



Wood 'n' things



Mid Staffs Woodturning Association Newsletter

Issue – February 2013

Editor: Philip Watts

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Future Events

MSWA Meetings

March 1st
Michael Bidney
Bespoke Pens

5th April
Bob Chapman

Simple Forms and Classical Shapes

Other Events

Craft Fair
Wolseley Bridge
February 9th and 10th

Club Competitions

March
Challenge – A Gavel and Block

April

Novice
An Egg and Egg Cup

Chairman's Notes

The MSWA was again represented at a Craft Fair at the Wolseley Centre of the Staffordshire Wild Life Trust on 9th and 10th October. The inclement weather and the coincidence with the Six Nations Rugby matches meant that attendances were low.

The intention had been that the emphasis would be on attracting new members rather than selling turned items. The lathe was in continuous operation throughout the two days and visitors were being invited to "have a go" and a number did with instruction being provided by Geoff Payne. The static display of items was supplemented with a computer generated slide show giving information on the club and examples of wood turning.

Wood turning demonstrations do attract attention. We are not sure how many new members will result but there were a small number of expressions of interest. The "Hands-on" session on May 3rd is also being promoted as an Open Evening and we will be promoting this in local papers nearer that date.

Actions such as this are necessary if we are to rebuild club numbers and reinforce club finances such that we can continue to support the level of programmes that have been the norm in recent years.

My thanks go to the people who took the time to attend the fair and who were willing to demonstrate their various degrees of skill in the public gaze, watched more closely perhaps by their fellow turners.

Philip Watts



Editor's Scribblings

I maintain the club website as well as editing this Newsletter. Keeping the two in synchronism can be difficult and I have to rely on the more observant of the club members to spot the inconsistencies and e-mail me.

Who reads the website? Well, apparently, some people do. I received an e-mail from a class of school pupils thanking me for the assistance given to them in their school project by the links on the web site page. They also offered me a further link to place on the website and that will be done. The e-mail gave no clue to the location of the school but a little bit of research suggested that it was in fact in the U.S.A.. So the fame of the MSWA has gone global, if not exactly viral.

Ken Allen was bewailing during his demonstration the way in which so much wood is disposed of in the so-called council recycling depots, and how it could not be retrieved for further use locally. By coincidence it was announced on the same day in the Sutton Coldfield Observer that a new charity based facility was being opened here where, amongst other things, recycled wood would be available. The same charity, the Jericho Trust, already have a site in inner Birmingham where they claim that they even recycle lock gates from the inland waterways. These were made from English oak, planted in the time of Henry the Eight so they should be well seasoned. Hugh Field has already investigated the possibility of obtaining wood from there for turning so it will be interesting to see what becomes available.

I can already claim to be a seasoned recycler. The plinth on which my recently acquired metal-working lathe sits is partly made from plywood on its third use. From an upholstered box seat to a wheelchair ramp to a lathe plinth. Can anybody claim a more diverse usage of the same piece of wood?

Philip Watts

Newsletter

It is my practice to always keep the club Newsletter to an even number of pages despite the fact that I provide only a small number of printed copies and most people presumably read it on the screen. This might be an indication of a symptom of OCD, although the lie to this would be given by an examination of my workshop where the rule is "Everything in its place, everything all over the place". However, this gives me a problem when the available copy only spreads over seven pages. Short of adopting the standard Quality Assurance procedure of printing in bold text on the blank page:

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I need your assistance to fill the blank space.

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, image files as .jpeg, .tiff or .bmp files. In the extreme, I can even scan or photograph prints or negatives.

I will be looking for volunteers to write up the Demonstration Reports so the budding journalists amongst you should sharpen your pencils and charge the batteries on your digital cameras.



February Demonstration Report

Ken Allen is well known to members of the MSWA which makes it difficult for him to select projects that have not been seen before by at least half of the membership. He set out to do that on this occasion, and by the comments made succeeded in that respect. Being a project that would take too long to complete in a normal club evening, Ken used the well known Blue Peter approach and had several items "that had been made earlier" to assist in the demonstration.



He chose to demonstrate how to make a bowl, one that comprised separate base and rim with the rim standing off on off-centre turned pillars. His material was a piece of French oak, kiln dried. This is not a preferred material for Ken but air-dried English oak is evidently now very difficult and expensive to procure. The base blank was about 12 inches in diameter. This was held initially on a screw chuck and trued up with a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch bowl gouge. The outside and lower face of the rim were turned first with care being taken to ensure that what would be the lower face of the rim was truly square to the axis of the blank. A circle 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter was then marked out on this face and the circumference sub-divided into twelve segments, thus marking out the positions of the holes that would ultimately accept the upper ends of the pillars arising from the base. The rim was then cut free from the base and put to one side for later finishing. The holes could either be drilled on the lathe or on a bench drill. A useful tip is to turn a small groove on the circle marked out for the pillars as this will assist in locating the drill.

The base was then turned as a shallow bowl making sure that the upper rim was also square to the axis as this would form the face accepting the turned pillars. A circle 9 inches in diameter was marked out on this face and the circumference was subsequently sub-divided into twelve segments in a similar manner to the rim and thus providing holes to correspond with the pillar spacings.

A tip to improve the concentricity of items as they are reversed on a lathe chuck. Ken suggested that it was worthwhile truing up the jaws of the chuck using a standard High Speed Steel turning chisel with the chuck mounted on the lathe to be used. Only light cuts are required but the improvement can be significant.

The rim was finished on a jam chuck made from MDF. A disc preferably mounted on a face plate has a groove machined on its face to accept the rim. A hot melt glue gun can be used to provide additional security. MDF will need to be sealed first if this approach is used as the glue tends to be absorbed into the porous material.

Twelve spindles or pillars are required for this design. Ken Allen believes that these should be the "same but not identical" as they are hand turned and not machined on a copy lathe. (Editor's note: Being pedantic, and by reference to the Oxford Concise dictionary, the better word would be "similar", "same" in their view having a meaning equivalent to the word "identical". Or in other words, saying "same" is the same as saying "identical" or is that identical? Never mind!)

These were also made from French oak. The blanks were short lengths of square section held between centres on the lathe. Each end of each blank had been marked out to identify the true centre and two offset centres $\frac{1}{4}$ inch away from the true centre. The centre section was turned down to a cylinder about 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in diameter before the offset centres were used to turn the offset shape and each end dowel section such that the final shape created pillars with the top and bottom dowel sections offset from each other by the distance between the hole centres marked out on the base and rim. The



photographs below should make this clear. Ken employed a self-made aluminium gauge to check the diameters of each pillar and a small MDF gauge to check the heights and overall proportions.

Assembly commenced with the inverted rim being placed on a flat surface, the twelve pillars being located in the corresponding holes. A circular disc of the correct diameter assisted in positioning the pillars before the bowl forming the base could be dropped into position. It goes without saying that a full trial fit is an essential process before any glue goes anywhere near the assembly.



Ken completes these bowls using an oil finish.

His recommendation was that the offset pillars were best turned in one session to assist in producing a uniform shape. A number of members in the immediate vicinity of the reporter were more of the opinion that one should produce a number of pillars. Identify how many were close enough in shape before deciding how many of them would be involved in the final design.



Left: The completed bowl.



Right: Detail of pillars



Competition

The February Novice Competition called for the production of a tool handle. It was assumed in the committee's mind that this would be for a wood-turning chisels but this was not specified.

A new voting system was trialled with each member being asked to select a first, second, and third place item from those on display. Votes were registered by filling in a small paper slip before placing them in a voting box. This change was introduced to ensure that the competition produced clear first, second, and third places. When one considers how much time and effort has been expended around the world in devising the perfect voting system that remains understandable to the voting population and yet is simple to operate, it is not surprising that a subsequent more contemplative review of the result announced on the night suggested that the system of weighting votes that had been used required some refinement.

In view of that, the fairest result for this round of the competition would be to declare the first and second places to be a dead heat, the results being so close. The result thus becomes:

1st= David Neale and John McElroy

3rd Philip Powell.



We will continue to use the basic voting system for the foreseeable future to ensure that it is given a fair trial. The modification that we have made is that each first place vote will count as 0.75 points, each second place vote will count as 2 points, the third as 3 points, and so on. The overall winner is the person with the smallest number of points. This does mean that the first place person has to receive consistently high placing votes to emerge as the overall leader.

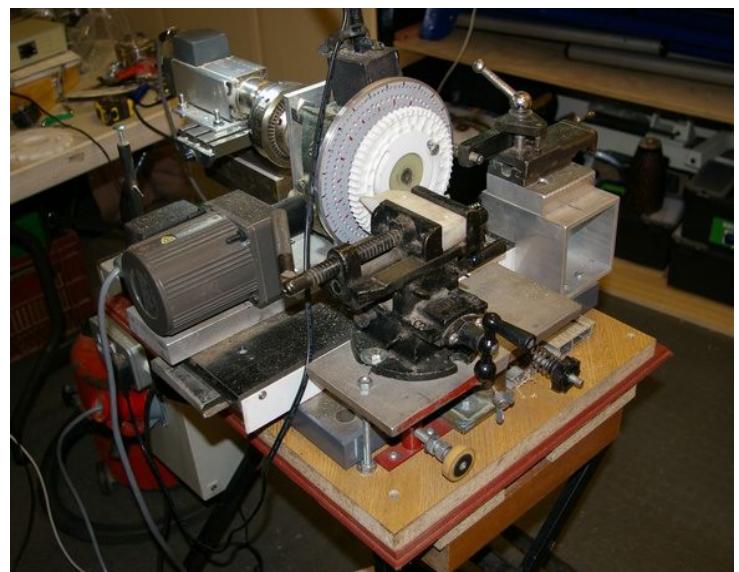


It's not the turning

One gets the impression that for some people it is not the turning itself, or the final product that is the major interest. What counts is the complexity or ingenuity of the process. Hugh Field's article in a recent newsletter about how he made a cup with an integral handle is an example.

The epitome of this approach must lie in the field of ornamental turning. Gordon Fradley, a long established member of the club has written articles for earlier newsletters about the Holzappfel lathes that were to the Ornamental Turning fraternity what Myford lathes are to the model engineers of this country. They are not manufactured today although there is an American company marketing an equivalent with prices starting in excess of \$8,500. But what if you cannot find or afford one of these vintage lathes, or its modern equivalent? The answer according to one member of the Derwent Valley Woodturners is to build your own.

I attended a meeting of the Derwent Valley group to hear about his work. The photos on the next page show the complexity of the machine that he has produced.



Above: The “works” end of the machine.

Left: The turning end and below some of the work produced.





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Club information

Your club committee for 2013 is:-

Chairman - Philip Watts

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Secretary - John McElroy

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Albert Heath

Geoff Payne

Peter Worrall

Health and Safety Advisor

Hugh Field

Please only use phone numbers if absolutely necessary.

Merchandise



Clothing

The club has a selection of items for sale, all featuring the club name on a blue background.

Sweatshirts (dark blue) £12.00

T-shirts (light blue) £7.00

Baseball caps £6.00

The sweatshirts are ideal for the workshop at this time of year; nice and warm, but they are also smart enough to wear down the high street, to woodturning shows, and to AWGB seminars.

See John Smith at the club meetings if you would like to purchase any item of club clothing.



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

See John Smith at any club meeting if you want to borrow one of these.



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.

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

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 at the club meetings.

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, see him at the club meetings.