



Wood 'n' things



Mid Staffs Woodturning Association Newsletter

Issue – March 2014

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Future Events

MSWA Meetings

April 4th
John Berkeley
Turned Boxes and
Alternative Materials

May 2nd
Hands On and Open Evening

Other Events

Club Competitions

April
Novice – Spinning Top

May
Challenge – Decorated Platter

June
Novice – Door Wedge

Chairman's Notes

A much welcome sight of an increased audience at our last meeting. Long may it continue. We had a number of visitors and would hope that they will turn into long term members.

Paul Bellamy's demonstration was well pitched at the less experienced turner and explored what could be done with very basic equipment. It was well appreciated judging by the comments made to me at the tea break interval.

Next month's demonstration will explore the use of alternative materials but will still be based on conventional wood turning equipment and processes. John Berkeley is a long term and well established turner. My first acquaintance with him was through his articles in the magazine "Woodturning" where he explored the world of puzzles, often based on the use of hand threading techniques, both left and right hand threads. It should be an interesting night.

MSWA again attended the Staffordshire Wile Life Trust Spring Fair, bringing MSWA to the attention of the visitors. However once more the stand was manned by the usual small band of suspects. Our next visits are likely to be the Alrewas and Kings Bromley Shows. I will advertise the dates as soon as they are confirmed. Put them in your diary and come and support us. Who knows, you may even get some free tuition as well as joining in a social occasion.

Philip Watts



Editor's Scribblings

I am sure that members, being of more mature years, will no longer believe in Father Christmas and the Tooth Fairy, but what about the Chuck Key Gremlin? That is the one that hides the chuck key at every opportunity.

He struck recently when my wife and I were in the process of replacing a garden shed. I was drilling the holes for the coach screws that held the sides together. A clearance hole for the shank and a pilot hole for the screw thread. Two drill bits and a chuck key. One bit in the drill chuck, the other bit and the key in the pocket of my overalls. Except that when I came to change a bit, there was no key and replacement bit in my pocket. Search all pockets, no result. Examine the ground around the shed, still no items found. Review all movements in the last few minutes and search all paths covered. Whereabouts of chuck key and drill bit remaining a mystery. Obviously the work of the Chuck Key Gremlin!

The mystery was resolved at lunch time when I removed my overalls to discover the key and bit residing in the top of my boot socks having missed my pocket and slipped down the overall leg. I am not convinced, however, that it will be the last time I spend valuable minutes mid-project looking for the elusive item despite it being tagged with a strip of red insulation tape. There has to be something else at work.

Philip Watts

Spinning Tops

The Novice Challenge for April is for a spinning top. Terry Gray, a former member of the club used to produce these interesting tops which would invert when spun. They were called Tippe tops. Here is the science behind this odd behaviour from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.



A tippe top is a kind of top. When a tippe top is spun at a high angular velocity its handle slowly tilts downwards more and more until it lifts the body of the top off the ground with the stem pointing downward. As the top's spinning rate slows, it loses stability and eventually topples over.

At first glance the top's inversion may mistakenly seem to be a situation where the object gains energy. This is because the inversion of the top raises the object's center of mass, which means the potential energy has increased. What causes the inversion (and the increase in potential energy) is a torque due to surface friction, which also decreases the kinetic energy of the top, so the total energy does not actually increase.



March Demonstration – Paul Bellamy



Paul Bellamy is well known to members of the MSWA, having previously been a long term and very active member of our club. He is now secretary for Derwent Woodturners.

Paul's approach to demonstrations is to combine ideas for projects together with hints on basic wood-turning and equipment. This, for this demonstration, he had picked a project intended to replicate the basic design of an antique sugar bowl and combined that with ideas on how somebody who had just purchased a wood turning lathe could extend their wood-turning repertoire without having to go to the further expense of a chuck. The cost of some of these today almost equals the cost of a basic lathe.

The project choice had come from a request from one of Paul's pupils who had a desire to translate the design of a glass sugar bowl into a wooden object. The obvious way was to turn the upper bowl as one piece, the second piece as the base and to combine the two with a matching spindle as the column. A good project including a measure of cross-grain turning with some spindle work.



A typical design of Victorian sugar bowl used as a basis for the project

Paul had prepared his pieces for the base and bowl by gluing them to “waster” (my expression) sections of old floor board thick enough to be screwed to the type of face plate often supplied as standard with a basic lathe. The joint that he had used was a paper joint in that a piece of paper is sandwiched between the two pieces of wood. Paper typically of the same weight as copy paper or one of the better quality newspapers is employed together with a standard PVA white glue. This produces a joint that has adequate strength to endure the turning process but is one that can easily be parted with the aid of a sharp chisel or knife. The half-thickness of paper left on the base of the turned piece can easily be cleaned off. It is not wise to use too light a weight of paper because the glue can penetrate through and form a more permanent joint, too difficult to split without damage.

Turning of the bowl is undertaken using a standard 3/8 inch bowl gouge. However, Paul had reversed the normal way in which bowls are turned by tackling the inside and top first. The reason for this became evident when having completed the hollowing and having applied the finish of choice, a diluted Melamine polish being Paul's preferred selection, he split his partially turned bowl from its mount and remounted it in a recess turned into the waster piece. He then turned the base of his bowl using



measurements to ensure that he did not turn all the way though. Sanding and finishing together with a hole bored in the centre to receive the spindle completed this phase of the project.

The base is another piece of conventional cross grain turning but with the top being turned first and a hole drilled to receive the lower end of the spindle.. Having been split from the mount as with the bowl, the waster piece is this time turned to leave a spigot on which the base can be mounted to allow the bottom of the base to be cleaned up and left slightly concave, thus ensuring that the sugar bowl will sit evenly on a level surface.

Finally, the spindle portion is turned between centres. The end sections that would form the spigots to fit into the holes already drilled in the bowl and base were turned first. Again, Paul demonstrated how one could use a jam chuck to hold the end of a spindle with sufficient force to allow the turning of the central shaped section of the column.

Many useful techniques demonstrated in a way that was obviously of interest to many of the less experienced turners in the audience.

Further applications of the Glue Chuck and Faceplate principle

The principles demonstrated by Paul are extremely powerful in that they can be used in many different ways to great effect. I have described before in the November 2011 issue of this Newsletter how the use of an angled "waster" piece can be used to turn a skewed bowl. For the Challenge competition for this month's meeting, I used the same technique but took it further by moving the bowl and waster piece laterally on the face plate in order to turn the offset recess in the upper face of the bowl.

Another Hint from Paul

Paul attended our last demonstration and thought that the following tip would be of interest.

Quentin mentioned using food enough dyes for colouring veneers and Hugh Field said that ready made spirit dyes work as well but there is another option, albeit limited in colours. Old bios, especially when they have stopped working but still have ink in the tube, can be a good source of stain. Carefully, preferably wearing gloves, pull out the brass tip, then cut up the tube into half inch sections and place in a small lidded jar. Pour in a small amount of methylated spirits and leave to stand, with a lid on. The amount will depend on how much 'biro' is in the mix but just enough to cover them should work well. The ink is soluble in meths and results in a very effective stain. I guess if you used too much meths, you could leave the top off the jar and let some evaporate but be careful, this mixture is obviously very flammable.

Make sure you use the same 'make/model' of biro if you are chopping up several pens as the colours vary between manufacturers. One make of black bios gives a deep purple colour. The only problem with this source of 'stain' is the limited colours. I have only come across black, blue, red and green bios but there are variations in those base colours, as I found with the 'black'.

Once applied and allowed to dry, the stain is very permanent, and seem impervious to cellulose and acrylic finishes, but I would be careful if you used a spirit finish as this might dissolve the stain again. I know Ken Allen has used children's art marker pens in a similar way but their ink isn't as concentrated as biro ink. And Ken also suggested the use of natural dyes such as beetroot and blackberry juice, tea and coffee - all of which have proven quite successful.



Club Competitions

The Challenge was the production of an offset bowl. A wide range of interpretations resulted leading to an impressive display shown below.



First prize went to Ted Gill with a magnificent turned and carved bowl. There was a tie for second place between Vance Lupton and John McElroy. Hugh Field took third place. Entries also came from Geoff Payne, Dawn Hopley and myself.

It was only when I came to make up this page that I realised that all these entries came from members of the committee. Geoff Payne was the exception, and even he is a past committee member. Surely, there are other members out there capable of turning to this standard.

The Challenge for May is a Decorated Platter. Plenty of time to get your paint brushes out and to reveal your inner artistic soul!



1st Ted Gill



2nd= Vance Lupton



2nd= John McElroy



3rd High Field

Newsletter

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, I can accept photographs in both hard and soft copy, in many formats.



Club information

Your club committee for 2014 is:-

Chairman - Philip Watts

Email: chairman@mswa.co.uk

Tel. 0121 308 7838

Secretary – John McElroy

Email: secretary@mswa.co.uk

Treasurer – Vance Lupton

Email: treasurer@mswa.co.uk

Assistant Treasurer – Hugh Field

Events Secretary – Ted Gill

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Abrasives -

Newsletter editor – Philip Watts

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Committee Members

Dawn Hopley

Health and Safety Advisor

Hugh Field

Please only use phone numbers if absolutely necessary.

Merchandise



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

Dawn Hopley has taken over the responsibility for these items and may be seen at Club Meetings



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.

Steve is a member of Coombe Abbey Turners and has a massive stock of timber which he is happy to sell to turners and woodworkers. The timber consists mostly of locally sourced native hardwoods, planked and kiln dried, and is available at great prices; some really lovely stuff. Steve lives in Sapcote in Leicestershire, not too far away, and close enough to Axminster in Nuneaton for a joint visit! Steve can be contacted on 01455 273894, and his website is www.woodcharm.co.uk

In Kingsbury Water Park they have created a log yard and have a large supply of various timbers. It would appear that they are bringing all the forestry felling for North Warwickshire to this site for disposal. They have large pieces down to branches and sections from Birch, Oak, Beech and other locally grown woods. Please note that these are "green", although some of the larger pieces have been there for a year or two. The only downside is that you have to pay £3.50 to get into the car park. Go to the Park shop and ask for James and they will radio for him to come to the yard. If he is not available, Fred will assist.

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

Axminster Jet Bench Top Circular Saw JTS-10

Assembled and complete with stand

Little used and taking up room £150

Ring Philip 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