooby Knitting and Stitching Group** meet on Thursday afternoons in the Village Hall. They spent four afternoons with Rachel in January 2020 learning about the project and making macramé leaves for the tree. Members of the staff team at Bassetlaw Museum in Retford also joined in. The group shared their own family stories while they worked, some of which can be seen in the exhibition.



Reverse lark, Josephine, basket and double half hitch knots are combined to form the leaf patterns.

60 Year 4 pupils at **Redlands Primary and Nursery School**, Worksop enjoyed finding out about macramé and learning to tie a square knot to make the many individual elements that make up the tree bark and branches. Rachel visited their school and together the pupils made over 150 macramé tree branches in two days!

*"Thank you for a very productive and positive workshop. Rachel had a lovely manner with the children, who really enjoyed their time with her and all were able to participate and achieve"* Jayne James – Art Co-ordinator at Redlands Primary

*"We're proud to be helping with this project to make the macramé leaves for Rachel and Inspire. It's particularly apt for Scrooby because we have a Pilgrim Father who left this village and went on the Mayflower with his family, he was called William Brewster"* Ann Robbins – Scrooby Resident and knitting group member

Our thanks to **Rachel Carter**, Year 4 pupils and staff from **Redlands Primary & Nursery School** in Worksop, **Scrooby Knitting Group**, the team from **Bassetlaw Museum, Retford** and **Neil Pledger** for photography.

## Spirit of Mayflower: Language of Sculpture Exhibition Tour

- **Creswell Craggs Museum and Heritage Centre:** 3 March 2020 – 19 April 2020
- **Mansfield Central Library:** 22 April 2020 – 4 June 2020
- **Beeston Library:** 9 June 2020 – 21 July 2020
- **West Bridgford Library:** 24 July 2020 – 2 September 2020