



Future Events

April 1st 2011
Club Meeting
Paul Hannaby
Creative wood turning
A top class turner from the Forest of Dean

May 6th
Clive Brooks
Demonstration by Sorby Tools

Saturday 7th May
Rugeley Lions Club Family Fun Day
at the Horns Inn, Slitting Mill.
Club Demonstration

Club Competitions

April – Beginners/Novice Cup
A Small Lidded Box



May – Challenge Cup
An 8" minimum tall Vase with colouring

Chairman's Notes

Spring has Sprung!

The birds are singing, the sun is shining and the first daffodils are just starting to open their eyes in the garden. Spring is here at long last! How appropriate it is therefore to have David Springett as our March demonstrator. David is one of my personal favourites on the wood turning circuit and I always look forwards to his presentations. Maybe it is my Product Design background and love of problem solving that puts me on a similar wavelength. Whatever it is, I always go away full of enthusiasm and inspired to try new things. Hopefully you all enjoyed his visit just as much and would like to see him again next year.

Booking demonstrators and sorting out the monthly programme is an unenviable task that Geoff Payne has somehow managed to wrestle with for the last few years. His task is getting more and more difficult though with the rising cost of travelling expenses etc. Your honest feedback on the demonstrators is always therefore most appreciated as it does help Geoff in his labours. If you too have your personal favourites that you would like to see at the club next year, then I'm sure Geoff would appreciate your views and comments.

Some of you are probably wondering what I do as well as wood turning. Well, I have just returned from a very busy and stressful weekend indeed. As some of you are aware, I am a member of the Staffordshire Search & Rescue Team (SSART) and I have just completed an intensive training course to qualify as a Search Party Leader. This was a very busy training weekend, held on Cannock Chase, with over 60 people in attendance. We were all tested to our limits with sleep deprivation and various tasks and tests to put us through our paces. Some of you may have spotted us out and about on Friday or Saturday night, doing night-time navigation and mock search scenarios, and wondered what on earth was going on. Well, now you know! You can blame me!

SSART is a member of the Lowland Search & Rescue association (ALSAR) and we have close links with the Mountain Rescue organisations. The only difference is that we work closely for the Staffordshire Police to search for missing and vulnerable people in urban and rural locations; as opposed to hill walkers and mountaineers in difficulty out in the hills. We are all unpaid volunteers and are on 24 hour call-out for 365 days a year. We can only be called out by the police or ambulance service, whereas members of the public can call Mountain Rescue direct for assistance.

At times it can be very demanding and stressful, and it has taken over most of my free time in recent weeks. Fundraising is always a problem as we are entirely self-funded and raise all of the donations ourselves. Trying to fit this in with training and call-outs has proved impossible in recent weeks, so we are now actively trying to recruit a team of supporters and new members to assist in the background. If any of you would like to get involved, then please do contact me for further information. You can also visit our website at www.staffssearchandrescue.org. We would love to hear from you if you think you can help in any way. Even a small donation is always much appreciated.

Dawn



Editor's scriblings

It was decided at a recent Committee meeting that we should conduct a Risk Assessment for club meetings in accordance with AWGB guidelines. A volunteer was required and your Editor, having had the experience of such issues on major railway projects, somehow became that person. The wisdom of that choice became less evident when the relatively large biscuit barrel being turned for the March Competition escaped from the lathe and left your Editor with a cut lip. It was almost a case of being unable to whistle "All I want for Christmas is my"

Suffice to say that it was a salutary reminder to have consideration for safety when wood turning. It is too easy to become blasé and events happen very rapidly when your lathe is turning at even a modest speed.

Wildlife Trust Craft Fayre



MSWA had stall at the recent Wildlife Trust Craft Fayre. Gordon Fradley demonstrated what the safe wood turner should wear and a wide range of turned items were there for sale. The club made a donation of £38 from the sale of items to the Trust





Recollections of the Elm

by Albert Heath



My first recollection of elm was when I was a young lad about seven years old: a local farmer delivered a load of elm which I now know as branch wood for us to use as firewood. There were no such things as chainsaws in those days. Trees were felled with a cross-cut saw or a good sharp felling axe. The cross-cut saw was a saw about three to six feet long and about four inches deep with a handle on each end, and used by two men.

Firewood was cut by the same method except that a bow-saw was sometimes used. This was a saw with a replaceable blade (when you could get one as it was just after the war) so people tended to sharpen them; not always correctly I would assume. This I found out to my cost when I came home from school and Mum asked me to some logs for the fire. The saw jumped and I still have the scar to prove it. It was still very difficult to split elm when it had been cut into logs because of its wild and twisty grain.

My next memory was at school. Elm trees had been felled to make way for a mobile classroom and the ground around it was turned into a school garden. The boys discovered when digging that small roots of elm could be unearthed and, when the teacher was not looking, smoked. I will never know how we managed to smoke it because it burned you mouth and throat like crazy. Then a farmer across the road had a full row felled and a local agricultural experimental station had a whole wood mainly of elms felled and the roots taken out. A machine called a Gyrotiller was used to till the ground to a depth of about two to three feet.

Many years later I got into woodworking and turning and a friend of mine who worked on the Sugnal estate took a tree to the timber mill to be cut up for firewood. He got there just as they were about to cut up an elm tree. He swapped his tree for the elm, they cut it into planks immediately, he took it home and put it into stick. (Editor's note – this means placing it into a stack for seasoning with small pieces of wood between the layers to allow the air to circulate) Many months or perhaps even years later, I needed a piece of elm for a project and decided to pay him a visit. Only to find that he had sold the lot.

I became a Scout Leader years later and, on a leader's course, we were advised never to camp near elm trees because their branches tend to fall without warning. I have never found this to be so, but it is a possibility.

Editor's note: Albert's reference to the Gyrotiller had me searching the web for a reference only to discover that the manufacturer was Fowler of Leeds. It would have been just as quick for me to pull a copy of "The story of the steam plough works" by Michael R Lane and published by Northgate from my book shelves.



Demonstration Report – March Meeting

David Springett is a popular choice as a demonstrator at the MSWA, as is evidenced by his third visit in three years. David's forte is in devising simple techniques to produce what looks like complicated or even impossible to turn pieces. In his demonstrations, he concentrates on showing these techniques rather than in producing a finished product, so sanding and polishing do not feature.

For his first project David showed how to produce the ever popular mouse in a wedge shaped block of cheese. The mouse has evidently bored its way into the cheese, and Pooh like is now too fat to extricate itself. The starting point is a block of wood mounted on a wooden fixture screwed to a metal faceplate. The fixture traps the block and provides support whilst a 25mm diameter hole 20mm deep is bored using a Forstner bit. This hole is then opened out making sure that the initial 2mms of the aperture are untouched, thus retaining the all-important 25mm diameter. Simple tools, some hand made are used on a flat shelf type tool rest. This permits greater control of the tools, these being pressed flat to the rest. Finally a small hole is drilled through the back of the block to permit the tail of the mouse to protrude.

The mouse is turned from a close-grained wood such as lemon wood. A blank of sufficient length is held in a chuck and given support by a revolving centre in the tailstock. The mouse is turned with the tail towards the tail stock. The diameter of the mouse at its maximum point is 26mm, chosen to be an interference fit with the aperture of the hole in the “cheese”. The head of the mouse is turned last and parted from the blank in the chuck. This approach has the advantage that the mouse can be returned to the lathe and trapped between the tailstock and a small recess turned in the blank left in the chuck, should a final adjustment to the mouse's diameter be required.

The holes for the mouse ears are bored with a rotary burr held in a Dremel or similar drill, a drill bit not being used because of the propensity for such a bit to skid across a curved surface rather than make a clean entry. The ears of the mouse are produced by cutting “lollipop” shapes from thin leather and a tail is similarly made from leather, all three items being glued into the respective apertures.

The cheese is then given its final shaping on a band saw with additional Gorgonzola holes being drilled with a pillar drill to add to the effect. The mouse is then inserted into the hole with the application of a small amount of force to overcome the interference fit. The mouse is thus trapped within the cheese and no amount of juggling and shaking will remove it.

Variations on this theme include embedding a golf ball or a small bird within a section of branch wood. David sands a small flat on the back of the branch and screws it to a face plate to perform the drilling and boring operations. (Editor's note: It is possible to do the same thing by using cable ties to strap the log to the faceplate but use the thicker cable ties and cinch them up tight, otherwise life gets interesting)

Then it was onto one of David's specialities, a hollow ball with an object trapped within. The first part of this section of the demonstration covered the turning of a perfect sphere. This was well covered in the report on last year's visit in the October 2010 of Wood 'n' things so is not repeated here. An additional point made this year was the need to note the positions of the “North” and “South” poles of the sphere, these being the points of end grain. Two of the apertures in the hollow ball are made at these points in order to ensure that the cones to be turned as part of the project lie along the axis of the grain.



David has evolved a formula to calculate the setting for a pair of spring bow compasses used to set out the constellation points on the surface of the sphere. Selecting one of the “poles” as a starting centre point, the spring bow compasses mark out a circle on the surface of the sphere. A point is selected anywhere on this circle and another circle described on the sphere. This new circle intersects at two points with the first circle and these points are used as the next centre points. The process is repeated until a complete mesh of circles covers the surface of the sphere including the pole opposite to that which was the start point. It is probably easier to try this on a sphere than describing it. (Your Editor is presently in the middle of deriving the mathematical formula that will confirm the factor of 0.526 used by David. Dredging a knowledge of spherical geometry from memory is proving the most difficult part. (Anybody else who has already derived it should forward the solution to me at editor@mswa.co.uk. It could form the basis for an article)

The sphere is held on the lathe in a simple shop made chuck in which the ball is trapped in a semi-circular recess by a wooden ring screwed onto the face of the chuck. A centre held in the tailstock is used as a guide as each point of the constellation is addressed. Using the flat shelf type tool rest and an edge ground tool, a circular groove is turned to a pre-determined depth, the central cone tuned to shape and the aperture hollowed out to form the interior of the overall hollow ball. David used a proprietary tool for this exercise but suggested that the same operation could be carried out with the aid of a flat chisel ground to the correct profile. The turned area is then protected with a simple wooden disc locating over the point of the cone. The operation is repeated until all twenty points had been addressed.

Onto a demonstration of elliptical turning and another of David's special tools based on a design dating from the Renaissance period and over four hundred years old. The tool employs a sliding work holder held in a framework over the head stock and driven by a cam shaped plate. Sliding surfaces were all in wood and operation was noisy and likely to produce smoke. (Something to do with rubbing two boy scouts' legs together as a means of starting a fire, perhaps) The fingernail profile tool had to be used at what David described as the “point of tranquillity” for the oval form to be maintained. Not an operation for the faint-hearted is your reporter's view.

Finally a short demonstration on how to turn lace bobbins without the usual problem of breakage when turning such small diameters. David started with a length of Ramin dowel, held it in a standard drill chuck on a Morse taper in the headstock, and used the tailstock revolving centre to support and ensure that the drill chuck did not “walk” out of the headstock shaft. With only a small extent of the dowel protruding, David turned the head and thread carrying portion of the bobbin. The bobbin was then reversed and a purpose made split collet placed around the turned section of the bobbin before re-insertion into the chuck. The tailstock again provided support as the body and tail of the bobbin was turned using a skew chisel made from a square section of tool steel ground across the diagonal.

With this small piece of production turning, David reckoned that twenty bobbins could be turned in a fifteen minute period.

You can find further details of elliptical wood turning on the Internet, including an excerpt from one of David Springett's DVDs. There is also a short paper on the Holzappfel elliptical chuck available on the Ornamental Lathe Society website.



Mystery Object - What was the answer to the question?

Last month's question was another problem of the kind that the charity REMAP tackles every month.



The problem was an electric shower unit mounted high above a bath. Too high in fact for the potential user to reach. How could controls be modified to bring them down to waist level?

Movement of the unit was not regarded as possible. The unit had two knobs. One knob controlled temperature, the other flow. The knobs were detachable from the splined shafts of the valves that they controlled.

The solution chosen was to turn two pulleys to fit over the control knobs, being attached to them by small screws. Two wooden blocks mounted one on each side of the shower unit provided mounting points for small pulley blocks from a dinghy chandlers. Cords ran from the control knobs through these pulleys down to waist level and these were finished off with matched sets of light pulls.

March Competition

The March round of the Challenge Cup called for a Biscuit barrel. Six entries were received.



Apologies for the entry on the right hand side being cropped. The maxim for the photographer has to be "More haste, less speed" next time.

The results were:

Joint 1st place was awarded to Peter Worrall and Geoff Payne for their wonderful items.

3rd place went to Albert Heath with his glass lined barrel with a perfectly fitting lid.

Other entries were from Tom Young, Philip Watts, Terry Gray and Edward Gill

This was the second time that the new system of voting was used. Members are reminded that it is essential that you wait for the tea break before casting your votes as it is only then that all the entries are on display.



Club information

Your club committee for 2011 is:-

Chairman - Dawn Hopley

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Assistant treasurer – We urgently need someone to take this on, ready to take over next year!

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Paul Bellamy

Tel:

Email:

Albert Heath

Tel:

Email:

Brian Garratt

Tel:

Email:

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, Terry Gray 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 for hire.

AWGB Instant Gallery -1991 to 2003

Sharpening - GMC

Turning Projects with Richard Raffan

Turning Wood with Alan Holtham – Table Lamp

Colouring Wood – Jan Sanders

The Skew Chisel – Alan Batty

Bowls for Beginners – Ray Jones

Course on Spindle Turning – Ray Jones

Making and Decorating Platters – Mick Hanbury

Making and Decorating Boxes - Mick Hanbury

Turn it On – Volume 1 – Jimmy Clewes

Turn it On – Volume 2 – Jimmy Clewes

Turn it On – Volume 3 – Jimmy Clewes

All Glued Up! Open Segment Turning – Sue Harker

Turned Out Nice Again! Involuted Turning – Sue Harker

Wood Turning with Steve Heeley – Steve Heeley

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

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.

The following are worth a look :-

Boiling wood

Some information on this alternative wood treatment.
<http://www.woodturningvideosplus.com/boiling-green-wood.html>
www.woodturners.org/tech_tips/misc-pages/boiling.pdf

General

www.turningwood.com/artists.htm

There is an entry on this site for Darrel Feltmate with lots of useful information.

Ideas for ornaments can be found on
<http://woodcentral.com/newforum/ornaments>

Marquetry

It is well worthwhile looking at the website for the Staffordshire Marquetry Society. There is an excellent gallery of work by members.

www.staffsmarq.freereserve.co.uk

Questions and answers

This section is an opportunity for members to ask questions for other members to answer, primarily about woodturning 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

For Sale Black & Decker DN66 Plunge Router. Virtually new. In box. Ideal to modify for use for fluting etc. on lathe. £20.

Contact Will Rose 01543 490424 or
secretary@MSWA.co.uk

Brand new Supernova chuck insert Type 3 for sale £15
Thread size M20x1.5 RH (Metric) to fit Electra Beckum / Multico, Sumaro and other metric threaded lathes.

Contact Paul Bellamy 01543 472669
paul.bellamy@mswa.co.uk