



Forthcoming events

Club Meetings

4th November
David Winter
“Star” bowl

2nd December
Mark Hancock
Flat work demonstration

Club Competitions

November Challenge

Item assembled from at least 3
turned parts

December Novice Bowl

Other Events

12th - 15th October
Wizardry in Wood
Carpenters’ Hall, City of London

<https://www.wizardryinwood.com/>

13th - 16th October
**Midlands Model Engineering
Exhibition**
Warwickshire Exhibition Centre
CV31 1XN.

www.midlandsmodeleengineering.co.uk/

5th & 6th November
Toolpost Open Day
Didcot, OX11 7HR
www.toolpost.co.uk/

19th & 20th November
**Staffordshire Wildlife Craft
Fair**
The Wolseley Centre,
Stafford ST17 0WT

Chairman’s Notes

Our October Meeting was the second “Hands-on Session” of the year. A modest attendance but with the welcome addition of visitors who may, hopefully, become full members in due course.

Three lathes in use. It would have been four but Dawn Hopley had received an very early morning call-out with the Staffordshire Search and Rescue Team and had wisely returned home to bed.

Ted Gill was making spinning tops representing dancing ladies. Vance demonstrated a number of projects and techniques throughout the evening including decorative tea light holders and stylised Christmas Trees. I had intended to demonstrate an easy way to make small ornamental bird boxes but spent most of the evening providing basic tuition to a prospective new member. But this is, after all, one of the possibilities for a “Hands-on” Evening.

Next month, we welcome David Winter as our demonstrator. David provides a valuable service by collecting, preparing, and reselling wood for turning, at very reasonable prices. A particular speciality is the putting together small packages of wood suitable for a specific project such as an earring holder. David will be demonstrating what can be made from a blank prepared on a bandsaw to provide the basis of a “star-shaped” bowl but that can also be developed into box designs.

On the way back from a short holiday in the Lake District, we stopped at G & S Timber near Junction 40 on the M6. A reasonable selection of wood, but all the bowl blanks had been pre-cut to a rough circle on a bandsaw. This left me wondering why? Apart from the fact that it would be impossible to turn some of the square items as demonstrated by Vance, we all have machines for making things round. They are called lathes!

Philip Watts

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Editors Scribblings

Again, house decorating and other projects have dominated my last month, but I have started on my entry for the November challenge. Having suggested the theme of “an item assembled from at least three turned components”, I later realised that all my entries for this year’s Challenge would have met this specification! So, it has to be something a bit different, I feel. I was surprised how “rusty” I felt after a few weeks without doing any turning. It took a while to feel really confident at the lathe, I really must keep at it more often again.

The Staffordshire Wildlife Christmas Craft fair at the Wolseley Bridge Centre fast approaches. Thank you to all those members who have provided items to sell there. Vance’s “Conversion challenge” has resulted in a variety of items. This Newsletter also contains several suggestions (with instructions!) for suitable items you could make. Please bring them to the November meeting.

November looks like being busy month for outside events, I’ve tried to list those that I think will be of interest. There are too many for me to attend, so if you do get to any of them please consider taking a few photographs with a view to doing a short write up for the Newsletter.

Hugh Field

October Competition (Novice)

This was for a pair of matching tea light holders. Voting was very close but Graham Massey came first with his square versions (which he has kindly donated to the club to sell), and John Meers was second with his intriguing leaf design. This has moved Graham into the lead in the Novice competition.





October hands-on open evening.

As Philip has already mentioned, the second of our hands-on open evenings this year was slightly better attended than the previous one in May, with 14 members and 3 visitors attending. As Philip has already said, it appears highly likely that at least one of the visitors will join our club.



Ted Gill got busy on the club Nova lathe turning cute dancing ballerina spinning tops (see later article), Vance Lupton brought his Charnwood lathe and was making tea light holders similar to the one that David Lowe had recently demonstrated at the July 2016 meeting (see later article) and also started to make an offset turned Christmas tree, (see later article).



Philip Watts used his small Axminster lathe to demonstrate his ideas for simple miniature decorative bird boxes (see later article), using plastic pipe for the body; and also helped a visiting beginner turner with some basic spindle work.

I had set the CCTV system up on the club lathe for anyone who wanted to have a bit of practice, but there were, unfortunately, no volunteers.

Ron Dixon was busy sharpening saws, a skill that is sadly becoming more scarce these days.





Ken Allen kindly brought along a box of wood to give away (I acquired a piece of Wenge, a wood I've heard of but never used before!).

Last, but not least, John McElroy was quick to get the kettles going so all could enjoy tea or coffee and biscuits!

I think all enjoyed their evening.

Hugh Field

Ballerina tops

Here is one example for a design and how to make these:

<http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.woodturner.org/resource/resmgr/FUNdamentals/TurnersAreTops20150929.pdf> (see pages 19 - 22, but there are lots of ideas for spinning tops on the other pages!)

'Twinkling' Tea Lights

A fairly quick project but perhaps best tackled in small batches – to allow paint to dry.

Material required: 6"x 2" bowl blank – e.g. sycamore or beech, Ebonising paint/lacquer, iridescent paints and 'Opal Dust' (e.g. Jo Sonja's)

Process:

- Find the centre of the blank, drill and mount it onto a screw chuck.
- Flatten the base and true the edge.
- Mark out and cut a chucking recess about 5 mm deep.
- Mark a pencil line on the face about 10mm away from this to establish a foot area.
- On the edge, mark a pencil line around the blank about 10 to 15mm in from the headstock side.
- Remove the material between the two pencil lines finishing in a gentle convex curve.
- Sand, seal and finish the base.





- Remove the blank and remount it onto the chuck jaws – in expansion mode.
- Turn this top face as before finishing with a gentle curve from the centre to join the curve you have turned from the base.
- Sand and seal as before.
- Paint this surface black (the iridescent colours don't show up well on a light background). I use 'Chestnut Ebonising lacquer' and leave to dry. (Or encourage the drying with a hairdryer!)

Applying the paint effect:

- I use *Jo Sonja's iridescent paint*. Turn the lathe speed up high (approx 2,500/3000 rpm). Place a small quantity of paint onto your finger and apply to the spinning blank near its centre. *Tip: Stand clear of the firing line when doing this to avoid the spray, and protect the lathe bed with a cloth!!* The paint should be thrown out ward to the edges of the blank by centrifugal force. Stop the lathe, check the results and repeat if necessary.
- When satisfied use a little of the Jo-Sonja's 'Opal Dust' and apply to the spinning blank as before.
- Stop, check and re-apply if necessary.
- Set aside to dry – or use a hairdryer to speed up the drying process.

Drilling for the glass/metal candle cup holder

- Set up a drill/Forstner bit of an appropriate size to fit the candle cup you are going to use and drill down to the depth of your holder - less 1 or 2 mm. (Preferably use a drill or bit slightly larger than the diameter of the glass tea light holder you will use but failing this use the largest size you have and widen the resulting hole to fit with a parting tool etc. Alternatively you can do the whole process with a parting tool).
- Sand, seal and finish the inside.

Offset turned Christmas tree ornaments

I first saw this demonstrated by Hugh Field at a Staffordshire Wildlife Trust event the club attended - and then later saw it detailed in an article on the 'Woodturning on line' web site at: <http://www.woodturningonline.com/> which incidentally is, in my opinion, an excellent resource for woodturning and well worth looking at! This particular item can be found under the heading 'Turning Projects' (upper left side of the page) and then find the topic 'Ornaments.' Or use this link:

<http://www.davidreedsmith.com/Articles/EccentricTrees/EccentricTrees.htm>

Initial preparation:

Find the centres of both ends of your blank and centre punch. (I also cut off the corners of the blank using a bandsaw to speed up the turning, but it's not an essential step.)

On the end which will be the base of the tree draw a circle about 10mm radius (or use the circle made by a Steb Centre if that's what you are using) and mark three equally spaced, offset centres on this line. Centre punch each one and label them '1', '2', and '3'.





Preliminary turning

Mount your blank between centres and turn to a cylinder. In the headstock end of the lathe I used a Steb centre - but any form of drive centre would do just as well. In the tailstock I used a ring centre to limit the penetration of the centre point which, as the cone gets turned to a narrow point, might otherwise start to split the wood.

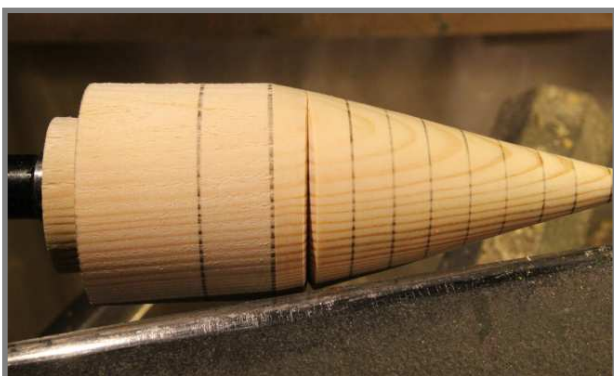
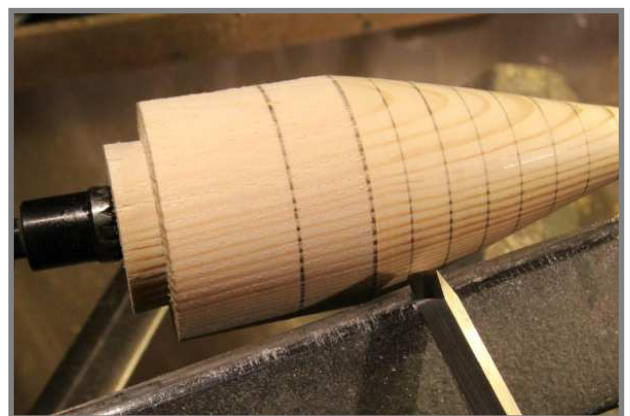
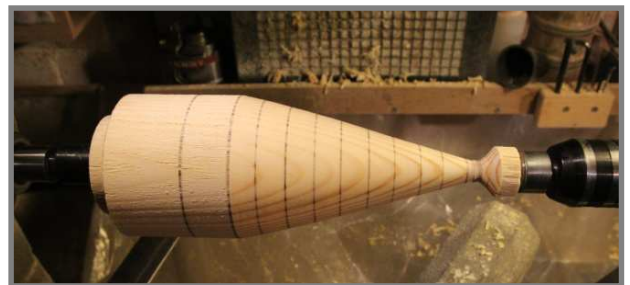
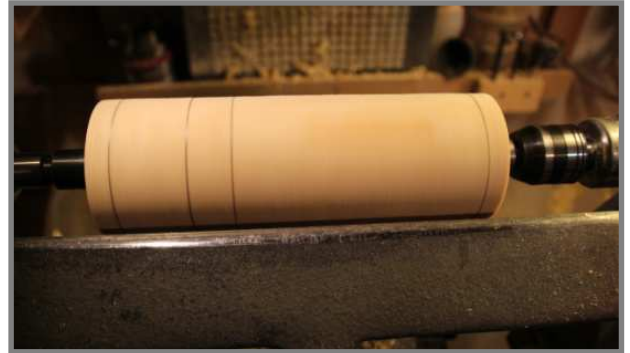
In pencil, mark out the positions for the chucking spigot, the tree base/container, the trunk, and about 10mm to 15mm at the tailstock end.

Begin turning down the cone of the tree using whatever tool you feel comfortable and safe using. A skew chisel is recommended but much can be done with the spindle roughing gauge and spindle gauge. Remember to leave the tailstock spigot which will be needed to support the offset turning.

Once the cone has been turned make a series of pencil marks around the cone about 10 to 12mm apart for the 'branches' of the tree. Don't be random with this – they need to be of a uniform, regular spacing.

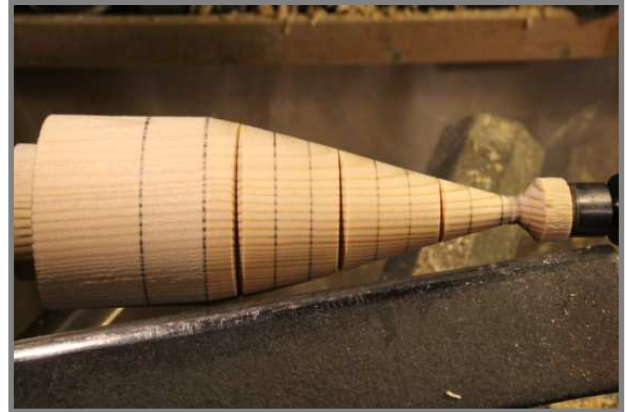
Offset the headstock end into the first, '1', offset mark. Reposition the tool rest so as to avoid the offset rotation of the work – turn the work by hand every time you do this to check.

With a skew chisel held with the long point *down* make your first cut into the rotating work on the first line. Create your V cut to a depth approximately the same as the ghost image of the rotating work. Stop the lathe to check progress. The cut should go about 2/3rds of the way around the cone.





When satisfied move down the cone missing two lines and repeat the process. Continue in this fashion – turning a V cut, leaving two lines, etc- until you reach the tip of the cone.



Now offset the headstock end into the second, '2', mark. Re-check that the work doesn't catch the tool rest again. Cut your next V cut on the line to the right of the first one.



Continue along the cone cutting further V cuts to the right of those already done until you reach the end of the cone.



Make the final third, '3', offset and repeat as above.

Painting the work

Remount the work on centre and seal the work with a sanding sealer to prevent the paint from bleeding.



With a narrow brush colour the inside of the V cuts thoroughly but trying to avoid getting colour onto the surface. (You will later re-skim the cone so any paint overspill will be removed but its better – and more economical – to avoid getting paint on the surface in the first place.)

Put aside to dry – or use a hairdryer to speed up the process.

Final turning and finishing

Remount the work in the headstock chuck but support the cone end with the tailstock centre.

Skim the cone to remove any paint overspill.

Turn down the section for the tree trunk and the base – but don't part off yet.





Go through the grits and sand the work to a fine finish.

The work can be sealed and finished on the lathe and then parted off or could be parted off and the sealed and finished off the lathe.

VARIATIONS

Try concave and convex trees. Using two colours, like the traditional Christmas colours of red and green, looks good but using three or more didn't seem to be quite so effective.

Vance Lupton



Miniature Bird Boxes – An easy way!

Miniature bird boxes make an attractive Christmas Tree ornament and there are many articles around on how to make them. Most suggest the use of a contrasting wood for the mid-section. I have made them that way but found that the process of boring out the central part took almost as long as the rest of the rest of the work.

It struck me that it might be possible to shorten the time by using an alternative material for the central section. Pieces of plastic waste pipe that had been purchased and used to make netting frames for my wife's fruit trees appeared to be such an option. Nominally 32mm in diameter, I used pieces about 45mm long and drilled the "entry hole" on a bench drill.

The ends were turned from 50mm square stock about 150mm long. Turned to round, each end was taken down to the correct diameter for holding in my Record chuck. I split this length about 2/3 of the way from one end. Taking the longer piece as the top, this was held in the chuck and the end taken down to be a push fit onto the plastic pipe. The centre was then drilled and turned out to reduce the weight of the top. It looks better too if the projecting portion of the top is cut in to produce the effect of an overhanging eave.

The top is now reversed and held in the chuck. A useful tip here is to take a short length of the pipe and cut a slit in one side, forming a split ring that can be placed over the top and used to protect the wood from marking by the chuck jaws. The top can now be turned into whatever shape of finial takes your fancy (or turns you on, as they say). Do not forget to drill a fine hole through the top to take a length of fishing line or equivalent to suspend the finished ornament

A similar technique provides the bottom of the bird boxes. Tops and bottoms are glued into the central section.



The white pipe can be used either unpainted or sprayed in a bright colour to contrast with wooden ends.

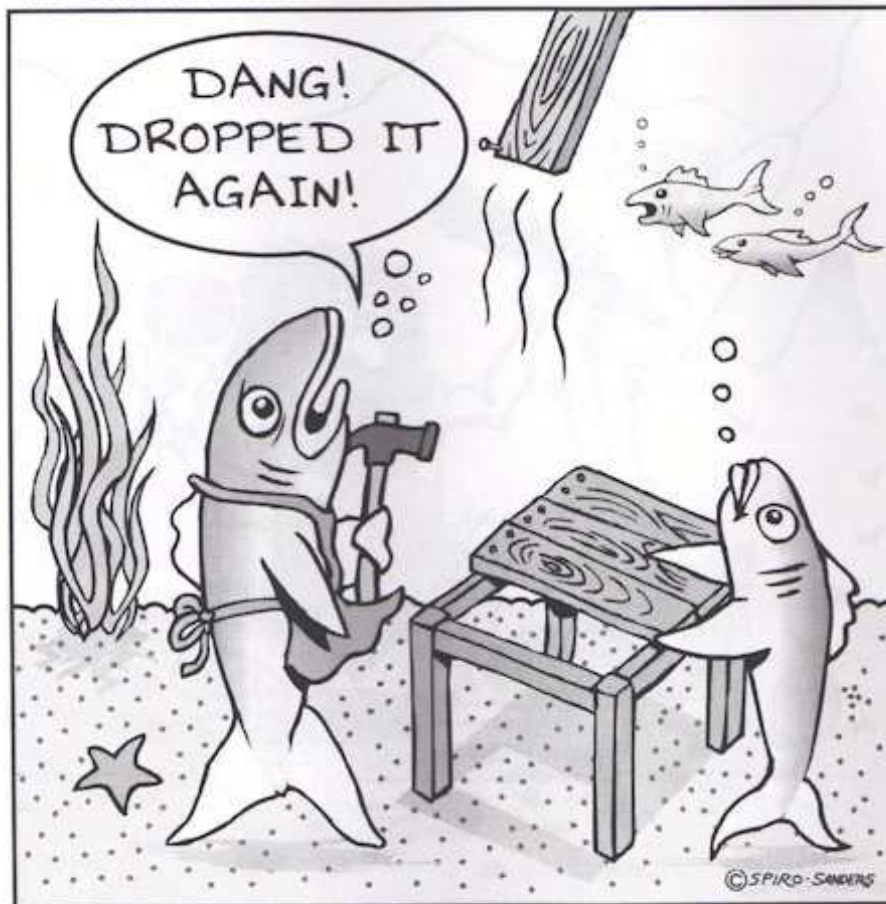
A quick and easy way to produce what hopefully will sell well at the Christmas Fair at the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust at the end of November.

The photograph shows unfinished ornaments ready for final assembly. The split ring used to protect the wooden pieces can be seen in the centre at the bottom of the picture.

Philip Watts



And finally.....



Why fish quit woodworking.



Hints and tips

This section is for any tips or advice you would like to pass on to other members. If you have discovered something you found useful, that you think may benefit others, please pass it on.

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Custom Toolrests – David Fields

David is an ex member of MSWA and his 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@pnbellamy.co.uk

[David and Paul are members of Derwent Woodturning Club, as am I, so I could act as "go between" on these if required - Hugh Field]



Abrasives and other items

Mirka Abranet 70 x 125mm Sheets:

5 x Mixed Grit Pack (120, 180, 240, 400 and 500) = £2.00 per pack

Mirka Abranet 50mm Sanding Discs:

7 x Mixed Grit pack (80, 120, 180, 240, 320, 400, 600) = £1.50 per pack

Rhinogrip 50mm Sanding Discs:

7 x Mixed Grit pack (80, 120, 180, 240, 320, 400, 600) = £0.90 per pack

Flexipad Sanding Pads (for above discs):

50mm Velcro Conical Spindle Pad with 6mm shaft = £8.82 each

J-Flex Sanding Paper:

5 x 1m lengths mixed grits 120, 180, 240, 320 & 400 = £9.50 per pack

Screwdrivers:

Various sizes donated to club = £1 each

BondFix Superglue:

50g Bottle of Medium Viscosity = £3 per bottle

Donated Items:

Various Books and Magazines = 50p to £2 each



DVDs

I haven't published the list of DVDs this month, please refer to a previous issue.

If any members have DVDs which are not on the list, but which they would like to donate to the Club, they would be most welcome.



Club information

Your club committee for 2016 is:-

Chairman - Philip Watts;

chairman@mswa.co.uk

Tel. 0121 308 7838

Secretary – John McElroy

secretary@mswa.co.uk

Treasurer – Vance Lupton:

treasurer@mswa.co.uk

Events Secretary – Ted Gill

events@mswa.co.uk

Newsletter editor – Hugh Field

editor@mswa.co.uk

Tel: 0121 329 2911

Webmanager – Philip Watts

webman@mswa.co.uk

Health and Safety Advisor -

Hugh Field

health.safety@mswa.co.uk

and **Dawn Hopley**

Please only use phone numbers if absolutely necessary.