



# Wood 'n' things



Mid Staffs Woodturning Association Newsletter

Issue – February 2014

Editor: Philip Watts

Editor@mswa.co.uk

## Future Events

### MSWA Meetings

March 7<sup>th</sup>  
Paul Bellamy  
A "Glass" Vase

April 4<sup>th</sup>  
John Berkeley  
Turned Boxes and  
Alternative Materials

### Other Events

March 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>  
Staffordshire Wildlife Trust  
Spring Fair

### Club Competitions

March  
Challenge – Offset Bowl

April  
Novice – Spinning Top

May  
Challenge – Decorated Platter

## Chairman's Notes

We discussed the question of club finances at the AGM in January. There was a reluctance on the part of those who attended that meeting to discuss and vote on any increase. We did not push the issue at that time, which perhaps we should have done.

Subsequently, the club committee has met and reviewed the situation further in the light of more information relating to the expected costs of demonstrators for the programme planned for this year. Your committee has a number of responsibilities. One is to maintain the order and quality of programme that members have indicated that they would like to see. One other is to maintain the long term future of the organisation, this includes the financial stability.

We have reluctantly decided to hold the fees at their present level for the rest of this year. This will require us to dip into the club reserves.

We will review this matter at the end of the year. Factors that would permit us to maintain the present level of fees at that time would be an increase in club membership together with a similar increase in average attendances at meetings, the use of internal demonstrators from within the club, and possibly more hands-on sessions within the programme. We will also attend a number of shows and fairs during the year and would hope that members will donate items for sale such that revenue from this will go back into club funds.

Your support in all these initiatives will be welcomed. The committee cannot achieve them without your direct support.

Philip Watts



## Editor's Scriblings

Seeking inspiration to fill the blank areas of this Newsletter, I occasionally wander through cyberspace looking at other club newsletters. There are some very successful clubs with their own workshops, programmes of weekly meetings, and waiting lists of people wishing to become new members! Try reading the newsletter for the two Auckland wood-turning clubs for some real eye-openers.

However, all clubs go through patches and have common problems as is evidenced by the piece below. I do not think that the author will be worried about copyright. They do say that imitation is the best form of flattery.

Philip Watts

### ARE YOU AN ACTIVE MEMBER

Are you an active member?  
The kind that would be missed  
Or are you just contented  
With you name upon the list.

Do you take an active part?  
To help the club along  
Or are you just satisfied  
To be the kind that just belong.

Do you attend the meetings?  
And mingle with the crowd  
Or just stay at home  
And crab both long and loud.

Do you help plan the programmes  
Get new members quick  
Or leave the work to just a few  
Then talk about the click.

There's quite a list of work involved  
Which means success if done  
But it can be accomplished  
By the help of everyone.

So attend the meetings monthly  
And help with hand and heart  
Do not just be a member  
But take an active part.

**Written by Ann Gray of Tauranga**



## Quentin Smith - Marquetry for woodturners

### Report by Hugh Field

This was another of our "not strictly woodturning" demonstration evenings, introduced in our quest to expand the range of disciplines that can be applied to our hobby. A sort of "blurring" of the boundaries, you might say! Previous demonstrations have included carving, pyrography and airbrushing.

As marquetry is a table top activity it made it a little difficult for a large audience and unfortunately the camera set-up and lighting were not ideal, however Quentin took great care to explain the techniques involved and there was an opportunity during the tea break for members to have a closer look at his work and to ask questions. He covered a lot of ground during the evening!

As Quentin pointed out, one advantage of marquetry is that it can be carried out indoors and this might make it an alternative winter activity for those with unheated workshops!

Marquetry can be used to produce items that can be used as an inlay, for example for the centre of a bowl, or the lid of a box; or a band can be made to go round the outside of a vase, box or bowl. An item can be veneered all over, even if it has a convex surface, as Quentin demonstrated with several of his display items. Obviously in most applications it will be necessary to produce an accurate shallow recess to accommodate the thin veneer, but with care that should not be a problem. Also, if a band is being applied to an item the circumference needs to suit the pattern spacing of the band in order that the join is not apparent.



Quentin started by giving an introduction to the different types of marquetry, including an example of using flattened straw, attached to cardboard, which needed no further finishing; and an item where veneer had been cut out, shaded, and re-inserted to depict a Staffordshire knot. He also showed an example where a fretsaw had been used to cut a pattern in two veneers laid together, one light and one dark, to enable two coasters to be veneered, one being the negative of the other. He gave an overview of the tools required; cutting mat, steel straight-edges, masking tape (cheap stuff from "Poundland is "low tack" and ideal for marquetry!), knives, etc. Swann Morton is the blade of choice but the scalpel



## Wood 'n' things



type holder can allow the blade to "waggle" so a craft type handle, which accepts the same blades but supports them better is preferable. This is available from Quentin, if you can't find one elsewhere, along with his range of ready made inserts at [www.qjsmarquetry.co.uk/](http://www.qjsmarquetry.co.uk/).

During the course of his demonstration he showed how a sharp cutting point can be re-created by using a diamond hone on the BACK of the point.

He started by demonstrating the "window" technique where an aperture is cut in a piece of veneer and then filled in with a different wood. A drawing of an overlapping triangle star was transferred to the veneer using carbon paper and then pencilled in using a straight-edge. Asked how many pieces he would need to cut to make the design I think most thought either 12 or perhaps 8. Quentin said he would do it with 5! Obviously some pieces he would cut out were to be used later! He then cut out the first triangle using a straight-edge and knife (taking care to keep the blade perpendicular to the veneer) emphasising that care is needed to avoid cutting past the points, by cutting from each end to the centre of the line. After carefully "popping out" the triangle he then placed a contrasting veneer underneath the aperture, taking grain orientation into account, and taped it into position. This stops the veneer moving and protects against the veneer against tearing when cutting across the grain. Apparently dyed veneer is more difficult to cut across grain.

He then cut against the edge of the top veneer to create a matching shape in the contrasting veneer, again cutting from each end towards the centre. The surplus veneer was removed from the top layer and the top layer, with aperture was layed over the cut out contrasting piece. Tape was laid on top to keep the pieces together.

To glue the piece in place, the assembly was turned over and a fine bead of PVA glue was run along the joint, rubbed in, and the surplus removed using the back of the knife as a scraper. Quentin uses fine tip glue dispensing bottles obtainable from [www.finetip.co.uk/](http://www.finetip.co.uk/).

Tape was then applied to the back so work could continue. The next triangle actually cut through the first insert but the same principle applied to cutting the next insert. Unfortunately at this stage Quentin realised he had wrongly cut the second triangle so would be unable to complete the original design, so we don't know if he would have done it in the 5 stages he promised!

Quentin offered a few tips. It's easier to turn the work around so as to be always cutting towards yourself, and that cutting curves is easier by making a short cut towards you and then advancing slightly and repeating so that the cuts join up to complete the edge. Take care when removing the tape as it's easy to break the veneer across the grain.

The next technique to be covered was cutting strips and rectangles. These can be used to make bands or sheets which can be cut into shapes as inserts. Obviously accuracy is important when cutting the strips and this is achieved by a simple trick. To start with, a straight-edge is taped to the cutting board to keep it stable, and provide a datum. Spacers are then used either side of the veneer (which has had its first edge trimmed straight) to be cut to position a second straight-edge at a pre-set distance from the datum. This enables a set of strips to be accurately cut. These strips can be then placed on tape (a tip here is to apply a strip of tape along a straight-edge so that when it is turned over a wide, stable section of adhesive is exposed onto which the veneer strips can be laid, starting against the straight-edge, and butted together to create a sheet. The resulting sheet can then be turned round and cut at right angles to create rectangles, or at an angle to produce trapezoids. These shapes can be combined, and different veneers can be used to create a wide variety of patterns for inserts and bands. Quentin demonstrated how staggering the joins, or using contrasting and alternating veneers can create many different effects. Tape is used to locate the pieces to enable glue to applied to the back as before. Suitable spacers for setting the cut width range from machine nuts, coins, bits of plastic or wood, or anything where two matching thicknesses can be selected.





## *Wood 'n' things*



The next part of the demonstration was using a Fiskars Shape cutter and circle guide. This is a device that uses an articulated blade which follows the template to produce accurate disks. More information can be found at [www.fiskars.co.uk/](http://www.fiskars.co.uk/). The device does not actually cut through the veneer but provides a suitable guide for the shape to be finally cut with the knife.

Ted Gill took over at this stage to demonstrate his inexpensive vacuum clamping technique to glue the insert that Quentin had cut into a recess in a turned part. This makes use of "zip" bags that are sold for packing bedding and enable a vacuum cleaner to create sufficient clamping force to ensure that veneer inserts are evenly clamped. Once the vacuum cleaner has evacuated the bag a non-return valve and sealing cap retain the vacuum for sufficiently long for the glue to set. Small inserts could probably be applied using conventional mechanical clamps but vacuum clamping really comes into its own with convex (or concave) surfaces. Ted had successfully used this method to attach veneer to noticeably convex surfaces and large items can be easily accommodated, for example the skate-board that Quentin had on display. Items that have a recess, such as a bowl will need to have a cloth pad positioned across the rim to allow the vacuum to form in the recess.

Quentin described how it is possible to apply veneer to curved surfaces, such as an egg and how the shape of the veneer sections has to alter in order to accommodate the change in geometry across the item. He had a number of items on display.

Next, he moved on to hot sand shading. This utilises an electrically heated sand bed into which the veneer section can be "dipped" to darken the edge. The degree of shading depending on how deep, and for how long the veneer is dipped, and it is sometimes necessary to trim the edge to reinstate the straight edge, and to remove shading which is too dark. He demonstrated how this technique is used to shade each segment of a "scallop" insert (otherwise known as a Sheraton Fan). As the veneer shrinks slightly with the application of heat it is important to start off oversize so that the shape can be finally trimmed to fit.

We were next shown how a number of basket weave patterns could be created by cutting strips of veneer and using sand shading to create the illusion of the weave.

Finally, Quentin showed how sheets of contrasting veneer can be glued edge to edge to enable shapes used, for example in the Compass Rose to be more easily produced in quantity. This technique makes use of a jig to enable the veneer edges to be hand sanded straight and square. The sheets are then taped together and the joined sheets "flexed" to enable a glue bead to be applied to the join. Holding the joined sheets in slight reflex then ensures a tight join.

Although finishing was not covered, it was emphasised that sanding needed to be done carefully as the standard thickness for veneer is only 0.6mm (less than 1/32").

He commented that light veneers can be dyed using food dye diluted with methylated spirit as long as time is allowed for it to penetrate. I can confirm that ready made spirit dyes also work well.

All in all a very informative demonstration. I am sure that marquetry has its place in enhancing wood-turned items and does not require a great outlay in tools and equipment.

I certainly intend to give it a try and already have a few ideas that might see their way into future competition or display items.

Hugh Field



# Wood 'n' things



Further examples of Quentin's work (above and below), and Ted Gill demonstrating his vacuum bag technique assisted by "Henry" (right)







## Club Competitions

The February Novice competition results were First, by a big margin, Ivan Cotteril, with a very nicely executed bud vase complete with flower. Second, Jane Russell. Third, Les Hatton.



## Newsletter

The Newsletter is for your and the club's benefit. If you have something to say then write it and send it to me for inclusion. I can accept text in almost any format, although simple text files are the best. Similarly, I can accept photographs in both hard and soft copy, in many formats.



## Club information

Your club committee for 2013 is:-

### **Chairman - Philip Watts**

Email: [chairman@mswa.co.uk](mailto:chairman@mswa.co.uk)

Tel. 0121 308 7838

### **Secretary – John McElroy**

Email: [secretary@mswa.co.uk](mailto:secretary@mswa.co.uk)

### **Treasurer – Vance Lupton**

Email: [treasurer@mswa.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@mswa.co.uk)

### **Assistant Treasurer – Hugh Field**

### **Events Secretary – Ted Gill**

Email: [events@mswa.co.uk](mailto:events@mswa.co.uk)

### **Abrasives -**

### **Newsletter editor – Philip Watts**

Email: [editor@mswa.co.uk](mailto:editor@mswa.co.uk)

### **Webmanager – Philip Watts**

Email: [webman@mswa.co.uk](mailto:webman@mswa.co.uk)

## **Committee Members**

Albert Heath  
Dawn Hopley  
Peter Worrall

### **Health and Safety Advisor**

Hugh Field

Please only use phone numbers if absolutely necessary.

## Merchandise



### Abrasives

If you need that finishing touch, the club has packs of Abranet, recommended by demonstrators and other club members, at £2.20 for a set of 7 sheets - 120 -600 grit.



**Books and DVDs** The club has the following DVDs amongst others for hire.

### MSWA DVD List

- 1 AWGB Instant Gallery 1991-2003
- 2 Sharpening GMC
- 3 Turning Projects with Richard Raffan
- 4 Turning Wood with Alan Holtham – Table lamp
- 5 Colouring wood – Jan Sanders
- 6 3 Disc collection – Trent Bosch
- 7 Bowls for Beginners – Ray Jones
- 8 Course on Spindle Turning – Ray Jones
- 9 Making and Decorating Platters – Mick Hanbury
- 10 Making and Decorating Boxes – Mick Hanbury
- 11 Turn It On – Vol 1 – Jimmy Clewes
- 12 Turn It On – Vol 2 – Jimmy Clewes
- 13 Turn It On – Vol 3 – Jimmy Clewes
- 14 All Glued Up No1 – Sue Harker
- 15 Turned Out Nice Again – Sue Harker
- 16 Wood Turning with Steve Heeley – Steve Heeley
- 17 Woodcut Turning Tools
- 18 Robert Sorby Specialist Tools
- 19 Inlaid and Novelty Boxes – Chris Stott
- 20 Hope for us all – Simon Hope
- 21 Hope for us all – Vol2 – Simon Hope
- 22 Wet Turning With a Difference – Stuart Mortimer
- 23 AWGB Seminar 2011
- 24 Turning Green Wood – Michael O'DonnellID
- 25 Woodturning, a craftsman's guide. - Mark Baker

**Dawn Hopley has taken over the responsibility for these items and may be seen at Club Meetings**





## Turning tips

This section is for any tips or advice you would like to pass on to other members. It doesn't matter what it is, if you discovered something you found useful, that you think may benefit others, please pass it on.



## Useful websites and suppliers

There is a lot of information available on the internet but some is better than others. If you come across any useful sites, please let me know and I will publish them here.

Steve is a member of Coombe Abbey Turners and has a massive stock of timber which he is happy to sell to turners and woodworkers. The timber consists mostly of locally sourced native hardwoods, planked and kiln dried, and is available at great prices; some really lovely stuff. Steve lives in Sapcote in Leicestershire, not too far away, and close enough to Axminster in Nuneaton for a joint visit! Steve can be contacted on 01455 273894, and his website is [www.woodcharm.co.uk](http://www.woodcharm.co.uk)

In Kingsbury Water Park they have created a log yard and have a large supply of various timbers. It would appear that they are bringing all the forestry felling for North Warwickshire to this site for disposal. They have large pieces down to branches and sections from Birch, Oak, Beech and other locally grown woods. Please note that these are "green", although some of the larger pieces have been there for a year or two. The only downside is that you have to pay £3.50 to get into the car park. Go to the Park shop and ask for James and they will radio for him to come to the yard. If he is not available, Fred will assist.

## Questions and answers

This section is an opportunity for members to ask questions for other members to answer, primarily about wood-turning but I see no reason why this couldn't be extended further. There is a lot of knowledge in the club on many subjects and this should be an easy way to get answers.

## Items for sale or wanted

If you have any items for sale, or if you are trying to find something, send me the details and I will put it in the next issue.

### For Sale

Axminster Jet Bench Top Circular Saw JTS-10

Assembled and complete with stand

Little used and taking up room     £150

### Ring Philip Watts on 0121 308 7838

### Custom Toolrests – David Fields

David's grandson is able to make tool-rests, similar to the Robert Sorby system, out of round steel bar. These can be tailored to suit your requirements i.e. tool-post stem and length of the actual tool-rest. At the moment he is only doing straight tool-rests but bowl rests may be feasible in the future.

And if you have a Record lathe and do small spindles, he has developed a cranked tool-post, allowing the tool-rest to get close to the work, without the banjo dropping off the front bed bar.

If you would like to see one, or want to discuss your requirements, please have a chat with David on 01283 229072

### Carnauba wax polishes – Paul Bellamy

Following the favourable reaction to the polishing kits Paul started earlier this year, he has established a supply of carnauba wax flakes. These can be used to make your own 'sticks' or mixed with other components to make a range of polishes. He is selling these in 250g bags but could do larger quantities if you need it. He also has some ready-made wax blocks, comprising 60% beeswax/ 40% carnauba. These are softer than most 'wood-turning sticks' but he prefers this as it doesn't score your work.

He also has more of his 'Buffing kits', similar to Chestnut's system. For more details, e-mail him at

[paul.bellamy@mswa.co.uk](mailto:paul.bellamy@mswa.co.uk)