



Future Events

MSWA Meetings

5th April
Bob Chapman

Simple Forms and Classical Shapes

3rd May

Hands on and Open Evening

Other Events

National Marquetry Exhibition

Gladstone Pottery Museum

25th - 31st May 2013

Club Competitions

April

Novice

An Egg and Egg Cup

May

Challenge

A Clock

Chairman's Notes

Your committee met again on 26th March when we again enjoyed the hospitality of John Smith and his provision of coffee and chocolate biscuits.

A key item on the agenda was the format of the Hands On and Open Evening when we hope to provide a different format for the meeting, at what we believe is a popular request, and also take the opportunity to attract new members from visitors. We will try and publicise this event in the local media beforehand.

We already have an offer from Paul Bellamy to bring his tool sharpening jigs along and provide advice on that tricky subject and are looking for other members to bring lathes or projects to the evening as a way of sharing their knowledge. David Winter will be on hand to sell wood blanks for those who will be freshly inspired by what they see.

We have also discussed the possibilities of attracting attention from groups such as the local scouts having seen and read about the successful events elsewhere in the country.

If you have any ideas on how we might take such initiatives forward then we will be more than grateful for any suggestions. Just e-mail them to me at chairman@mswa.co.uk or contact me by telephone.

Philip Watts



Editor's Scribblings

A common question that is asked of me whenever people learn that I practice (that being the operative word, in my case) wood-turning is "Where do you get your wood?". Whilst some of my blanks have come from workshop clearances or commercial sources, others have come from local gardens. The word gets around and friends advise me when they are removing and disposing of trees such as cherry, apple, or laburnum. This sounds great but the subsequent experience is so often poor and friends with wood burning stoves become the ultimate beneficiaries.

Recently I was provided with a substantial apple tree trunk and branch. The trunk was about ten inches in diameter so I chainsawed it into pieces just under a foot in length and split each section lengthways on the centreline, intending to turn bowls. The sawn ends were then liberally coated with PVA glue. Two sections were rough-turned the next day into nine-inch diameter bowls and again coated. Within one day, one bowl had splits both radially from the heart section but also circumferential. A week later I started to rough turn another section only to find that it was already splitting longitudinally, as were the other pieces. That was the end of the bowl turning exercise and, consequently, I have split one piece along the longitudinal crack and started to turn end grain vases.

I do not know what other member's experiences are in this direction. It would be interesting to know. Perhaps an article, somebody??

Philip Watts

Is it a Crime?

I came across a new word the other day, as one does. Something of which some MSWA members may be guilty. Skeuomorphism. What's that I hear you say? "It must be a terrible sin. Put them in a cell and throw away the key. Civilisation must be protected"

Actually, it is the placing of a physical ornamentation or design on an object to make it resemble another material. Evidently, Steve Jobs of Apple was guilty of this by placing fake leather finishes on certain products.

So those of you who apply stained and dyed finishes to wood to make it resemble porcelain or china, beware. You could be guilty. Nuff said!

Newsletter

I

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.



March Demonstration Report

Michael Bidney, our demonstrator for this month has what he describes as a “modest workshop, on the shores of Hollingworth Lake, nestling under the slopes of Blackstone Edge”. There may be an element of poetic licence in this statement, knowing the area as I do. Michael has been turning pens for some six to seven years by his reckoning and now does it commercially on a small scale, supplying pens as we heard to a well known Scottish distillery.

His source of material for these pens is in fact redundant whisky barrel staves of American white oak (*Quercus alba*). Apparently, beverages aged in wooden barrels take on some of the compounds in the barrel, such as Vanillin and wood tannins. The presence of these compounds is dependent on many factors, including the place of origin, how the staves were cut and dried, and the treatment during manufacture. After roughly three years, most of a barrel's flavour compounds have been leached out and it is well on its way to becoming "neutral".

The staves are obviously curved from their useage in the barrel and only the straighter sections may be used. The pen sections are cut will oversize on a bandsaw before being drilled on a pillar drill to accept the brass tubes that form part of the pen design. Michael finds the usual problem of wandering drills with the drill being driven off line by the grain of the wood. The brass tubes are abrided with a coarse abrasive before gluing into the pen sections, thus ensuring a good bond.

Michael uses superglue, allowing an hour to ensure that the adhesive has set before turning. Once set, the wood is trimmed back to the end of the brass tube. Whilst some people recommend plugging the brass tubes with either potato or plasticine, he finds that it is sufficient to use the point of an old knife for this purpose.

The pen sections are mounted on the lathe using a universal mandrel and standard bushings that are commercially obtainable. Turning was commenced as normal with a roughing gouge and the final turning completed with a round nose scraper. A feature of pen turning is the need to obtain a high level of finish so abrasives up tp 1200 grade are used,

The pen blanks having been made from old whisky casks have also been well soaked throughout their life. The changes in moisture content as they are being turned into pens has the potential to produce cracking so Michael soaks them in Danish oil overnight before final finishing with a sanding sealer and three coats of wax.

The upper portion of the pen is turned in a repeat of the lower half. Michael prefers to turn fountain or roller ball pens rather than the more common slim-line ones and considers them to be easier. Final assembly was demonstrated using a commercial press tool.

Michael finished his demonstration b starting to turn a pen from acrylic. Unfortunately, he demonstrated one of the downsides of this material, a propensity to shatter whilst being turned. This prevented him from completing this part of his examination. A small number of members then had the opportunity to try their hand at turning on such a small scale. There were many parts of the demonstration where members had both questions to ask but also to offer their experience in this particular branch of the art or craft of wood turning.





The Penny Pinchers Guide to Pen Making

or Practical Procedures for the Parsimonious Penman

A recent article on pen making in a well known wood-turning magazine commenced by listing all the equipment that could be used in making pens. The list, plus the potential costs, was significant. The approach was appropriate if, like Michael Bidney, one wished to venture into pen-making on any scale; but if the intention is only to produce a relatively small number then the outlay appears excessive.

This was the case when my wife, the Marquetarian, moved into the manufacture of pen boxes with lids inlaid with marquetry. I was then required to produce the pens to go inside the boxes to make Christmas and Birthday presents for family members. Life was made a little easier in that only one style was proposed, although in a variety of woods.



I drilled the pen blanks on the lathe but I also tried the other way using a pillar drill. Both ways work well. Holding the pen blank vertically in a pillar drill is made easier if you have a small vice available but a good substitute can be made from a couple of pieces of wood notched to receive the pen blank cross-section.





The pen blanks were taken down to length and the ends squared on a disc sanding table, checking with an engineering square.. Mine is a combined belt/disc sander but a lathe can always be converted to act in the same way by attaching an abrasive paper to a faceplate and mounting a wooden table on the lathe bed in front of it.

I was using the brass tubes with an outside diameter of 7mm and found by experiment that a piece of 6mm studding was a relatively good fit inside the tube. A short section of wood was held in a chuck and drilled on the lathe to accept the studding. Using an under-size drill and tapping the hole with an M6 tap produced a firmly held mandrel locked into place with pairs of nuts and washers. It is worthwhile to create a countersink on the end of the mandrel by setting it so that there is a very small protrusion beyond the holding wood and touching the end with a drill. This permits the mandrel to be held in the chuck with support from the tail-stock. The alternative to this is to make an intermediate piece to fit between a live centre and the mandrel.



This simple mandrel obviously does not have the convenience of the bushings that form part of the commercial systems. The prime function of these is to provide a reference point in turning the pen blanks down to the correct diameters to match the pen fittings and to hold the pen blank central when the internal diameter of the brass pen tubes is greater than that of the mandrel. The technique then is that of conventional turning and has to be that of setting callipers to the correct diameters for each end of the blank, turning down to that point and then endeavouring to turn a smooth curve between those points.

Opinions seemed to be divided amongst club members during the Michael Bidney demonstration as the best tool to use. Some preferred to use a spindle gouge, others a skew. Some used full size tools, others the miniature ones. My personal preference is towards the latter.

Assembly of the components can be carried out in a standard bench vice. One problem here is keeping the components in line during the pressing operation. A technique that I have devised is to take a small square wooden block and to drill a blind hole of the correct diameter to accept the pen barrel. Inserting the pen section into this hole then ensures that it remains square to the vice face.

Will I continue to turn pens using these rudimentary methods? I have to confess that since I now possess basic metal turning facilities, I will probably manufacture a set of bushes to suit my needs. However, if you do not have such equipment, all is not lost as an examination of early clock making lathes shows that the use of hand-held tools on a rest was a common feature before the development of the cross-slide. Careful use of a sharp gouge can permit brass to be turned in a standard wood-turning lathe provided that you have a suitable chuck to hold the work piece. Similarly, the central holes on the bushes can be drilled on a wood turning lathe to suit the mandrel in use.



Competition

The March Challenge Competition called for a gavel and block.

We have been trialling a new voting system with each member being asked to select a first, second, and third place item from those on display. Votes are 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. As I wrote last month, 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 we have found it difficult to devise a weighting system that is easy to operate and gives a reliable result on the night.

Our experiment using a scoring system borrowed from the sailing world proved to be a failure when subjected to a real world test. We intend to simplify the system still further for the April Meeting and members will be asked to vote for the first place only but using a “blind” voting system.

After all that, I have to confess that I failed to take the statutory photographs. Here are the winners:

1st Hugh Field

2nd Philip Powell – Nice to see a new name in the listings.

3rd Geoff Payne

Entries were also received from Ted Gill, Brian Smith and the Editor.

If these competitions whet your appetite then how about the following:



Woodturning Competition 2013
sponsored by **Axminster Tool Centre**

If you have a piece of work recently turned or one you are currently working on or planning, then why not enter the New Forest Trust Woodturning Competition sponsored by Axminster Tool Centre?

This is a great opportunity not only to display your work to a wide audience, but also to win a prestigious prize. One of the key elements of the competition is that all pieces of work must be turned from wood grown in and native to the UK; ideally wood sourced from the New Forest.

The competition is open to all woodturners and selected entries will be placed on display in the [New Forest Trust's](#) marquee at the [New Forest & Hampshire County Show](#) from 30th July to 1st August 2013.



Club information

Your club committee for 2013 is:-

Chairman - Philip Watts

Email: chairman@mswa.co.uk

Tel. 0121 308 7838

Secretary – John McElroy

Email: secretary@mswa.co.uk

Treasurer – Vance Lupton

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Assistant Treasurer – Hugh Field

Events Secretary – Ted Gill

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Newsletter editor – Philip Watts

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Committee Members

John Smith

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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'Donnell
- 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

Machinery and Equipment list (Ex Terry Gray)

Delta - bandsaw K9334 28-180

Power craft - Router table and router

Power craft - Reciprocating saw

Jet - Woodlathe JWL 1220VS

Axminster - K10 chuck with spare O'Donnell jaws, spare "C" jaws and spare button jaws (to fit Jet wood lathe JWL 1220VS)

Chuck - 4 jaw with spare set of extending jaws (no makers name but manual with it)

Erbauer - 8" thickness planer RO9W44

Turning tools - Approx 2 dozen assorted

Hilka - 6" bench grinder with one white and one pink wheel

Red Eye - Circular saw with 185mm blade diameter

Power Craft - cordless power drill, 24 volt, with 13mm chuck and battery charger

Delta - Scroll saw

Black and Decker - 240 volt router

Black and Decker - 240 volt variable speed drill with 13mm chuck

Dremel - "300" hand router

Record - "5 1/2" Jack plane

Bosch - PBS75 Belt sander

If you are interested in any item please contact Mrs M Gray on Tel 01889 576921 Rugeley(Staffs)

Lathe and Tools

Record DML36SH with bowl turning attachment and rests. £175.00

Record Power chuck RP3000 £50.00

Robert Sorby Thread cutters £20.00

Robert Sorby Sandmaster £20.00

Henry Taylor Roughing Gouge £15.00

Contact: Ken on 0121 378 0448 – Sutton Coldfield or speak to Phil Watts on 0121 308 7838

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 on 01283 229072

Carnauba wax polishes – Paul Bellamy

Following the favourable reaction to the polishing kits Paul started earlier this year, he has established a supply of carnauba wax flakes. These can be used to make your own 'sticks' or mixed with other components to make a range of polishes. He is selling these in 250g bags but could do larger quantities if you need it. He also has some ready-made wax blocks, comprising 60% beeswax/ 40% carnauba. These are softer than most 'wood-turning sticks' but he prefers this as it doesn't score your work.

He also has more of his 'Buffing kits', similar to Chestnut's system. For more details, e-mail him at paul.bellamy@mswa.co.uk