

# *Revolutions*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS OF GREAT BRITAIN

Issue No 72

£1.95 Free to members

February 2005



**Winning entries  
from Tools 2004  
Exhibition**



Photos: Anthony Bailey - GMC

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<p><b>Saturday &amp; Sunday March 5th &amp; 6th</b> <b>JAMIE WALLWIN, Woodturning</b> <b>Demonstration</b></p>	<p><b>Saturday &amp; Sunday 2nd &amp; 3rd April</b> <b>BOB NEILL</b> <b>Pyrography Demonstration</b></p>

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## Chairmans notes



I cannot recall a year going so fast as this one - where does the time go. It only seems a couple of weeks ago that I was elected as chairman and here we are approaching the

next Annual General Meeting which is only one week later than last year.

I hope you all had a good Christmas and a happy New Year.

### Revolutions

Just as I thought that revolutions had hit its peak Mike Dennis our editor along with all the article contributors has made it even better.

I would like to thank those that make regular contributions and also those that write the occasional article. It is so interesting getting to know what others are doing and I know turners that are new to the craft are always on the look out for new ideas so please keep sending them in to our editor.

### Seminar

You all must have seen and read in the last issue of revolutions the full line up of the main presenters for the 2005 Seminar. We have tried to put together a wide and varied type of woodturning styles and techniques to cater for all tastes.

Also we have a wider choice of accommodation on offer this year.

At this time the one-slot presenters are still to be selected we will have some names in the next issue of revolutions.

### The Way Forward

Branch secretaries will already be aware of the improvements to the demonstration grant and to the fact that they can now be split to include two evening demonstrations instead of the one whole days demonstration. Your committee is striving all the time to make improvements and savings one of these is to cut down on the amount of time that we hold committee meetings. This does not mean that we are doing any less but in this age of electronic mail a lot of work can be done by e-mails and so saving time and money on the amount of travel. As a committee we are forever looking at making ways to make savings.

Articles, letters, tips, adverts etc featured in this Newsletter do not necessarily carry the endorsement of the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain.

### DATA PROTECTION ACT

Your personal details are held on a computer belonging to the AWGB. Your details are purely for the use of the Association and are not passed on to any third party. If you object to your name, address and telephone number being held on a computer belonging to the AWGB, then please write to the Secretary. (Address Opposite)

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## Front Cover

Winning entries from the Tools 2004 Exhibition

Top left Peter Morgan  
Gold in Playtime Section

Top right Paul Reeves  
Gold in Wood Art Section

Bottom Left  
Luc de Roo Gold in Open Gallery Section

Bottom Left  
Keith Woolcott  
Gold in Ancient Times Section

Copy deadline for the next edition of

Revolutions

15th

April 2005



# Editorial

A Happy New Year to you all and I hope the holiday period went well for you. I hope Santa brought you lots of woodturning tools and equipment.

As I sat down at the computer to write this editorial my copy of Review arrived. A publication from Axminster Power Tools which is obviously designed to sell tools and equipment but it is worth more than that. Not only does it tell you about the latest tools and equipment but it is full of those little bits of information that help to understand how these things work and those odd tips to help improve your work. I must put this down now and get on with my editorial.

There is not much to talk about really as the Association is swimming along very nicely. We have a new branch (see opposite) and enquiries about starting up a new branch in Tavistock and Buckinghamshire. The Seminar is all on schedule with a steady stream of bookings and our existing branches are all busy arranging events for the coming year.

With this issue of Revolutions you will find the 2005 edition of your members handbook which is slightly earlier than previous years.

Hope to see many of you at the AGM

*Mike Dennis*

## Lionel Pringle - new address

His new address is  
Merrymead, 57 Westfield Lane,  
St Leonards on sea,  
East Sussex, TN37 7NE.  
Telephone No: 01424 752452  
E-Mail:

lionel@lepringle.plus.com

**Ray Key**

**new e-mail and postcode**

ray.key@btopenworld.com

Postcode now WR11 7HW

# News in Brief

## Congratulations

Our heartiest congratulations to AWGB member Colin Simpson on becoming editor of Woodturning magazine. Colin took over the reins from Mark Baker on Monday 31st January. Colin has been a professional woodturners for the last four years or so and is also a member of the Cheam Branch and on the Register of Professional Turners.

I am organising an event called Natural Homes and Gardens in partnership with the HDRA at Ryton Organic Gardens. As the name suggests the event focuses on natural products and artefacts for the Home and Garden including crafts, furniture and furnishings. I wondered whether you could inform your members about the event in case any of them are interested in exhibition/demonstration space. (The cost of a standard 2.4 x 1.8m pitch for the weekend is £120 with other pitch size options and outdoor space also available). Natural Homes and Gardens takes place in a large Marquee within the Gardens on June 4/5th and is one of a number of well publicised and well attended events at Ryton Organic Gardens attracting several thousand visitors per weekend.

Sally Packer  
Creativity Events  
organicfoodfairs@aol.com  
01934813407  
01934811840

## WOODEX 05

Formerly known as the Midlands Woodworking and Woodturning Show will be held this year on April 22 -24 near Leamington Spa

## Breaking News

An exhibition entitled **BRITISH WOODTURNING** is being organised at The Rufford Gallery in Nottinghamshire **in association with the AWGB. It will run from 12 JULY to 28 AUGUST** with a preview on the evening of **MONDAY 11 JULY**

A **Masterclass** workshop is to be held over the weekend of **20/21 AUGUST**, and another aimed at **beginners** is being organised to be held over the weekend of **27/28 AUGUST**. We envisage both workshops being held in the Woodland Workshops with space for a maximum of eight people.

More details in the next issue of Revolutions

**BriMarc** have moved

Nick Lowe House  
Unit 20a, Harriott Drive, Heathcote  
Industrial Estate, Warwick .CV34 6TJ

Tel No: 01926884440

Fax No: 01926884444

E-mail: sales@brimarc.com

## Welcome to another new Branch

## The Chestnuts Woodturning Club

**The Secretary is**

Terry Roberts, 'Terlyns'  
Ipswich Road, Offton, Ipswich,  
Suffolk. IP8 4SF

**Telephone** 01473 657064

**They meet on the third**

Thursday of each month at  
The Community Hall,  
Duke Street, Hadleigh  
at 7.30pm

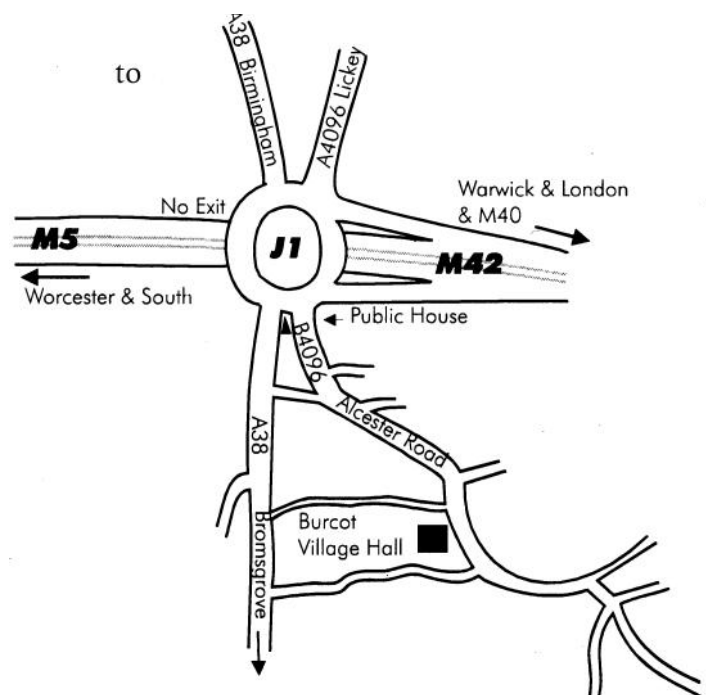
# *The Association of Woodturners of Great Britain*

**The AGM will take place at Burcot Village Hall,  
Burcot, Worcestershire  
Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2005 at 2.00pm prompt**

## **AGENDA**

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of the AGM held at Braunston Village Hall, Braunston, Northampton,  
Sunday 28th March 2004
- 3 Honorary Chairman's report.
- 4 Honorary Treasurer's report and subscription recommendation for 2006.
- 5 Election of Officers  
There will be no postal voting for officers this year as only one person per executive  
post has been proposed. Members will be elected as follows:-  
Chairman - Tony Witham  
Vice Chairman - Lionel Pringle  
Treasurer - Mike Morley  
Secretary - Lionel Pringle
- 6 Election of Executive Committee Member  
There being only one nomination Derek Phillips is  
duly elected
- 7 Election of Regional Representatives  
the Executive Committee  
As only one nomination for each  
region was received Adrian Needham  
is elected as regional representative  
for the Southern region and David  
Grainger is elected as regional  
representative for the Northern region
- 8 Discussion.

**NB** Only fully paid up members of the  
Association of Woodturners of Great Britain  
are entitled to attend the Annual General  
Meeting.



# Chisels and Gouges

Brian Partridge

May I wish you all a happy and prosperous 2005.

I did say that this edition I would do more advanced bowl turning, however I am always being asked about my tools and how they are sharpened, so here goes.

I guess most turners have far more chisels than they really need and I am no exception, there are 52 different gouges and chisels in my workshop but I have a small selection of these that are favourites and I will run through these in detail.

I must however point out that tools and their profiles are a very personal thing and what suits me ideally may not always be to other peoples liking. Having said that most of these are basic tools and will enable most turning to be carried out, so if you have no fixed ideas you might like to try my approach.

Whatever you use **it needs to be sharp** and my solution to this is a grinder with two blue wheels (pink wheels are perfectly adequate). I have a Sorby fingernail jig on one wheel and an O'Donnell grinding platform on the other. There are many jigs on the market place but it is best to either try them out or talk to other more experienced turners before spending money. The tools are treated in groups and using pictures and I show my preferred grinds. The angle given is between the shaft and the bevel. Tool dimensions are external except for the bowl gouges which normally are measured across the flute internally. Please understand that these are my favourite basic tools and they have been ground the way I like them. You will see other grinds and angles used by other turners but **these work really well for me**, So here goes:-



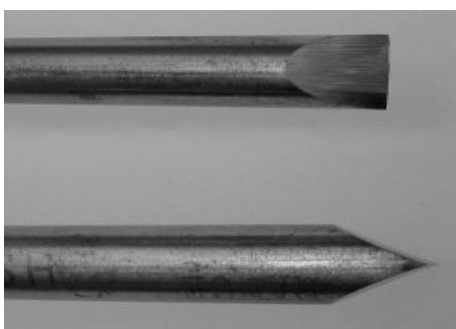
1 The grinder showing both jigs.



2 The tools.



3 A skew chisel being sharpened using the O'Donnell jig set to 15°.



4 6mm round straight chisel ground at 15° on both edges. This little tool is great for working with small boxes and the like. If pointed slightly up it is ideal for giving a good finish at the bottom of a straight-sided box and it is great for cutting little steps and facing off rims of boxes.



5 35 mm large roughing gouge ground straight across at 30°, this can be used for removing large amounts of wood from spindles and also for finishing cuts on smooth shallow curves. Not suitable for bowls or large diameter logs. 14 mm small roughing gouge ground straight across at 30°, used mainly on small spindles for shallow beads and coves.



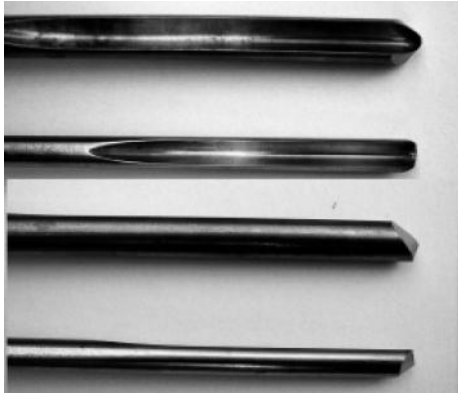
6 13mm skew chisel ground at 15° on both edges. Although larger skews are often favoured, this is the one I use most often, particularly for fine detail. Note the sides of the tool have been rounded slightly to prevent the tool rest getting ridges.



7 10mm basic fingernail gouge ground using the Sorby jig at 30° (the bottom of each pair) this is the main tool used for details on most spindle work. 10mm fingernail gouge ground at 25° (the top of each pair) with smaller radius at the tip. This tool is ideal for very small detail, the tip is equivalent to that of much smaller gouges but the tool has greater stability and is much less likely to vibrate.



- 8 5mm general purpose diamond parting tool ground 30° on each edge. The diamond section helps to prevent binding in the groove created. It is better to start the cut with the point going straight in at right angles this will give a cleaner start, the handle is then lowered to rub the bevel giving nice peeling action until completion. 1.5mm thin parting tool ground at 20° on the long edge and 30° short edge the bevel of the short edge is the one to rub on the material. This tool is ideal where minimum wastage is required such parting off the lid of a small box. Both edges should be sharpened, this helps to give a clean cut on the face of the item.



- 11 7mm bowl gouge ground straight across at 30° (the bottom of each pair), for general use but particularly at the top of natural edge bowls. Beware with 30° you might find that the bevel cannot rub at the bottom of the bowl. It is useful to have one ground at 45° this is a good general-purpose gouge for bowl work and will enable the bevel to rub at the bottom of deeper bowls. 10mm bowl gouge ground at 45° (the top of each pair) with the wings cut back on the Sorby fingernail jig. This is a most effective tool for roughing down bowls using a pull cut which is more comfortable and gives better control, it does not give a good finish unless used in shear mode as a final cut. Beware this tool bites if abused, it needs practice but is well worth mastering.



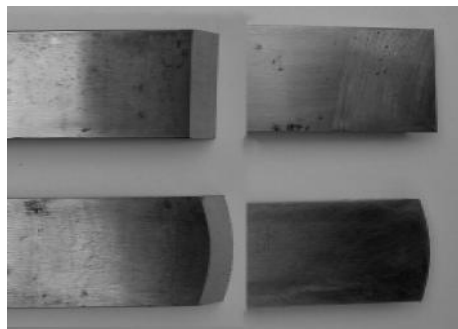
- 13 The diamond point tool is ground on its face at 30°, it is very useful for rolling very small beads on the edge of bowls etc. It is also useful for making decorative grooves on many items such as the bottom of small boxes.



- 9 The bowl gouge being ground in the Sorby jig this enables the wing to be ground back, make sure that it does not go to a point by grinding too much on the wings.



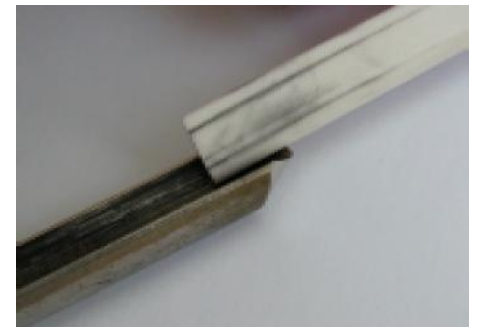
- 14 The rectangular grinder dressing tool with micro diamonds and the ceramic stone for use on chisels.



- 12 25mm straight scraper ground at 45° although I do not use scrapers a great deal this good sized tool is fine for finishing a flat surface on faceplate work, it should be used tilting slightly down with the minimum overhang. 25mm round scraper ground at 45°. This is great for removing little ridges and tool marks inside bowls. To get the finest edge on a scraper take off the burr produced by the grinder using a slip stone and remake the burr with one pass of the slip stone at right angle to the shaft. The scraper can be sharpened several times this way before regrinding. Remember the burr is very fragile and will not last long as a cutting edge. **Make fine cuts or you will get badly torn grain.**



- 10 The Sorby small shear scraper is great for giving a good finish inside small round boxes. Rubbing its largest face on a fine ceramic stone or equivalent sharpens the cutter.



- 15 A ceramic stone used to tidy up the inside of the flute on a spindle gouge, note the ridges which need to be removed.



- 16 The dressing tool in use on the grind wheel. This should be done whenever the wheel becomes black and glazed with embedded metal particles to give a faster cleaner cut. If left too long the wheel will tend to burn the tools.

# TURNESSEX 2005

THE LEADING WOODTURNING EVENT IN THE SOUTH EAST OF ENGLAND

## Sunday May 15<sup>th</sup> 2005

Chelmer Valley Woodturners, East Herts Woodturners, Fairlop Woodturners and Thameside Woodturners will be co-hosting TURNESSEX2005 which promises to be the greatest woodturning event in the South-East.

**TURNESSEX2005** will take place at the home of Fairlop Woodturners in Barkingside in the King Solomon High School. On approximately 15,000 square feet of floor area with all the necessary facilities. **TURNESSEX2005** will have all the attributes to put on an event showing what is best in British woodturning today.

### Club Participation

About fourteen clubs from Essex, Herts, Sussex, Kent and East Anglia will take part. Most of the clubs are AWGB affiliated but clubs not belonging to the AWGB are also welcome. The clubs will all have approximately 3m x 3m area to display what is best about their branch. The clubs best turnings will be on show in the 'Club Display'. Some clubs will also have a working woodturning lathe to show off their skills to visitors. Members of the individual clubs present will chat with visitors about woodturning and club-life in general.

### AWGB involvement.

The Association will be represented by the Area Representative and other members. The chairman of AWGB will also be present at the open day.

### GMC Publications

Publishers of the well known magazine 'Woodturning' will also be present offering advantageous subscriptions and their other publications.

### Woodturning tuition

On hand tuition will take place in three different categories. These are:

General Tuition: Woodturning for everybody.

Ladies Tuition: Woodturning for ladies by ladies.

Kids woodturning: Catch them early. A chance for children to try their hands at turning under expert supervision. Luke Rance will demonstrate to visitors that woodturning can be practised from the cradle.

### AWGB Instant Gallery

This well known mobile exhibition of the AWGB will be on display in full.

### Best of Show Gallery

Each club will enter their members best turnings to be judged by Bert Marsh. The Club whose member turned the best of show item will receive the prestigious TURN ESSEX SHIELD.

### Best Stand of Show

Gary Rance will judge which participating club presents the best stand.

### Raffle Gallery

Each club will donate turned wood prizes to be raffled to ticket holders. Before the raffle takes place all items will be displayed.

### Sale Items

Turned Products by members of participating clubs will be on sale on advantageous prizes to the public.

### Other Crafts

Apart from the participating woodturning clubs pole-turners, woodcarvers, chair makers, pyrographers and bodgers will show off their craft.

### Refreshments

Food, coffee, tea and soft drinks will be available all day.



## Trade Participation

Anything a woodturner can wish for will be on show by:

- Airpress Co
- Australian Out Back Imports
- AWGB
- BHP timbers
- Caroll Tools
- Chestnut Products
- Crown Tools
- Engineering Chucks
- GMC Publications
- Hegner UK Ltd
- Speed Control Inverters
- Jill Piers
- JSP (Respirators)
- Lovell Works Wear
- Martin the Timber
- Meantime Design
- Peter Child
- Robert Sorby
- The Hot Spot (UK) Ltd
- Vicmarc UK.

Turning machines and tools, Chucks and Jaws, Polishes, varnishes, sealers, Small Tools, Turning Timber in planks, blanks and squares, Highly specialised timber: burrs, spalted timber, exotics will be available at very competitive prices.

## There will be no shortage of celebrities

- Mark Baker
- Roy Childs
- Simon Hope
- Phil Irons
- Bill Jones
- Stuart King
- Bert Marsh
- Stuart Mortimer
- Gary Rance
- Tony and Christine Witham

This line up will make sure that visitors can have all their questions answered by the most respected professionals.

## Entrance

There will be two types of tickets:

**Public ticket** £2 per person, including programme and guide  
£1 for OAPs.  
Children under 16 years of age are welcome free of charge.

**Master ticket** includes demonstrations and lunch, £8 per person.

Master tickets will be offered to Clubs in bulk at a price of £100, with no limit on the number of Club members who wish to attend.

## Income

**TURNESSEX2005** will be a non profit making event with all proceeds to go to local charities.

### Club competition 1

The Chelmer Valley Inter-Club Trophy for 2005 will go to the Club judged as exhibiting the best work against the following criteria:

1. Not more than one turned item per Club member, and all pieces to have been completed within the last twelve months on the date of display.
2. Overall standard of spindle turning and face-plate work, and any combination of both.
3. Appropriateness and overall standard of finishing methods,
4. Appropriate use of the wood.
5. Form, shape and proportion,
6. Suitability for purpose (if any).

Each Club will be allowed a flat area of 6ft x 2ft, (no lights or stands), and will themselves determine how many pieces to display. Club tables will be judged on both quality of turning and of presentation.

### Club competition 2

The best judged Club with a stand in the public area will be awarded £100. Each Club will have an area of 100 sq ft of space to display their work and one operating lathe.

Judging will be on presentation and quality.

Clubs will have a free hand to make the best display.

The judge's decision will be final.

# COLLABORATION - TURN AND BURN

Bob Neill



Bob would love to have a centre where a whole spectrum of skilled people would work together on different projects, just as they do in the States and New Zealand.

When Alan has turned the platters, plates, bowls etc., it is time for Bob to burn his designs on to the wood, then add the colour, using acrylics, inks, felts and various other media.

In December 2004, Bob and Alan held a 'Two Man Show' at the Mansfield Art Gallery and Museum near Nottingham. On one of the weekends, they demonstrated to

Bob Neill and Alan Truman have been working together on a variety of turned projects for over 10 years. They met originally at one of the many Craft Fairs which the two used to do all over the country.

You may have seen some of Bob's work in the CRAFTSMAN MAGAZINE, featuring his travels around the globe - to places such as the Falklands, the U.S.A., Belgium, Germany and on the Woodturning Cruise to Norway.

Alan and Bob meet regularly to discuss the designs Bob comes up with, before Alan retreats to his workshop to turn the pieces. It is quite a unique collaboration in the creative world since most craftsmen prefer to work on their own.



the public and attracted a good audience.

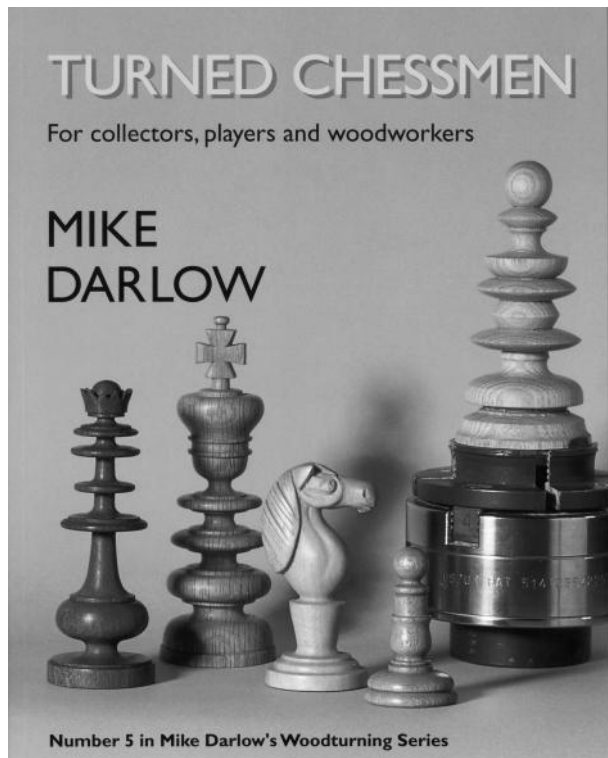
This is a very lively Gallery with an excellent programme of changing exhibitions and Workshops. Recently, Bob led a pyrography workshop with local schoolchildren. During January, he also had his work on a display at the new Cathedral Centre in Derby. This Centre is very keen to support local crafts including buying local produce for its cafe.

You can see Bob demonstrating his work and running his workshop at The International Woodturning Show at Alexandra Palace from the

# Book Review

Reg Hawthorne

## Turned Chessmen by Mike Darlow



Mike Darlow has now published the fifth book in his series on woodturning. This latest book on turned chessmen is another excellent production of interest to collectors, players and of course woodturners.

With previous books covering fundamentals, methods, techniques and design, this is the first project book with others promised. Having said that, it is more than a project book, starting off with a history of chess – with its origins in India about 550 AD and then progressing through Persia and the Mediterranean area under Islam and on

into Europe and North America.

The text is lavishly illustrated with reproductions, photographs and drawings.

Chapter 2 is a short gallery showing six sets turned by modern woodturners.

There are excellent chapters on chess symbols, designing chess sets, drawings for chess sets before a large final chapter on making chessmen. This is again extremely well illustrated covering everything you need to know from materials through preparation, turning, carving and decoration.

If you are at all interested in chess or looking for an interesting project then this is the book for you.

Published by Stuart Davies Ltd.  
ISBN 0-85442-115-7  
Price £19.95

25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> February and at the Hobbycrafts Show at the N.E.C. from 17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> March.

Anyone interested in learning the crafts of Woodturning or Pyrography can contact Bob on 01332 792036, or Alan on 01623 754893. Why not get started with a one day course? You never know where it will take you - Outer Mongolia ??

Bob's Website-  
[www.bobneillpyrography.co.uk](http://www.bobneillpyrography.co.uk) - or  
contact him on his E-mail at  
[bob@burnerneill.freemove.co.uk](mailto:bob@burnerneill.freemove.co.uk)

P.S. Bob will be demonstrating at Craft Supplies, Miller's Dale, nr. Buxton, on the weekend of April 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>.



*Bob Neill with some bottle stoppers made for a Eurostar commission*

*10th International Woodturning Seminar*

*12th to 14th August*

*Book Now to avoid disappointment*

# A Lesson in Perfection

JohnCunniffe

Having been associated, in some way with wood and woodworking for most of my life, it is not surprising that I should take up woodturning as a hobby, pursuing the activity with a relentless passion.

Both my father and grandfather were essentially practical men and introduced me to the world of woodworking and imparted many skills in the manipulation of hand tools that I still retain today. Above all I developed a love of trees and timber that comes with a simple fascination of all things in the world of nature.

Fate followed a more practical route and embarked on a career in government service. This was abruptly terminated by illness and surgery that lead to permanent disability. The despair of being cast adrift without purpose or direction provided the trigger, leading to the fulfilling and therapeutic activity of woodturning.

The newcomer is faced with an amazing array of techniques, projects, tools and people, all in competition to relieve the unwary of his hard earned cash. Having roughly organised my turning life I began to produce numerous articles of mediocre quality aimed at the craft market I enjoyed limited success. I joined clubs, became a member of the AWGB, attended demonstrations and shows, searching for that stimulus and inspiration that would provide the key to a higher level of satisfaction and success. There is a glimmer of a realisation that the quest for excellence is unceasing in its demands.

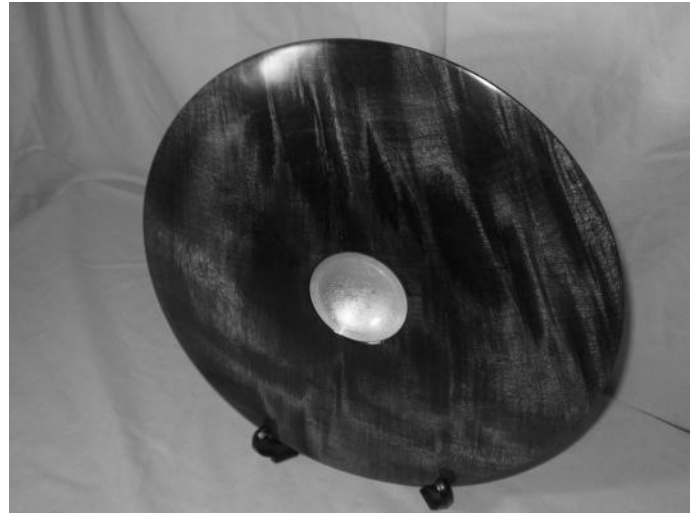
At this crucial turning point I met Jimmy Clewes who started to

influence the way I approached and thought about the art of woodturning. It is not just what he produces that makes Jimmy a guru in the world of woodturning but the way he presents himself to the task. His demeanour and almost conspiratorial role in engaging with his audience is pivotal and

impressive whilst leading them to a successful conclusion of the process being demonstrated. I believe that to achieve any lasting success, there is a need to curtail the rush to turn every possible project and adopt every style and technique. Wishing to find an aspect of the craft offering a challenge I have opted to concentrate on wet wood turning which gives an almost endless opportunity for design, decoration and artistic appeal. Jimmy Clewes was the obvious choice as a tutor in this endeavour.

Without funding from the AWGB I would never have been able to undertake this course, (to the AWGB I will remain eternally grateful.)

The 15<sup>th</sup> of December at 0600hrs found me on the A1 heading north to the home and well-appointed workshop of Jimmy Clewes. On arrival I was made welcome with a warming cup of coffee. No time was wasted in off loading my tools for a general discussion and advice from Jimmy on sharpening my tools. After passing a critical eye over them, with particular emphasis on my bowl gouges,



*Photo 1 Unfortunately the black and white picture does not show the vibrant blues and greens with a gold leaf centre*

which were central to the projects in hand, the angle and shape of the fingernail profile on my 3/4" bowl gouge was changed.

The course covered elements of planning and design, tool techniques, colouring, wet wood turning and finishing. The first project called for a discus-shaped piece with a central cup hollowed out and being coloured and brought to a lustrous finish. Photo 1:

Using a sycamore blank mounted on a screw chuck Jimmy painstakingly explained the concept of seeing through the blank to obtain a perfect sweeping curve. A rechucking spigot that was integral to the curve was formed. Before rechecking, the piece was finished to a high standard working from 240 to 1200 grit abrasive after raising the grain the whole sanding process was repeated. Once satisfied with the finish, three coats of very thin cellulose sanding sealer were applied. Particular attention was paid to sealing the outer rim of the piece to prevent dye bleeding from the front.





*Photo 2*

Having reversed the piece the same process was repeated on the front omitting the sanding sealer. (Which with hindsight may have been a mistake. The complexity of the grain pattern creating a highly figured and porous surface absorbed higher than expected amounts of finish. A light coat of sealer could have reduced this.) After a wonderful lunch provided by Jan Clewes we returned to the workshop to finish the project. Three colours of spirit dye were applied by wiping with tissue.

Firstly under Jimmy's supervision a dark royal blue was evenly spread over the whole piece. This was sprayed with meths and fired to both raise the grain and dry the spirit dye. After sanding to reveal the lighter high spots these were treated with a yellow dye and lightly sanded. The final coating was a light blue. A tissue pad sprayed with meths was used to lightly blend the colours and remove surplus dye. After sanding with 800 to 1200 grit the light colours were reaching out from within the highly figured piece. A final seven coats (see above on absorbency) of spray lacquer de-nibbing between coats was finished first with metal polish and then Tee Cut to achieve a high gloss hard shell that showed chatoyancy in the piece.

After removing the project from the chuck it was remounted between centres, using a large foam pad to protect the coloured surface, and the spigot removed the back

and after sanding was treated finished with oil.

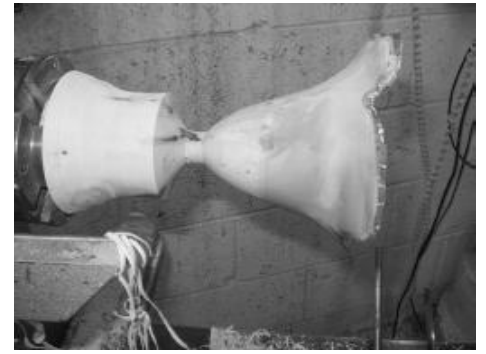
On day two we assessed a piece of wet hawthorn that I had brought with me. Having decided on shape and design the piece was mounted between centres and roughed down after taking a reference cut to retain the bark edge. See photo 2.

The exacting phase was to bring the natural edge of this end grain vase to a uniform 2mm thickness. See Photo 3. In the background the steady, calm and encouraging voice of Jimmy Clewes guided me through the whole process. To my surprise I completed the project myself, being shown new tooling techniques by Jimmy that made life easier.

Until now I had been approaching this type of project from the wrong angle. This was the cause of some of my more spectacular failures. Even at this stage I did produce a dig in I now know to be caused by greed, impatience and a lack of attention to detail.

Having been successful in using my shop made hollowing tool the project was brought to a satisfactory conclusion with a nice oil finished piece that is admired by all. See Photo 4.

The afternoon was spent turning a cross-grained sycamore bowl from timber that had been recently felled. See Photo 5. so fresh that wet weather gear would have been appropriate. The streamer like shavings and sweetness of the cut were a pleasure to experience. The most difficult aspect of wet wood turning is



*Photo 3*

to control the drying process avoiding distortion and cracking. The propensity to cracking appears to deter most people from turning wet wood. Keeping newly turned items in plastic bags, in a cool atmosphere for a few days largely solves this problem.

Throughout the two days we returned to the first project applying a steady build up of lacquer to achieve a lustrous shine. The end result was worth the effort.

Overall, thanks to Jimmy Clewes and the AWGB I have enjoyed an exiting and rewarding course. My confidence and skill in turning wet wood has increased. Above all Jimmy has reinforced the need for a methodical and painstaking approach to my work, this could mean the difference between the production of Craft and Gallery quality items. The rest is up to me. After being given the incentive and the skill the coming year will be spent on perfecting the process.



*Photo 4*



# 10th International Woodturning Seminar

## 12-14 August 2005

### Loughborough University

## Seminar Update

We are now into "Seminar Year" 2005, if you had forgotten that the Seminar Sub-committee certainly has not. The major demonstrators are now all "in place" and the arrangements for the trade stands are well in hand. Administrative details will be subject to minor "tweaking" to reflect what we all learnt in 2003 in order to make 2005 even better.

The profiles of the demonstrators were published in the November Revolutions.

What the presenters will be demonstrating is on page 18 and 19 of this issue of Revolutions

Booking forms went out with the November edition of Revolutions and they have been coming back to Mike Morley with good bookings so far. It is pleasing to see that a number of new members will be coming as well as familiar returning faces. Keep it up, though, there is still room for more! If anyone has lost track of the form from the last issue a copy can be found on our website ([www.woodturners.co.uk](http://www.woodturners.co.uk)) click the "seminar" button to find the form and booking information.

We have had to make one change from the information that went out in November. Due to some changes in the accommodation usage we no longer have the availability of en suite double rooms. The rooms provided with the pull-out beds as doubles will have exclusive use of bathroom and toilet facilities just across the corridor but no true en-suite double accommodation is available on campus.. If this is not satisfactory you may wish to consider off-campus rooms. A special deal at £35 pp/pn is available at the Quality Hotel for a double room. If you wish to consider this option you should book direct with the hotel stating that you are attending the AWGB seminar. Details may be found at <http://www.hotels-loughborough.com/> or by telephone on 01509 21 1800.

So, dig out the form and book your place for August, we cannot guarantee the same record breaking temperatures that we had last time but we can promise a memorable weekend.

If you are still not sure of the details or need any other information give Mike Morley a ring on 01276 23424 – he also responds well to e-mails on [awgbtreas@hotmail.com](mailto:awgbtreas@hotmail.com).

## Seminar Fees include

Access to all demonstrations, trade stands and gallery of work

All meals & refreshments

Welcome pack with all the information you will need to enjoy the weekend

**All this for just £190**

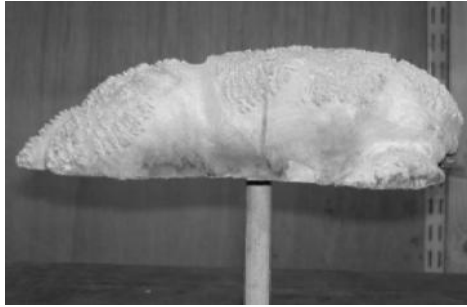
All tickets must be prebooked - Accommodation can be provided as well

## *Package Deal*

Enjoy a £5 discount on all places booked (including accommodation)  
and paid for in full before 30th April 2005

# Spiky Australian Burr to finished winged bowl

TrevorCocks



1. First find the balance point of the burr by balancing it on the top of a section of 1/2" dowel. Then hold the burr in place & mark around the dowel with a pencil.



2. Burr mounted on faceplate. My lathe is a Myford ML8 with a maximum swing over the bed of 7 1/2" Dia. All work will be on the outboard side of the headstock.



3. Flat created on the burr, size and position of rechucking spigot marked with pencil.



4. The completed spigot. This measures 37 x 4mm (1 1/2 x 5/32") deep with a slight dovetail to suit my Axminster chucks O'Donnell spigot jaws.



5. Underside of bowl and wings turned ready for finish sanding. Ensure sufficient material is left to form the top side of the wing and the top rim of the bowl which will be used to hold the bowl while turning off the base rechucking spigot.



6. Applying a coat of Danish oil to the base



7. Bowl rechucked in Axminster 38mm O'Donnell jaws ...



8. .... ready for work to start on shaping the top side of the wing and the inside of the bowl



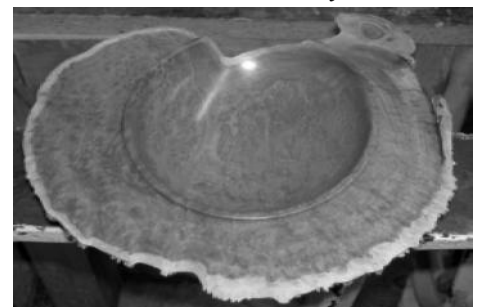
9. Bowl is now mounted in wooden jaws which grip on the 4 3/4" x 1/8" lip of the bowl. 1/4" Bowl gouge is then used to remove the rechucking spigot, leaving a concave base so the bowl sits flat.



10. Spigot removed and base finish sanded down to 400 grit before applying a coat of friction polish



11. Due to the spiky edge of the burr it is much safer to finish polishing the top and underside of the wings with a polishing mop mounted in a Dremel.



12. Finished bowl is 210mm at it's widest point and stands 40mm high.

# Soap Dishes

Andrew Hall



1. The central logs were to be the materials used to produce the four soap dishes. The oak was felled four months ago and had remained outside exposed to the elements the surrounding logs are Cherry, Apple and Eucalyptus.



2. Tools to cut the log into two pieces include the chain saw, saw horse and of course the safety visor gloves and ear defenders.



3. Logs ready for use nicely cut to manageable size ready for the lathe. The piece to the right will be used for the soap dishes and the piece to the left is destined to become a hollow form



4. New oak log 4 months old next to a piece of oak beam from a 14<sup>th</sup> century chapel. Note the dark rich brown of the 600 year old oak. I actually used the beams to make kitchen unit doors and the material was exceptionally hard but the finish was brilliant.



5. Tools to make the soap bowls Parting chisels, Deep and shallow fluted bowl gouge, Visor, safety glasses and gloves



6. Oak log mounted on the lathe ready to start work removing the bark and getting into shape. Log is supported with the tail stock centre and the drive centre is a Morse taper three stebcentre



7. Making the first cuts to remove the bark and start the basic sphere shape. Note the leather glove to prevent skin chaffing with the hard bark. Keep tightening the tailstock centre for added safety



8. With all the bark removed and the first sphere shaped the second sphere is now shaped to match the first. I sharpen the bowl gouge frequently to remove the resin and keep a keen edge. The banjo is positioned so that the chisel rests in the middle of the tool rest for maximum support



9. Both spheres are shaped and the centre line of each is marked with a pencil. An old parting tool picked up at a car boot sale for £1 is used to part the two spheres to a diameter of about 1 inch or 25mm. The heart wood and sapwood are clearly defined.





10. Cut the material in half using a tenon saw  
The heartwood and sapwood are clearly defined.

The spheres are 6 inch / 150mm in diameter.  
The oak is still very wet despite being felled 4 months ago as it has remained outside exposed to the elements



11. The first sphere has been turned 90 degrees so that the pith is central to the bowl.  
Always work with the grain taking the cut from the tail to the centre pith line then reverse the whole sphere and repeat the exercise.

Using an old strong leather chisel part the two bowls to approx. 1 inch / 25 mm core



12. Both spheres turned to the finished outside shapes of the bowls.

Note one sphere is larger than the other that was because of a dig in so it had to be reduced to clean the edge. "yes we all get them" no matter how careful one lapse of concentration.



13. The soap dishes have now been cut in half using a pruning saw as the wood is still wet and cuts better with this saw. The bowls are positioned on the off cut of oak and the old oak beam. I made a bowl out of the old oak the grain was exceptional



14. The next stage is to hollow out the bowl using a 1/2 inch bowl gouge and 1 inch round nosed scraper.

I then sand the interior and exterior 180 through to 320 grit and use a mixture of sunflower oil and lavender oil concentrate to both lubricate and finish the soap dishes



15. The final sanding with the 320 grit astro dot abrasive paper. This was recommended at a demonstration given by Mark Baker at the Sunderland woodturners club not only does it give a great finish but used with oil it has minimal dust which is good for the safety of any woodturner



16. I use large bowl jaws fitted to the Vicmark 120 chuck to finish the bottom of the soap dish.

The chucking point is removed but I have added a small amount of decoration.  
Notice the small amount of dust below the bowl that is the accumulation of dust from the four bowls in the form of slurry. Using the oil as lubricant also adds as a grain filler



17. Another way of holding the bowls is the use of the jam chuck made from a scrap piece of material to hold the bowl in position



Completed soap dishes

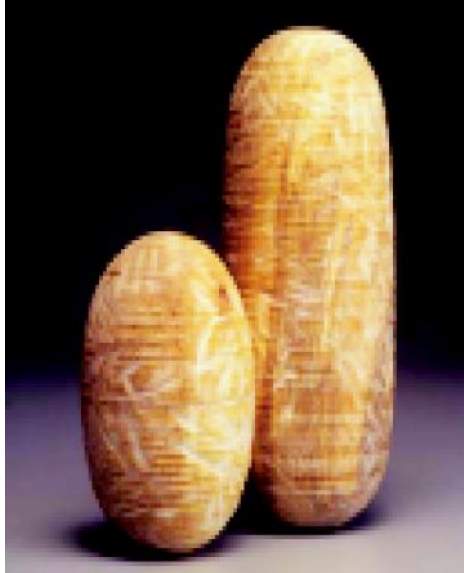


# Seminar 2005 - More on the Presenters

Mike Dennis

In the last issue of Revolutions I told you that I would let you know what each of the presenters would be demonstrating at this years seminar. Although these are the planned presentations at the moment the AWGB or the presenter may alter these in the light of changing circumstances.

## Thierry Martenon



Texture carve burn and brush  
Texture carve and paint  
Use of veneer in order to obtain a texture



## Christophe Nancey



The making of a 'Carambola', a simple hollow form carved after being turned. The accent is put on the different aspects given to the wood (Heather Root). Parts of the wood are designed to be polished and bark parts to be left rough.

Turning a vase in Heather Root with pewter inlays. The rough shaping in wet wood, after drying the final turning and the inlaying of pewter

Finally the texturing, drying, inlaying, sanding, carving, colouring and polishing of the final piece taking into account the aesthetic appearance of the piece.

## Bin Pho



Bowl or vessel preparation for piercing. Piercing tools selection, their availability on the market Image transfer, drawing and design possibilities. Piercing techniques Airbrush and accessories selection Preparation of turnings for airbrushing – sealing the wood applying liquid mask etc. Colour selection – opaque versus transparent – dye versus colour – stained glass effect Airbrush techniques – special effects, transparent colour mix, fading techniques etc.



## Nick Cook

Architectural Turning - Timber selection, marking out, tool selection and their use.



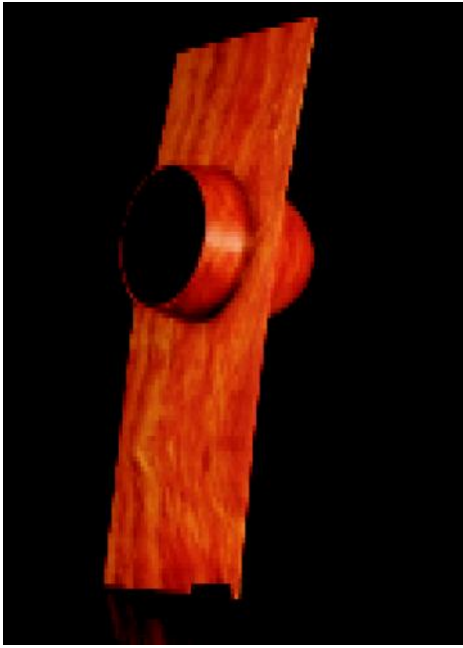
Production turning - Nick will focus on a wide range of quick, enjoyable and very practical projects you can go home and make yourself. Nick will demonstrate everything that goes into making the production pieces that have made him a highly successful commercial turner from tool selection and sharpening to specific turning techniques. He will discuss the various jigs and fixtures along with shortcuts to make his marketable products. He

will show you how to make bottle stoppers, baby rattles, honey dippers, tea-lights, Christmas tree ornaments and boxes.





## Stuart Batty



Tall narrow thin exotic bowls  
Off centre square bowls  
Timber selection, use of tools and sharpening,.

## Julie Heryet



A wet natural topped vase with the emphasis on producing a well designed item with sensuous curves and an overall balanced form.

Pepper and Salt shakers with hand chased threads, with the emphasis on functional but still sensuous forms.

The choice of timber, tools and sharpening, and finishing will covered on each session

## Nick Agar



Bowls and platters with a rim decorated by way of texture and colour.

Multi axis work including wall plaques and bowls with Texture and colour

## Michael O'Donnell



Peel, Slice and Scrape – Making those tools work for you, handling them so that they peel, slice or scrape their way through the wood, with long shavings flying off leaving that perfectly formed piece on the lathe. Believe it or not there is a bit of the Wild West in the process.

Seeing The Light - Take a tree straight from the garden or forest and immediately enjoy the fun of bringing out its figure form and finish. Coping with shrinking, splitting and spalting while turning it to extremes to see the light

## Dave Reeks



A large platter turned, decorated using an Arbortech, Sorby texturing wheels and wire brushes. Colouring and finishing.

Timber conversion and preparation to turn a vase from a wet log very thin with the aid of a light. Time permitting sanding to a finish and reverse chucking.

## David Springett



Mouse in a cheese based on the Singapore ball technique.  
Turning spheres, marking out spheres and a simple method of producing a hemispherical chuck to hold spheres.  
Turning a cube inside a cube inside a sphere.  
Making a solid wooden arrow fit through a glass apple.  
Lattice turning (in the flat) & a look at offset lattice turning.  
Turning a spiked star in a cube.  
Streptohedrons. (turned twisted polygons as boxes)

# Our native trees - Yew (*Taxus Baccata*)

GuyRavine

This article will be the longest in this series on British Timbers and only really touches the surface of a truly fascinating subject. Many books have been written about this tree, and many more will be written.

Yew is the longest-lived native tree, and also the most steeped in mystery and legend. A familiar sight in churchyards nationwide, it has often been associated with death, but it may well be there because the Yew itself was the object of veneration, and the churches were put next to the Yews rather than the other way round.

The tree contains a poisonous chemical (taxin) and this may be reflected in its Botanical name. The name 'Taxus' may be related to the Greek words 'toxon' (bow) and 'toxicon' (the yew derived poison with which arrowheads were dressed).

Names in other languages: If (French); Tejo (Spanish); Tasso (Italian); Idegran (Swedish); Taks (Danish); Eibe (German); Taxis (Dutch). Iúr (Irish); Iubhar (Scottish Gaelic); Euar (Manx); Ywen (Welsh); Ywenn (Cornish); Ivenenn (Breton) Hagina (Basque).



Yew grows widely across Britain, throughout Europe and into Asia, China and Japan. There is also an American Yew, pacific Yew (*Taxus Brevifolia*).

Botanically a softwood, Yew is, in fact, harder than almost all of our native hardwoods; it is also one of the most attractive native timbers, in demand for both turning and cabinet making. When fresh cut the heartwood is a bright orange colour (often beautifully veined) and the sapwood bright white. With age the colour darkens to a ruddy brown, with the sapwood often taking a duller yellow tinge. However the colour contrast will always be there if sapwood is present .

Although related to the pines, Yew is unique in having a fruit, or aril, rather than a cone. It is also unique amongst European "conifers" in its toxicity. Yew has both male and female forms and has needle like leaves. The small green female flowers are difficult to spot unless you get very close to the tree. The male flowers are a little larger, and are pale yellow. They grow underneath the previous year's shoots. The stamens when ripe, in February/March, shed clouds of pollen, which is

distributed by the wind. The fruit, or aril, ripens in the autumn and is light red. The aril partially encloses a single pale coloured seed (or nut). The fruits are mostly distributed by birds, and do not appear to be as toxic as the foliage is

supposed to be, although the seeds themselves are apparently even more toxic. I am puzzled about this toxicity, as I look after goats which frequently escape (this being the nature of goats) and which like to taunt me by eating yew while I try and catch them. Misguided people quite often give them yew foliage, and it doesn't seem to hurt them. I also know of sheep that eat yew and come to no harm. It is said to kill cattle very quickly though; after a short nibble sometimes. It may be that the tree is more poisonous in winter, when it may be the only bit of greenery around. It is also said that clipped and half-withered yew branches are especially poisonous to cattle.

Although this mysterious evergreen tree can live for millennia, it does not grow very tall and is rarely more than 20 m (67ft) high. It can attain an enormous girth, but with a tendency to become hollow and divide into a group of trunks of similar size, all sharing one root.

In Britain, Yew was once much more common on the chalk downs in Southern England and on limestone areas in the North. It can still look after itself in the wild and there are a number of surviving Yew woodlands, most notably Kingley Vale Woods in Hampshire. . Yew has been widely planted in formal gardens, and is often used as a subject for topiary. Indeed Yew, along with box, is one of those plants that almost defines formal gardening. The trees are stately and have a certain dignity, so that when other plants are being blown all over the place or changing leaf colour, the yews maintain their composure.

While Yew displays an almost jaunty aspect in formal gardens, the





general feel of the tree is one of eeriness and gloom. Tennyson refers to Yew a lot in "In Memoriam" and these lines are redolent of this feeling.

*"The Seasons bring the flower again  
And bring the firstling of the flock.  
And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
Beats out the lives of little men."*

*O, not for thee the glow, the bloom,  
Who changest not in any gale.  
Nor branding summer suns avail  
To touch thy thousand years of gloom."*

Irish Yew. (*Taxus Baccata Fastigiata*).

In 1760 a farmer named Willis in the Cuilceagh Mountains in Northern Ireland found two Yews with a "fastigate", (i.e. upward growing) tendency. Both were dug up, and one replanted at Florencecourt; and it is from this source that millions of Irish yews are descended. This tree survives to this day, although it now looks rather sad. Its upright form requires less room and it is preferred for hedging and topiary. Most Irish Yews are female and therefore bear berries. The wood is identical to ordinary Yew.

Sadly Mr Willis made nothing from his momentous discovery.

### **Ancient, Champion and Notable Yew trees**

More Yew trees in Britain come into these categories than any other species, with the possible exception of Oak. Indeed many of the individual trees are worthy of

an article in their own right.

The tallest Yew in Britain at 29m (c. 97ft) is at Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire, and in Eire there is a 25m (83 ft) specimen at Luttrellstown Castle, County Dublin.

While Yew does not often grow tall, old yews can attain a magnificent girth. Mightiest of all is the one at Ashbrittle church in Somerset, which measures 12.19 m (c. 40ft) at ground level.

The oldest Yew in the British Isles is reckoned to be the Fortingall. Located in Perthshire, almost in the mouth of Glen Lyon, Fortingall is one of the most interesting and picturesque villages in Scotland. It is said that this was the birthplace of one Pontius Pilate! This is the story. His father, a Roman Officer, was sent on a mission of peace to Pictish King Metellanus, whose seat was at Dun Geal (Fortingall). Whether the envoy brought his wife with him, or whether the mother of the child was one of Metellanus's household, we do not know. But here Pilate was supposed to have been born, and naturally enough he played in the, already old, tree.

The tree is reckoned to be a minimum of 3000 years of old, but there are those, including the Yew expert Alan Meredith, who think it may be as old as 9,000 years old which would make it Europe's oldest living thing. In 1769 the tree's girth was 56ft (over 17 metres). Standing in the churchyard the two surviving parts of the trunk are enclosed by a wall built in 1795 to deter souvenir hunters.

The usual scientific methods of dating a tree, (counting the annual rings in the trunk or carbon dating,) are not applicable when it comes to Yew: because the trunk of a yew usually hollows with age, whilst it continues to grow by

rooting its branches and forming a grove around itself. Sometime an aerial root will grow inside the hollow trunk further confusing the issue. So the tree can go on regenerating itself inside or outside its original trunk, and is capable of making a comeback long after it seems to have "had it".

There is a vast Yew at Much Marcle in Herefordshire with the hollow trunk typical of such venerable trees. The difference with this one is that it has been fitted with a bench inside its trunk, an appropriate place to muse on the passing of the years, no doubt.

Wordsworth wrote a poem "Yew Trees" which refers to stately Yews at Lorton and Borrowdale in the Lake District. The Lorton Yew survives, as do three of the Borrowdale four.

Here are some lines from "Yew Trees";

*"There is a Yew, the pride of Lorton's  
vale.  
Which to this day stands single in the  
midst  
Of its own darkness as it stood of yore....  
Of vast circumference and gloom  
profound  
This solitary tree! – a living thing  
Produced too slowly ever to decay;  
Of form and aspect too magnificent  
To be destroyed."*

There are two remarkable Yews framing the Church door at St. Edwards Stow-on-the Wold. Planted the 18<sup>th</sup> century, they have now grown way beyond what was probably intended, and have almost become part of the building. Pink trunked and with gnarled roots resembling strange animal feet, they are probably on borrowed time, as they must threaten the building.

Two sites at which Yew topiary can be seen at its most spectacular are Leven's Hall, Cumbria and Montacute in Somerset; both of

them National Trust properties. The latter can be seen in the film of Jane Austen's "Sense and Sensibility".

#### Uses

Yew has always been a valued material. As fence posts it will outlast Oak, and would last well in the ancient wooden causeways that were laid in swampy ground. Like Oak it survives Bog conditions and is quite usable. Bog Yew is recognisably Yew, it is just darker and duller. I have used 5,000-year-old Bog yew from the fenlands.

A 150,000-year-old Yew spear found in East Anglia is probably the world's oldest wooden artefact. It has always been used for bows, and the mediaeval long bow is probably the cause of the decline of Yew numbers during that period, a casualty of an arms race. In England suitable Yew became scarce. Yew from Spain or Italy became the favoured material since it was straighter and less prone to "pin" (knots). The 137 Yew bows recovered from the Mary Rose are all from the same baulk of Yew; of foreign origin. The bows seem to have been manufactured to a standard length of around 6ft (1.8m) and would then be adapted to the individual archer's requirements when issued. Trained archers could loose 10-12 arrows per minute, and could put up a fearsome barrage in either attack or defence. Armour piercing arrows were effective at up to 200 yards (180m).

#### Why was yew such a superior wood for bow making?

The stave was cut in a 'D'-section, a layer of sapwood was left along the flattened back of the bow. This is vital to the function of the bow.

When the bow is drawn, the inside face of the arc undergoes compression while the outer surface is stretched. The

heartwood of yew is able to withstand the compression and the sapwood is elastic by nature, and both return to their original form when the bow is loosed. Making a bow took several years. Staves were cut in winter, roughed out and left to dry for at least a year. After the bow was "seasoned", it was worked in stages into the final product. These stages would take place at intervals of a year for three or four years.

Yew was used for domestic turnery but not extensively. Evidence of only one yew vessel was found in the Coppergate excavations at York/Jorvik, which perhaps suggests that it was not high on the list of favourite timbers of pre Norman conquest turners. Its propensity to split may have been a factor. It has always been used for furniture, but again in a limited way because of the difficulty of finding suitable material. It is probable that it was too important in weapon manufacture to be used for turning.

#### Taxol

This is a substance taken from the cambium or inner bark of the Pacific Yew, which has proved effective in treating some cancers, particularly breast cancer. If injected directly into tumours it can significantly reduce them. The downside of this is that the existence of the tree has been threatened, as the earliest extraction methods for the chemical required the destruction of numbers of trees. Fortunately more modern methods are less destructive.

There is a similar substance (Baccatin) that can be taken from clippings of English yew. They have to be taken from a hedge, which is trimmed annually, as the Taxol/Baccatin production is greater in fresh growth. There are

companies that will collect Yew trimmings if they are of sufficient quantity and if it is economic. This needs to be arranged well in advance, as the Taxol/Baccatin starts to deteriorate if the clippings are left more than 24 hours.

Contact [www.limehurst.com](http://www.limehurst.com) of Chichester tel. 01243 545455, or Friendship Estate of Doncaster 01302 700 220.

#### Folklore

Prior to the introduction of Christianity Yew was a sacred tree of the Druids, who built their temples near these trees, or sacred groves – which were replaced by the early Christians. The association of the tree with churches survives to this day. There has been much discussion, and many opinions expressed as to why the Yew is so often found in churchyards. Some say it is the deep-dark green, almost eerie and shady presence of the tree. Others say that it is the tree of death, (and therefore appropriate to graveyards) due to its poisonous chemistry, or that it was put in churchyards, (where it would not be accessible to live-stock) to grow wood for longbows. Christian scholars have associated it with Christ as 'the tree of the cross' or with the theme of resurrection

Round the church at **Painswick** in Gloucestershire, are many clipped yews, traditionally said to number 99. It was alleged that there could be no more and that every attempt to plant a hundredth would fail—and it did! Eventually the mystery was solved, when a lady wrote to *The Times* in 1963, explaining that her father, a scientist and practical joker who lived beside the churchyard, 'used to pour acid or poison on the roots of the hundredth yew tree whenever they planted a new one. It's highly likely that he started the legend himself.'

There is a tradition in East Anglia that if you bring yew into the house

at Christmas, amongst the other evergreens used to dress it, you will have a death in the family before the end of the year. Many still think it unlucky to burn Yew.

A Somerset tradition is that "Our forefathers were particularly careful in preserving this funeral tree whose branches it was usual for mourners to carry in solemn procession to the grave, and afterwards to deposit therein under the bodies of their departed friends"

Before it became possible to import Palm leaves for Palm Sunday, Yew sprigs were used as a substitute.

#### Turning Characteristics

Yew is one of the most beautiful and satisfying of woods to turn. Or at least it is when it is not being one of the most frustrating. An almost infinite variety of grain characteristics is matched by an equal variety of faults. The definite two tone colour scheme allowed by the different colours of heart and sapwood can be used to good effect when using branch wood. The problem is using it without it splitting. Some people kiln dry the branches fairly successfully. I

favour rough turning wet branch wood and leaving it to dry. I use a precise method called the "Inertia Principle". This means that I rough turn the wood, date it, then put it bags or boxes or just in the general workshop debris; then hope that by the time I rediscover it, the wood will be dry. Sometimes this method only requires six months, but has taken anything up to ten years. Visitors to my workshop will understand how I came to employ this method!

Dowels for spindle turning can be rough turned and will dry rapidly, 3 months will usually be enough for material up to 50mm (2") thick. I haven't had that much success with material over 50mm.

In general Yew air dries fairly quickly, but not especially well. It is prone to split, and the fresh cut wood will often show splits that occurred in the living wood. There is little that can be done about this, and the larger the log, the more problems that it tends to have. Cup shakes, star shakes, ingrown bark, hidden knots all make this a difficult wood to usefully convert. If it is hard going for Turners, pity

cabinetmakers, whose task is much harder. They talk of 100% waste, which actually means that they discard as much as they use (shouldn't that be 50% waste?).

I have made many bowls from Yew over the years, but it is not the best wood for them. The main problem is in finding large fault free pieces, and fault free pieces often have little visual interest. If splits and other defects are acceptable there is no problem, but few customers are willing to accept them. Many beautiful hollow forms have been made from Yew; few are free of faults in the wood, but this style of work (particularly on end grain) usually has enough going for it for the faults to be of little consequence. Tracy Owen and Phil Irons have produced some beautiful hollow forms, and a magnificent large hollow piece more than a metre high won a prize at Craft Supplies a couple of years ago but I haven't been able to find the makers name.

It is straightforward to wet turn end grain bowls and vases in Yew, but personally I have not had much success with them. Yew bark does not stay on natural edges very often (unlike Laburnum) and breakages during turning, or subsequent splitting, are common.

Spindle turning is straightforward if the woods is straight grained and knot free. It will respond well to both skew and gouge. If it is wild grained or knotty, this isn't the case and you may have to resort to what my father refers to as "Brute force and ignorance". Failing that, heavy-duty abrasives can sometimes save the day! It is best to go easy on the abrasives on the end grain of Yew, as it is one of those timbers prone to heat shakes.



**Great Yorkshire Show 2005**  
**Tuesday 12 - Thursday 14 July**

# Microwave Drying Wood

Keith Donald

*This article was extracted from the Kent Branch newsletter 'Counter Revolutions'*

Microwave drying wood is a good technique to utilise where you need something dried in a hurry.

## Equipment

Of course you will need a **microwave** oven. It is not really important whether it is a turntable model or not, and the power level isn't that important either. We will be using very low power levels, (defrost) so that sort of limits itself. The only other factor is the physical size, and that is self explanatory really. If the work piece is too big it won't go in the door.

You will also need some **scales** to weigh the article. This bit is difficult because you need a set of scales that allow you to measure accurately to small amounts - 5 gram steps or so. I have a set of digital scales that are in 5 grams steps and they perform well. If you are drying any wood by other methods, you will probably have scales anyway.

The only other things you need are time, patience and some wood to microwave of course.

## The Technique

First, the piece needs to be prepared. Rough turn the piece until the wall thickness is about 10% of the total diameter. This allows you to remount it and finish it off when dry, with the benefit of enough meat in the walls to allow for any oval distortion that may occur. If the oval distortion is not important, turn it to the finish you want. It is your choice. I am only explaining the microwave technique here.

Speed is really important, as some woods are prone to crack if left to air dry, so keep moving. If you need to leave the piece for any length of time, either cover it with a wet cloth or place it in a sealed plastic bag.

You are now ready to cook the piece. Weigh it and record the weight. Place the piece centrally in the oven, set the power level to what ever you use for defrost. The following times give some indication depending on the size of the piece.

- Up to 200mm (8 inch) ..... 1 minute
- 200mm (8 inch) to 300mm (12 inch) ....2 minutes
- over 300mm (12 inch) 3 minutes

After setting the oven as described (defrost setting and time), start it. At the end of the cycle, remove the piece from the oven and allow it to cool. Leave until cool, or at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  hour. This is one cycle.

Replace the bowl in the oven and repeat the cycle. At the end of the 4th cycle, weigh the piece and record the weight. These 4 cycles are one drying program.

*If you are using a non turntable oven, turn the piece upside down and rotate 90 degrees between cycles. This allows even spread of warming.*

At the end of one complete program, allow it to stand for an additional % hour, then repeat the program. Keep repeating the program until the weight remains constant between two programs. At this time it is as dry as you will get it and the piece can then be finished.

## Some Points of Caution

Don't try and rush things. The temptation is to crank up the heat or the time. You will be very disappointed with the results if you do. The idea is to do this slowly and deliberately. Just like too much heat when sanding will cause heat cracks to appear, so will too much heat when cooking. Take it slowly.

Check your settings before starting the microwave. It is easy to switch the oven on at the default power setting (usually high) without realising. The results are again too much heat, with the resulting overcooking

If you do not have a workshop microwave oven and have to use the kitchen microwave oven, seek approval first. If you follow the instructions I have outlined here, you are barely warming the wood, so the possibility of damage to the microwave is no more than cooking your bacon for breakfast. Overset the power or lengthen the time, and you may well cause all sorts of problems. Gum pockets in the wood will boil and may explode and you will find they are very hard to remove. Also, you can cause tainting of the oven if the heat is too great.

## How it works

Microwave ovens work by vibrating the molecules within a material, and this movement creates heat. The microwaves penetrate deep within objects (organic articles). As you can imagine, the molecules in a liquid (water and sap) are easier to vibrate than those in a solid (wood fibres). This is more so with water borne sugars and cellulose such as those in wet wood. As you gently irradiate the article, you warm



those compound liquids which expand because the molecules need more room to dance around (vibrate), thus forcing their way along the cellular structure of the wood. Upon exiting the cells at the outside surface, the water evaporates.

You now have a two-fold process underway, heating/expansion moving the liquid out from the centre of the article, and also the sponge effect of the dry outer surface drawing the moisture out from the centre. This is why it is important to remove it from the oven and let it cool completely in the room air. Now you can also see that by giving it a really good cook, you will boil the liquid within the wood and, like any cooking, you will soften the fibre and damage the wood. This can manifest itself in many ways, including increase tear out on the end grain, production of articles that are difficult to sand to an acceptable finish and articles that will not take oils or waxes very well.

By following the method outlined, you are merely helping the natural process with a little modern technology, and instead of taking about 1 year per inch of board thickness, you can achieve the same results in a couple of days.

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last newsletter  
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your branch or direct  
to  
Derek Phillips -  
details on page 3**

# SEMINAR AUCTION APPEAL

One of the core aims of the Association is to provide guidance and support of the membership.

Considerable assistance is given to the setting up of affiliated branches and helping in the running of these local centres for those wishing to develop and foster interest in woodturning.

Clearly the support and development of members is of central importance to the long term future of the AWGB. Over the years the Association has provided assistance to individual members in terms of membership fees, loan of a lathe and tools, and awarding scholarships to deserving members. Historically this activity has been supported by the auction of work donated by members and demonstrators at the Biannual Seminar. This has now become a tradition at the Seminar Banquet.

The success of the auction relies heavily on the generosity of members donating pieces of work. Many members donate pieces of work on a regular basis. Are you yet to join this generous band? Maybe this is the year that you can put this right by donating a piece of work.

An education and special projects fund exists that relies on revenue from the Seminar Auction and additional monies raised by other means.

This fund is used to assist members of the Association who are keen to develop their interests in woodturning and would gain a real benefit from support in a particular area.

Grants from the fund will be awarded following approval by the Committee and a committee member is responsible for administering the day-to-day running of the programme.

For those who have donated work in the past please do so again for this years seminar. For those who have never donated a piece of work now is the time to start thinking about doing so. We need good quality woodturning and if it is out of the ordinary so much the better.

# SEMINAR SCHOLARSHIPS

Out of the Members Development Fund four seminar scholarships are offered to deserving members.

Applications must be supported by a written brief, outlining the members experience to date (2 years), future interests and the value perceived in attending the Seminar.

Those receiving a Seminar Scholarship would be encouraged to report on their time at the event for publication in *Revolutions* or alternatively in a recognised Woodturning publication.

For further information please see the details in your Members Handbook that came with this issue of *Revolutions*.

**19th**

**OD**

**R 16th/17th/18th**

**k**

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# Living Heritage Woodturning Competitions

*To be held at*

**The Festival of Wood  
Broadlands, Hampshire  
June 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> 2005**

**The Festival of Wood  
Sandringham, Norfolk  
September 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup>**

## **1. Open Class - Open to all Woodturners Prizes**

The prizes will be awarded on the following basis:

<b>1. Open Class</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Prize	-	£400
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize	-	£200
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize	-	£100

### **2. Visitors Award**

In these days of interactivity, we will be asking the visitors to vote for their favourite competition piece. A special prize of £100 will be awarded for the visitors' choice.

#### **How to Enter**

1. First Fill in the **Registration Form** (to arrive no later than May 1<sup>st</sup> for Broadlands and August 1<sup>st</sup> for Sandringham) to let us know that you wish to enter the competition.
2. Send your finished pieces to:  
**Living Heritage Craft Shows Ltd**  
**P O Box 36, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 8PY**  
Remember to include your **Entry Form**.  
This must be received no later than June 10<sup>th</sup> for Broadlands and September 9<sup>th</sup> for Sandringham.
3. All entrants will receive two free passes for the Sunday, to attend the prize giving and for collection of their pieces.

#### **Rules**

1. The competition is open to all residents of Great Britain
2. All entries must arrive before the closing date.
3. All entries will be displayed on June 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> at Broadlands and September 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> at Sandringham
4. The judges decision is final.
5. No entrant may win more than one prize.
6. All pieces must be entrants own work.
7. Photographs of entries may be used in promotional literature by Living Heritage
8. Entries should not have been featured in other woodworking competitions.

#### **Judging Criteria**

All entries will be judged on the basis of:

- a. Execution of work:  
Craftsmanship, tooling and Sharpness of detail.
- b. Finish
- c. Originality
- d. Timber Choice
- e. Technical Challenge
- f. General Appeal



# Registration Form

Sandringham Festival of Wood

Please note – This is not an Entry Form

Send this form to:

Woodturning Competition, Living Heritage Craft Shows  
PO Box 36, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, ST14 8PY.

Name .....

Address.....

.....

.....

Post Code.....

Tel No (inc Std Code).....

Description of project.....

.....

.....

Wood used.....

Date.....

Signature.....

Estimated value for insurance.....

**Please complete this form and return it to arrive no later than August 1st 2005**



# Entry Form

Sandringham Festival of Wood

This form must accompany the piece

Send this form to:

Woodturning Competition, Living Heritage Craft Shows  
PO Box 36, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, ST14 8PY.

Name .....

Address.....

.....

.....

Post Code.....

Tel No (inc Std Code).....

Description of project.....

.....

.....

Wood used.....

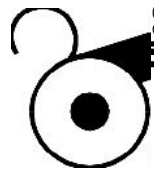
Date.....

Signature.....

Estimated value for insurance.....

**Please complete this form and return it to arrive no later than September 9th 2005**





## Registration Form

Broadlands Festival of Wood

Please note – This is not an Entry Form

Send this form to:

Woodturning Competition, Living Heritage Craft Shows  
PO Box 36, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, ST14 8PY.

Name .....

Address.....

.....

.....

Post Code.....

Tel No (inc Std Code).....

Description of project.....

.....

.....

Wood used.....

Date.....

Signature.....

Estimated value for insurance.....

**Please complete this form and return it to arrive no  
later than May 1st 2005**



## Entry Form

Broadlands Festival of Wood

This form must accompany the piece

Send this form to:

Woodturning Competition, Living Heritage Craft Shows  
PO Box 36, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire, ST14 8PY.

Name .....

Address.....

.....

.....

Post Code.....

Tel No (inc Std Code).....

Description of project.....

.....

.....

Wood used.....

Date.....

Signature.....

Estimated value for insurance.....

**Please complete this form and return it to arrive no  
later than June 10th 2005**

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### *Wood Art Section*



*Bryan Scott - Silver award*



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## **Tools 2004 Exhibition Runners up**

### *Special Awards*



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*Richard Pain*



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*Brian Stainton*



*Marcel Van Berkel*

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*Tony Witham*