



A message from our chairman - Friendly firewood!!

It was an interesting farm. At first sight, like a good many other farms in the country, it looked a little run down, but the large square farmhouse, built of grey stone looked very imposing - and quite old. Must be at least 200 years. And it had a dovecot, although this was in a ruinous state now. I made a mental note to enquire about it when I had had time to get to know Mrs. Maunder. She had advertised that she offered 'bed and breakfast' and Joan and I had booked in for two nights. You see, the farm was not far from Somerton in Somerset and we had planned to visit the Axminster show and also fit in a visit to Yandle's tool shop and timber yard and from our home near Stafford this was too much to do in one day. Let's make a weekend of it we said and this place seemed to be in just the right place.

While enjoying tea and biscuits with Mrs. Maunder, in her sitting room, I got round to admiring some of her furniture - mostly Victorian, it seemed to me but nice quality and a lot of it. A pedestal table, a chiffonier, chairs - all of the usual stuff, and of course, I couldn't keep my eyes off it.

'Are you interested in furniture', she asked. 'Yes I am but rather it is the wood that attracts me particularly, you see I am a wood turner'.

'Oh, that's interesting', said Mrs. Maunder.

I don't know whether she still thought it interesting after I talked about it non-stop for about a quarter of an hour but eventually she said ' Well there is a lot of wood in the yard and, if you would like some, just help yourself.

After thanking her for generous offer I asked her just where about in the yard I might find it. 'It's under the lean-to roof, there is a big pile of it, you can't miss it'.

Indeed there was a big pile. Two truck loads at least. But it was firewood!

There was a real mixture. Oak, ash, beech, sycamore, beech, lime and yet more beech, and some of it had obviously been there for a good long time for it was, dare I say it, spalted. Perhaps the word 'rotten' would be a more apt description. However, we rummaged amongst the chunks, the wood lice and the spiders and selected, I think, only three pieces. This meant that I could honestly say to Mrs. Maunder that I had taken some of her wood and was very appreciative of her offer.

We enjoyed our stay at the farm. The Axminster show was brilliant as usual and we were not let down by our visit to Yandle's. They are always worth a visit and there you can get a good selection of proper wood to keep the average turner busy for ages.

For several weeks I didn't even look at the wood. I just left it in the bag up in the corner of the workshop. But the day came (it usually comes about every two months) when the place was so untidy I just had to have a sort out and make room to work. And so, I rediscovered Mrs. Maunder's firewood!

When I had a close look at the chosen pieces I thought 'this wood has potential after all'. I planed an edge of a piece of beech and saw that it had a sort of marbled effect which was very pleasing and it looked as though it might make a very attractive ball point pen. I had recently attended an excellent demonstration of pen making and I had already obtained from Craft Supplies some kits to make what I thought was probably the easiest of the excellent range in their catalogue. So, let's have a go. And so my first pen was produced. Not without some difficulty I might say as the wood really was rather soft and to get anything like a decent finish my skew chisel had to be razor sharp.

Now when I attempt a project which is new to me, I usually find that the first one is a sort of 'prototype' and not very special. The second one is usually a much better example and so it was on this occasion; and I decided that if I went back to stay with Mrs. Maunder I would give her this second pen as a little gift - a sort of 'thank you' present.



A few months later and we were back at the farm enjoying a short break on the beautiful countryside which Somerset has to offer, and there I was giving Mrs. Maunder the pen. Well she was so pleased, delighted in fact, and to prove it she gave me a kiss! Brave woman! 'That is wonderful', she said. 'After breakfast we'll have a little chat about a bit of business'. What could she mean?

You get an excellent breakfast at Mrs. Maunder's and so it was about an hour later that she called me to one side and asked me if I would be kind enough to make some pens for her to give to her family.

'Certainly', I said, 'how many would you like?'

'A dozen should be enough', she said. 'I'll pay for them, of course, but they must be made of wood from the estate'.

Naturally, I was happy to do this for her, so I went and selected a few more pieces from the wood pile and as soon as I got home I set about making the pens. When you have made a dozen pens - or a dozen of anything, for that matter - you become quite good at it! So now I feel that I am a very proficient pen maker.

All I because I was given a few pieces of firewood!

Peter



Editor's note

Now the summer is here and the evenings are lighter, we can all spend more time out of the house; in the garden or even in the workshop with bits of wood. It also means there are quite a few shows to visit so I thought I would give you details of some of them which may be of interest to you.

Forest of Mercia

The club has been invited to have a stand at the Forest of Mercia County Show on 31st. May/ 1st. June. This is an opportunity for us to show the craft of woodturning to a wider audience and maybe get more club members. If anyone would like to have their work displayed, please get in touch with any member of the committee. Items are NOT for sale, so they will be returned to you afterwards.

CHADS

We have agreed to put on a demonstration at CHADS Garden Party on the 8th. July. CHADS is located on the old football ground between Kings Bromley and Rugeley. The area has been laid out to allow the physically or mentally handicapped and the disabled, facilities for the enjoyment and appreciation of nature and nature conservation, wildlife and agriculture and horticulture including the provisions of a garden and nature reserve adapted, set out and modified for their particular needs. Any help would be appreciated.

Kings Bromley

The club had a very successful presence at last years show, when we took most of the prizes. Now that is not the only reason for visiting the show as there are many other interesting stalls to visit but it does offer anyone a chance to display their work and potentially win some cash! Entry costs 50p with prizes of £5 for 1st., £3 for 2nd. and £2 for 3rd.

There are several categories - Child's toy, Hand carving (article that includes or is exclusively hand carved), Turning (article under 7" diameter), Turning (article over 7" diameter) and Useful article (for home or garden).

Why not give it a go?

On a personal note, my thanks to Roy Fallows who has taken over the job of Assistant Treasurer. I am sure Maurice will also be grateful as I couldn't really assist him at the club meetings due to other commitments.

Finally, I could do with some more articles for the newsletter. If you want a newsletter, I need your news to publish. Please send anything you would like printed, to :- paulbellamy@dsl.pipex.com
28 Hollis Road, Yoxall, Burton on Trent, Staffs. DE13 8PZ

Thanks,
Paul



Club information

Your club committee for 2006 comprises:-

- Chairman - Peter Worrall
- Secretary - John Smith
- Treasurer - Maurice Partington
- Assistant treasurer - Roy Fallows
- Events secretary - Geoff Payne
- Abrasives - Terry Gray
- Raffle - Margaret Hill
- Member's representative - Ron Barnsley



Club merchandise

LATEST - Chestnut products

The club has negotiated a deal with a supplier of Chestnut wood finishing products that should give us a 10% discount, but we need to place an order for £150-200 this month. The most popular products appear to be Sanding sealer, Melamine lacquer, Cellulose thinners, Danish oil. Please let us know what you want as soon as possible or you will miss out on a great opportunity. Order form is last sheet of this newsletter!!



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, and they keep all that loose clothing wrapped up, but they are also smart enough to wear down the high street.

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 is now in charge of the club's stock of abrasives. They are £1.75 per metre and we have 180, 180, 240 and 320 grit in stock.



Club meetings

The next meeting, is on June 2nd. and Graham Lovett will be demonstrating for us.

The 'Summer Hands On' evening has been arranged for 7:15pm Friday 16th. June. Steve Heeley and possibly Ken Slatcher have kindly offered to be there to give advice to members. There will be several lathes available to allow some 'demonstrations' but also for you to try things out with guidance and advice from other members.

I have also agreed to bring my laptop and will be happy to discuss any computing questions regarding the newsletter. I don't promise to solve them but it may give some pointers to problems.

As usual, there will be a raffle with great prizes.

Last year's meeting was a great success and I think everyone came away having learned something.



Club Competition pieces

The Challenge cup competition piece for the July meeting is:-

'A platter between 6 and 8 inches diameter and a maximum of 1.25 inches high'.

and for the Novices / Beginners, the June piece is:-

A 'Bottle coaster'.

Basically a stand for a wine bottle to stop any drips messing the table cloth. Remember not all wine bottles are the same diameter so there needs to be a small allowance for this but the wine bottle must not be unstable. I might even bring a bottle of wine to try them out!

Next issue

A report on the Forest of Mercia show and Gordon's tips on Copy turning and Tool grinding angles and jigs



May competition entries



First place - Les Aldridge

Second place - Peter Worrall

Third place - Ted Webster

An impressive set of balls, maybe the club will have a set of skittles for a club competition so we can have a game, although these balls look too good to use for that.

Well done everyone who entered.

And here's something to think about:-

My wife stepped into the room where I was working the other day and asked me if I would go do some wood turning on the lathe.

"Of course," I replied, receiving anticipatory joy at the thought of my wife's pleasure when I would be finished creating the item for which she had a need.

"What do you need? Maybe a new dibber or possibly a rolling pin or a vase? I have Beech, Ash, a little bit of Walnut and a tad of Oak. What would you like?"

"Oh, I don't care," my wife replied. "I need about six bags of shavings for the flower beds."

Which just goes to prove, it is worth attempting a piece for the competitions as something good comes out of everything!



Tracy Owen - Don't get donked!

It is always interesting to meet professional woodturners in person as, no matter how many books, magazines, videos that you look through, you can never appreciate their true skills until you see them in practise. And it gives us all a chance to ask questions and get a direct answer. On that matter, this month's demonstrator, Tracy Owen, came with an added bonus as we discovered he was the inventor of the texturing tool, now marketed by Robert Sorby but more of that later.

Tracy is on the Register of Professional Turners and specialises in green wood turning of bowls and hollow forms to produce unique one-off pieces. He also likes to add texture to his work which is achieved with a range of techniques but tonight he chose to turn a piece of wood burr.

Wood burrs are large, rounded outgrowths on the trunk or branch of a tree. It is thought that irritants such as bacteria are the cause of wood burrs. A curiosity of nature, they provide an interesting piece of timber as the figure, or grain pattern, is very complex compared to the normal grain of the tree. Tracy's work enhances the patterns in the wood burrs by the shape of the piece and by keeping the natural outer edge. The difficulty in working on a natural edge is that a lot of the time it is not possible to have the bevel of the tool rubbing on the workpiece. This calls for very precise, controlled movement of the tool and Tracy emphasised the turners stance, how the tool should be firmly held using the hands and the body, and that movements use the body, not just the arms. A good reminder of an old lesson that some of us forget too easily.

The piece was mounted on a screw chuck but, as it was bound to be out of balance, he used the tailstock to provide extra support, reducing the forces on the screw. Always better safe than sorry!

Once the basic outer shape was formed Tracy cut a dovetail spigot, ready for reversing the bowl and completing the inside. However, he doesn't like dovetails left on pieces so he allowed more wood behind the dovetail so he could finish the work with what has become his trademark, a simple but stylish, curved foot.

Leaving the tailstock in place he worked the underside of the bowl, developing a nice flowing shape. When convenient, Tracy uses the length of the tool rest to support his arm as well as the tool, giving better control and reducing fatigue. He is also a proponent of long ground tools to give better access in difficult places, especially cutting near the spigot.

To get a good finish on the burr, as it doesn't have any particular grain direction, Tracy recommended 'shear scraping', something many of us have heard about but may not have tried. This is where the scraper is held at an angle to the toolrest, rather than flat on it, providing an acute cutting edge to the workpiece instead of directly across it. This gives a much cleaner cut.

The surface of the piece was finished by power sanding, using a sanding disc in a power drill, with the work rotating at low speed. He applies quite a lot of pressure to the disc but as everything is moving, this doesn't leave any sanding marks. Of course, he works through various grades to get the desired finish, then applies sealer

The piece was then mounted on the dovetail and the inside of the bowl was worked, frequently stopping to check the form and, more importantly for the audience, the integrity of the lobes of the burr. As Tracy said "Don't get donked!", meaning watch out for any pieces that might break off and hit you. A new phrase to most of us, that caused amusement but is excellent advice.

Again he used power sanding to achieve a beautiful finish but this needs great care as there are a lot of openings towards the edge of the bowl, ready to catch the edge of the sanding disc. When that was finished, the bowl was reversed using a soft pad to jam the bowl between the chuck and the tailpiece. Now he could remove the dovetail by working it into a concave curve, which enhanced the shape of the whole piece. Very impressive!

Having finished the demonstration piece, Tracy gave a brief history of the texturing tool, especially interesting as it was his idea and he had some of his prototypes to show us. Several members have had varying degrees of success with one of these tools and Tracy was keen to show how it can and should be used. When texturing, it is important to keep the tool moving, otherwise the cutter will track the same cuts, leaving deep ugly scars rather than an overall texture.

Then onto the spiralling tool. Here it is important not to set the angle of the cutter too far as it has to stay within its own pitch. Start gently until you have at least two starting grooves, then allow the tool to find its own cuts and move these along the workpiece. Repeating this movement cuts the spiral to the desired depth. The tool can also be used to cut beads by setting the angle at 90deg.. Finally Tracy showed an easy way to sharpen the tool, which is done only on the



Wood 'n' things



bevelled edge. The tool is held with the cutter against a piece of scrapwood in the lathe, causing it to spin. Then a diamond hone is held against the tool and the rotation of the cutter sharpens the edge. Simple but very effective.

We all learnt a lot this evening and as usual, the demonstrator left us wanting to have a go at something different. I am sure there will be a queue to borrow the texturing tool and I foresee competition pieces with textured surfaces making an appearance in forthcoming meetings.

Tracy Owen at Mid Staffs Woodturners, May 2006u

Pictures by Ron Barnsley and Paul Bellamy



Some of Tracy's other work on show

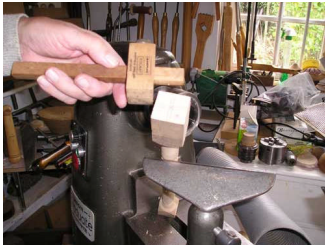




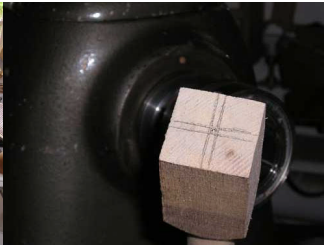
Gordon Fradleys's Tips, Tricks or Treats

THAT perhaps the most accurate method of marking the centre of a spindle blank is to use a traditional marking gauge (Pic.1). The gauge need not be set to scribe exactly on the centre line but can be set a little over or a little under centre and the resulting scribed lines will form a square around the true centre (Pic.2).

This method is called 'boxing off' in engineering terms and would always be used when marking off a plate for drilling. The size of the box would be accurately set using a vernier height gauge to equate to the diameter of the hole to be drilled. We don't need to be that accurate for centring our work piece; often the centre can be found by 'eyeballing', that is, judging the centre by eye. But where one needs to be more accurate, perhaps when the square blank is only just large enough to achieve the correct diameter then 'boxing off' is my prescribed method; certainly far more accurate than marking across corners.



Pic.1



Pic.2

THAT one of the simplest ways of acquiring a useful shear scraper is to use an old skew chisel. Some professionals use two scrapers, one left hand and one right hand.

I have attempted to show these, with their grinds, in the top two wooden mock-ups.

Others go for a double grind, one on either *edge* of the blade. This grind is often curved as is demonstrated on the third wooden sample. I also go for a double grind but on the *face* of the blade. Yes, it's an old 1 1/4" skew chisel, and is ground with a slight convex curve as shown at the bottom in Pic.3. Pic. 4 shows the 'skew' shear scraper in front of a bottle shaped vase which will be used to demonstrate the action of shear scraping.



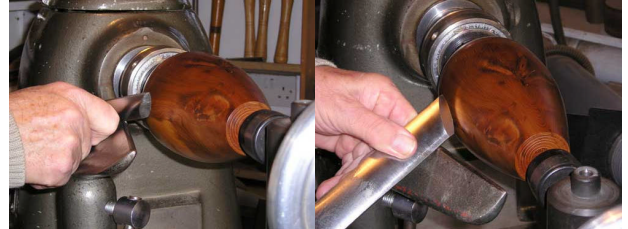
Pic.3



Pic.4

The next two pictures attempt to show the action of shear scraping where the scraper is presented to the work-piece, not flat on the rest, but at a raised 'shear' or 'shearing' angle of about 45° and with a light touch to provide a superior finish. Note that on such a bottle

shape, the left hand shear action *pulls* the chisel from the largest diameter downhill to the smallest diameter (Pic.5). Conversely the right hand shear scraping turns the chisel over and pulls it lightly from the largest diameter again, downhill towards the smallest diameter at the tailstock end (Pic.6).



Pic.5

Pic.6

THAT whilst there are many ways of storing sanding discs, the neatest method I have known is that provided by Bill Kinsman, a long time friend and member of the Mid Staffs Woodturners. Bill suggested, in a magazine tips page, that the centre of abrasive discs are never used so why not punch a 6mm hole in the centre of each disc and store them on pegs suitably arranged on a base board. The idea saves an enormous amount of time and frustration (see Pic.7). The base of the stand can be marked with the appropriate grit size below each holding peg as shown.



Pic.7

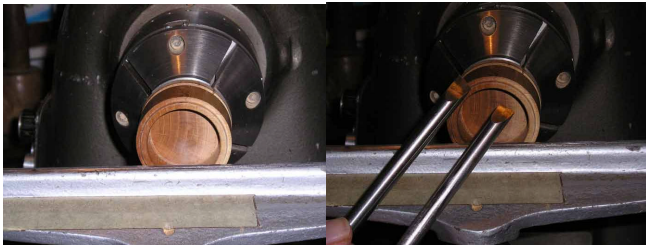


Making boxes.

When you are making boxes and need to keep the sides square and the bottoms flat (see Pic. 8), try these tips which I believe will help you in your endeavours.

Make yourself a $\frac{3}{8}$ " round skew chisel in High Speed Steel. Better still get yourself a couple from the Ashley Isles stand at the next exhibition. Grind one as a skew and the other with a square end as shown in pic 9.

I learnt something from Paul at the Friday March 3rd meeting which I should pass on to you before proceeding. One of the immediate benefits of producing the "Newsletter" as a PDF file is that you can enlarge your pictures at will. So, if you can't distinguish the skew from the square end chisel in Pic.9 then zoom in until you can, the skew is on the left.



Pic.8

Pic.9

Cut down the inside wall of the box with the skew chisel(Pic.10). It gives ample clearance from the side wall where your parting tool would catch the edge. We all saw this at Steve Heeley's demonstration on March 3rd. when he began to bore the base of the table lamp for a snug fit of the lamp's spindle.

You will recall that Steve resorted to a conventional small skew, using the long point to cut down the recess.

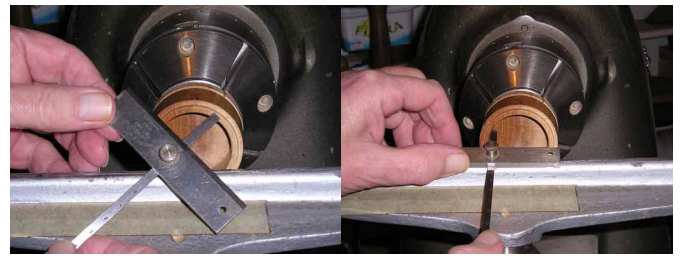
The second chisel ground with a square end would also cut down the box sides but is extremely useful for squaring across box bottoms. Small square or rectangular plates made from aluminium or plastic off-cuts are useful for checking that box bottoms are flat.



Pic. 10

Another little tip imparted by the late Keith Rowley can prove useful if your box bottom ends up with a little pip. Stop the lathe, rotate the box to set the grain vertical and simply scrape off the offending pip. Your newly acquired $\frac{3}{8}$ " round square end chisel will do this job admirably.

My final tip on this subject of box making is one that was given to me by Ray Key. That is to obtain an engineer's depth gauge. This is very useful, not only to measure the required depth of the box but also to check that your box walls are square with the bottom.



Pic. 11

Pic.12

Pic. 11 shows my 6" Moore and Wright depth gauge and pic.12 shows it in use.

Set the gauge almost to the depth of the box, hold the main body of the gauge against the top edge of the box and gradually slide the gauge to the left or right until the rule touches the box wall and check for squareness.



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.

Quick, quick, slow.

After you showed me the IKEA light dimmer last month I had a bright (no pun intended) idea. Why not use the dimmer as a variable speed controller for an electric motor?

So I've been to IKEA (the only place I could find one) and sure enough it works!

You must bear in mind that it's only rated to 300 Watts, but I've used it to control my Microclene air filter (80 Watts). I've got a big model as I used to turn in a large courtyard but now work in a small shed (10' x 8') so it was very noisy. By slowing the motor it still filters adequately but isn't too noisy and I can always speed it up if I need.

It might be worth trying on a small lathe of less than 300 Watts to see how it copes.

What do you think?



Useful websites

There is an awful lot of information available on the internet but some is better than others. If you come across any good or useful sites, please let me know and I will publish them in the newsletter.

The following are worth a look :-

<http://www.tracyowen.com/>

Website for last month's demonstrator. Look at that hollow form!!

http://www.robert-sorby.co.uk/spiral_texture.htm

Details of the texturing, spiralling and chatter tools from Robert Sorby



Latest news

Has Terry Gray made it across the UK on foot? Will he be at next weeks meeting? Did you sponsor his good cause before he set off? If not, I am sure he will be happy to accept any extra donations.



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.

Wood suppliers

Some club members have been asking about local suppliers of wood, suitable for turning. I thought of one person, Chris Barker, who demonstrated at the club last year and has a shop at Middleton Hall, near the Belfry. Chris has a good selection of timber, at good prices and I am sure will welcome any club members. He also sells on eBay under the identity 'cod12ie' (don't ask me how he came up with that one!)

If anyone else can suggest other suppliers, please send us the details so they can be included in future newsletters.



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

Clarke CBS12WV variable speed bandsaw.

A useful 500W saw with 12" throat, tilting table and 80mm cutting depth. Bought from Machine Mart two years ago. In good condition. £80. Paul Bellamy





Chestnut products order

Please complete your details and we will place the order as soon as possible.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

The commonly used products are Cellulose Sanding Sealer, Cellulose Thinners, Finishing Oil, Friction Polish, Lemon Oil, Melamine Lacquer, Specialist waxes, Steel Wool and Wood stains, but they have a massive range to choose from.

Have a look at their website :- <http://www.chestnutproducts.co.uk/pricelist.asp>

<u>Item description</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
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