

Forthcoming events

Club Meetings

7th April

Gary Rance

Three items including a
pepper mill

5th May

Hands-on/open evening

Club Competitions

April - Novice

A ring stand

May - Challenge

An Abstract

Other events

**Friday 11th & Saturday 12th
March**

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

Craft Fair

Wolseley Centre

ST17 0WT

10 - 4pm

**Friday 24th & Saturday
25th March**

**Midlands Woodworking
and Power Tool Show**

Newark

10am - 4pm

Saturday 29th April

**Mark Baker at Cheshire
Guild of Woodturners**

Plumley Village Hall

WA16 0TR

10am - 4pm

*(Contact John McElroy, if
you are interested in going
to this)*

**Thursday 11th & Friday 12th
May**

**Woodworks@Daventry
2017**

Daventry Leisure Centre

NN114FP

Chair's Chatter

How Precious Time Is!

How precious time is ... This was the theme for the day on Friday 3rd March. Not only was it something that Sally Burnett touched upon in her wonderful demonstration, but it summed up my life at the moment. After a very busy week, little did I know how hectic Friday would become.....

The day started sublimely with a lovely dog walk in the morning over Cannock Chase. I then had the luxury of being able to spend the rest of the day woodturning. As per usual had had left making my competition entry far too late, but wrongly thought I had the rest of the day to make a simple little Quaich. How difficult could it be? It was only a simple bowl with a couple of handles after all!

After a few phone calls, I managed to escape to the workshop at 11am. I had already selected a nice piece of Ash and even drawn up some plans, so was merrily turning by 11:15. By mid-day I had even finished the turning process. It was a bit rushed and not quite the desired shape, but I was happy. All that was left to do was carve out a couple of handles, add a little pyrography and ... and then the phone rang!

It was another call-out with the Search & Rescue team. I was duty manager that day, which meant that it was my job to liase with the Police and mobilise the team into action. So that meant dropping whatever I was doing. Noooooooooooooh! Not today of all days!

Four hours later, all phone calls finished, plans made and the team was out on the ground searching for a missing man at Birches Valley visitor centre. Just around the corner from Etching Hill of all places. That was when I realised that I still had time left to try and finish my competition entry!

So back to the workshop I went. All my original ideas and designs went out of the window. It was now a race against time! And so it passed that my lovely little bowl was savagely attacked on the band-saw and then abused with a file. To add insult to injury, the poor thing was then tortured with a pyrography iron in a vain attempt to try and disguise all of the scars and damage that had just been inflicted. Just 40 minutes later and hey presto! What a disaster! I'll let you judge for yourselves ...

Fig.1. What was envisaged in wood.

The celtic knotwork was going to be lovely and delicate pyrography.

Although things didn't quite turn out as envisaged, I can't explain how happy I was just to get it finished and then get it to the meeting on time. I found myself chuckling at the back of the room when Sally said how she had come to woodturning late in life





Fig.2. My rather tortured results

and that it now felt like a rush against time to try and do everything she wanted to achieve. She summed up my day perfectly.

Anyway, I thoroughly enjoyed the meeting as usual and was truly inspired by Sally and her wonderful work. She gave us so many new ideas, hints and tips. I for one had never heard of freezing wood to keep it fresh before.

I was also overwhelmed by the number of entries into this month's competition. It was lovely to see that so many people were keen to have a go and interpret the brief in so many different ways. Selecting a winner was no mean feat; and after my experience, I think everyone deserves a medal just for getting an item on the table.

So until next month ... happy turning ... and try not to leave your competition entry till the last minute!

Get turning those ring stands now!

Dawn

Editors Scribblings

It's been a busy few weeks with woodturning events, so with write-ups for two events at Axminster Nuneaton, our Club demonstration on 3rd March and the Craft Fayre at Wolseley Bridge, along with other contributions from members, this is another "bumper" issue!

Those of you who read "Woodturning" magazine will have noticed Mark Baker's comments regarding how best to promote woodturning as a hobby. This is a subject that is regularly discussed at committee meetings as we really do need to increase our membership if the club is to remain financially viable. We have decided to make even more effort at our outside events to both promote woodturning and to recruit new members. Any suggestions you may have would be most welcome. I was quite surprised to discover only the other day that a near neighbour does some woodturning, even though I have known him for probably 40 years! So, maybe we all have potential new members on our doorsteps?

You will note from the "Forthcoming events" section that there is much in store for those willing to travel a little. I am unable to attend all the ones that I promote, and no doubt there are many more that I am not aware of; so if you find anything that you think other members would be interested in then please let me know. Similarly, if you do attend an event then please consider submitting a write up, however brief, for inclusion in a future Newsletter. Photographs are always welcome. On this note, I shall not be going to the Midlands Woodworking and Power Tool Show at Newark on 24th & 25th March, so some help with a report on this would be appreciated. In fact anything that might be of interest to others would be welcome for inclusion in the newsletter. Those of you who, like me, belong to other Clubs might consider writing a brief report on demonstrations they have seen elsewhere.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

Hugh Field



Colwin Way at Axminster, Nuneaton 17th & 18th February

This was another of Axminster's free events, spread over two days (I visited just on the Friday). Colwin Way is one of Axminster's tutors from their Skill Centre In Dorset, active on the demonstration circuit and a regular contributor to Woodturning magazine.

Information about Colwin can be found on Axminster's web site.



Colwin started by rough turning a bowl which was to be sealed and stored for about 6 months before finish turning; he has a ready source of freshly felled timber in Dorset which provides him with an inexpensive supply of large blanks (lucky him!).



The next project was a Windsor chair leg, of which Colwin turns many! Expert use of sharp tools, especially the skew meant that minimum sanding was required.



Colwin followed on with a 2 piece candle holder which he finished with sanding sealer and paste wax, burnished to a high shine.

His final project was a simple, but elegant, bowl.



This was yet another of Axminster's excellent demonstration days. For those of you who have yet to attend on of Axminster's events then I do suggest you give them a try.

Hugh Field



March Competition

Well, what a fantastic number of excellent entries! The subject of the Challenge this month was a “quaiach”. This is a traditional Scottish two handled drinking vessel, commonly used for drinking whisky. Often they would be used to share a drink with friends, so the size can vary widely. Clearly some of our members are prepared to share more generously than others.....



Photograph courtesy of Philip Watts



Vance Lupton was second with his pyrographed and coloured example (A), (above).

It much surprised me to be the winner with entry (B), but thank you all for your votes!

Geoff Payne was third with his lavishly decorated example (G), (below).

Other entries were by John Meers (C), Dawn Hopley (D), Jane Russell (E), Philip Watts (F), and John McElroy (H).

Hugh Field



Photograph courtesy of Philip Watts



March Display Table

Again a most encouraging display!



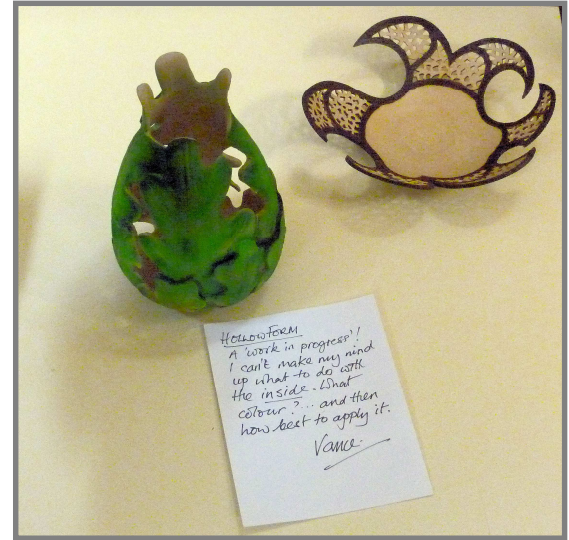
Vance's thin pierced vessel alongside Ted Gill's pierced and carved goblet. On the right are first attempts at a quail by Philip Watts and in front is my shallow bowl with woven "insert" (inspired by Dawn Hopley's recent demonstration at Cannock Chase Woodturners), the bowl is in two pieces with 24 radial wire spokes in between. Dawn has since kindly re-woven it for me using finer yarn!

Hugh Field

Storm Doris makes a delivery!

Philip Watts received a delivery of green wood (right) when storm Doris delivered a neighbour's tree into his back garden. Philip and his wife were out at the time but the dog, who was in the kitchen, is still in shock from when it suddenly went dark!

Pity it wasn't a nice hardwood variety!



Plea for help from Vance! (he coloured the inside black!), alongside his thin pierced and shaped bowl.

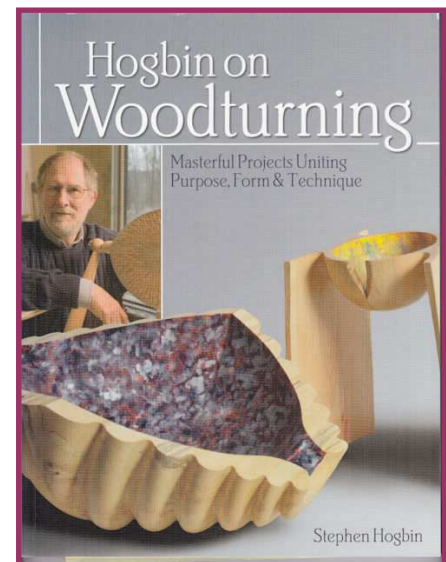


Photograph courtesy of Philip Watts

Book Review

Hogbin on Woodturning (Fox Chapel Publishing Co. Inc, 2013)

This book is a lot of fun! No conventional bowls and candlesticks in this amazing volume by Canadian woodturner, Stephen Hogbin. It's not just a picture book of gallery work either, for Hogbin gives us step-by-step accounts of how he achieved each of his unusual projects, which take turning in a new direction. Whether the finished article is a small domestic item or a public installation, Hogbin brings a fresh eye – and a saw and a glue bottle – to every project.





He shows how by cutting a turned shape, sometimes more than once, rearranging the pieces and assembling a new shape, you can produce something unexpected and often beautiful. The book offers advice on developing ideas, drawing designs, finishing, colouring, making jigs to hold work, filling defects, cutting, gluing and much more. What excites him, he says, is the question of what is going on inside a piece of timber.

As well as being a useful textbook, this is a very personal record of the challenges Stephen Hogbin has taken on, sometimes in response to a request, sometimes simply because he was inspired by a particular piece of timber, or by a friend's gift. Born in England, he moved to Canada at the age of 26 but has 'turned the world', so to speak, and his enthusiasm for his craft is expressed in his writing. The book is well illustrated, not only with pictures of his work and the stages of production, but also glimpses of his workshop and of trees near his home.

The tools Hogbin uses are not complicated; and he points out that he started with a simple hand saw – he had no specialist equipment as he began to develop his ideas. The projects are not just ornamental – in this book you will find practical household objects such as spoons and salad servers, a towel rack, a potato masher, a cookery-book stand, a dustpan, a drawer pull and walking sticks. Looking at our new list of competition titles, I can see straight away some that could be inspired by this book: for instance, the abstract piece and the offset candlestick.

An attractive paperback, *Hogbin on Woodturning* is well bound, of high quality, with a useful index, and is available from on-line retailers for about £8.50 – but shop around!

Jane Russell

March Demonstration - Sally Burnett



This is a quote from Sally's website:-

"Initially I trained in 3D design with a specialism in ceramics and glass, I have always worked with a variety of materials and it was inevitable that I would eventually turn to working in wood.

I concentrate on bowls and hollow forms introducing colour, texture and metal leaf to my designs. I am excited by the many patterns found in nature particularly logarithmic spirals but also with architectural structures – the space that they define, the shadows that their structures create and their dominance of the landscape. Buildings have often been the inspiration for my designs.



Turning wood is a combination of practical skills, an intuitive sense of the wood the 'art' to make the most of the grain, the texture and the structure that is exposed as the log is turned. Selecting green wood to turn, working with the grain, which has possible inherent cracks and inclusions, is technically challenging and very satisfying.

When you turn green wood the shavings are warm and damp, the studio is filled with the scent of the wood and your tools need to be kept especially sharp. You have to work fast as the wood dries as the walls become thin and the stresses in the wood can result in cracks or checks. Yew is one of my favourite woods, it is quite stable and as the wood dries there is little distortion. Sycamore, maple and cherry distort rapidly as they dry, bowls and platters often becoming oval a characteristic that can be exploited".

A visit to her website at <http://www.sallyburnett.co.uk/> is strongly suggested as this write up alone will not do her justice.



This was not a "blank to finished item" session, instead it was a demonstration of techniques and design philosophy used by Sally in the production of her decorative pieces.

Sally opened with a laptop presentation in which she described how she selects and processes her timber. She works almost exclusively with wet wood (it cuts easily!), sycamore being her preferred species for decorated work, and has several ways of storing her considerable stock, including end sealing (using PVA and then dipping in wood dust/fine shavings, so they can be stacked immediately without sticking together) and also by wrapping and freezing (she has 3 chest freezers full!). She explained that there seems to be no deterioration after several years, and that turning can be carried out whilst the wood is still frozen! You don't just get wet, you get cold and wet!



Most of her work is turned "end grain" and her preference is to either have the pith in the middle, or to select from the outside edge of the tree with no pith; but this dictates the use of a large tree. Both methods minimise the subsequent distortion.

She turns to finished shape and thickness (leaving a generous chucking allowance) and using sharp tools and a finishing shear cut to refine the shape. Sycamore can bruise if too



much bevel pressure is used, causing the wood to turn pink and this is almost impossible to sand out. The piece is then left for 2 -3 days for the piece to dry out before sanding. Careful monitoring and use of thin CA glue is used to repair any cracking and the base of the piece is turned quite narrow above the chucking spigot to try to prevent any cracks which result from the thicker wood running up into the actual piece. The piece is usually left in the chuck to preserve accuracy and potential black staining (which can travel up the wood) from reaction between the wet wood and the metal jaws is often eliminated by the use of cling film. Unless knots and other features can form part of the complete design, such as with a platter which will end up as a "landscape", they are ruthlessly removed as with a deeper open form they can cause problems such as distortion later. Sally





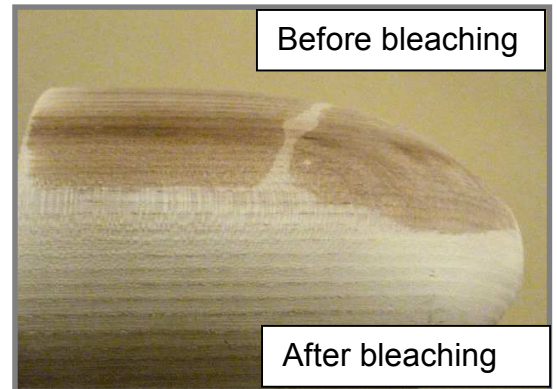
recalls her early philosophy of trying to create the biggest possible piece from a given blank, but is now more readily prepared to waste wood in order to create better finished items, even if this means the resultant piece will be smaller. She has recently bought a complete tree and explained that, as it will yield approximately 50 large blanks for an outlay of about £450, the cost of the wood is relatively low



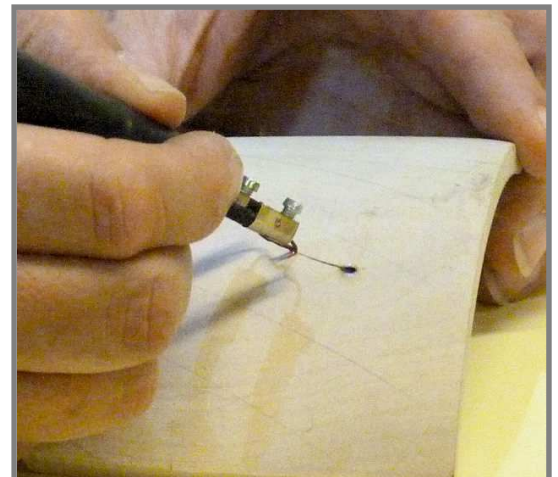
considering the investment of time (typically 6 days per piece) in her finished work. The thickness is measured by what Sally described as the "rattle" method whereby callipers are set slightly too wide and a constant "rattle" is aimed for as the progressive hollowing and outside shaping proceeds. The thickness of the piece depends on the type of decoration to be applied. For piercing a thickness of about 2mm is ideal, but the piece is left thicker towards the base to aid stability. For a carved piece more thickness will be allowed.

Sally plans her decoration before turning the piece and gains much inspiration from on-line sources such as Google and Pinterest.

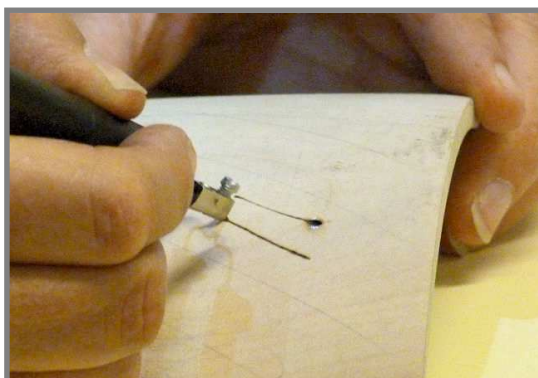
Many of her items use bleaching to lighten the wood before decoration. Her favoured bleaching medium is a Vitableach*, a 2-part product and often 2 or 3 applications are used. Sally emphasised the need for protective gloves and a suitable face mask due to the caustic nature and the fumes produced in use. Although a "wet" process, there is little raising of the grain and 320 grit abrasive has been found to be adequate once the wood has dried out.



The chosen design is sketched on to the finish turned and sanded piece. Sally uses a combination of rotary burr carving and piercing and pyrography to decorate her pieces. Using a high power pyrography machine** enables carving to be performed using a knife type tip.



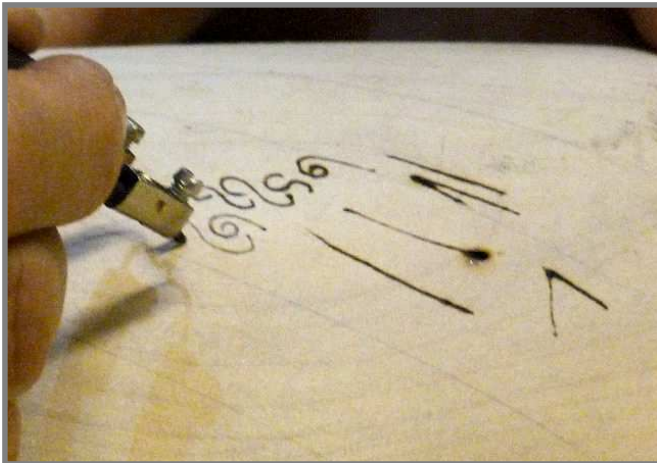
When using the pyrography machine it is important not to work at an unnecessarily high heat setting as excessive burning either side of the line can occur and this won't sand out. It's better to work more slowly at a lower temperature. "Blobs" at the start and end of lines (picture right) is a common problem and can be eliminated by practicing using the pyrography pen like an aeroplane landing and taking off so the tip is never stationary on the wood (picture below). Sally advocates producing practice squares on birch ply (picture below right) or off cuts of other woods. All woods are different when it comes



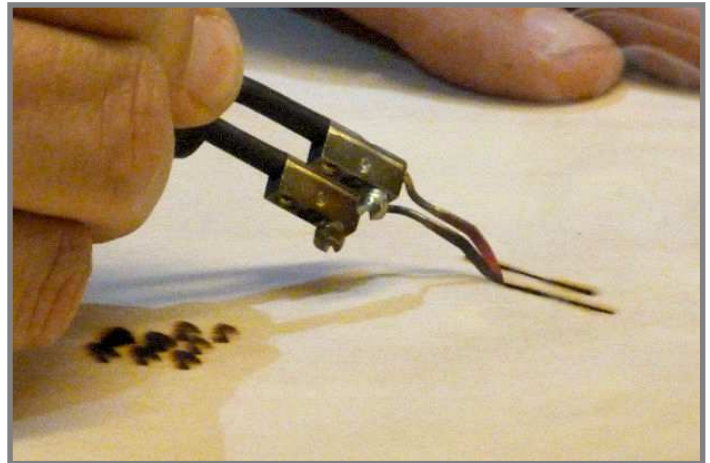
to pyrography and ash can be particularly difficult when working across the grain pattern.

Particularly important is to work at a speed that keeps the tip at a constant temperature.





With practice, smooth shapes can be drawn with no blobs or excessive burning.



Using the knife tip for drawing fine lines. These can be used to demarcate coloured areas and deeper "cuts" can be used to carve the wood.



The knife tip can be used for drawing geometric shapes and "blocking" them in. Texturing and decorating can be carried out by using shaped tips using a "branding" technique.

Sally uses a micro-motor** capable of up to 35,000 rpm in preference to a Dremel type unit with flexible shaft. Being almost vibration free means it is much more comfortable to use for long periods and in the long run can be a sensible proposition economically when the cost of replacement flexible shafts (they do break!) is taken into account. The quick release collet feature is also extremely useful. A NSK, air driven ultra high speed unit is also



used for piercing but although this is easy to use it does tend to burn the wood, which may not be desirable in the finished design unless colouring will be used. Whichever unit is used, a lot of dust can be produced and extraction and preferably a powered respirator should be used. The cutters used for piercing are solid tungsten carbide, typically 1.2 to 1.8mm diameter, and can be easily broken if the tool is not kept perpendicular to the wood. Texturing and carving can be performed using a variety of rotary burrs. Coarse types such as the Saburr range can remove material quickly, but at the expense of poor finish. Note that all of these do wear out!





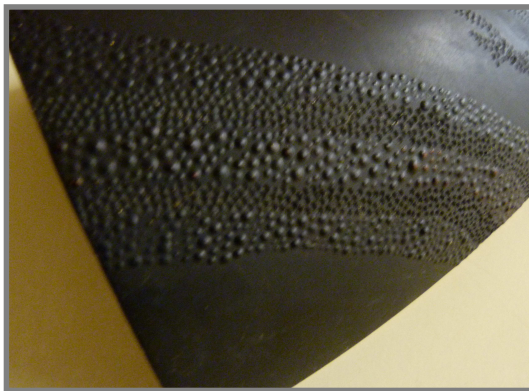
Tungsten carbide burs can produce a reasonable finish, especially for texturing. Dura-grit abrasive type burs are an alternative for shaping and diamond burs can achieve a good finish but remove material slowly. The aim is always for the features to require minimum sanding.



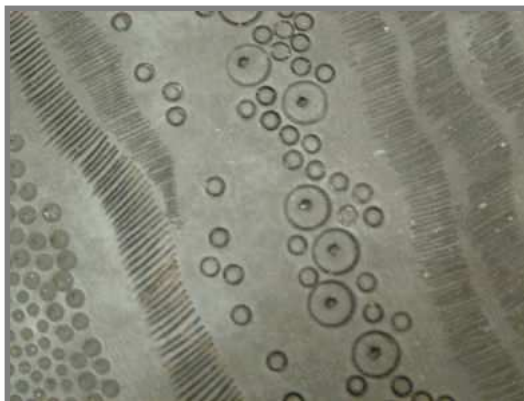
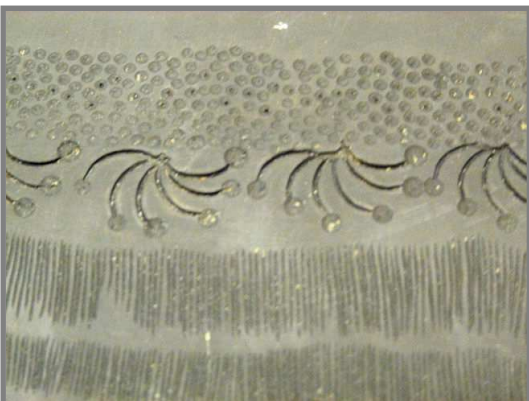
Saburr bits (left) Dura-grit (above) TC burr (right)



Diamond burs (above).



Raised features are created using acrylic paste thinned with acrylic extender/flow medium or acrylic gouache. If sufficiently thin, when applied with a wooden skewer, this will produce "soft", various sized "blobs". Colour can be added at the mixing stage or after allowing 24 hours to dry they can be over painted.



Another useful technique employed for decoration is the use of punches (often in fact every day objects) which are used to impress decorative features into the wood. As Sally said, "It's surprising what you can do with a big enough hammer!".

Sally seals her work and finishes with automotive acrylic spray lacquer, often favouring a matt finish (£7.99 from Halfords, but not all branches stock it, and cheaper than products offered specifically for wood finishing!). The matt finish is effective even when used over a satin or gloss lacquer, and has proved to be durable. Care should be taken not to "mix" finishes. In particular cellulose should not be applied over acrylic. Although interesting results can sometimes result from experimentation, they are not predictable and durability cannot be assured.



Final comments from Sally were to believe in yourself; be particular - investment is in time, not material. If a piece warps, see if it can be adapted to take advantage of it's new shape. Provenance can help to sell the finished piece - the reason the tree was felled can be important to a buyer.

A truly enjoyable demonstration. Sally is a very talented artist in wood and her experience of working with ceramics shows through clearly in her designs.

Thanks also go to Ted Gill and John Meers for operating the camera system.

Hugh Field

* The main distributor for Vitableach is:
Smith & Rodger
34 Elliot Street
Glasgow G3 8EA
Tel: 1041 248 6341

info@smithandrodger.co.uk
<http://www.frenchpolishes.com/Bleach>

** Woodart products
28 Henniker Road
Debenham
Stowmarket
Suffolk IP14 6PY
Tel: 07770 226640

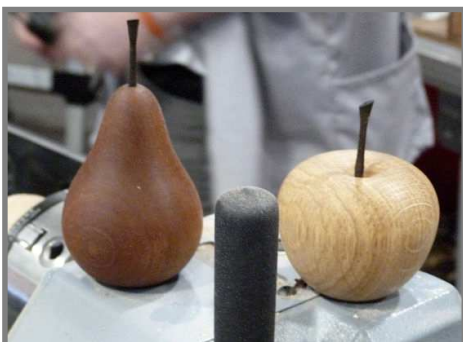
john@woodart-products.co.uk
www.woodart-products.co.uk/

“Turn it Up” - Mark Sanger and Richard Findley at Axminster, Nuneaton - 4th March

This was an opportunity for the two winners of Axminster's "Ten turners Turning" events (Richard won it in 2014 and Mark was the current champion having won in 2016) to battle it out side by side to establish the Champion of Champions.

The event was compared by Axminster's own Colwin Way and consisted of a number of timed challenges. At the end of each challenge the audience was asked to vote for their favourite.

As a warm up the duo were asked to turn a goblet in just 10 minutes. Mark's was of a more pleasing design so he won the vote.



Next came an interesting twist where Mark tackled a 20 minute turning trial, to turn an apple and a pear, set by Richard (Mark would set Richard his challenge later in the day). Despite his many years experience, Mark had only ever turned two apples (and no pears!). With a little help and advice from

Richard, Mark completed this challenge with aplomb, in the allotted time.



Richard then gave a 20 minute talk on two of his favourite projects, being the use of pewter incorporated into box lids and bowl rims and the production of barley twists for legs and pillars.



Each contestant was then asked to choose just one tool to complete a piece in 20 minutes. Mark chose (not surprisingly!) a 3/8" bowl gouge and produced a rice bowl with lid; Richard chose his trusty 10mm beading and parting tool to produce a lidded box.



After a lunch break, Mark and Richard were asked to produce as many spinning tops as they could in 20 minutes. Mark went for quantity and produced 10 items of varying size and shape; Richard concentrated on quality but only completed 8 and a half. However, Richard's strategy paid off and he won this vote!

Mark next challenged Richard to turn a rice bowl in 20 minutes, having initially joked that the challenge would be a hollow vessel!

Those of you who are familiar with the fact that Richard is a production turner who mainly does spindle work will realise that the time restraint probably put Richard a little outside his "comfort zone". However with a little advice from Mark he produced a very satisfactory example.

Mark then talked about his favourite projects and techniques. Much of his work and the decoration he adds is inspired by nature (he passed around a fascinating book containing hundreds of extremely close up images of pollen grains). A particular piece he featured is shown to the right.



The final challenge of the day (they were only told by Colwin what it would be during the lunch break) was a finial lidded box to be completed in 20 minutes. This was "bread and butter" to Mark but a quick Google search by Richard on his mobile 'phone resulted a picture of a suitable item which he proceeded to reproduce! Despite being an unfamiliar project to Richard, he turned the most pleasing item of the two (on the right in the picture), as judged by the audience.



After a final totting up of the total scores, Richard was declared the overall winner and was presents with his trophy of a replica of a bowl gouge and bowl, mounted on a base. This had been created by Colwin Way.



This was a most interesting and entertaining day, organised to Axminster's usual high standard. My apologies for the poor quality of the photographs (some are images of the television monitors); H & S dictated the use of protective screens and the fast moving nature of the day was an additional factor.

Hugh Field

South Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Spring Fayre - 11th & 12th March



This is one of our regular venues at which we have a stand and is an opportunity for members to sell items and for the club to raise funds by selling items which have been donated. Part of the proceeds from our sales are donated to the Wildlife Trust and any balance goes to help fund the clubs activities. Traditionally this event has been less successful for the Club than the Christmas one, but this year appeared to better attended and we achieved higher sales figures than previously. Several visitors had a go at turning on Dawn's lathe and there was quite a lot of interest in the subject of woodturning in general. I suspect we will see a few extra visitors to club meetings as a result.



Dawn discovered that if necessary a chuck key can be used as a texturing tool for the cup of an acorn!

Thank you to the other regular supporters of this event, Dawn Hopley, Vance Lupton, John McElroy and, in particular, non-committee members Jane Russell and Geoff Payne for manning (personning!) the stand.

In total, sales were £391.50 over the weekend, and after deductions for disbursements to vendors and a donation of £50 to the South Staffs Wildlife Trust, there remained a contribution of £85.90 to Club funds.

Every little helps!

Hugh Field

UK & Ireland Woodturning Seminar - 15th & 16th July, Coventry Hilton

Following the success of the first of these events last year the organisers have made some changes for 2017. The venue is the same but the master classes will be held in a separate room. I attended both days last year and thoroughly enjoyed it (see the July 2016 issue of the Newsletter). This year promises to be even better!

Entry to the show is by pre-booked ticket and tickets for the Master classes are now available. As there are only 50 tickets available for each Master class I recommend that you book early!

Go to www.ukiws.co.uk/ for more information and booking.



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.

David Brearley has taken over the responsibility for these items and may be seen at Club Meetings.



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



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 – Vance Lupton

treasurer@mswa.co.uk

Assistant Treasurer - Graham Massey

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.