



Chair's Chatter

Plate Spinning Again!

I thought last month was busy, but July is packed full of events and things to do. So much so that I've been chasing my own tail yet again. It all started with two woodturning demonstrations. One at our home club, which seemed to go down very well, and then another at Wolverhampton Turners. Although it does take a lot of time to plan, prepare and practice my demonstrations, I am finding it very rewarding indeed. The positive feedback, ideas and suggestions have been amazing and each club is unique. Every audience has a different perspective and comes up with different ideas and suggestions. Our club was no different and I came home buzzing with new designs and techniques in my head. There were various solutions for drilling jigs, new weaving techniques, other materials etc. etc. etc. You came up with them all! All I have to do now is find the time to try everything.

I did mention that I was looking gain more experience with basket weaving and that I had been told about a few free courses being run locally, well here are the details. They are mainly being run by the Forest of Mercia CIC (Community Interest Company) and are either free or just £5 per person. Most of them are being taught by David Knowles who some of you may know. It's been very difficult to track down these details, as they are poorly advertised and the FOM website is not very informative. I eventually tracked them all down via word of mouth and on Facebook.

1. Monday 24th and Tuesday 25th July – Free Hedgerow Basket Making Course – Use hedgerow materials to make your own basket to keep. Event being held at the new Forest of Mercia Hilton Green site, off Hilton Lane in Essington. Contact Rebecca Banks on 01922 417770 for full details.
2. Thursday 27th July – Bramble Basket Making with David Knowles in Hednesford Park. 09:30 to 03:30. Contact Lynn Evans on 07855 099353
3. Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th July – Willow Weaving Workshops with David Knowles – Shopping Baskets – 09:30 to 03:30 - £5 per person over 19. Children free. The Museum of Cannock Chase, Valley Road, Hednesford WS12 1TD. Tel. 01543 877666.

The Forest of Mercia CIC offer a wide range of other free or low cost courses. They are briefly listed on their main website, but the full details can only be found on the Facebook site. I will give you the links below. If you want to find out more, then it may be worth phoning them or visiting their head office at the Chasewater Innovation Centre.

Some leaflets are also located at the Museum of Cannock Chase, but they are not yet listed on their website.

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

<https://www.facebook.com/ForestofMercia/>

https://www.facebook.com/pg/ForestofMercia/events/?ref=page_internal



Finally, I just want to give Wolverhampton Woodturners a mention. It appears that they have very similar circumstances to our own club. Their numbers are dwindling and they are struggling for volunteers to run the club. They have a fantastic venue at Fordhouses and a good selection of club lathes and I really think that they would like our support. Their next meeting is a hands-on night on Tuesday 8th August and they are hoping to attract a few new members. I think they would really appreciate it if a few of us could also pop along to help. I am planning to go and take my new lathe for people to see and try and it would be great to see a few familiar faces. For full details please visit their website at ... <http://www.wolverhamptonwoodturners.org.uk/> . Below is also their programme for 2017/2018:-

Aug 08 - Hands on evening
Sep 12 - Steve Heeley (Professional)
Oct 10 - Angus Stewart (Member)
Nov 14 - Robert Till (Professional)
Dec 12 - Hands on evening
Jan 09 - Paul Bellamy (Professional)
Feb 13 - Doug Rochester (Member)
Mar 13 - AGM & Hands on evening

Dawn

Editor's Scribblings

In his editorial this month, Mark Baker (editor of Woodturning Magazine) asks the question of his readers "are you most active during the winter or summer months?". Time of year doesn't seem to make much difference to me as far as comfort is concerned; although my workshop is fairly small (a single garage) it is integral with the house and has insulated doors, so is relatively cool in summer and requires minimal heating in winter. Replacing the old up and over door a few years ago transformed it! The old door acted like radiator in summer, didn't fit well so it was cold in winter and, of course, it had to be fully opened to get access thus losing any heat within. The new doors are tri-fold so I need only open a third of the width, and they are made of steel so are secure. An added bonus is the powder coated finish is virtually maintenance free. They also take up less space than the up and over. Anyway, back to the question! When I thought about it I realised that my woodturning activities are largely dictated by what is happening at the Club. Competitions, craft fairs - both mean that I seem to be in my workshop just as much at any time of the year. How about you?

Dawn also raised a question during her demonstration this month - what lathe(s) do you own? This could be a useful list to anyone who is in the process of buying a new/used lathe. Having pondered whether to buy the Nova Comet Dawn was interested to learn at the meeting that one of the other members already owned one. So, how about letting me know what you own?

I'll start the ball rolling by saying that my old (converted to electric variable speed drive) treadle lathe was replaced by a second hand Nova lathe, similar to the club one, a couple of years ago. It had been converted to variable speed and I like it. It takes up a little more space than my old one but is mounted on a (retractable) wheeled cabinet, with drawers, so provides storage space as well. A slight downside is that, like the club lathe, it has a M30 x 3.5 spindle thread; not a problem with my two Supernova chucks as the lathe came with suitable chuck inserts. The Axminster Clubman chuck was more of a problem, initially solved by purchasing a M30 to 1" x 8 adaptor; I have since re-cut the



thread in the body to M30 x 3.5. The adaptor is now only needed for the smaller Record RP2000 chuck and some faceplates that I own.



I spent the weekend of 15th and 16th July at the UK and Ireland Woodturning Symposium (UKIWS), held at the Hilton Hotel in Coventry. This is the second year for this event, organised very efficiently by three very keen YouTube woodturners. This year was even better than 2016 with space for more trade stands resulting from holding the masterclasses in a separate suite in the hotel. In addition to the masterclasses (for which an additional fee had to be paid) there was an almost continuous series of public demonstrations. I didn't see any fellow club members on either day, but it was very well attended so I may have just missed seeing you. It had attracted delegates and demonstrators from the rest of Europe and even a student from USA

who is studying spalted wood who had travelled 8,000 miles to be at the event and to further her studies. She kindly agreed to give a short talk on her subject between other demonstrations.

If you have yet to visit a UKIWS then I can highly recommend that you book for 2018! Visit www.ukiws.co.uk/ for more information.

Hugh Field

July Competition

There were four entries this month, the subject being a plant stand. Philip Watts was the winner with his pierced design (complete with plant!), Dawn Hopley was second with her pedestal design incorporating (naturally!) some weaving, John Meers was third with his carved and pyrographed one. The other entry was by Hugh Field.



1st - Philip Watts



2nd - Dawn Hopley



3rd - John Meers



4th - Hugh Field

Mid. year competition update

Novice - John Meers is the only member who has entered items this year, so is currently winning by default.

Challenge - Current positions are:-

Hugh Field	8 points	(3 entries)
Philip Watts	7 points	""
Geoff Payne	6 points	(2 entries)
Dawn Hopley	4 points	""
Vance Lupton	3 points	(1 entry)
John Meers	3 points	(2 entries)
Jane Russell	2 points	""
John McElroy	1 point	(1 entry)

July display table

It was nice to see a selection of items on the display table again this month - Vance Lupton and Ted Gill had obviously been inspired by Mark Sanger's June demonstration. I particularly liked the paper finial on one of Vance's hollow vessels! This is an excellent way to finalise a design before spending many hours carving and sanding a spiral finial. Vance had also experimented with wood bleaching as suggested by Sally Burnett when she demonstrated for us in March this year.

I brought along two of my hemi-spherical bowls (inspired by those of Australian turner Pat Johnson who featured in the April 2017 issue of Woodturning magazine). These are turned as a complete sphere, with a paper glue joint, so that a pair of bowls are produced simultaneously. After turning the sphere it is re-chucked between two large cone centres and the axis changed to allow the decorative grooves to be added. After splitting the two apart they are hollowed and then re-mounted to finish the feet.



Items the display table, Vance Lupton (above left), Ted Gill (above), Hugh Field (left).

Simon King tries his hand at turning green wood



The haul from a visit to a tree surgeon

Inspired by Sally Burnett's demonstration at the club meeting in March, I set out on a quest (this makes it seem more exciting than it actually was) to get my hands on some green wood. Unfortunately, I don't own a forest so the best way of obtaining some was to contact a local tree surgeon. A quick Google (other search engines are available!)

provided me with several contact details and a few e-mails later, I arranged to go down to a tree surgeon's yard in Cheadle (ArB Tree Care). They store a large quantity of good diameter branches/trunks (upwards of 10") at the yard which is eventually split and sold as firewood. Consequently, any wood that you want to purchase is priced according to how much firewood they would get from the piece. I believe that this is how other tree surgeons price green wood too.



Five rough turned bowls produced from the logs



After scrambling around and over the woodpile, I selected three pieces which one of the arborists kindly cut into smaller pieces so I could load them into my car more easily. The picture shows the wood I purchased from them; lime (14" diameter), beech (12" diameter) and cherry (10" diameter). Altogether, there was around 5ft of wood and I paid the princely sum of £15. This is around the price of one kiln dried blank of a similar size, so represents rather good value for money if you don't mind waiting for the wood to season.

I processed and rough turned the wood over the next couple of weeks (I actually still have two cherry blanks to rough turn). This provided me with six rough turned bowls (only five are pictured) and two thin-walled open forms. Unfortunately, one of the open forms dried into a distinctly oval shape so it was donated to my sister for use in her log burner. However, the other has only distorted very slightly so is awaiting a sanding and parting off. Any other offcuts from processing the logs have also been gifted to my sister's log burner and the shavings will be composted, so nothing has gone to waste. I'd be extremely lucky if all of the rough turned bowls dry without checking but even if they do, the turning has provided me with hours of practise and experience.



An open form awaiting sanding and parting off

I'd recommend that everyone has a go at this. Contact a local tree surgeon, get your hands on as much wood as you and your car can carry and have yourself a bit of fun turning green wood (and getting sprayed with wet shavings in the process).

A note of thanks

As was mentioned on the night, June's meeting was my last regular attendance at the club, although I will try and visit when I can. I have only been a member for two and a half years but the club has helped my work progress and provided me with plenty of inspiration during this time. I would like to thank all of the members of the club for being so friendly and welcoming to a complete novice when I joined. I must also extend a special thanks to all of the committee members who have put together a wonderful and diverse array of demonstrations during my time and kept the club running.

Simon King

July demonstration - Dawn Hopley

Dawn has been experimenting with combining weaving with woodturning for a while now. It all started when a bout of 'flu gave her time to get distracted drowsing the internet where she came across videos of how to make paper "spills" by rolling newspaper and then weaving them into waste paper baskets and suchlike. Further research revealed the availability of ready made coloured, thinner, paper spills and also the use of other materials which prompted Dawn to see if she could combine her love of woodturning with her new found enjoyment of weaving. He has now demonstrated this at a number of local clubs.





Since her last demonstration, and after much deliberation, Dawn has bought a new lathe to replace her aging Axminster one which has very wobbly spindle bearings. It's a Nova Comet with DC variable speed drive and the ability to add a range of attachments to the back of the spindle. Now, on with the demo!

Being an initially an experimental project, Dawn started by using pine roof timber offcuts and has found this to be less tricky to turn than she had previously been led to believe. Sharp tools, high speed and sympathetic tool presentation are the key - if all else fails then abrasives can come to the rescue! In the event, Dawn did not do any sanding during the evening but little would

have been needed anyway such is the skill of her turning.

A "vessel" can be woven completely without either a base or top in alternative material, and many of us will be familiar with the plywood bases used in wicker work. Dawn takes this a stage further by giving shape and form to the top and bottom of the item.



A cross grain blank, approximately 6" x 2" had been roughly shaped on the band-saw and drilled for a screw chuck. This was

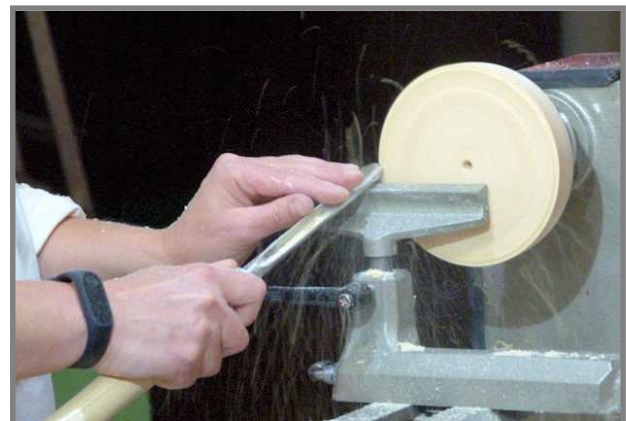


cleaned up on the edge and face using her "all rounder" gouge. A chucking recess was then created to suit the chuck using a parting chisel and gouge and the foot size established. Decorative beads were added to the recess and the outside shape of the base turned. The outside would normally be sanded and finished at this stage; however, the piece was then removed from the screw chuck and re-mounted using the previously turned recess.

After cleaning up the face, the next stage was marking off the positions for the drilled holes which would later have pieces of kebab stick glued into them. The number of holes required depends on the size of the finished item and the thickness of the



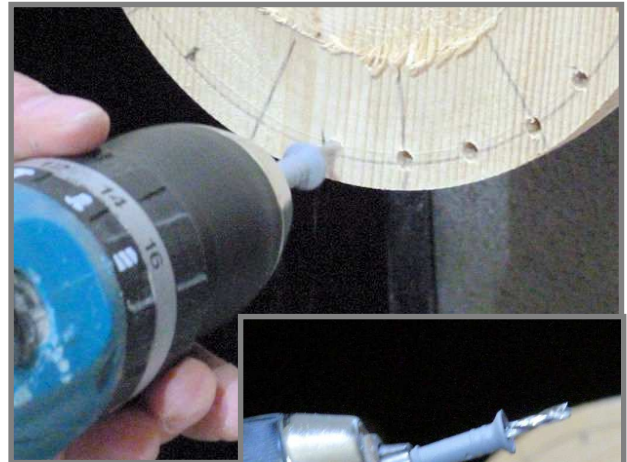
weaving material, and the type of weaving to be used dictates whether an odd or even number is required. Simple "in and out" weaving with a single "thread" requires an odd number. Using a double thread and a rope twist technique means that an even number can be used. The hole spacing needs to allow for the thread to be easily passed between the sticks. With the example being demonstrated, 16 seemed to be an appropriate number so Dawn





used the built-in 8 position indexing facility and using the tool rest and a pencil to mark the radial lines. To check that the tool rest was on centreline she indexed 180° after the first mark to check that the lines coincided.

To create the 16 positions, Dawn just “eyed” the spacing to create the intermediate positions. Alternative methods of marking the holes are to calculate the spacing using geometry, or to use an index plate with additional holes. It may even be possible to use the chuck key teeth as a guide if these are exposed on your particular chuck. With the lathe running Dawn marked a circle about 5mm inside the edge of the base to create the positions for the holes. The holes were drilled using a brad



point drill, 3mm diameter to suit the kebab sticks, using a cut down plastic Rawlplug as a depth stop. A light finishing cut across the face removed the small amount of tear out.



The inside was then hollowed using a combination of pull and push cuts. Initial turning of the top and marking out and drilling the holes was

as for the base, ensuring that the start position of the holes will allow for the grain direction of the top and bottom to be correctly orientated later. The top needs to be a ring so the thickness was established using the parting tool widening to stop it binding and going a little beyond half way through. The burr on the edge of the parting tool was used to impart a good finish to the inside of the ring. Waste material was removed with the gouge to allow the inside to be sanded and finished. Next, duct tape was liberally placed across the back of the piece to retain the ring when it was parted right through after reducing the speed of the lathe. The sound of the cut changes noticeably as the toll begins to





break through. The duct tape has sufficient flexibility and reinforcement that the tool does not easily cut through it, as might be the case with masking tape. An alternative to this, if a thinner top is acceptable, would be to trepan about $\frac{3}{4}$ the way through and then part the ring off, leaving a scrap piece that could be used as a jam chuck for remounting the ring for finishing later. Dawn used a spare piece of wood as a jam chuck to finish turn the inside and face. Again, duct tape can be used



to increase the security of the jam chuck if required. The same technique can be used for producing rings for mirror and picture frames.

Next came the insertion of the kebab sticks. The pre-cut sticks were inserted into the base and the top ring added, ensuring that the grain direction matches the base. This is quite a fiddly process and it helps if the holes are deep enough to be able to pull a few of the sticks out slightly so the top and bottom can be joined temporarily and then the remaining ones can be engaged with



the top. A final squeeze and the parts are assembled. Dawn has found it best to glue the sticks after assembly by using either thin CA glue or diluted PVA. A small bead of either applied just above the join will just run down and do the trick.

An alternative method, as developed by a member of Chase Woodturners following Dawn's 2 part demonstration there is to complete the bottom and the weaving before turning and drilling the top ring. This way the holes can be marked off to suit, and in fact some of the holes can be omitted with the top of the weaving being concealed by turning a recess in the bottom of the top ring.





The weaving process brings many choices! Different materials can be used such as garden twine, coloured string, wool, decorative cord, etc. Natural materials can also be incorporated and patterns are easy to incorporate.

Dawn suggested that it is easier to start from the bottom and weave part way up, but to then weave at least part way down from the top, before completing the weave. This method provides easier access for the final part of the weaving.

There is no end to the variation that can be achieved by varying the height and also the relative sizes of the base and top. The angle of the drilled holes can be used to give different shapes of vessel, and a natural edge can be left at the top as an added feature.



It is difficult to cover the alternative weaving techniques in this write-up but much inspiration can be gained from books, and from the internet and one person in particular who is combining woodturning with weaving is American craftsman Jerry Maxey. A couple of pictures of his vessels are shown below, but it is well worth browsing his galleries at www.jerrymaxey.com.

Dawn had a wide range of her items on display including a platter that I had turned and Dawn had re-woven after my



crude attempt using green garden twine.

Dawn has already mentioned in her "chat" that the Forest of Mercia organisation is running a range of short courses aimed at preserving some of the dying crafts, including basket work.

An excellent demonstration and nice to see woodturning combined with another craft.

Hugh Field



Two of Jerry Maxey's creations (right)



Their approximate is my rough...

I enjoy making pot pourri bowls using the bought pewter lids, which are manufactured by various different firms but all roughly similar in size. Measurements are given in catalogues and on packaging, but I soon realised that these are approximate: the diameter can vary by a smidgeon (if not a whole tad!) so I am used to cutting the flange in each bowl to suit a particular lid, and warning prospective buyers that the lids may or may not be interchangeable.

However, I was disappointed to discover that two lids I had bought, with a design of a flower basket, went a step further – they are OVAL! I had to cut a wider flange than usual to avoid having a gap, but it still does not look right, with uneven amounts of wood showing.

This design is one of those that don't have a defined outer ring, so it is not easy to spot the odd shape until you come to fit it to the bowl. Even buying the lid in person from a store rather than a catalogue did not help, as it's not until you come to size it in that you discover the anomaly. I have not had this problem with the roses design, which also has an uneven, unenclosed edge, yet is in fact circular, but beware! - there may be other designs out there that I have not tried, which have the same problem.

Apart from this I do think these lids are good value and they offer a wide variety of designs to suit most tastes.

Jane Russell

[It is possible to true up the lids by turning a softwood concave "chuck" plus some hard foam (or similar) padding and using the tailstock centre and a pad to support the lid. Gentle cuts at low speed with a gouge or scraper will work fine on the soft pewter. Just watch the sharp flying swarf though. - Editor]

Kings Bromley Show - 22nd July

The Club paid for a stand at the Kings Bromley Show again after a break of several years. Paul Bellamy, (loyal, ex member of MSWA) very kindly brought along his excellent marquee, generator and a lathe. Dawn had borrowed some additional trestle tables and, after managing to secure a better location than the one first allocated to us, we felt we had managed to set up a decent looking stand in a good position. Sadly, the sun didn't shine for long and sales were not good and didn't really justify the effort that had been put in.



Thanks must go to Vance Lupton, John McElroy, Jane Russell, Geoff Payne, for "manning" the stand and to Phil Williams, and others who came along to offer encouragement and support. A welcome visitor was Chris Gibb, ex member who, unfortunately, is no longer able to turn owing to his mobility problems but still keeps in touch (Paul was actually using his lathe at the event).





Wood 'n' things



Geoff, Dawn, Vance and Jane scooped all the prizes in the Woodturning section of the craft competition with Geoff also winning the trophy for best entry in the class with his replica blow-lamp.

Even though we did little more than cover our costs for the day it was good to have time for a good chat and there was quite a lot of interest in our display and in woodturning in general. One visitor who has recently acquired a lathe was able to benefit from some basic tuition from Paul (the only tutor I am aware of who chooses the skew as the second tool to teach after the spindle roughing gouge!).



Hugh Field

Forthcoming events

Club Meetings

4th August

Hugh Field / Philip Watts

Downloaded video evening - hopefully some things you've not seen before!

1st September

David Atkinson

Boxes

Club Competitions

August - Novice

A table or stool leg

September - Challenge

Miniature table or stool

Other events

Friday/Saturday 8th & 9th September

Yandles Woodworking Show

If you're down that way, or fancy a long day out it's well worth going.

Hurst Works, Hurst, Martock, Somerset TA12 6JU

www.yandles.co.uk/

Thursday 19th to Sunday 22nd October

Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition

Warwickshire Exhibition Centre, Fosse Way, Nr Leamington Spa, CV31 1XN

No woodturning, but plenty of tools and things that are useful in our hobby!

<http://www.midlandsmodeleengineering.co.uk/>



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.

Members sales items

This section is for listing any turning or woodworking tools or related items you have for sale.

Any submissions to editor@mswa.co.uk, please.

DVDs

The club has a selection of Woodturning DVD's for use by registered club members use only. You can borrow them for just £2 per month (some are free)! 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.

We need a volunteer to take over the responsibility for these items, and the sale of abrasives, etc.

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



Club information

Your club committee for 2017 is:-

Chairman – Dawn Hopley chairman@mswa.co.uk

Tel: 07860 501 379

Secretary – John McElroy secretary@mswa.co.uk

Treasurer – Phil Williams treasurer@mswa.co.uk

Assistant Treasurer - Tony Tripp

Events Secretary – Vacant 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

Please use phone numbers only if absolutely necessary.

Other important people responsible for:-

Refreshments: *David Neal, David Dawes & Ron Dixon*

Equipment: *Mark Pickering & John Meers*

Cameras: *John Meers, Ted Gill, Vance Lupton & Dawn Hopley*

Club shop: *Vacant*