

Revolutions

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS OF GREAT BRITAIN
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September 2014



**Les Thorne
gets all steamed up
in West Sussex**



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FRONT COVER

**Les Thorne has his
"best ever fun,
slowly"**

DATA PROTECTION ACT

Your personal details are held on computers belonging to Executive Committee members.

Your details are held purely for the use of the Association and are not passed on to any third party. If you object to your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address being held in this manner then please contact the Secretary.

Chairman's Notes

Deciding what to write about in these notes is often a problem, and often the problem is resolved for me by simply announcing something or other. These notes are largely no different. The 2015 Seminar is the big news of course, and more of that later in this issue, but it promises to be a fantastic seminar once again, and this time we (our treasurer, at least!) have gone to great pains to make it more affordable and accessible.

An article in the last issue, and subsequently on the forum, caused me a considerable amount of problems, and consequently time, and whilst tempted to write a long comment on it I decided to write only this:

The woodturning community is a relatively small community, and largely we all fish in the same pond. If we have difficulties, queries, concerns, contradictory view points on some issues then by all means air them, discussion is healthy and to be encouraged. It is, however, worth remembering that the printed or typed word is often prone to be being misunderstood or misinterpreted. Printed and typed words have no intonation, so the reader is often left to perceive it for themselves, and often gets it wrong, and what might have been a sincere comment is taken as a personal barb. I'm sure we can all live without the feelings this tends to engender. If we could all consider how what we write, and how we write it, might affect others we might all feel less put upon at times. (The telephone is a wonderfully underrated communication device.) I intend to take this advice personally, as I am as guilty as anybody else of forgetting this, and have also caused unintentional hurt by carelessly clicking "send".

My apologies.

On a brighter note, we are making great headway with the various arms of the new Development initiatives, and some members have already completed the Certificate and been awarded their certificates. Congratulations. The new "Approved Tutor" programme is nearing completion, and will be a boon for AWGB training activities, specifically where novice and junior students are involved, and will ensure both the quality and consistency of tuition that we ought to demand.

On the subject of Young Turners, can I remind you all to encourage your young members to enter the WCT/AWGB Youth and Ray Key competitions in October. Full details at <http://www.turnersco.com/turning-competitions>

These competitions not only offer healthy cash prizes, but perhaps more importantly the opportunity for young turners to get their work seen and appreciated, and they may well pick up a few pointers during the process. So come on, let's see you all supporting our young turners and encouraging them to step forward and win some cash!

Happy and safe turning until next time,
Andy

Treasurer's Notes

It doesn't seem long since I was writing the last notes! But we have been very busy on your behalf.

The Seminar

I wanted to let you know the charges for next year's Seminar. As I mentioned last time we are trying to keep the prices down and we have decided to keep the cost to you at £375 including VAT for the full weekend. This is LOWER than the cost of attending either of the last two seminars! The cost of putting the seminar together is around £32,000 which includes hire of the facilities, presenter and organiser costs and expenses. £375 includes the cost of all your accommodation and meals which costs £236.40.

Most importantly the seminar is open to both members and non-members alike.

To make life easier for me, as organiser of such things as accommodation and meals, this time we are only offering en-suite accommodation. As last time, you can also come just for the day, all of them or just one or two, or you can come for the days and stay for dinner. All options include coffee or tea in both the morning and afternoon and lunch. Costs for online or credit card bookings will be 4% higher as we have to pay commission to PayPal and Lloyds, who provide our credit card facilities.

Keep an eye on the website, forum and Facebook for more details about bookings which we'll release as soon as the details are finalised – probably around the end of September. Full details will also be in the next edition of Revolutions. The charges will be as shown below:

2015 Fees (inc. VAT)	
Full weekend - en suite	£375.00
Friday (no overnight)	£ 60.00
Friday inc. dinner (no overnight)	£ 80.00
Saturday (no overnight)	£ 90.00
Saturday inc. dinner (no overnight)	£120.00
Sunday (no overnight)	£ 90.00

For those attending the Banquet dinner we are also providing a choice of main course which you will need to pick when you book and don't worry I will keep a record so I can tell you if (when!) you forget. Sam and I have chosen this menu which we hope you will enjoy.

Starters:

Sliced seasonal melon garnished with orange, pink grapefruit, berries with a red berry dressing (Vegan)

Mains – a choice from:

Chestnut cottage pie – poached chestnuts, onions, carrot, cauliflower, lentils & dates topped with a sweet potato mash, (vegan) (n).

Roasted polenta layered with roasted aubergine,

peppers, basil, courgette, beef tomato with an oat & shallot crumb with tomato & black olive sauce, (vegan).

Pan seared free range chicken breast with a mushroom filling served with roast cherry tomatoes & peppers with a red wine sauce.

Classical beef bourguignon – slow braised beef in a rich burgundy sauce garnished with glazed button mushrooms, baby onions, bacon lardons and fresh parsley.

Pudding:

Steamed syrup sponge with traditional creamy custard – a classic trip down memory lane!

Coffee and mints to follow.

The voucher scheme I mentioned last time is up and running but the demand is almost non-existent, which is disappointing. So far I have sold £100 worth to one member. If you are thinking of asking for these for Christmas please get your family organised in good time as year-end is a very busy period for me. All I need is a cheque and a stamped addressed envelope. Vouchers are sold in multiples of £10 – you can also buy online on our website.

Demonstration Grant

You may have noticed that Paul Hannaby has updated the website so you can apply for the Branch Demonstrator Grant online. You can find the form under the "resources" tab. This streamlines the process as the form comes straight through to me electronically and I can pay it as soon as I get a moment, usually within 24 hours. We have also amended the paper based process so that you send your forms straight through to me. This can incur a delay of up to a week for payment as I work away from home most weeks. Otherwise the process remains the same and I will keep the Reps up to date with grants that are paid.

Giving a Bit

I mentioned last time that we had set up this facility whereby you can do your online shopping through the website www.givingabit.com. So far we have generated £12.44 tax free income from our purchases, BUT....only four people who are not on the Executive are signed up and one of those is my wife! Come on people – Christmas is coming – some of you are bound to be buying things online from Amazon, Boots, John Lewis, Argos, PC World, Currys, Screwfix to name but a few. Sign up and let the big boys send us some money! Otherwise they keep it and you know how much tax they pay!

Branch and Club Websites

We have been considering how we can help the Branches and Clubs with their publicity and getting more interest in what we do. One key way is, of course, the website and we are proposing to set up a small group to provide, for want of a better title, "a dummy's guide to woodturning club website design". Our own webmaster Paul has more than

enough to do at the moment and we see this as an opportunity for you budding webmasters out there to get involved. The idea is to put together a short document that we can include within the handbook you all receive at Branch and Club level that covers topics such as design, layout and technical considerations. If you think you would be interested in helping out with this initiative please register your interest with Sam Webber, our Secretary and we'll take it from there. Communications will be via email, telephone and Skype.

Want to get more involved – want to help out?

At the AGM in 2016 it is my intention to stand down as Treasurer. Although my formal term as Trustee comes to an end in 2017 this will be a seminar year and not the best time to take over running the Association's accounts. Therefore I have decided to step down a year early. I am preparing a full job description and a guide to the accounting system we use.

I am hoping that one of you will volunteer to come on board, sooner rather than later and I am more than happy to stand down earlier if we get a willing volunteer.

The Treasurer is a Director and Trustee of the Charity and a Director of the Trading Company and takes an active part in the decision making of the Trustees especially when it comes to financial arrangements. Computer literacy and attention to detail is a must and an awareness of business finance, VAT and online banking is required. Being able to add up helps!

Without a Treasurer the Association cannot function as someone has to run the accounts, pay the bills and invoice those who advertise with us. Our annual turnover on a non-seminar year is around £70,000 and in a seminar year this rises to around £150,000. If you would like more information please send me an email.

AWGB International Woodturning Seminar - 7-9th August 2015

I say this every two years, but it really doesn't seem possible that seminar year is almost upon us again. But it is!

Dave Atkinson has written elsewhere about the changes we have made to make the seminar more affordable and accessible, so all I'll say is that despite it already being one of the most affordable niche interest seminars, it has become even more affordable with the price drop. So there's no excuse...book a ticket! Or at the very least, start putting some of the cost to one side by purchasing some vouchers now. Details are on the website.

You are probably wondering what the seminar has

in store in 2015, and this is where I give you a taste of what will be on offer. Historically we haven't released this information until December of the year preceding the seminar year, but we feel it's high time we came clean a little earlier to give you a good chance to make the necessary plans.

2015 will build on the successes of the previous seminars and hopefully provide an exciting weekend of all-things-turning for you. The main attractions of course are the presenters, and we have an exciting line up for you. Here are just five from around the world to whet your appetites!

From the USA we are delighted to have Cynthia and Michael Gibson presenting for us. Many of you will know their names and work from Woodturning magazine and several UK forums, but unless you've travelled to a demonstration abroad you won't have watched them demonstrate. Now's your chance! Well known for their exquisite collaborative "tea pots", (see below), the Gibsons are all set to wow seminar delegates with their passion and skills. We are rightly proud to have secured them for you.



Also from the USA we are delighted to have Ashley Harwood presenting. Ashley, (see page 6), has developed a reputation for superb technique and attention to detail in her work, and is in high demand as a demonstrator and tutor, already developing an enviable international reputation. We are sure Ashley will provide a stimulating and informative series of demonstrations.

Returning to the seminar after a well received one-slot presentation in 2009 is Ambrose O'Halloran from Ireland. Ambrose's work is in his own words, "design led", and his attention to the details of everything from tool preparation to completed work is what makes his demonstrations so well received. We look forward to seeing Ambrose demonstrate as a full presenter in 2015.

From the UK we are also pleased to announce that after a successful one-slot demonstration in 2013 Mark Sanger has agreed to return and provide delegates with a more in-depth presentation of his techniques, skills and thought processes at the 2015 Seminar. Mark is a seasoned demonstrator and author, and his

finely turned vessels have inspired many to a more "artistic" form of turning. We know you'll enjoy his presentations and leave inspired to push your limits and expectations.

Also from the UK, and demonstrating at the seminar for the first time, we are thrilled to have Carlyn Lindsay as a main presenter. Carlyn has worked with laminated woods for 25 years, and her style of work really is her own. Her meticulous attention to detail, an eye tempered by an Art & Design degree in wood, metals and plastics, provides her work with a refined, beautifully crafted and highly sought after quality that we hope will inspire delegates to try this demanding category of woodturning.



This is only a taste of what will be on offer in terms of presenters, and the full program will be announced in the New Year, but I'm sure you can already see it's going to be a great event.

One thing we can assure you of is that you'll have the devil of job deciding who to go and see first!

The seminar isn't just about the presentations though; any former delegate will tell you that with the traders on site offering all your woodturning consumables, equipment and tools, the companionship and friendships formed and renewed, a world-class Instant Gallery of work from all over the world to view, photograph, and be inspired by, the seminar is a weekend long festival of woodturning not to be missed. And the 2015 seminar will have a few surprises that we hope will add even greater benefit for delegates. So watch this space in the New Year!

Now...go and book your place! We look forward to seeing you all in August 2015

Andy Coates
Chairman AWGB

Les Steams Ahead

Lionel Pringle

On a bright and sunny Sunday morning at the end of last May, Les Thorne took command of an Invicta steam roller by the name of Gisela. This was the novel start to the process of officially opening 'West Sussex Woodturners' demonstrating and teaching facility at the 'Amberley Museum and Heritage Centre'.

An article outlining the process by which WSW reached this climax of their ambitions has already been published in issue number 108 of this newsletter, and so I will not reiterate any of what has already been said.

Les completed his official duties with a few chosen words and the professional flourish of a skew chisel, and then unveiled a commemorative plaque. He was then called upon to make a celebratory bowl, which was subsequently signed by some of the attending dignitaries.

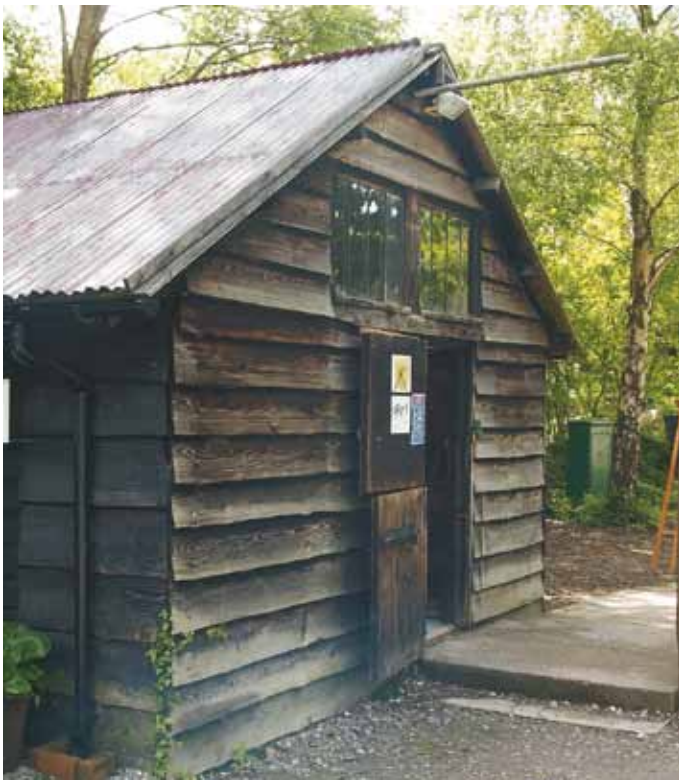
Three members then went on to prove that it was possible for woodturners to do something else other than make shavings, by producing a selection of barbequed meats that were done to a turn, with no sign of scorching whatsoever.

Over two decades ago I was a member of 'WSW' and was one of the original participants in the old woodturning shop, demonstrating, and occasionally selling, to the general public. It was not unusual, midweek and at the fag end of the season to be able to count the number of punters on the fingers of one hand! But such is the camaraderie amongst turners, we usually worked in pairs, that a good time was always ensured.

How things have changed. The museum itself has moved on greatly since those early days with all sorts of improvements being implemented, particularly, from my point of view, the new dining facilities. The woodturners have moved from a makeshift building, where space was at a premium, into a brand new building that is really fit for purpose.

Although the official opening was at the end of May, the building has been in use since just prior to Christmas 2013, when over 850 youngsters passed through this new workshop making Christmas tree decorations. The day before the opening ceremony 360 scouts were able to turn and take away a woggle, all this being achieved on the six small lathes. So far over 1400 children have passed through, each turning something special to treasure. Alongside this WSW has run five training sessions for twenty eight club beginners on a one to one basis.

This is a very auspicious start to a new era for 'West Sussex Woodturners' at Amberley.



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This needs careful steering

Woodturning – A Dying Craft?

Richard Smith's article in Issue 109 elicited quite a response. Here are the thoughts of three members. A response from John Hooper is an article in itself and follows on from this piece.

Terry Atkinson in Shetland responds thus:

I was very interested to read the article on woodturning a dying craft.

I have been turning now for about twenty years but nearly twelve years ago, through change of circumstance I became professional and then ultimately was entered on the Register of Professional Turners. I live in Shetland so theoretically my market is small. Initially that concerned me and I was always concerned that the current order might be my last.

One thing though that I was determined to do was to be professional in every aspect. Not just the turning, but the marketing and the packaging. Too many craft workers sell a product and the customer leaves with it wrapped in a super market poly bag. I was aiming at wedding presents that looked very presentable.



Les has always been a dab hand with the skew

Shetland weddings last three nights. The first is for the close family, the second for the distant family and the third for friends and work-mates. I aimed at the first night. My main product was pepper mills, ideally large mills. So I had a logo designed, see previous page, the perfect waiter. He was on a box similar to a malt whisky box. If I couldn't package the product properly, I didn't make it. Also, if I couldn't make it for a reasonable profit, I didn't make it. Unless somebody particularly wants a bowl I never turn bowls. They are a waste of wood and you are appealing to somebody else's artistic taste. A functional item can, and will be, used so it can be given as a present and is always well received.

Perhaps I'm getting a bit too hard, though I don't think so, but nobody would go to the first night of a wedding having only spent £20. So, as I upped the price, so I upped the sales.

I always keep a large stock of wood which I suspect the hobby turner would not be able to. I have just completed a large order for somebody in Norway. They contacted me and I was able to fulfil the order from my own wood stock. Perhaps woodturning may be dying but only if we let it. It takes effort to survive in any occupation today, but in twelve years I have never had an empty order book. Perhaps I'm lucky but only twenty thousand people live here and there are no trees and I am surviving. I even tried to retire last year but that didn't work. I make and repair spinning wheels so I am also handy on a metal lathe. I will be interested to hear other professional turners' tales and how they survive.

Les Symonds has this to add:

After reading Richard's article, I was moved to reply from the outset. Richard opens with a sweeping statement that I feel is at best ill-considered, at worst, perhaps a little ignorant. Is he not aware of the many woodturners who, like me, occasionally sell our products as a means of supplementary income? To say that professional turners have been priced out of the market by hobbyists selling too cheaply, is also rather flawed and too generalised. I have just returned from Northumberland where I made a point of visiting galleries where turned wood products were displayed and sold, and I am firmly of the opinion that the true situation is considerably more complex than Richard's outlook suggests.

I saw a professionally turned bowl in burr ash, simplistic in form and a good size, for sale at well over £300, whilst I also saw many more examples at more realistic prices. In the former example, could the professional not be pricing himself out of the market? I saw one turner's work, which included two identically sized bowls. One was rather drab in its appearance; it lacked interesting shape, although it was made from a moderately spalted piece of beech. Curiously

though, he had priced it more highly than its counterpart, a delicately formed bowl in burr elm. This professional's pricing structure was flawed, and not as a result of competing with 'hobbyists'.

As for my own work, I believe that the quality of my work sits well alongside some 'professionally' turned pieces that I saw whilst I was away, and the prices that I charge are in line with, and in many cases a little higher than those that I saw. In my own area in a little corner of Snowdonia, I have no difficulty finding shops and hotels to stock and sell my products. Indeed, I started selling only six months ago; so where are all the hard-pressed professionals who have failed to tap into this market? Perhaps a little less pontificating about their plight and a little more proactive attempt at tapping in to such markets might be appropriate.

I'm sure that there are instances out there of the examples that Richard has quoted, but come on Richard, consider the wider picture!

Norman Billingham looks at it historically

Since the industrial revolution capital has aimed to lower unit labour costs by de-skilling work, automating repetitive tasks and exporting manufacture to lower-cost economies. Where once a single, skilled craftsman might be responsible for building a piece of furniture, a modern factory may have one man operating a tenoner, another a morticer and so on. De-skilling and automation allow cheaper employees who are more easily replaced and have less negotiating power. Turning is a classic example; jobs once requiring a skilled turner are now done in a fraction of the time by automatic lathes. There has also been a change in fashion from elaborately turned legs and standard lamps towards cleaner, simpler designs. I would argue that turning was indeed a dying craft by the 1970s, when the professional turner was largely only needed for one-off jobs, often in restoration, and the craft market was close to non-existent.

I have been a hobby woodworker since my parents gave me a fretwork set for my 11th birthday but although I was well aware of turning, I didn't get involved until I was in my 30s. I did a two-day course with Peter Child in 1976 and have turned on and off ever since. I bought my Myford ML8 for £195 when my monthly after-tax income was £320. In those days there were really only two lathes on the market, from Coronet and Myford, tools were limited in range and suppliers, there were almost no chucks for wood lathes and courses and clubs were pretty much non-existent. There were very few books and no dedicated magazine.

Since those days there has been an enormous expansion in turning, I think for a number of reasons.

The de-industrialisation of the UK since the 1980s has led to significant numbers of senior managers retiring early with substantial payouts and pensions. Large numbers of workers were made redundant with redundancy payments. The result was people with money looking for hobbies, or ways of making some extra cash, and the market for the input side of turning, lathes, chucks, courses etc. began to expand. Real manufacturing costs dropped, so that lathes, chucks and tools are now much cheaper in real terms and far more readily available. My 1976 monthly after-tax income would now be worth around £2200 and I could buy a very respectable lathe now for a much smaller fraction than I spent then. Over the same period there has been a huge increase in wealth, particularly at the top. This has meant that the most skilled professional turners can find good markets for one-off pieces of art turning and the market for well-made craft turning is vastly larger.

Turning clubs have sprung up everywhere and professionals can supplement their income by teaching and demonstrating. There are professional turners who can sell single pieces for very high prices and turning features in modern museum and art gallery collections. Where turning could have been claimed to be dying in the 70s it seems to me that by comparison with the hobby I took up, it is thriving.

What may be happening now is that the group of people who drove that large expansion are dying out and not being fully replaced. The club to which I belong is growing but our average age is certainly past the flush of youth and we have only one teenage member (who happens to be one of our best turners). I'm absolutely in favour of doing whatever we can to encourage an interest in turning amongst young people but it seems to me that the natural recruitment area for maintaining the vigour of turning as a hobby is the near-retirement or just-retired age group. Whilst we may indeed encourage a few youngsters to become professional turners, the real market is the hobby turner and turning is a hobby for people who have space, resources and time to commit. For someone in their 20s, trying to build a career and a family, expensive space and time consuming hobbies are a luxury; where woodworking in general produces useful things, modern turning mainly produces objects of desire, not need.

Incidentally, much of what I've said here applies to other hobbies. I belong to a model engineering society and we face exactly the same issues. Whilst we do what we can to encourage youngsters, we've expanded in recent years mainly by offering training to people looking towards retirement. We are also keeping a close watch on the spread of newer making methods like CNC machinery and 3D printing. It strikes me that quite a few of the complex turned objects we see in magazines, coated to look like anything but wood, could be made more easily by 3D printing, but that's another story.

Woodturning - Is There a Future?

John Hooper

I have been woodturning, on and off, for quite a few years, but it is only in the last 2-3 years since joining a club, that I have begun to see what it is all about and where it might be going. One of the most significant events for me was the International Seminar at Loughborough, which showed me the very wide range of items which are produced both in the UK and around the world.

I was surprised at the prices that some items attracted in the auction, not because of how high they were, but because of how low some of them were. I have been trying to find out what the reason for this is, and I have realised that the price may depend on where the buyer lives, rather than what the piece is. There seemed to be a considerable difference in attitude on price between the UK and other countries such as Japan, Germany and the USA.

It does seem that buyers in those other countries see turned and decorated items as works of art, and not utility items, which seems to be the case in the UK. (*There are some exceptions, such as the Daniel Collection, which buys pieces at "artistic value" rates.*) Perhaps this is not too surprising given the British Government's recent decision to change the classification of "Crafts", such as woodturning, wood carving, embroidery and similar pursuits, such that they are considered non-creative and are included in the broad area of manufacturing. No doubt there is an economic reason for this, but I cannot see what it is.

This, in turn, reinforces the issue that many turners, professional and hobbyist, have complained that our output is often underpriced, and the public at large do not see those exquisite pieces as works of art, but as functional items for use in a kitchen or somewhere similar. When did the populace last consume their evening meals from wooden bowls with wooden spoons? The result is that turned work often, if not mainly, sells at a price which probably does not cover the cost of materials, never mind production costs and, God forbid, any profit.

Having said that however, and this is important, I do recognise that the vast majority of hobby turners do not produce items for sale, but do so for their own satisfaction in mastering the skills involved. Personally, I still have a long way to go here, but I will keep trying.

So, where does this take me? Given my observations above, am I condemned to be seen as "a man in a shed" producing lots of shavings and boxes of bowls that no-one really wants because thermo formed plastics, the scourge of 21st century, are cheap and easier to wash. I am not enamoured of such a prospect so I am drawn to consider what can and, perhaps, ought to be done about it. My thoughts

have ranged over a number of issues albeit in a not very organised way, but it seems to me that the significant aspects are as follows:-

Organisation

Many turners, but not all, are members of AWGB and a local club, and similar organisational structures exist in other countries, most notably the USA, with AAW advertising in the UK for members. We should not forget the Irish Guild of Woodturners, the Australian Association and all the others around the world. What do these organisations do for their membership and how do they collaborate, if at all, to address the global issues that we are facing? *(This includes the impact of conflicts in rain forest areas, increasing energy/transportation costs, aging populations and economic recessions, new "technologies" for products using man made materials rather than natural resources, and a whole range of accelerating changes in life expectations in "third world" areas. This results in:- increasing scarcity and price of our raw material (wood); the reduction of markets into which work, either professionally produced or hobbyist, can be sold; the possibility that the craft may die out; and numerous other consequences.)*

In the UK, AWGB provide a decent set of aims and objectives, club and members' listings, a regular magazine and support to advance skills through training programmes, demonstrator vetting and training and a website to support members. They do more than this, but this article is neither an advert nor a critique. The Loughborough bi-annual event is important locally and internationally, and the creation of a Certificate in Woodturning is significant, in that it recognises the need to formalise the skills and abilities involved, and this will need to be developed to higher levels.

However, it was something of a surprise to learn that AWGB do not collect any statistics about their considerable membership. We do not know and cannot currently ascertain what the mixes of gender, age grouping, ethnicity and so on are. Perhaps this is not considered important, except that if the reality of the situation is that it really is retired men, largely from engineering or teaching backgrounds, making up the majority of the membership, then we do have something of a problem, due to natural attrition rates. *(This is what Richard Smith was alluding to in his letter published in Revolutions June 2014 edition.)* On the other hand, if members come from a wide diversity of ages, trades and ethnicity, with a good mix of gender, then there is no cause for concern. But, having attended some woodturning clubs and the Loughborough event, this is evidently not the case, raising the question as to whether we have become moribund.

Admittedly, the UK has an aging population so there ought to be a larger field from which new members can be sought. However, this does not really address the central issue about how woodturning is

perceived; in fact it reinforces the perception of 'old' men in sheds. I use the word perception, which in itself could be some distance from reality, but without the information about membership, how can such a perception be changed?

Form versus function

Anyone involved in design, art or manufacturing will inevitably have to consider the debate over form versus function. Designers, particularly in the automotive field have known that function alone is insufficient to persuade customers to buy the product. Long gone are the days of "any colour you like so long as it's black" (Henry Ford did not actually say this - it is apparently an urban myth), and now "kerb appeal" is of paramount importance in the industry. Is the craft of woodturning any different? There are many variants on the 8" bowl, or should I say 200mm, but it remains a primarily functional object. The same is true of goblets, platters, vases, earring stands, etc. In my limited experience, woodturning still largely consists of brown in various shades, occasionally laminated with a different shade of brown. There are stains and colorants available, but these are not popular with traditional turners who eschew the view that the wood is beautiful in itself and needs no adornment other than a coat of microcrystalline wax. There are very few examples of the incorporation of alternative media such as acrylics, metals, stone and textiles. This is the case notwithstanding the vast range of "how to do it clips" on 'YouTube' and advertising in the woodturning magazines. Even when embellishment does happen, there is no noticeable effect on perceived value. This is easily seen with pens, where well made and unique acrylic pens, made by well known turners, sell for a few pounds, but a plastic barrel pen with the Mont Blanc or Cross logo on it sells for over £100. *(At a show in the Midlands in 2013, a prominent member of the woodturning community was offering acrylic pens for prices in the range of £9 to £15.)*

Some of our most famous artists have produced forms which have no evident function, but which are heralded as wonderful and treated as treasures. The works of Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth illustrate this phenomenon. Although they worked mainly in stone, some of their works could have been equally successful if made from wood, especially the rounded forms, (Moore), and the pod shapes, (Hepworth), all of which could have been produced on a lathe. Does anyone know of a turner with similar international stature and repute? I don't, and I have to wonder why. Perhaps it is an overall reluctance to move away from the traditional shapes and finishes and into areas outside of our comfort zones. Closer to home there was a particular example of this problem. At the 2013 'Woodworks' show, arranged by Tudor Rose Woodturners of Daventry, the winning entry was a part turned heavily decorated spherical object, with no apparent function. This was clearly an experiment with form. It drew a lot of comment, from members of various clubs that this "wasn't really

woodturning" and similar views. So strongly were these views expressed that the organisers introduced a new rule for such entries for the 2014 competition, creating two groups; the first being a turned piece with polish as the only finish permitted, and a second group where embellishment with stains, metals or whatever the creator wishes is allowed. Whilst I understand and support the decision to split the category it directly illustrates the issue. I would be willing to bet, (this article was drafted before the 2014 event), that the polish finish item will be one for which the function is immediately recognisable, and there will be very few entries into the "embellished" category, where form is of more importance. If I am right, the traditional approach will win out, and interest, and consequently prices, will remain low so far as the general public is concerned. Additionally, such traditional based work is unlikely to be of interest to the 'PlayStation or X-box' generation, who have been fed a diet of impossible feats and improbable objects. The problem is that this is the generation from which the new woodturners will come, if they come at all.

My view is that a shift towards the sculptural (form) type of turning is required to overcome the 'polished wood bowls' and 'men in sheds' perceptions, and to create the view that woodturning is something that can be undertaken by all groups in the community, especially younger men and women, to produce highly desirable objects. The development of a Diploma in Woodturning will help, but only if vigorously marketed and promoted. The training and support of candidates can only be of benefit to professional and club turners alike, although it will mean moving on from the traditional approach. This does not mean that the skills associated with bowl and spindle turning are no longer required. These underlying skills need to be mastered before a turner can progress to the more artistic work.

To my mind a shift in the direction that I describe could potentially have two outcomes: Firstly, recognition of the artistic nature of our efforts leading to more realistic pricing, and Secondly, a broader appeal in the community leading to a larger number of people being introduced into the art of woodturning.

There is already evidence that my view may have some support. Have a look at the featured work in recent editions of 'Woodturning' magazine. More of the articles and illustrations are leaning towards 3-D sculptural work than remain with the traditional approaches.

I do not expect that these views will be especially popular, but I believe that the continued success of clubs and AWGB, depends on whether the shift can be achieved on a broad front to bring the art of woodturning into the mainstream of creative and skilled craft work in the UK, as it appears to be in other parts of the world. *(Tax breaks have been permitted*

in some countries for the purchase of artwork. Information on the practice and consequences of tax breaks can be found at: <http://crefovi.com/articles/law-of-luxury-goods/london-art-tax-law-firm-crefovi-art-tax-law-a-double-hedged-sword/>)

Addendum: 29th May 2014

The photographs taken at "Woodworks" in Daventry can be seen at:

<http://www.tudor-rose-turners.co.uk/page36.html>.

It can be seen that a large majority of entries in both categories (polished and decorated) were recognisable in terms of their function. There appears to be an absence of the pure artistic forms, based on, Moore's Spheres, or Hepworth's Pods or any more esoteric and challenging forms, and consequently, it appears that I did win the bet that I made with myself.

Demonstrator Training Courses

The Demonstrator Training Course has continued to be popular with a number being run so far this year.

At the moment I have members in Derby and Kent who wish to attend courses. We need more members in these areas to make up course numbers. Ideally we need four members on each course to make the best use of the member's development money.

If you live in these areas, or any other area, and would like to attend a Demonstrator Training Course please fill in an application form on the AWGB website or contact me and I will post an application form to you.

Further to the Instructor Training Course, Peter Bradwick and his team are at present completely rewriting the course. The executive deemed that the course in its present form was not fit for purpose in the light of our current objectives. It is hoped to open it up to all members who wish to attend later in the year or early next year.

It is a great deal of work for Peter and his team and the new course is likely to be renamed the Tutor Training Course when ready. Please be patient and I will contact those who have already contacted me for the Instructor Course when I have a date for the courses to start.

Please contact me on john.r.montgomery@sky.com or phone on 01752 894083 if you require any information on the Demonstrator Training Course.

John Montgomery

Demonstrator & Instructor Training Coordinator

Did you know - The oldest known representation of a lathe is on the wall of an Egyptian tomb dated around 300 BC (would that be Between Centres, I wonder???) but artefacts far older have been found with what appear to be turning marks.

Pencil Pot

George Watkins

Pencil pots are one of those often overlooked items of which there are at least one if not more in most homes, and can come in all sorts of shapes, sizes and materials.

Turned wooden pots are a relatively simple project that has some excellent skill building exercises which you will find yourself using time and time again on all sorts of projects. Techniques like end grain hollowing or reverse jam chucking will prove invaluable on many occasions.

I start by mounting a blank of dry wood about 5¼" long by 3¼" square between centres (photo 1). I rough down the blank using a spindle roughing gouge (photo 2). I then decide which will be the top and bottom of the finished item and cut a dovetail spigot on what will eventually be the base end to suit my chuck jaws (photo 3). I remove the blank from between centres and mount it in my chuck. Using a 5/8" bowl gouge I make a cleaning cut across the end grain (photo 4). I like to cut a slight taper down the length of the blank (photo 5), this aids stability and just seems to look better than a straight cylinder. The next step is to add some decoration, this is entirely your choice but I normally use a mixture of beads and coves. I add two beads to the base using a point tool (photos 6 & 7) then I mark out where there will be a cove at the top and remove an 1/8" or so of wood between the two points (photos 8 & 9).

Using a ½ round nose scraper I cut the cove as cleanly as possible (photo 10) the external decoration is now complete (photo 11).

To begin hollowing I normally drill a ½" hole down to the desired depth (photo 12), this isn't essential but it does speed up the hollowing process. Using the same 5/8" gouge that I cleaned the end grain with I hollow out the pot (photo 13), this is done with the gouge rolled over anti-clockwise with the flute facing the wood which is going to be cut away, alternatively you could use a large Forstner or sawtooth bit and drill out the pot but I find it just as quick to use the gouge. To check when you have reached the correct depth I use a ½" dowel by placing it into the pot and using my thumb as a reference (photo 14). I then place it on the outside of the pot and eye ball my thumb across the rim to check the depth (photo 15). I leave a little bit of extra wood in the base to add stability, at this point the walls are around ¼" thick and the base ½" to 5/8".

Using a ¾" scraper I clean the walls and end grain as best I can, and it is now ready for sanding (photo 16). The handle on this scraper is 24" long to help counter act the overhang, alternatively you could use a dedicated shear scraper which will encounter less of the overhang forces.



I start sanding at 120 grit (photo 17) and finish at 320, to sand the inside I glue a piece of foam backed velcro hooks onto a length of 5/8" dowel and work my way through the grits as before. Never wrap the abrasive around your fingers and sand the inside.

With the sanding complete, I apply a quick coat of lemon oil to stop the transfer of any finger marks to the surface whilst I reverse turn the pot (photo 18). This doesn't affect the final finish which in my case will be Woodoc 10 but you can also use traditional wax, hard wax oil, Danish oil, etc. Remove the pot from the lathe and mount a scrap piece of timber in the jaws (photo 19). This is the jam chuck which enables me to remove the chucking mark from the base and sand it. Cut a male tenon on the scrap wood to suit the internal diameter of the pot (photo 20). This needs to be a very accurate tight fit but not so tight that it splits the pot as you push it on. A little tip here is to leave a shoulder on the jam chuck which the top of the pot sits up against (photos 21 & 22). This not only gives an excellent visual reference to see if the pot is running true but also a physical stop to ensure concentricity. At this stage I very gently remove the waste wood and clean up the base making it slightly concave using the 5/8" gouge (photos 23 & 24). You could bring up the tailstock for extra support if you wish but with the speed kept low, a razor sharp gouge and a well made jam chuck, it's not always necessarily to do so. Sand the base as before and apply the finish of your choice.





The Woodturner's Friend - The Cabinet Scraper

Doug Alderton

Part 2:- Using the Cabinet scraper

Woodturners may be unfamiliar with cabinet scrapers as a finishing tool but I can assure you that when sharpened properly the cabinet scraper can be a very good friend. Part 1, published in the previous issue of *Revolutions*, gave instructions on how to sharpen the scraper. This part will try to show some of the woodturning situations where the cabinet scraper can be used to remove tool marks which would take you much longer if you tried to remove them with sanding techniques only.

One of the biggest surprises I had while attending a woodturning workshop was the clouds of dust engulfing a few of the woodturners. On investigating I was more than surprised to see the culprits with hand drills, fitted with sanding attachments, feverishly sanding bowls etc that were revolving on the lathe. Apparently, alien to me, the term for this activity is

called power sanding. Up until this moment all I had used to finish wood was cabinet scrapers and sandpaper. Talk about having my head buried in the sand, no, I don't think so. Why use a sledge hammer to crack a nut when a pin hammer would suffice? Equally, why use power sanding when scrapers and sandpaper would create less dust? I believe that the majority of woodturners have not been introduced to the use that a cabinet scraper can be put to in removing imperfections in the surface of wood. How many times do you say to yourself, "I'll just take another profile cut to remove that tool mark", and you end up doing a number of cuts before you can start sanding. Well friends, next time you are in this situation, pick up a cabinet scraper and judiciously remove the imperfections with a few strokes using the appropriate shaped scraper. The scraper can remove imperfections in wood in seconds rather than the few minutes that power or hand sanding would take without removing lots of wood in the form of dust.

Let us start with how the scraper is used on flat surfaces before proceeding to those situations that are commonly presented to woodturners on nearly every project we turn.



The scraper is normally held as shown in photos 1 – 3. Photo 1 shows the 'push' stroke forcing the scraper forward. Photo 2 shows the 'pull' stroke pulling the scraper toward you. Photo 3 shows the scraper being used at an angle to the grain of the wood in a slicing action. By applying pressure with the thumbs to the centre of the scraper with the fingers at the ends on the rear, you will deflect the scraper into a slight curve. This curvature is used to target the imperfection to be removed without the sharp corners digging into the surface, causing unwanted marks. The pressure you apply will determine the thickness of the shaving you remove. It is important

that the scraper is held at the correct angle to the surface of the wood. This is found by holding the scraper perpendicular to the surface and then by tilting the scraper, either forward or backwards. As you slowly move the scraper along the wood you will feel the scraper bite into the surface. At this position the scraper is at the optimum angle for removing shavings, hold this position and complete a full stroke of the scraper. You will find that as the cutting edge wears down you will need to tilt the scraper further until you get to the point that you are producing dust and not shavings. You have now reached the stage when you need to rejuvenate the cutting burr as instructed in part 1. Try to rejuvenate the burrs as soon as the scraper no longer removes shavings, by doing this the cutting burrs will survive longer before you need to renew the edges by filing.

Now for the removal of imperfections in turned items, the most useful scraper for this is the goose necked shaped scraper. My advice is to master the sharpening of the rectangular shaped scraper first and then master the gooseneck. The gooseneck scraper is not easy to sharpen but if you methodically prepare the edges and turn the burrs in short lengths around the curved edge you will end up with a very useful tool. You will however find that you will not be able to use the scraper on soft wood or wood with high moisture content.

Let us try our first efforts on the most common

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situations; the first is the ends of spindle turned items, which have been parted off, and the bottoms of bowls. A lot of woodturners assume that because the bottom of a wood turned item is not usually seen then they can leave the bottom unfinished. It's not only the typical woodturner that turns the item over to see the condition of the bottom; it is also the more important potential customer. The bottom of all turned items should be finished to the same standard as the remainder of the item. Preferably the item is parted off; reverse chucked, and the bottom profiled with a slight concave curve with turning tools. There are occasions when it is not possible to reverse chuck an item, or the woodturner has not been shown reverse chucking techniques so leaves the bottom in the parted off condition with circular tool marks and a rough surface, photo 4.



This is the situation, where the gooseneck scraper becomes very useful in removing the tool marks and the roughness. You will find that the grain on the ends of parted off items can flow in different directions so trial and error will determine which way you use the scraper.

To demonstrate some of the other situations where a scraper can be beneficially used, I have used the most grotty and rubbishy piece of cherry that I could find. Defects include cracks, knots, grain running in different directions and rough areas which are difficult to turn smoothly with turning tools. The specimen was lightly stained, for photography purposes, to provide contrast between the portions scraped and those areas left untouched. Photo 5 shows the removal of exaggerated surface tool marks, normally you would only have an odd ring to remove.

Photo 6 shows a crack through a knot that has been over packed with wood dust using super-glue. If you tried to remove the excess protruding packing with sandpaper it would take much longer in time than it would with a scraper. Depending on the viscosity of the super-glue and the porosity of the wood, super-glue penetrates well below the surface of the wood resulting in a much harder surface than the surrounding area. This is the important point



to remember, if you use sandpaper to remove the excess packing then you will very likely remove more of the surrounding wood than the hardened super-glued surface, resulting in a ridged surface. By using a scraper first to remove the excess packing to a level surface you will have a surface that only needs a minimum of sanding.



Another large defect, photo 7, shows a split at the end of the specimen and through a knot. This defect was filled with a two part, resin and hardener, polyester car body filler. The filler was mixed with a small amount of earth pigment to approximately

match the colour of the wood. The defect was packed above the surface to allow for shrinkage during the curing cycle. Sanding might be adequate if the split or crack is in straight grained wood as the filler is relatively soft but in this case the split also runs through a knot so the scraper was used. Wherever you have a knot the surface after turning will nearly always be slightly above the surrounding area due to the bouncing of the turning tool over the denser and harder surface of the knot. After turning an item that has a knot defect you will find it beneficial to first use the scraper to level out the knot to the surrounding surface before applying sandpaper.

If you turn boxes then you will know that there are some woodturners who deem it a requirement that when you remove the lid there must be an audible 'pop' sound. If you achieve this requirement then you will also know that after a couple of days you will very likely not be able to remove or refit the lid. Usually both the body and the lid of the box will distort as the wood changes its moisture content to accommodate the ambient temperature and humidity. If you do like to maintain a 'pop' fit then it is possible to remove wood from the portion of the spigot on the box that is causing the interference with a scraper, as shown in photo 8. The corners on the rectangular shaped scraper are left at 90° for applications such as this where you need to access square corners.



One of the most rewarding applications for the use of a scraper is on natural edge bowls or square edged bowls that have 'wings' after turning. Some woodturners are reluctant to turn these items, usually because they are more difficult to sand and the dislike of the intermittency of the turning tool cutting the wood. This alternate cutting of wood then air between the 'wings' makes it difficult to obtain a smooth surface without tool marks. This applies equally to the inside and outside surfaces. The tool marks are more pronounced on the leading edge as there is no bevel support when the tool strikes the 'wing' edge. The thinner the 'wing', the more the wood deflects so good tool control is necessary to minimise tool marks. Photo 9 shows a partly turned natural edge Ash bowl, parts of which have been



lightly stained for photography purposes, to provide contrast between the portions scraped and those areas untouched. Photo 10 shows the outside surface partly scraped with the rectangular shaped scraper showing how effective the scraper is in removing the tool marks.



Photo 11 shows a similar demonstration on the inside of the bowl using the goose-neck scraper. The most important thing to remember is to match the curvature of the scraper to the curvature of the bowl surface. Failing to do this will result in a rippled surface but with care a near perfect curved surface

can be maintained. Remember also to always use the scraper in the direction of the grain in the wood. Removal of the tool marks with the scraper leaves a surface that can be hand sanded without the need for power sanding resulting in a bowl with sharp edges. I have seen many bowls spoilt by woodturners trying to sand to remove tool marks with the lathe turning. Never start sanding until all of the tool marks have been removed.

The cabinet scraper is not the panacea in removing imperfections in the surfaces of wood but it is a tool that if used judiciously will reward you with a surface finish smoother than a surface prepared with sandpaper only. If you follow the above suggestions you will save your lungs from volumes of dust and also save time in finishing your work of art.

Did You Know - The aspen tree is almost certainly the largest and most long lived organism on the planet? The aspen spreads via root suckers and even when a trunk dies the roots live on. Sizable forests covering many hectares have been discovered to be a single plant, estimated to be up to 80,000 years old.

A Word of Thanks

Dear Lionel,

My thanks to you, to the AWGB, and to Robert Sorby for the Turnmaster Tool System. I've now had a chance to put it through its paces, and I can say that it is an impressive piece of kit, thoroughly thought out in design, and solidly built to Sorby's usual high standards.

In fact, the Turnmaster is so robust that it would be seriously under-used were I to keep it to myself, and I have therefore decided to share my good fortune - and the tool - with fellow members of the Christchurch Society of Woodturners.

The vice-chairman of our club has a workshop housing four lathes, where he holds weekly 'open workshop' sessions, for members to use equipment they may not have at home and to have advice, guidance and tuition. I feel that the greatest use and benefit can be derived from this prize by leaving it with him on semi-permanent loan to the club. In this way, any - indeed, all - members will have the opportunity to make use of it and/or to "try before you buy."

Yours sincerely,

Geoff (Knott)

The current editor of this newsletter is past his sell by date!

A replacement is required.

It is an interesting and fulfilling job.

As editor you will be in contact with a wide variety of interesting and talented people.

An opportunity to expand your knowledge of turning and IT.

Take this opportunity to put something back into the Association.



Brian's Turn



A shining
example
to us all.

Polly undergoes
surgery

A Right Royal Shiner

In my column in the March 2014 issue, you may remember, I made a neat little bowl entirely with the Robert Sorby Turnmaster tool before adding a 3-bead feature with the Ashley Iles Beading Tool. I gave the finished project a couple of coats of Chestnut Finishing Oil before putting it aside to fully cure (allowing days rather than hours, how many times have you seen a project spoiled by the finishing system having been applied in haste?) Today I am going to give the bowl a deep, glass-like shine using the Chestnut Buffing System.



Photo 1 - The Chestnut kit consists of three polishing mops, clearly marked 'A', 'B' and 'C', plus a differently coloured 'brick' for each of them. In addition there are two mounting spindles (a large one designed to fit into a lathe chuck and a smaller version for a hand-held power drill). The booklet of clear instructions is written in good old fashioned English English, rather than Translated-from-Mandarin-by-a-Yugoslav English or the even more baffling Yo-Bro-Yankee English we often come across these days.



Photo 2 - Before attacking the bowl I tried out the new-to-me buffing business on the remains of a coloured hollow form that I had lavished Churchillian love, sweat and tears on in readiness for exhibition at last year's seminar.... before deciding it was just plain hideous. Its corpse has kicked around the workshop ever since being used for a variety of inexplicable, and often inhumane, experiments along the way. To the left you see the original finish and to the right my very first attempt with the buffing kit. I bet you are impressed. I know I was!



Photo 3 - Mr Chestnut's booklet mentioned that the mops might lose a few threads on first use - and he wasn't kidding! This little heap came from all three mops and I have to admit I gave each a helping hand by applying a piece of scrap timber. Better to lose cotton at this stage than during the polishing operations.



Photo 4 - With mop 'A' spinning on the lathe I 'fed' it with the red coloured brick of 'Tripoli', which is a very, very fine abrasive, before applying the bowl. The lathe speed makes quite a difference to this process; the faster the mop turns the 'stiffer' it becomes (something to do with centrifugals, I reckon). I decided to keep the speed low in the hope that the mop would penetrate around the beads and crevices caused by my iffy turning (as well as pandering to my modicum of personal cowardice which will, of course, remain our little secret).



Photo 8 - The timber began to shine at this stage.



Photo 5 - Immediately after taking this shot of me polishing the rim the mop quite rudely snatched the bowl from my hands and threw it ignominiously against the wall. Hmmmm, sharp edges at right angles to spinning cotton, another good reason to keep the lathe speed down.



Photo 6 - Based on that experience I decided to polish the rest of the rim in this direction instead. I'm pleased to say the bowl was undamaged and the lesson well and truly learned. This was the only occasion that anything felt out of my control.

Photo 7 - Having worked around the bowl (needless to say it was neither possible nor advisable to attempt the inner surface with this size of mop) I changed to mop 'B' and charged it with the White Diamond brick and repeated the polishing operation.



Photo 9 - But the final mop (C), hand-in-hand with the carnauba wax stick, really put the depth into the shine. If following in my wake, be careful not to overload the mop with carnauba, otherwise unsightly-and-hard-to-remove waxy lines will be deposited onto the work piece.

Photo 10 - This shot shows the stark contrast between the before buffing (inside the bowl) and after (the outside). I have never achieved anything like this depth of shine on a piece of my work before.



Photo 1 - Polly's backside consists of a means of attaching her to the lathe, in my case a homemade faceplate ring screwed directly onto her MDF back bone. I used to rely on a normally turned chucking recess but it got gradually chewed up so this more permanent arrangement was sought. On reflection I suspect the MDF recess would have lasted longer if I had flooded it with a half-and-half mixture of PVA adhesive and water to stiffen the fibres. If you try this yourself why not share your findings with the rest of us through this column?



Banana anybody?
(Looks like they need eating pdq Brian - Ed)

Polly Gets a Facelift

Following my column in a previous edition RevsHQ's postbag was inundated with almost three requests for introductions to Polly, the MDF/polystyrene faceplate used in the making of my fruit bowl. After a year or more of hard use her fizzog, never exactly attractive, is now in dire need of a little restoration. Perhaps this is fate's way of encouraging me to bore everybody... bar those hordes of letter writers... while sharing Polly's facial indignities with the world.

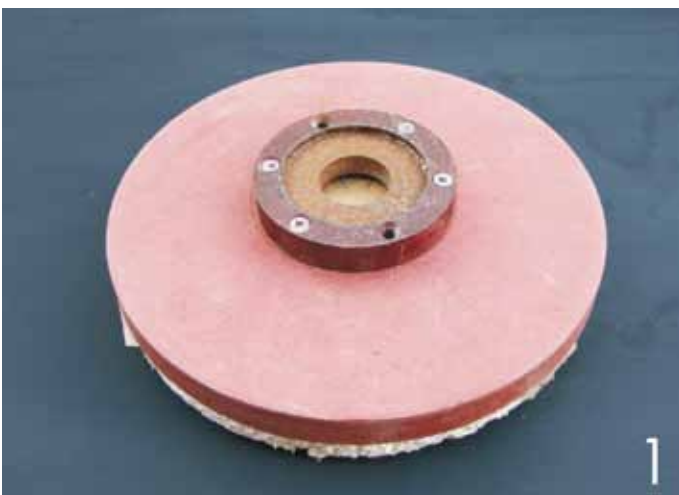


Photo 2 - Polly's existing face has been through an unknown number of rugged encounters with variously misshapen projects and is now ripe for replacement.

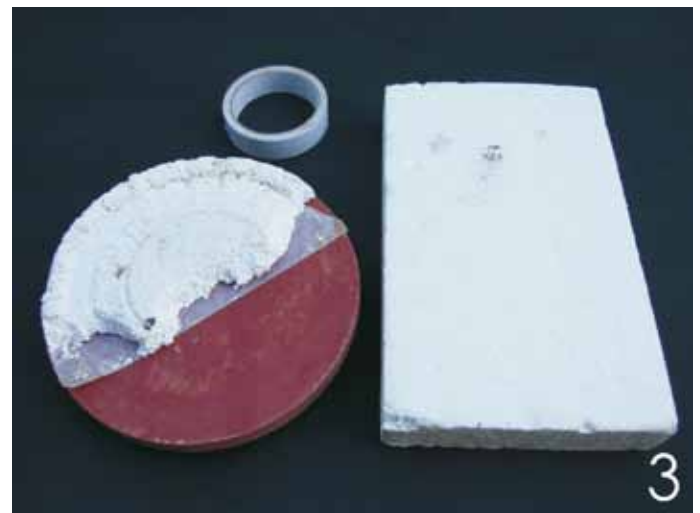


Photo 3 - As soon as one pollyface is put to work I am on the lookout for its replacement. This new one (packaging left over from Granny's new Zimmer!) is thicker but narrower than the existing but with so little weight involved there will be negligible out-of-balance issues. The partial removal of the mangled pollyface has revealed Rolls Royce double-sided sticky tape, so beloved of carpet fitters, but this time Polly is going down-market to the cheaper-but-narrower pound shop version. In use this joint is always under compression so rarely shows any sign of giving way.

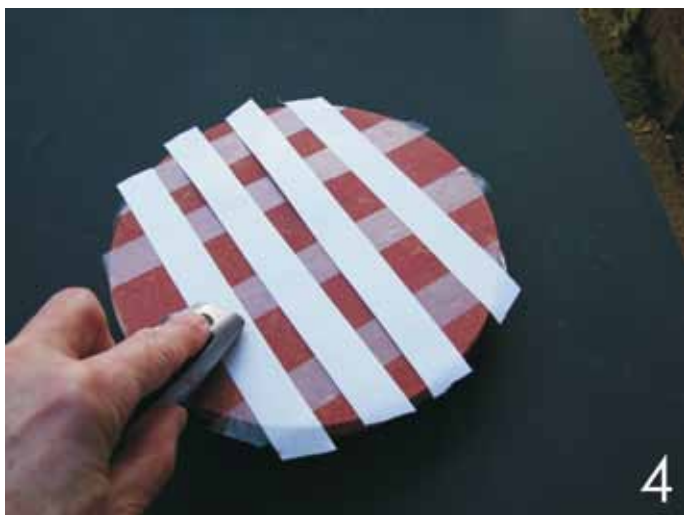


Photo 4 - I decided to go with this interesting crosshatch pattern but before removing the tape's protective strip I gave it a severe rub-down with my knife handle to ensure a good bond with the MDF.

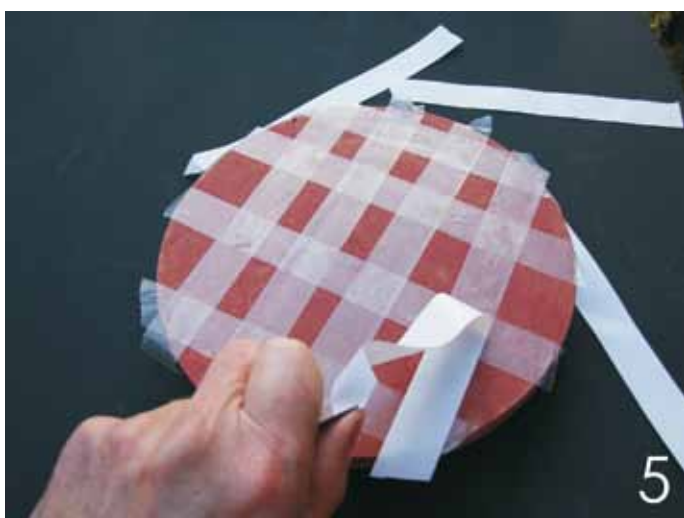


Photo 5 - After this treatment the protective strip can be a little difficult to remove but I find the point of the knife blade will usually lift one corner.



Photo 6 - With the new polystyrene in place I like to leave the whole assembly under compression overnight to reinforce the bond. In the past I have

used the lathe for this job but now wonder about the advisability of leaving bearings etc. under unnecessary strain for lengthy periods, so have plumped for a serious weight of chucks this time around.



Photo 7 - A quick whip around with the band saw removes the excess polystyrene.



Photo 8 - Polly is left in her new Sunday best, ready for the next call on her services.

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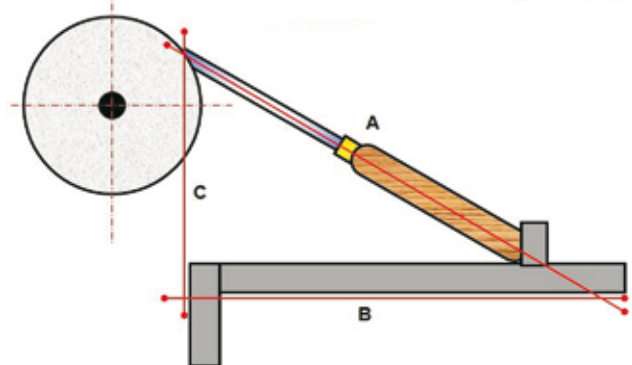
Grinding Jigs – Part 2

Richard Stapley

In part 1 of this article I described how I made the two 'Standard Type' Rests for the Bench Grinder; in this part I describe how I made a Gouge Grinding Jig.

This type of Jig is readily available from a number of manufacturers but due to the cost and the fact that most did not match the basic requirements, I perceived I would require so I set about making a system of my own.

My basic needs were for a Jig that gave me adjustment both horizontally and vertically for the reasons illustrated below, and a system that was always to hand and ready for use. If I could achieve this I thought I may pay more attention to sharpening and also carry it out on a more regular basis.



The angle of the bevel on any gouge will be dependent on the Length of the tool 'A' and any one of the other two dimensions. Therefore to maintain any given bevel angle for any length of gouge, 'A' then both 'B' and 'C' must be adjustable.

With this jig and the two ways of adjustment I found you can control the final grind angle according to the length of the gouge and its handle.

The basis for the jig was, again, two lengths of the aluminium 'T' section channel used in part 1, one piece as the horizontal Support for the 'V' Slide to locate the gouge handle and the second piece acting as the support for the horizontal support and for the vertical adjustment.



You can also see the quick release folding bracket (typically as used for fold down tables, shelves etc.) which enables the jig to be always in place, yet does not get in the way when not in use, see the picture below. In the picture you can see the jig in its folded down position with a simple cover plate over the end to prevent any abrasive debris, when free hand grinding, getting into the hinge pivots and causing excessive wear.



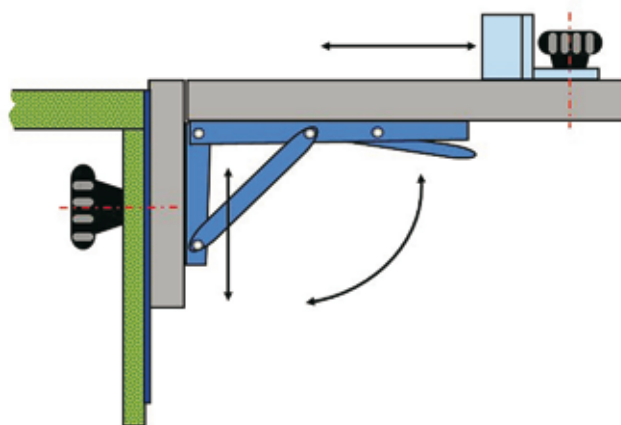
The length of aluminium channel used for the vertical adjustment I made twice the distance from the top of the grinder support platform to the centre of the grinder. In my case this was 150mm (6") so the piece of channel used is 300mm (12") long.

Mine is 850mm (34") long and suits my current requirements but should I ever own a longer gouge then I can add a detachable extension if necessary.

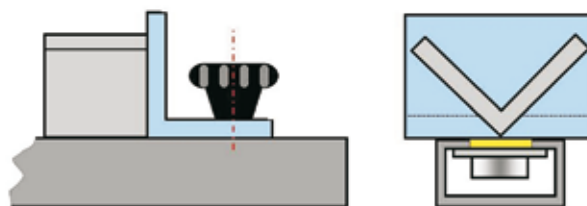
The hinge I used was not particularly expensive and I

I find a general clean up, of all the jigs, followed by a good spray of Dry Silicone/PTFE into all joints will ensure that undue wear and tear does not take place.

The whole assembly is supported off the grinder platform with the right hand wheel of the grinder utilised. A vertical MDF platform is attached to the 'T' frame of the support, which has a metal strip attached to it generally as described for the slides in part 1, and I used exactly the same format for adjustment and locking as before. The principle is shown below.



The adjustment is via a 'T' bolt and knob as used for the adjustment on the standard rests detailed in part 1 of this article.



The aluminium channel as used above can be difficult to track down, but I understand that two steel variants, 'Unirail' and 'Unistrut' are more readily available and these are adequate alternatives.



The adjustable locator for the gouge handle



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Phil Irons Workshop

Brian Hollett

Half a dozen cars of every description and from just about every point of the compass, descended on the tiny Warwickshire village of Welford-on-Avon towards the end of March. The occupants were clutching a variety of hollowing tools and other turning paraphernalia with which they hoped to start, or continue, their own personal journey into the often frustrating, but ultimately satisfying, world of making hollow forms. Our tutor, and owner of the spacious, back-garden workshop where the fun was waiting, was to be Phil Irons whose beautiful turned work graces numerous collectors' shelves as well as many fine galleries.

I shared the bubbling enthusiasm of the rest of the students but my day was destined to be a little different from theirs. I had contacted Phil beforehand with a request that he school me in his interesting colouring techniques. To facilitate this I had brought a toolbox full of stains and three of my own brand of hollow forms to work on. Little did I know that Phil would take one look at my pieces and, with a twinkle in his eye, tell me they weren't suitable candidates because I had already sanded them down to 240 grit and his technique called for the initial staining to take place BEFORE any sanding operations begin. To get over the problem he found me a ready-roughed and dried piece of his own from a dark corner of his workshop, and I then took over to finish-turn the piece before beginning the stain-sand-stain-sand-stain-sand-polish routine, which I was there to discover and practice. The result was my very first collaborative piece, Phil's shape and techniques performed by my own fair hand. I am more than pleased with the result as is SWMBO, so much so that she has already made a special space for it on the lounge unit - praise comes no higher than that, I can tell you!

At the same time as I was getting stuck into this getting-mucky-with-colours business the other guys were being put through their paces of 'hollowing from scratch'. I just had to stop to watch and I am glad I did because I picked up a number of interesting tips and tricks which were new to me. I was especially interested in Phil's method of freeing suitably sized vessel-blanks from a log. He employs a series of differently sized hardboard discs to discover and mark out the most advantageous use of the piece of wood at his disposal, an ash trunk in our case. Using this method each blank was not only freed from the log but also roughed out with the chainsaw ready to be mounted on the lathe.

Returning to the workshop each student mounted a piece of ash on his lathe and, using the lessons Phil had already imparted, started shaping first the outside and then the inside of the vessel. There is, of course, no way every nuance of hollow form making can be covered and practiced in a single day but

Phil managed to cram in as much knowledge as he could before we each went our merry way with noggins crammed-to-overflowing with info ready to be put into practice as soon as we got back to our home workshops.

Thank you Phil, you covered more in that day than I would have thought possible in three. Thank you also for the piece I brought home with me, I wonder if you are as proud of your collaboration with this aging writer as he is of collaborating with you.

Thank you AWGB for organising the workshop for us. I think offering members the opportunity of spending time with a professional in this way is not only good for those taking part but for the Association and woodturning world, as a whole. Long may the idea prosper.

Finally, thank you to each of my fellow students of the day Gordon Rich and Nigel Miles from the Crow Valley club, Don Robins from Coombe Abbey, Gwynne Stephens and Chris Hart from Mid Wales and Ken Kay from Red Rose Woodturning. I hope each of you got as much value from the day as I did and go on to astound us all with your hollowed pieces at the next seminar.

Phil Irons offers courses on a number of different woody subjects of varying lengths to suit the candidate. Contact him for further details on 01789 751284 or at www.philironswoodturning.co.uk



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Return to Gilwell 24

John Leach

For the fifth successive year, the East Herts and Cambridge Woodturners, with support from several other clubs, held woodturning taster sessions for Explorer Scouts and Senior Section Guides at the largest annual Scouting event in the UK. Gilwell 24 is a 24 hour activity packed camp and was attended by over 4500 young people and their leaders at the Home of World Scouting, Gilwell Park in North London.

After several months of planning, and weeks of good weather, the weekend in July arrived. As we set off to drive to Gilwell, it had been raining all night, the roads were flooded. On arriving at the Marquee allocated for woodturning, we found that the heavy rain overnight had resulted in a stream running through the middle of the woodturning area (fig 1).



The first job was to get more hogging on the ground over the wet areas. The next priority was to set up the kitchen/rest area for what would be a hard day of woodturning the following day. Having sorted out the catering and flooding, the woodturning area was set up with fifteen lathes (six of which were generously loaned to us by Axminster Tool Centre).

The following day started misty but by mid-morning the sun had broken through and the marquee became very hot. By lunchtime the woodturning activity slots were fully booked for the whole 10 hour day. As in previous years, the young people were given a short introduction and safety talk before having half an hour working, one-to-one, on a lathe



with an experienced turner, making a simple item such as a toadstool, a dibber, a wand or similar (fig 2). The young people were then able to have their handiwork branded with a Gilwell 24 logo, using a ToolPost branding iron. The young people thoroughly enjoyed the woodturning experience and each thanked the turners and support staff several times.

Talking to the turners at the end, I was left unsure as to whether the youngsters or the turners had enjoyed the day more! Those unable to try woodturning were able to enjoy seeing examples of excellent turned items which were on display in the Instant Gallery, or obtain Gilwell 24 branded wooden souvenirs.

Further heavy rain hit the site during Saturday night, so the marquee was flooded again before the packing up was completed on Sunday morning. As we watched the Gilwell 24 closing ceremony in the arena adjacent to the woodturning marquee, it was clear that, despite being exhausted, the young people had enjoyed a fantastic 24 hours of activity and most would, no doubt sleep on their journey home.

The event, which was organised by East Herts on behalf of the AWGB, was supported by people from East Herts, Cambridge, West Suffolk, SECB, Martock and District, and Chelmer Valley clubs. During Saturday morning we were visited by the organiser of woodturning at the Norfolk Scout Jamboree to be held in Norwich in August (fig 3). A number of the woodturners at Gilwell 24 will be helping with the woodturning at NorJam.



The East Herts Woodturners acknowledge the generous support of Axminster Tool Centre, Chestnut Products, Henry Taylor Tools, ToolPost and Birchanger Wood Trust, and thank the members of many AWGB clubs for their efforts in setting up and providing the most enjoyable woodturning experience for over 125 young people.

If any AWGB members wish to help at similar events in the future, please email John Leach, at woodturningsurf@aol.com

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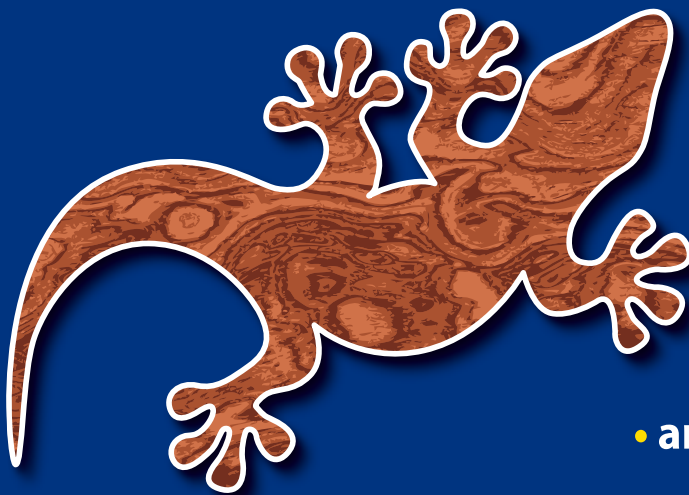
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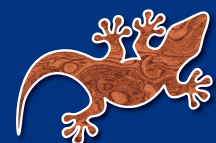


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From the Tree to a Bowl

Eugene Grimley

This series of articles has been compiled from a talk given as part of the I W G Exhibition in the Strule Arts Centre, Omagh in August 2011 and first published in the Irish Woodturners' Guild Journal during 2012

Part 3.

Seasoning - Nothing to do with adding salt and pepper. To season = to dry/remove the moisture content from wood. Unless we actually want to use 'green' timber it is necessary to dry the wood before it can be used, either commercially or at home.

Kiln drying - Commercially almost all timber, (and ALL softwoods), are kiln dried (known as artificial seasoning). The converted timber, (see Revolutions 109), is stacked on pallets or trucks and put in the kiln for 2 – 5 days. Steam is pumped into the kiln and is drawn through the stacks by fans. The moisture content is gradually reduced until it is just hot air being pumped in. This process can be controlled to give whatever moisture content is required. The timber is stacked with 'stickers' between each board to allow the free circulation of air. Small kiln kits for home-build are now available.

Air/natural seasoning - Some commercial timber is still dried using this method. The planks should be stacked with stickers between each one to allow air circulation. A roof/covering is beneficial to keep off the sun and rain but the sides must be left as open as possible to let the air move freely. This is a less expensive method but takes AT LEAST one year for every 1" (25mm) of thickness and the best moisture content achievable is approximately 18%.



Further drying is needed before the timber can be used especially in centrally heated buildings. Most commercial operations do not want the bother of thicker or larger planks making it very difficult to get the thicker/wider blanks woodturners want. Drying this sort of timber is left to specialist firms who have to charge a premium due to the extra costs involved.

So what about the woodturners who wish to dry their own timber? It is possible to do it yourself! You just have to wait and wait and wait! The converted Beech log shown in photo 1 would need a roof, and painting or waxing of the ends of the boards would also help to prevent splitting – this will slow the drying rate!

You will notice that all of the methods described have planks/boards of the same thickness. Drying different thicknesses and putting timber away at different times will add to your 'seasoning at home' difficulties assuming, of course, that you have the space and understanding family and neighbours!

However, all is not lost – there is hope – there are many methods to speed up the drying process. One of them involves using a microwave – a very understanding family is required for this! Another is to turn the bowls (especially small ones) with a thin wall thickness and introduce them gradually to the central heating so that the extra 4 or 5% of moisture content is removed. This can be achieved by checking the weight of the bowl in the workshop until it stops losing weight. Then bring it into the house in a paper bag and keep it in cooler areas gradually working up to the warmer areas. Using accurate weighing scales permits accurate calculation of water content.

One method which I have found to be very successful, with all sizes and shapes of bowl and some spindle blanks, is to use a home-made kiln as described below. The bowls are 'rough turned' to about 25mm (1") wall thickness (depending on the size of the bowl). Almost all bowls become oval and must be re-turned to bring them back to round.



Home-made kiln – I use a kitchen cupboard (in the workshop). It is double width (1000mm) but a smaller one would work well. I have a small extractor fan

(100mm) in the top left corner and a lamp fitting, with a 60w lamp (the old fashioned type), under the cupboard (behind the plinth) on the right. Both the base of the cupboard and the plinth have a number of holes drilled in them. The centre shelf can be replaced with slats or have holes drilled in it also. This layout means that the warm air is drawn through the cupboard. See photo 2

I load the cupboard/kiln with a number of rough turned bowls – I rarely have enough wood or time to fill it! Then for two weeks I have ONLY the fan on. For a second two weeks I have the fan on plus the lamp for 50% of the time. I use a timer set to give an hour on and an hour off 24/7. Then for another two weeks I have both the fan and the lamp on 24/7. At the end of the six weeks I have found that the vast majority of the bowls are down to about 14% moisture content. Some people using this method wax or paint the end grain and some wax all surfaces but I have not found this to give any improvement on my success rate, currently over 95%.

I have used the kiln for 75mm x 75mm spindle blanks (unturned) and some unturned bowl blanks and, to date, these have been successful although some Apple moved quite a lot in both roughed out and unturned bowl blanks.

Stacking bowls as shown in the picture above does not seem to affect the drying.



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