

# *Revolutions*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS OF GREAT BRITAIN

Issue No 77

£2.20 to non- members

May 2006



*Spinning a yarn at  
Alexandra Palace*

Photograph courtesy of "The Woodworker" magazine

# Craft SUPPLIES

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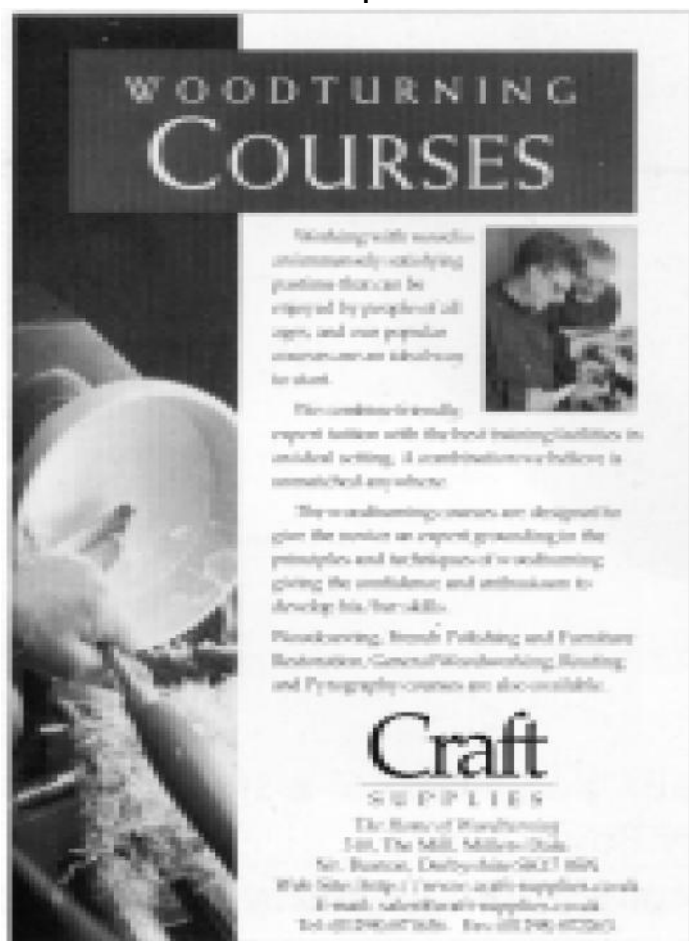
May 6th -7th, Jamie Wallwin, Woodturning Demonstration

June 3rd - 4th, Andy Lodge, Woodturning Demonstration

July 1st - 2nd, Tony Wilson, Woodturning Demonstration

Regretfully we will NOT be holding our Autumn Show. After a year of many changes, including the relocation of our warehouse and offices, and also Art Veneers, we are going to continue to endeavour to house the company under one roof. To complete the relocation we anticipate moving the shop from Millers Dale to our new site at Bradwell - hopefully at the end of September, beginning of October 2006. On completion of this we aim to hold a small open weekend in our new shop. Look out for further information.

(Editor's note: Please use the telephone numbers at the top of the page, time constraints have made it impossible to alter the details in the ads below in this issue)



### WOODTURNING COURSES

Working with wood is an immensely satisfying pastime that can be enjoyed by people of all ages, and our popular woodturning courses are an ideal way to start.

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Tel: 01433 622550 Fax: 01433 622552

## Executive Committee

### President

Ray Key, The Firs, 53 Weston Road,  
Bretforton, Nr Evesham WR11 7HW  
Tel/Fax: 01386 830142  
E-Mail: ray.key@btopenworld.com

### Chairman

Tony Witham, 39 Horsey Road, Kirby-le-  
Soken, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex. CO13 0DZ  
Tel: 01255 671697  
E-Mail: tony@awitham.freemove.co.uk

### Treasurer

Mike Morley, Lymcombe House, 7 Deepwell  
Drive, Camberley, Surrey. GU15 2HF  
Tel/Fax: 01276 23424  
E-Mail: awgbtreas@hotmail.com

### Secretary & Data Manager

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52 Upper Selsdon Road, South Croydon,  
Surrey, CR2 8DE  
Tel: 0208 657 5565  
E-Mail: davidbuskell@yahoo.com

### Membership Secretary

Derek Phillips, 15 Greens Road,  
Cambridge. CB4 3EF  
Tel: 01223 312134  
E-Mail: derek.phillips@virgin.net

### Trade & Business Liaison

Tony Walton, 7 Maple Leaf, Tiptree,  
Colchester, Essex, CO5 0NJ  
Tel: 01621 810949  
E-Mail: twwoodturning@lineone.net

### Editor & Vice Chairman

Lionel Pringle, Merrymead, 57 Westfield Lane  
St Leonards on sea,  
East Sussex, TN37 7NE,  
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### Members Development

Ray Tunstall, 8 Ragoon Road, Solihull,  
West Midlands, B92 9DB  
Tel: 0121 6882777  
E-mail: ray.tunstall@blueyonder.co.uk

### Web Master

Brian Partridge, Homeside, Lady Lane,  
Hadleigh, Suffolk, IP7 6AF  
Tel: 01473 828489  
E-Mail: brianpart@aol.com

### Insurance / Health & Safety

Peter Hockley, 6 Brook Croft, Marston Green  
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Tel: 0121 779 3220  
E-mail: peterhockley3@aol.com

### Regional Representatives Midlands & Wales

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E-mail: ray.tunstall@blueyonder.co.uk

### North & Scotland

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E-mail: woodinwest@care4free.net

### Southern Counties

Adrian Needham, Brimbles, 114 Slough Road,  
Datchet, Berkshire SL3 9AF  
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E-mail: ajneedham@e-brimbles.com

### Eastern Counties

Brian Partridge, Homeside, Lady Lane,  
Hadleigh, Suffolk, IP7 6AF  
Tel: 01473 828489  
E-Mail: brianpart@aol.com

## Chairmans notes

I stated in the last issue of Revolutions that those were to be my last Chairman's Notes. As you see I am still here! You all know how circumstances can change unexpectedly; at the time of the last issue going to print I had two ongoing health problems, one has been given the all clear and the other is awaiting the outcome of a recent operation. My change of heart was brought about by a set of circumstances that perhaps I should have foreseen. Mike Dennis had stated that, due to his change in circumstances, he was finding it difficult to carry on as editor and data manager and wished to stand down from these posts. Lionel Pringle, who was to have taken over as Chairman, suggested that if I were prepared to continue as Chairman he would put his hand up for the post of editor. The committee felt that it would be best if the editor's role was filled by a person who was familiar with the workings of the AWGB, and so all was agreed. I am sure that we will all give Lionel our full support in his new role. David Buskell had already taken over the post of Data Manager and was elected as Secretary at the AGM.

There is a full report of the AGM in this issue so I will not take up space repeating it here. However, I would just like to say that it came as a great shock to me to be presented with a life membership. I was overcome with such emotion that I was unable to give a thank you and acceptance speech, as the words just would not come to me. May I use this column to thank everybody most sincerely for considering me to be worthy of such an honour. I have learnt so much from working on the committee of the AWGB, and made so many friends and colleagues over the years, the list just keeps growing.

The Young Turners Weekend being held on the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> August 2006 still has some vacancies. For details of how to apply see page 22.

I do urge you to take part in the competitions being organised by the Worshipful Company of Turners. As you will have seen in the last issue there has been a rule change in order to encourage more entries.

Last year's Wood Festival at Sandringham was a very successful and worthwhile event for the branches that took part, it gave them an opportunity to meet the public and show them what can be made on the lathe. The Association has been invited to participate in three of these events this year, details are on page 15.

On the subject of shows, whilst writing these notes I received an e-mail from our secretary saying that we have been asked if we would like to demonstrate and promote the Association at the North of England Woodworking Show at Harrogate. We have accepted the offer and look forward to making many new friends in the North.

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)

### AWGB LAPEL BADGES (Brass & Enamel)

£2.50 p&p inclusive

### CLOTH BADGES

For sewing on Smocks etc

£4.00 p&p inclusive

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£1 and sae (9"x6") or postage  
free with badge orders  
Send Cheque etc, to Tony  
Walton (Address Opposite)

MAKE ALL PAYMENTS  
TO AWGB

## Front Cover

Detail of Rod Bonner's  
spinning wheel in  
Maple, which attained  
a fourth award at the  
International  
Woodworking  
Exhibition at Alexandra  
Palace in February  
2006.

Copy deadline  
for the next  
edition of  
Revolutions

30th June  
2006

## Editorial

The great thing about life is that no matter how organised you think you are and how predictable you think things are going to be, one way or another very little seems to go as planned. Such was the case with me last autumn. I had, after a lengthy period of procrastination, decided that the time had come for me to step down as Secretary of this Association and let some other dumb cluck have a go (sorry David).

No such luck! Yes I could stand down as secretary, but with my other hat on as Vice Chairman I was expected to offer myself for election as your Chairman, because, at that time, Tony Witham did not want to seek re-election on health grounds. I wasn't too happy about this but as I am a decent, do the right thing in a crisis, sort of bloke, I said yes.

But as I always say there's no point getting older if you don't get craftier. By a process of back stairs campaigning in the corridors of AWGB power, Tony was finally persuaded to stay on. As a compromise I offered to take on the editorship of "Revolutions" and let poor old Mike Dennis, who has done more for this organisation than any other human being, barring Ray Key, take a well deserved rest, of sorts.

We don't let people go easily however so Mike is still with us as Joint Seminar Co-ordinator until 2007, when he will finally be allowed to fade away. As for myself I still have the worry that I am still Vice Chairman, which is tantamount to Chairman in waiting, but perhaps if I make a hash of this new job or write some pithy editorials I might well get flung out. We shall have to wait and see.

There is a great temptation to use a post such as mine to indulge in tub thumping and in all probability I will do just that in the months to come. But at the moment I just wish to lavish praise on my predecessor who has done this job now on three separate occasions. His last tenure has seen great improvements in the quality and content of the newsletter and I hope that I can continue to move that situation forwards.

A new editor will inevitably bring change and there are some small changes in style in this edition, but what I hope is that the newsletter can become a true reflection of the thoughts and aspirations of you, the members of the AWGB. Communication is a topic of conversation that appears to ruffle feathers constantly, this newsletter is our prime means of communication and it should be seen to be working in both directions. Drop me a line and let me know what concerns you and what you think about the state of woodturning in Great Britain today. Contributors with a witty and acerbic tongue will always be particularly welcome.

I look forward to continuing the traditions set by my predecessors in this post and hope that members will look forward to the arrival of "Revolutions".

## New Branch

We would like to welcome two new branches to the the AWGB, they are:-

Crow Valley Woodturners

Secretary, Peter Bradwick, 01633 873640,

peterbradwick@btinternet.com

Highland Woodturners

Secretary, Sy Henderson, 01463 239624

syhenderson.inverness@tesco.net

## Additional Associates

Another three woodturning clubs have joined the AWGB in the Associated category, they are:-

Ayr & District Woodturning Club

Secretary, Bill Jamieson 01292 560821

North Devon Woodturners

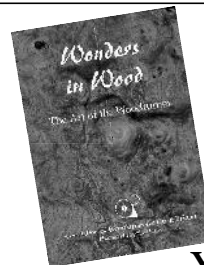
Secretary, Roy Tuner, 01237 478693

Cumbria Woodturners Association

Secretary, Fred Singleton, 01539 731896

## The Worshipful Company

Just a reminder that there is still just time to submit your entries for the Worshipful Company of Turners 2006 competitions. The entry forms, which were printed in the last issue of *Revolutions*, need to be submitted by May 15th.



**Is your turning  
lacking inspiration?**

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**Cheques with order made payable to the  
AWGB for the full amount, including P&P,  
quoting your membership number, name and  
address please.**



## A Fresh Face

With effect from the last AGM, the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain has a new Honorary Secretary. I believe I am correct in saying that David Buskell is only the fourth person to fill this post since the inception of the AWGB in 1987, so he will be aware that his is not a transitory appointment.

David Buskell lives in South Croydon in Surrey, in his proper life he is a Chartered Secretary and Administrator and so is ideally suited to his new post. David describes himself as a keen hobby woodturner. He started turning in 2000 having attended a course with the late Frank Clarke. A member of Cheam Woodturners he has been on their committee since 2001. David hopes to contribute to the continuing growth of the Association, and would wish to contribute to the continuing development of the AWGB and to assist in raising the profile of woodturning generally. He is particularly keen to encourage a much broader cross-section of the population to take up the craft.



## Seminar 2005 CD

Photographs taken by official photographer Charles Sharpe and other AWGB members are now available on a CD. The CD gives a flavour of all aspects of the 2005 Seminar. The CD will run with included slide-show software on a PC and will also show all the sections on a TV system using a DVD player.

Available from Tony Walton, 01621 810949, at a cost of £7 inclusive of post and packing.

## Minutes of the AGM

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at Daventry Community Centre, Ashby Road, Daventry, on Sunday 2nd April 2006, at 2.00pm

**1** Apologies for absence had been received from Ray Key, Reg Sherwin, Peter Hockley, Mike Donovan and Reg Reed

**2** The minutes of the AGM held at Burcot Village Hall, Burcot, on Sunday 3rd April 2005 were accepted by the meeting as being a true record, proposed by Ralph Pooley and seconded by Mike Collas

**3** Tony Witham, Honorary Chairman of the Association presented his annual report to the meeting and a copy of this is attached to these minutes. Tony Walton proposed acceptance of the report and Adrian Needham seconded, the proposal was accepted unanimously.

**4** The Honorary Treasurer, Mike Morley, presented the accounts for the year 2005 to the meeting, a copy of which is attached to these minutes. He gave a brief resume of methods of accounting used to arrive at the figures and an overall picture of the state of the Association's finances. After the loss of the previous year we had returned to a position of slight surplus. The decision to increase subscriptions was still felt to be justified and showed no sign of having caused any change in the usual pattern of renewals. Mike Dennis proposed acceptance of the accounts and Ray Tunstall seconded, they were accepted unanimously.

**5** As only one nomination per executive post had been received the following were duly elected:-

Chairman - Tony Witham  
Vice Chairman - Lionel Pringle  
Treasurer - Mike Morley  
Secretary - David Buskell

**6** As only one nomination had been received for post of Executive Committee member Derek Phillips was duly elected.

**7** Only one nomination per post had been received for the vacant Regional Representatives posts. Consequently Brian Partridge was elected to serve for the Eastern region and Ray Tunstall for the Western region.

**8** a/ John Johnson asked that the committee now identify themselves in order that all present were aware of who was who.

b/ John Montgomery proposed a vote of thanks to the committee for their hard work on the Association's behalf.

c/ On behalf of the committee and members of the AWGB Lionel Pringle presented Tony Witham with life membership of the Association in recognition of his many years of hard work and dedication to the aims of the AWGB.

Tony Witham closed the meeting at 2.35pm with thanks to the members of the Tudor Rose branch for their help with the setting up of the venue and the provision of catering facilities.

## Balance sheet as at 31st December 2005

[illegible]

## Notes and Statement of Accounting Procedures

### Basis of Accounting

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention

### Fixed Assets

Values for fixed assets owned and purchased by the association are presented under four categories:

1. Computers and Software
2. Exhibition and display equipment
3. Lathes and tools
4. Videos and Slides.

Values shown are current book values derived from historical cost less accumulated depreciation.

Depreciation rates used are 25% per annum of original cost for computers and software and 15% for all other items. In 2005 the Association purchases have been limited to updated software for accounts and publications purposes

### Membership Subscriptions

Membership subscriptions are those relevant to year 2005 membership

### Bank Interest

Interest from the Association's deposit account is an integral part of the Association's operations. No interest is paid on the current account. The refund of tax paid is included in the figures which are relatively large due to the advance payments for the seminar held in the deposit account

### Accruals

All known expenditure paid after 31/12/2005 that is correctly attributed to 2005 has been included in the financial statements.

### Stock

Stock items comprise 'Wonders in Wood', badges, and the CDs containing the archive of woodturning slides. The binders and the book, "Selling your Craft" have been poor sellers and have been written down to zero value. Physical stock will be retained and, if possible sold at reduced prices

### Prepayments

Prepayments comprise the purchase of Membership cards for 2006 and the payment of the insurance premiums to Ian W. Wallace for 2006. Storage of equipment is prepaid until August 2006.

### Taxation

The Association is, in principle, liable to Corporation Tax on the income arising from the temporary deposit of members' subscriptions. However, as the total is small the rate is zero. Tax paid on the interest from the deposit account has been refunded and is shown within the interest entry.

### Seminar 2005

Income and expenditure for the seminar is shown as a separate entry. As usual the figures are dominated by the University charges for accommodation and meals. An increase in delegates' fees and a good attendance resulted in a healthy surplus which will be carried over for the planned 2007 Seminar.

### Trade Creditors

Trade creditors comprise an Accountant's fee of £180.

### Charitable Donations

Although there is no entry under charitable donations activities in the period the sum of £1240.65 was raised for the Tsunami Appeal., mainly from work by branches. This money was sent to the Lions International organisation for their work in relief.

### Development Fund.

The development fund benefited in 2005 from the auction at the Seminar. Courses were funded to the sum of £750 and 5 scholarships were awarded to attend the seminar.

Sales of tools made by the late Phil Reardon were made at the seminar and shows. A total of £226 has been sent to Sue Reardon which, we understand, will be used for woodturning development.

### Financial Out-turn

The loss of over £2000 sustained in 2004 was reversed by a number of factors giving a surplus of £355. Main elements were an increase in subscription income of £1500 and reductions in expenditure on Revolutions (£1800), Branch Presentations (£1300), meeting expenses (£1000) and the absence of prize donations (£900).

The large loss in 2004 resulted in the decision to increase the membership fee to £14.00 which should show an improved balance for 2006. It is worth noting that the reserve funding of about £22,000 amounts to less than one year's income.

## Fixed Assets as at 31st December 2005

	Slides	Lathes	Exhibition	Computer
Net Book Value End December 2004	43.58	166.71	2428.36	1190.45
Purchases 2005	0.00	0.00	183.09	0.00
Depreciation 2005	15.59	35.72	510.27	564.95
Book Value at end 2005	27.99	130.99	2101.18	625.50

### MERCHANDISE

#### AT 31ST DECEMBER 2005

Item numbers	Books	Badges	badges	Stickers	Binders	CDs	Book
Stock at end 2004	394	162	273	568	190	10	49
Purchased 2005	0	0	0	0	0	85	0
Recorded Sales	47	52	39	35	12	17	0
Unrecorded sales, gifts	22	14	1	200	178	56	0
Written off	0	0	0	343	170	0	49
Closing numbers	325	96	233	0	0	22	0
Item Costs	1.00	1.77	1.09	0.32	3.71	2.00	2.36
Year End Valuation	325.00	170.39	253.97	0.00	0.00	44.00	0.00
				2005	Total		793.36
							2004

### DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Income							
Income Auction				2937.50			25
Expenses							
Courses	740.00					1260	
Teenage Turners Training Day	0.00					500	
Funding for Seminar Scholars							
Total Expenses				740.00			1760

NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE 2197.50 -1735

### SEMINAR ACCOUNT

Income							
Delegate Fees	44967.43						
Trade Stands and accommodation	5309.50						
Seminar Raffle	2039.00						
Other Income	300.00						
Sponsored places				52615.93			0

Expenditure							
University Accommodation and Meals	34404.81						
Facilities less Deposit	5532.74					1000	
Presenter Costs	6372.85						
Stationery and Printing	1119.31						
Photography							
Travel and Other Expenses	1698.33					278	
Total Expenses				49128.04			1278

NET SURPLUS/OVERSPEND 3487.89 -1278

# Chairman's report to the AGM

## Welcome

I welcome you to this AGM and as chairman appreciate you all being here, I know how far some of you have had to travel. It is not an easy task deciding where to hold such meetings, as our membership covers the whole of the country but I feel that this location is one of the best served by motorways. So I thank you all for attending.

Thanks go to the Tudor Rose Branch for arranging this fine venue and for providing such a fine lunch for those that attended the Branch meeting this morning.

## Explanation

I feel that I owe you all an explanation. I announced at the last Seminar that I would not be standing for re-election, and repeated this in the last issue of *Revolutions*. This was true at the time of going to print. As you all know circumstances change; at the time I had two ongoing health problems, one I have been given the all clear for. I have recently had an eye operation and am not yet sure whether this has been successful. The reasons for my change of heart will become clear later.

## Growth

Over the last twelve months we have seen the association grow not only in membership but also by the number of Branches, which now stands at 50 plus 11 associated clubs. I feel this has been a most encouraging year.

## Tsunami Appeal

I would like to thank all those that sent pieces of work to be sold to raise money for the Tsunami Appeal. This resulted in the sum of £1240.65 being raised. This was sent to the Lions International organisation, which was thought to be the best option as we know that all of the monies are transferred direct, without any costs. The money raised is going to help fund the rebuilding of the community centre in Hikkadua, Sri Lanka.

## Development Programme

The development programme has seen a steady flow of applicants for courses. As we have only a limited amount of funding for this, which is mainly raised at our biannual seminar auction, courses are only partly funded by the programme, the rest must come from the applicant. This was thought through by the committee and was seen as a fair way of putting the money available to the best use.

At last year's Seminar the sum of £2937.50 was raised. I would like to thank all those that contributed pieces for the auction as the development fund relies solely on money raised from the sale of these pieces.

You will have read in the last issue of *Revolutions* that this year we are holding a training weekend for young turners. The planning for this is well underway and applications are starting to come in. This weekend is for those that have had some experience of turning

## Thanks

I thank Ray Key our president for all the help that he has given us throughout this year. His experience in the worldwide turning scene is most appreciated; we would surely be struggling to arrange presenters for our seminar without his input.

Thanks go to Mike Dennis our data manager and newsletter editor for all that he has achieved throughout this year, especially as he not only had the extra work involved in the seminar, but also an increased workload outside of AWGB matters. This has led Mike to retire from the committee as data manager and as editor, he will be sorely missed. I wish Mike all the very best for the future. He has, however, agreed to stay on the seminar sub committee, so that his knowledge of dealing with the university can be passed on to a successor.

Thanks go to our secretary Lionel Pringle who has worked tirelessly for the association dealing with any correspondence that has come his way; he was always there for advice, which was freely given. As Vice Chairman Lionel was to have taken over as Chairman, but with Mike standing down it was thought that the position of editor would be better filled from within the committee. Lionel has put his hand up for the post and I would like to welcome him into his new role and I know that Mike Dennis will give him all the support in the changeover.

I would like to single out and thank the rest of the members of your Executive Committee -

- Mike Morley, our Treasurer, who has not only had his normal work load, but this year has also done a great job dealing with all the seminar bookings, insuring that everyone had a great time and that all were catered for.

- Membership secretary Derek Phillips, who has a difficult job keeping all of our member's details correct and up to date. With more branches coming on board his workload continually increases. I would just like to add it would make Derek's work a little easier if members could print the information each time they send him updates.

- Brian Partridge who is not only our web master, but also a regional representative for the east of the country. Brian is continually striving to improve our web site and keeping everyone informed. Our web site is where you are able to access the most up to date information and Brian certainly strives to maintain the site to a high standard. As with last year there has



been a problem on the forum page and at the moment is not operational.

On a personal note I would like to thank Brian for all his support during my present eye problems, not just for standing in for me at demonstrations, but always knowing he would be there to drive me about, including driving me back home from hospital.

- Trade and business liaison officer Tony Walton, who works tirelessly organising the Association stand at the various shows during the year, exhibiting member's work and arranging manning of the clinic. Also after the shows making sure that members work is safely stored until the next show.

- Peter Hockley who continues with his role as liaising between branches and the insurers, as well as keeping us informed of any health and safety matters.

- Ray Tunstall who has two roles, one as the development officer and the other as western regional representative, he is always meticulous in both roles.

- David Grainger, who is the regional representative for the north who once again has done a great job, as his area is so vast.

David is also responsible for the Wonders in Wood book sales as well as dealing with the video library.

- Adrian Needham who is the regional representative for the southern region and in the coming year will be understudying the treasurer so that there will be a smooth transition from Mike Morley our present treasurer. This is being done in this way as Mike has already stated that he will be leaving the committee before the next seminar.

Finally thanks to David Buskell for taking on the role of data manager in order to ease the work load from Mike Dennis

In closing I would also like to give a big thanks to all those that have submitted articles for inclusion in Revolutions. Without the articles and projects we would not have a newsletter of any worth.

## Dedication rewarded

Nationally the awarding of honours has been very much in the news of late. To achieve an award in the ranks of the AWGB it is necessary to be dedicated, have a very thick skin and the tenacity to put in a lot of very hard work over a vast number of years, despite the occasional onset of the head versus brick wall syndrome.

At last month's AGM, life membership of the Association was awarded to Tony Witham. In actual fact, because Tony has always been a joint member with his wife Christine (the power behind the throne),

the award was given jointly, although only Tony's name appears on the plaque.

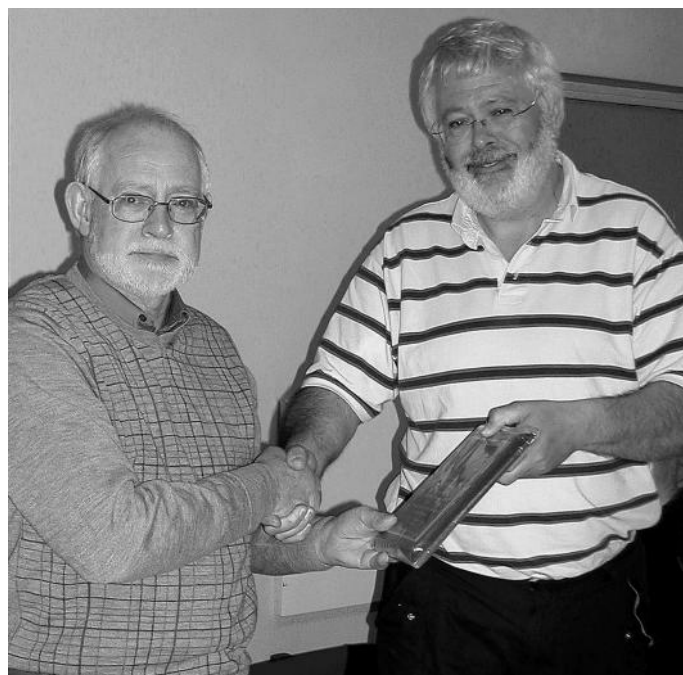
Although absent from the proceedings (he always manages a trip to the USA at AGM time) Ray Key provided the following citation:

*"I am only sorry that I am not at the AGM to make this presentation. This is an honour which is long overdue to one of the AWGB's stalwarts. Tony is one of the quiet men who just gets on and does things without fuss. He has always been totally committed to the AWGB's cause and always gives of his best. Two of his major contributions in the past have been as the Regional Representative for the Eastern Region and his non stop behind the scenes work at the Seminars.*

*Since he became Chairman in 2004, but more especially in 2005, he has had a series of health worries. So much so he felt he couldn't give of his best and was going to stand down from the Chair this year. However a breakthrough on that front and a recent operation, has enabled him to reconsider. The support of the AWGB Committee has helped, but it has been the backing of his wife Christine that has been the real clincher.*

*I know of two things Tony is very keen to focus on in particular, more youth initiatives and to make sure we celebrate the AWGB's 20th Anniversary in 2007 in style. Congratulations Tony on an honour well deserved. "*

The rest of the committee and Tony's many friends in the Association can only echo and endorse these words of Ray's.



**Vice Chairman, Lionel Pringle, presents Tony Witham with a plaque recognising his enrolment as a life member of the AWGB**

# A Course with Tracy Owen

by Hilary Gibbons

I work part-time as a nurse, and woodturning has been a hobby of mine for about three years. I started whilst doing a year at college studying cabinet-making; I had always had an urge to make something beautiful with wood! All we had to do at college was to make a handle for our own veneer scraper and I was hooked. My father and husband indulged my interest and bought me a small Record lathe for my birthday.

I practised by turning any pieces of wood I could get my hands on—fallen branches, logs from neighbours' trees, pallet wood, old furniture—and even bought the occasional bit.

My car was very obliging: whenever we drove past anyone using a chainsaw it refused to go on until there was a lump or two on board! My husband found this embarrassing at times, but the obliging public thought it amusing.



When I came to hollowing bowls, I had problems as the bowl got deeper. These made me invest in a short course with Dave Reeks in Kent. Absolutely invaluable! He showed me the correct tools to use in different situations and the quality of my work took a giant leap. I also joined two local woodturning clubs—Ely and Kings Lynn—also invaluable, although I was the only female turner in both clubs.

Come on, ladies: you would find this hobby addictive. Taster sessions available in my workshop. FREE!

Winning a few local competitions and the purchase of a second-hand Maestro also spurred me on, and my interest led me to the AWGB seminar at Loughborough in August, 2005. Here I met one of the most inspiring and long-admired international turners, Binh Pho, and was lucky enough to spend a day with

him after the seminar practising piercing and decorating turned wood.

Most of Binh's work is on hollow forms, and making these was again proving to be a problem. Watching demonstrations at the clubs was helpful, but how could I try out the hollowing tools to find which suited me best? At the Loughborough seminar an auction was held to raise funds for improvement scholarships for members. This was when I decided to try for an AWGB scholarship. The Panel decides every March and October how to allocate this money. I had to fill in a form explaining why I wanted to study a particular course.

I chose a deep hollowing course with Tracy Owen. Why Tracy? Well, he had done a demonstration at the Kings Lynn club and I liked the way he talked about what he was doing; he said he had most of the hollowing tools so I could try them out! He also had a VB36, which is a lathe I have been coveting for a while—but some turners (men!) had been telling me it was unsuitable for a woman!

So—a two-day course at Tracy's purpose-built workshop was organised for February.

Verdict? Absolutely brilliant. His teaching style was perfect for me. We met the evening before the two days to plan the content of the course. The first morning was to be taken up with tips on using my chainsaw! I had written a long list of "I need help with...", and this proved invaluable.

We then got down to the hollowing, and spent the first afternoon and next morning on a small yew hollow form. This proved to be a challenge, as it had many well-disguised cracks. How far do you go to salvage a lovely piece of wood when the cracks keep appearing? Tracy continues long after I would have given up; but the result was well worthwhile. The guidance he gave was enough to instruct, but not so much that I couldn't say "Look what I've made!"

My favourite tools? The Roly Munro—this was pleasing because I'd already bought one at Loughborough! The Little Brother—especially for the shoulders—and the Exocet, which I'm now saving for!! Can you get a grant for an Exocet??!!

In the final afternoon Tracy chose a really beautiful bit of elm; I turned a tulip-shaped hollow form and then put it in his sand-blasting cabinet. Now this is my best yet!

The verdict on the VB36? What a quiet, smooth, powerful machine—and a lovely colour! So my saving continues, and the space in my workshop for the VB remains!! My head is full of shapes and ideas of things I want to make, incorporating colour, carving and texture, and with the help of the one-to-one tuition,

the time I have available to practise is made more fruitful—and I waste less wood!!



Thank you, AWGB, and thank you, Tracy.

I should like to give a special mention to Tracy's wife, Gill, who kept us well-supplied during the two days with lots of tea, coffee and great lunches; and a further 'thank you' to Tracy, who invited me back into his workshop on the first evening to watch him turn an off-centre platter, which he was making as a gift for a friend's birthday. A lovely evening spent chatting with Gill whilst watching a master at work.

One day.....

## Chasing John Berkeley

By John Witham

On receiving my acceptance letter from Ray Tunstall, the AWGB member's development officer, I wasted no time phoning John Berkeley to arrange a mutual course date.

Owing to my arthritic condition, John kindly agreed to split my tuition into two half days, which worked to my advantage, allowing time to practice between tuition dates.

On arrival at John's home on the first day I was warmly welcomed and invited for a coffee and a chat. This led to a well drilled workshop health and safety talk prior to him leading me to his well equipped compact workshop. John introduced me to the tools we would be using and an array of different boxes and puzzles that he had produced.

After having found a platform to bring me up to a height to match the Vicmarc lathe, I turned a piece of

Box between centres with a dovetail spigot at each end for chuck mounting.

John firstly demonstrated chasing a male thread, then invited me to do the same. I cannot explain my embarrassment, but nerves took over and everything went wrong. John put me at ease and went through the procedure once more, he was overseeing and encouraging the work throughout, giving valued tips and advice, until I produced my first male thread. Following a further welcome coffee break, we followed the same format and I produced a female thread which fitted perfectly and that bought to an end our first session.

The next morning I went to my workshop to put into practice all I had learned the previous day. Some hopes! One clanger after another developed, until I settled down and analysed my mistakes, such as regulating the lathe speed and removing debris from chaser teeth, which were stopping the sweep of the chaser and damaging the already cut thread. However I did manage to overcome these problems and was able to produce a few presentable threads.

I arrived at John's home for my second session bright eyed, bushy tailed and raring to go. The session once again started with a welcome cup of coffee and a refresher of the health and safety chat. After choosing the design of the box we were about to make, my first task was to make a female thread, but I hit my first snag. Owing to my small hands I was unable to stretch my thumb and forefinger to hold both arm rest and chaser around the banjo. Try as I would I just could not reach, so John devised a method for me to use which worked well after practice and after a few more mistakes. John explained that I need not be too heavy handed and to make the first contact just a glancing kiss, and then holding the chaser loosely, let the chaser find the thread and the tool do the work.

Time seemed to fly by, but not before I had time to admire my first threaded box completed by the end of my tuition. I am not claiming to be a fully proficient thread chaser, that will come with time and practice, but I know I can now produce a threaded box and should I have any difficulties, John is only a phone call away.

I would wish to thank Chris and John for the hospitality I enjoyed in their home. Upon reflection I wish once more to thank the AWGB for its foresight and brilliant innovation in setting up the Members Development Scheme. I will endeavour to pass on my newly gained skills to many of my AWGB affiliated club members.

# Beginners projects - a lesson in planning, part 2

by Brian Partridge

I do hope the first part of the project proved to be of interest. This is the second part, which covers the paper knife and the pen and pencil. This continues to emphasise the need for **PLANNING** in our turning.

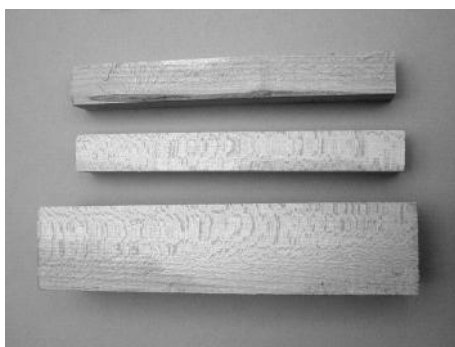
- Woods – I have chosen to use a matching wood namely Beech for these items but you might like to use a contrasting wood. Bring your own ideas into these projects, there is no need to copy me exactly.
- Tools Used - Only four tools are used, ½" roughing gouge ground straight across at 30°, 3/8" spindle gouge, 1/16" thin parting tool and ½" skew chisel. This part of the project could be completed with just the skew chisel, why not try it? But **KEEP YOUR TOOLS SHARP**
- Chuck - 4 jaw scroll chuck is used with appropriate jaws.
- Finishing - Sanding grits up to 400 and a melamine lacquer giving a very hardwearing surface, which does not easily mark.

The message here is that lots of expensive tools or woods are not necessary to do worthwhile projects.

Now let's get to work with the picture sequence. Have a go and more importantly have fun.



1 - Chisels used.



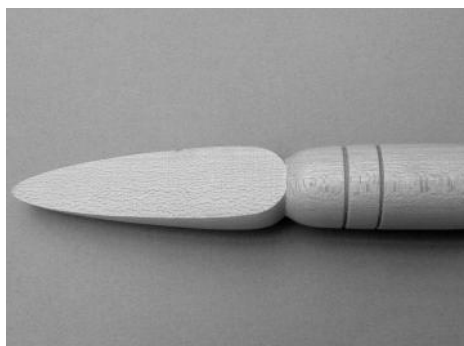
2 – Beech cut into basic pieces



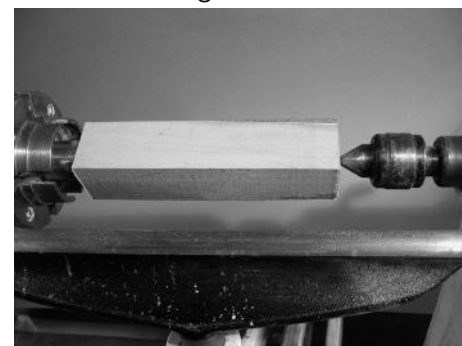
3 – Check your tool rest. If there are cuts and scores along its length, take a file and get rid of them.



4 – Finish the tool rest off with 180 grit, to get a really smooth surface, this will help your chisels to glide along easily.



5 – The first step is to make the paper knife. I have chosen a very simple design here but why not use your own ideas for the shape?



6 – Set the blank between centres.



7 – Rough out to the round using the ½" roughing gouge.

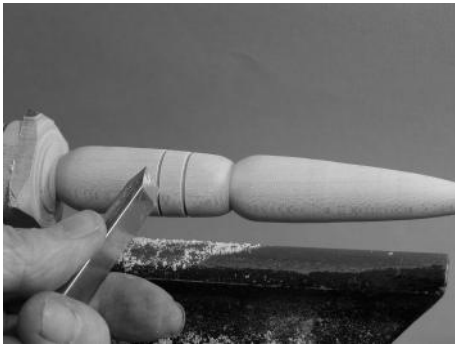


8 – Cut a spigot one end to allow for chucking later. **PLANNING**



9 – Make a small guide groove to delineate the handle and the blade.





10 – Continue to shape and make some decoration, perhaps some little grooves with the skew chisel.



11 - Now with the spigot made earlier, mount the nearly finished knife in the four jaw chuck and using the skew chisel start to roll over the top of the handle. Leave enough thickness to support the whole thing for sanding.



12 – Using the 3/8" spindle gouge carefully finish the pointed end.



13 – Sand to a good finish going up to at least 400 grit



14 – Finish using a good coating of Melamine lacquer hand rubbed in until dry and then buffed to a satin sheen with kitchen roll. This gives a long lasting finish, which resists water and finger marks.



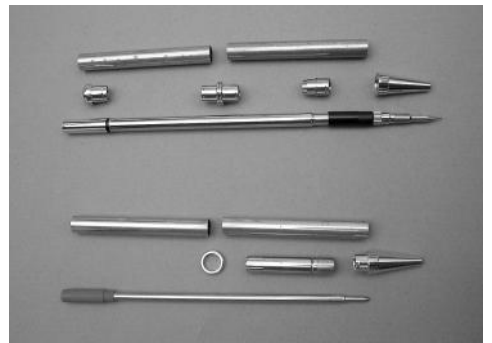
15 - If you have a bench disk sander then shape the blade taking care not to catch the handle.



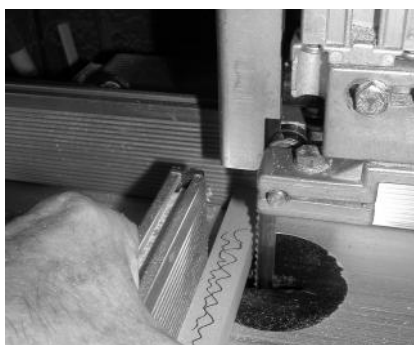
16 - An alternative is to use a little 2 or 3" disc mounted in a Jacobs chuck on the lathe. Hand sand to a good finish and apply a coat of melamine to the blade.



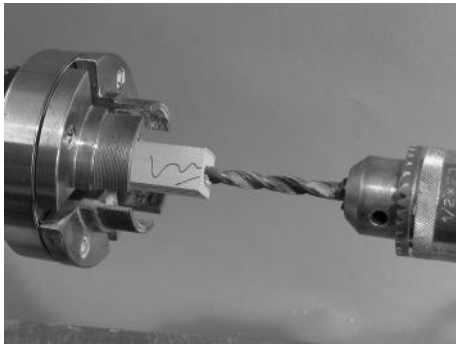
17 – Now to make the pen and pencil.



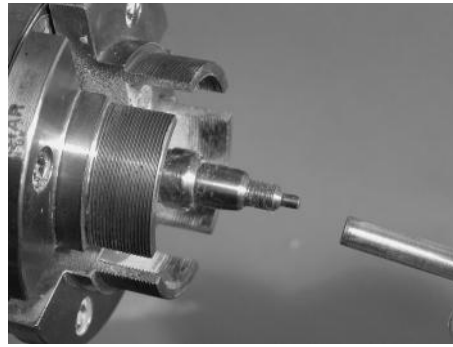
18 – This shows the mechanisms. There are many different types available, make sure that you know how they fit together before cutting wood. **PLANNING.**



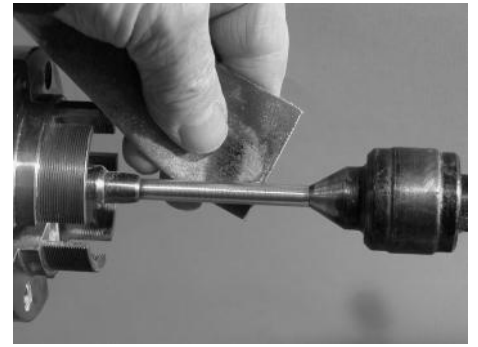
19 – The pen squares need to be cut into appropriate lengths to just fit the brass tubes which will be inserted later. Make sure that they are cut square and mark along the length so that you can identify the matching point when drilling.



20 – Hold each square in the chuck with the matching point of each piece at the drill end. Make sure that you start the drilling in the middle of the square. This process gives a good chance of the figure in the wood matching between the two halves of the pen body. If you are going to make lots of pens then a jig for use on a pillar drill is very effective.



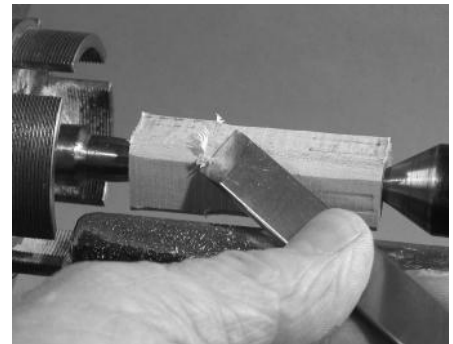
21 – Use a stepped mandrel to drive the brass tube.



22 – Sand each brass tube to make a good key for the glue.



23 – Apply some medium Cyano glue to the brass tube and with a twisting motion to spread the glue, push it into the wood, taking care not to get glue inside the tube.



24 – Using the ½" skew chisel rough the wood down, take care not to over tighten the live centre into the workpiece.



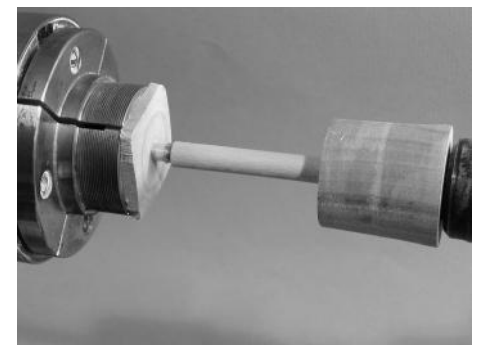
25 – Continue reducing the size until it matches the diameter of the gold spacers in the pencil kit.



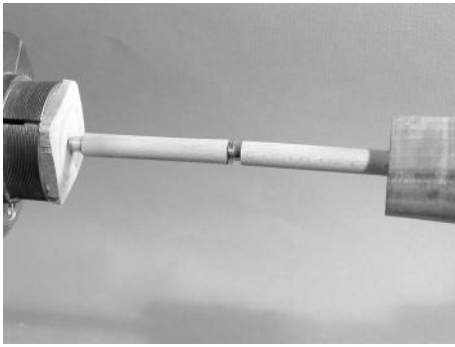
26 – If you have cut well with a sharp chisel then only 400grit is needed for sanding.



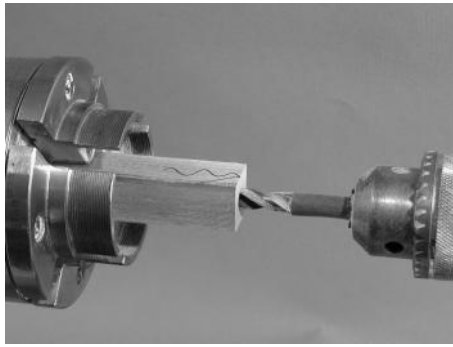
27 – Finish with Melamine in the same way as the knife.



28 – The parts of the pencil kit can now be pressed into place using wooden spacers in the chuck and tailstock .



29 – Push both halves of the pencil together taking care to keep everything in line.



30 – The pen has a blind end unlike a pocket pen. This requires a longer blank **(PLANNING)** which must be drilled carefully to leave room for the tail centre and the rounded top. It is best to mark the depth on the drill with a piece of tape.



31 – A groove at the top of the pen can now be established with the thin parting tool leaving sufficient diameter to enable the roughing and finishing of the wood.



32 – Finally cut to the correct diameter with the top part rounded. Sand and finish as with the other pieces. With the skew chisel carefully finish shaping the top and part off. A little bit of hand sanding is required to tidy up the rounded top.



33 – The completed project will look well on any desk and will provide a worthwhile exercise.

## Wood Festivals

*Promoted by Living Heritage Events*

**June 17th & 18th**

Chiltern Wood Festival

Chiltern Open Air Museum, Buckingham

Branches or Associated Clubs wishing to take part should contact Adrian Needham

**July 15th & 16th**

Sandringham Wood Festival

Sandringham, Norfolk

Branches or Associated Clubs wishing to take part should contact Brian Partridge

**September 8th, 9th & 10th**

Tatton Park Wood Festival

Tatton Park, Cheshire

Branches or Associated Clubs wishing to take part should contact Ray Tunstall

# *Turn East*

## **The 8th East of England Woodturning Seminar**

**Saturday 12th August 2006**

**at Fakenham High School, Fakenham, Norfolk**

Admission will be by ticket only at a price of £25.00  
which will include a buffet lunch.

**We have lined up a team of first class turners to demonstrate for us  
Les Thorne, John Berkeley, David Springett  
and Jimmy Clewes**

In addition we hope to have a range of trade stands together with an exhibition of  
members & delegates work

As we will only have a limited number of spaces available early application is  
recommended to what we believe will be a first class event

Application forms and further details are available from  
Mr Bernard Rose, 63 Belmore Road, Thorpe St. Andrew, Norwich, NR7  
OPR

Tel 01603 436990 or email [bandm.rose@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:bandm.rose@tiscali.co.uk)

**Turn East 2006 is a one-day Regional Seminar  
organised by the  
Norfolk Woodturners Society  
on behalf of the**

***Association of Woodturners of Great Britain***



# The View From Here

## Nick Hunton of "The Woodworker" magazine looks back on the International Woodworking Exhibition in February

As many show visitors will know, it can be a long walk up the hill to the Alexandra Palace Exhibition Centre. But, as they say, the view from the top and the experience of arriving at your destination, albeit the show that you have been heading for, can prove a really worthwhile experience.

As organisers of The International Woodworking Exhibition in February, the journey to the show was a more arduous climb than usual this year, as we were dogged by difficulties in the background, not least the financial uncertainty of the parent company (Highbury House Communications) behind the Exhibition and the related woodworking magazines. Essential factors were not put in place in good time as some readers will know, so there were difficulties in obtaining advance tickets, and for this reason some clubs decided not to go ahead with organised trips.

Fortunately, the uncertainty was lifted towards the end of January when a small group of nine of the Highbury leisure and craft magazines and their related shows were sold to a new company, Encanta Media. And, with the full backing and commitment of the new owners, those elements that were missing in the organisation of the event were immediately put in place. The month that remained before the show was a busy one, and we all appreciated, and would wish to thank, the commitment of the commercial exhibitors, demonstrators and clubs, and of course visitors, who gave their continued support to making the show happen in the style for which it has become well known.

The result proved to be an event with a real buzz, and with a wide spread of manufacturers and suppliers all offering machinery, tools and related products in an independent sales environment backed up by plenty of advice on offer from the experts. The presentations were wide ranging with the usual format of masterclasses, demonstrations and hands-on opportunities across the broad skill ranges of woodworking. Woodturning was well catered for with a line up of well known names including Stuart Mortimer, Gary Rance, Dave Reeks, John Berkeley, Ray Jones, Stephen Cooper, Tony Wilson, Mick Hanbury and Reg Slack, plus the AWGB, The Register of Professional Turners and Surrey Association of Woodturners all offering active demonstrations, displays and advice clinics as well.

The competitions did not attract as big an entry as we could have hoped for, and this in part may be due to the fact that we were not able to circulate the details so widely, the result of the earlier uncertainties.

The woodturning competition still gained the largest entry, and there were some fine examples of work in both the Prestige and Enthusiast sections from both new entrants and 'older hands'. Quality was high and the ideas and techniques attempted reflected a broad range of different styles, including filigree work, involuted turning, deep hollow vessels, applied decorative effects and combined faceplate and spindle work, as in classic items like Rod Bonner's spinning wheel. Of particular note was Roy Wood's ebonised skeletal clock which could have earned the nickname of the 'Ernie Wise' piece from the judges as they couldn't see the join! In admiration of this and its other qualities, they awarded full marks on the scoresheet.

Our thanks go to competition sponsors SIP, Craft Supplies and The Worshipful Company of Turners who provided the high value prizes.

More surprising was that the 'Take a Seat' competition calling for a turned, joined and upholstered stool did not attract a bigger number of entries as prizes which were high value cash awards from The Wood Group, representing the five Worshipful Companies participating at the show. Considering the high value of the prizes, the judges were disappointed by the few entries and felt that standards attained did not reflect the value of the prizes on offer and the full criteria of the competition. For this reason they reserved their right not to award all the prizes and made a Silver Award to Charles Aldridge and Bronze Award to Rod Bonner.

Entries to competitions are always important to us and do provide a display feature at the shows which is much appreciated by visitors. We hope that more people will consider entry for competitions at future events, and will endeavour to go on seeking sponsors to provide incentives for entry. We also hope that enthusiasts will rise to the challenge set by competitions to come up with new ideas and achieve personal high standards of workmanship that can be inspiring and encouraging to others.

Our next International Woodworking Exhibition will take place at the Staffordshire County Showground from 13th to 15th October. This is a new venue for the event previously held at Stoneleigh Park. The exhibition hall is much the same size as Stoneleigh with good facilities on offer including free car parking, and seats and cafeteria services offered on a gallery floor inside the exhibition hall. Planning is at an early stage, but with the full support of the new owners, Encanta Media, we hope to be building on the successful formula of our shows with a wide ranging event taking in commercial stands from leading manufacturers and suppliers, masterclasses, demonstrations and of course competitions. Watch out for further details. Information should be available shortly on the website: [www.getwoodworking.com](http://www.getwoodworking.com) or from Tel. 01689 899200. As they say, the view from here is looking up!

## ***Prizewinners from the International Woodworking Show, February 2006***

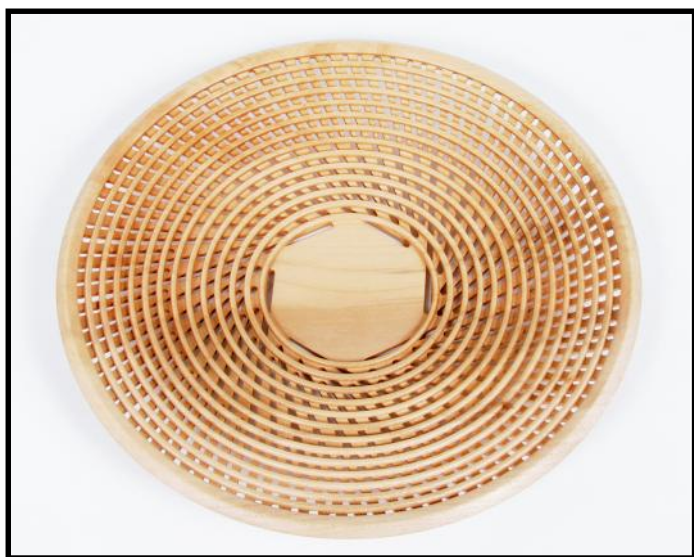
Clockwise on this page

Rod Bonner, bronze award in the "Take a Seat"  
category

Rod Bonner, fourth prize in the "Prestige Section", a  
spinning wheel in Maple

Rod Page, second prize in the "Prestige Section", a  
lattice dish in Sycamore

Russell Kebble, fourth prize in the "Enthusiast Section",  
rocking bowl in Red Mallee, Walnut and Ebony







Top left, Derrick Samson, second prize in the "Enthusiast Section", Whilwind bowl in sycamore  
 Topr right, Robert Bishop, first prize in the "Enthusiast Section", hollow form in Spalted Beech  
 Bottom left, Charles Aldridge, silver award in the "Take a Seat" category  
 Bottom right, Mr Jansen, third prize winner in the "Enthusiast Section", table lamp in Mahogany and Sycamore

**All photographs courtesy of "The Woodworker" magazine**



# New Handle for a Pen Mill

by Keith Donald RPT

At the end of November I received one of those pleading telephone calls from a long-time customer praying, he said, that my workshop was still in operation, knowing that we are planning to re-locate from Kent to Aberdeenshire. It had just dawned on him, he said, that he hadn't any promotion Christmas gifts for his various contractor customers and could I help out?

Here we go again, I thought, back into the world of production turning from a partly dismantled workshop. Nothing big in size, mind you, but big in quantity – two hundred pens! I questioned if he had that many customers. His reply was that he liked to give each contractor several small gifts to distribute among their staff.

So, that was it. 'Get on with it' was the order of the day and time was of the essence. To supplement the few packets-of-five de-luxe pen kits I had in stock, I cleaned out my friend Terry Davis' stock over at Poolewood Machinery and two more local suppliers besides. Pens? I'm sick of the sight of them! I decided the quickest and easiest solution was to turn them out of Corian. This would save me the hassle of getting the grain to match and stuffing the works into the right ends for this purpose; a practice that would have been necessary had I made them out of wood.

But this article is not about turning pens from Corian. It is about an incident that occurred along the way.

In the course of mass production and having produced a rough surface on all the little brass tubes with a home-made flap abrader. I came to that ever messy job of glueing them with cyanoacrylate (instant) glue into the previously bored out lengths of Corian. What a messy job that is. However cleanly and carefully I try to perform this part of the manufacture, I seem to get instant glue all over my fingers and spend the next few days slowing peeling it off. In the course of distributing the glue far and wide some inevitably finds its way inside the brass tubes, I guess an experience familiar to most.

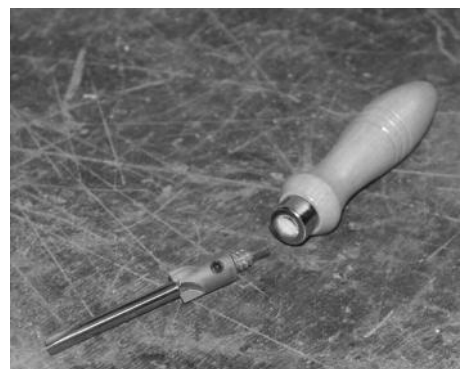
After the glue has set and hardened, this is where a very cleverly designed tool called a Pen Mill is found to be most useful. It has a fluted angled cutter much like a mini version of one of my long-hole borers, with a further four bladed fitment clamped axially on its shaft and the whole screwed into a wooden handle. Inserted into the previously glued assembly of brass tube and Corian it performs two jobs at once: cleaning out the excess glue inside the tube and trimming the Corian back to tube length.

Now, I'm not one for 'pussy-footing' around when output in quantity is the name of the game. Each

stage of manufacture is carried out on the entire production batch on a production line basis, with a few spares in case of later errors. Every assembly of Corian and brass tube was clamped, one by one, in the engineering jaws of an Axminster 4-jaw precision chuck, given a quick spin with the mill inserted, the assembly reversed in the jaws, the action repeated and then on with the next one. That approach to rapid production is fine as long as things go according to plan. But, you might guess, it didn't! I honestly cannot remember how far down the line I had reached, but it wasn't long before an extra heavy deposit of excess glue in one of the tubes caused a snatch. This resulted in the mill rotating in synchronism with the work-piece while the mill handle remained stationary in my firm grip!

On examination, I found the end of the mill shaft previously screwed into the handle had only a thin (3/16" Whit.) thread and no way was this going to give a secure fixing in the wood handle. I had several options. One, grip the metal shaft of the mill in a set of clamping pliers – cumbersome. Two, glue the mill threaded shaft with an epoxy resin, such as Araldite™. Three, the speediest but more costly solution was to nip over to Poolewood Machinery and purchase a new mill. With my sights set on the short time available to complete the job and the extent of the task remaining, the latter option was taken.

Treating the tool more kindly I hoped would result in little further disruption to my progress. Despite my newfound caution, after a slightly longer time than the first run, the same thing happened again! Examination of the new mill, now separated from its handle, revealed that evidently I was not the first to experience the design weakness of the assembly. The original design had been modified and this later example now sported an extra wood-biting insert threaded onto a short length of the 3/16" Whit. thread. I also noted that the choice of wood used for the handle was not a particularly close grained example but some Far East low grade material and hence it was not surprising that it failed under even a moderate load. A better solution had to be found.



**The broken mill**

I remembered that Terry Davis of Poolewood Machinery kept a stock of attractive chrome plated handles as component parts of the tail-stock hand-wheels for his Poolewood lathes, and decided these



would do nicely as new handles for my mills. To fit into the handles I used 12mm coach bolts, obtainable from a B&Q store. Another production line pattern commenced, this time to modify and improve two pen mills

The next task was to separate the handle body from its freely rotating centre shaft and drill and tap the exposed hole in the handle to accommodate the coach bolt.



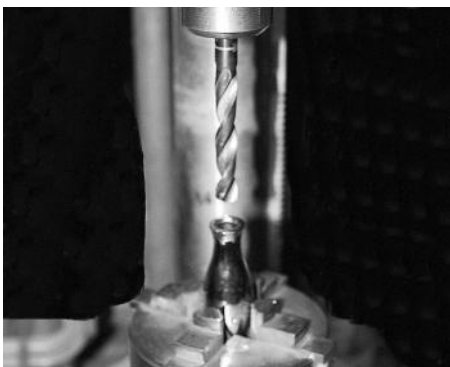
**Separating the handle from the shaft**

The two components of the metal handle are held together with an internal spring split ring running in two grooves, one in the shaft and one in the body. Separation was simply a matter of driving a thin steel wedge between the head and its shaft. They separate quite easily.



**The handle separated**

The shaft discarded, the next task was to clamp the handle in a four jaw chuck and re-drill the exposed hole to accept the tapping of a 12mm thread.



**Re-drilling the handle**

The normal sequence of first and second cut, followed by plug cut, was followed in tapping the larger diameter hole, with a little cutting oil helping progress.



**Tapping the 12mm thread in the handle**

Once the 12mm thread had been cut in the handle, the coach bolt was screwed in tight with a couple of drops of locking fluid and left overnight to set. The following day the bolt was sawn off, leaving 30mm protruding from the handle.

The sawn end was cleaned up on the grindstone and the centre pop-marked. An axial hole was then drilled and tapped to accommodate the 3/16" Whit. thread of the mill shaft taking care that sufficient depth had been allowed to accommodate all of the mill thread.



**Sawing the bolt insertion to length**

All that remained was to firmly insert the mill shaft with two small drops of locking fluid to complete the job.

There was no way this modified handle was going to fail! Even the normal rotation of the lathe mounted chuck holding the raw pen body would give a clockwise movement to encourage positive locking of both new threads.

The remainder of the lengthy task was completed with no further hiccup and I gained by having two duff tools replaced at little expense by far superior models. I can recommend it!



**The completed mill with new metal handle**

# Spindles and Finials

by David Grainger

Making spindles can be quite challenging because they invariably need to be made in multiples. Turners who regularly turn out bowls and the like must wonder what the tailstock is really for. Whoever, (except for Reg with his one legged blanco stand) heard of a one legged table, or just one stair spindle? There are umpteen spindles in your kitchen gallery rail, all the same, or very nearly all the same. Even candlesticks come in pairs.

I recently accepted an order for a number of small spindles and finials from a company in London. The spindles were to be 13" long from 1" diameter material and the finials 6" by 1½" diameter. The timber I chose was beech, simply because I had quite a large amount at the time, even though it was still in the log, but quite dry.

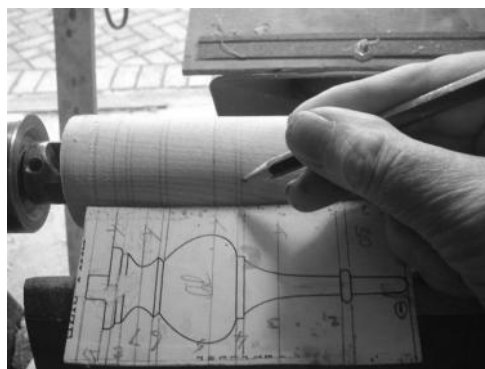


Roughly turned blanks ready for the microwave

The first task was to chainsaw the logs into slabs of an oversize thickness for the whole quantity of finials. These were stacked to allow for free air movement in a well ventilated section of the workshop for a few weeks. Whilst stacked in this way I was able to keep an eye on them and watch for signs of distortion and splitting. They were then band sawn into squares and then turned into oversize cylinders.

My moisture meter registered 18% but just to make sure. I microwaved them on defrost in batches of 10. I was quite happy not to go below 16% moisture content, and was satisfied that there would be no small creatures living in the wood after the microwave treatment.

When turning in multiples it is important to ensure that all the blanks are consistent in size before attempting to form the required shape. So the next stage was to turn each of the blanks to a shavings thickness over the finished maximum diameter. These would be reduced again during the final clean-up.



Transferring points from template to blank

## *Association of Woodturners of Great Britain* ***Young Turners Training Weekend***

The Association of Woodturners of Great Britain is holding a training weekend on the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> August 2006

The weekend is being organized for the training of young people from the age of fourteen to eighteen

The event is to be held at Grateley in Hampshire and is aimed at those who have had some experience of woodturning. The weekend will give instruction in safe turning techniques, design and creativity using texture and colouring.

The tutors for the weekend will be  
Stuart Mortimer, Gary Rance, Reg Hawthorne, Tony Witham and Ron Caddy.

The cost for the course will be £10 for the weekend and includes all materials, meals and overnight marquee accommodation. A list of local caravan and guesthouse accommodation for parents wishing to stay in the area for the weekend can be made available.

Application forms are available from Tony Witham either by e-mail [tony@awitham.freemove.co.uk](mailto:tony@awitham.freemove.co.uk) or Telephone 01255 671697, Please apply before the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006

The drawings which were provided, showing the shapes of the spindles were copied and pasted on card. The relevant high and low diameters were drawn to the cards outer edge, thus creating templates for the whole project. These points were then transferred to the wooden blanks.

Callipers were set according to the diameters corresponding to the templates. When I had run out of callipers a simple card gauge was made. I keep a number of different callipers in the workshop and it is a good idea to mark each with a spot of paint for easy identification, particularly when set to similar sizes.



**Set-up callipers and card guage**



**The three main tools used for this work, the Jones Beading Tool is in the centre**

The spindles were finally turned using just three tools. A narrow parting tool and the maid of all work for small spindles being a beading and parting tool ground as a skew chisel first shown to me by Ray Jones. This is a delightful tool to use. Also, just on occasions, I used a round nose spindle gouge.

The spindles were finally sanded with 240 and then 320 grit abrasive ensuring that the fillets were sharp and not rounded over.



**Part turned spindle with template**

## For Sale

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Single phase motor, Spare set of knives, Seldom used

Mike also has a selection of woodturning hand tools for sale. If you would like a list please send him a pre-paid envelope or e-mail him for a copy. His address is on page three

# Our native trees - Beech

by Guy Ravine

## Beech - *Fagus Sylvatica*



**France** - Hêtre blanc. **Germany** – Buche. **Italy** – Faggio.  
**Spain** – Haya. **Dutch** – Beuk.  
**Poland** - Buk zwyczajny.

European Beech is part of a large family of about a thousand species, mostly trees, which grow all over the non-tropical parts of the world. It is one of our most attractive trees with its thick tall smooth trunk, and its beautiful delicate spring foliage. The Autumn foliage is beautiful too, and the brown leaves often stay on the tree well into winter. This feature is particularly apparent on trimmed Beech hedging, making it an attractive and more easily managed hedge than most evergreens.

Beech can, and often does, grow up to 30m (100 ft) tall and frequently develops a massive trunk with a girth that can grow up to 8ft. The root system can be vast; but this is deceptive as it is relatively shallow, making the tree vulnerable to strong winds. Beech blows over all too easily. This root system is often visible on hillsides. The longest-lived Beech trees are usually hollow, they are much less likely to blow over.

Beech is not a long lived tree, anything over 250 years is unusual.

'*Fagus*' comes from the Latin word for 'eating', Beech seeds (Beechmast) are edible, as indeed are the young leaves. (Try them! But only the early young leaves, they get a bit too chewy later on in the year!). 'Sylvatica' is the latin for 'from the woods'.

Beech' is an Anglo-Saxon derivation and means "Book" in many North-west European languages, 'bok' in Swedish, 'buche' in German, 'beuk' in Dutch, 'boece' in old English. Beech wood was cut into thin slices, which were written on, and the word seems to have come into the language from this usage. The Romans used wood like this too, and made frames for their wax writing tablets.

European Beech is a common tree of the woodlands and forests of central Europe and can survive up to heights of 5000 ft in mountainous country. It grows throughout Europe from Sweden to the Balkans, often dominating woodland. The Beech cannot cope with waterlogged soils and it prefers dry light soils. It also does well in heavier, stiffer loams, as long as the subsoil is not too wet. However, Beech struggles in drought conditions, and the changing climactic conditions in Britain constitute a threat to the Beech woods of Southern England.

In Britain Beech occurs naturally in the Cotswolds, the Chilterns and the Sussex Downs, where it thrives in the chalky sub- soil. It is widely planted elsewhere.

The winter buds, on fine zigzag shoots, are spindle shaped and sharply pointed. The untoothed pointed oval leaves have 5-9 parallel veins. They emerge a delicate pale green and gossamer fringed in late May, but soon become dark glossy green as the fringe is cast off.

Little else will grow under the dense shade cast by Beech trees in full leaf. This being a combination of both the shade and the thirsty shallow root system. The lower branches soon die off and Beech trees tend to have tall branch-free boles

Numerous male and female flowers appear with the leaves. The hanging bunches of male flowers quickly fall and cover the ground with pale brown petals that soon blow away. Female ones stay on the tree until autumn and develop into spiky woody husks each containing a pair of triangular glossy-brown nuts. Often in Britain the seed husk will develop, but there will be no seed inside.

Like the rest of the tree, the bark is quite elegant. It is not very thick and is light-grey to olive-grey in colour. In some older trees it can appear to be a different colour because of lichens and green algae growing on it. It is one of few trees, whose bark stays smooth and unwrinkled, even in old trees. It is also easy to carve on and many trees bear long forgotten initials and messages.

Many variants of European Beech have been found or cultivated and there are notable Beech species from other continents.

### ***Fagus sylvatica* var. *Purpurea* - Copper Beech**

Common in parks and gardens the Copper Beech originated from Beeches found in the 18th century in



Hanleiter Forest, near Sondershausen, Germany. The leaves contain purple colouring matter in the cell-sap of their outer layers.

***Fagus sylvatica* var. *Pendula* - Weeping Beech**

Often seen in parks and gardens. This is a graceful and attractive ornamental cultivar.

***Fagus sylvatica* var. *heterophylla* - Fern-leaf or Cut-leaf Beech**

This name covers several varieties of narrow leaved Beech with varying patterns of lobes around the edges of the leaves.

***Fagus sylvatica* var. *Dawyck* (*Fastigiata*) - Dawyck Beech**

Tall cone-shaped tree (rather like Lombardy Poplar). Found in formal gardens and avenues and planted along roads.

***Fagus grandifolia* - American Beech**

Native American tree which grows in the Eastern part of the USA. Larger leaves than *Fagus sylvatica*. The wood is very similar to European Beech.

***Fagus orientalis* - Oriental Beech**

From Western Asia and South East Europe. Leaves are slightly larger than European Beech.

'Southern Beeches' are closely related to our Beech, and come from the genus '*Nothofagus*', some of these are evergreens, but the three named below are all deciduous and are the most likely to be seen planted in Britain.

***Nothofagus obliqua* - Roble Beech**

Native to Chile. A vigorous fast growing tree.

***Nothofagus procera* - Raoul Beech**

Also native to Chile and even faster growing than the Roble.

***Nothofagus antarctica* - Antarctic Beech**

Smaller and not as vigorous as the previous two. The dense forests which cover the shore of the Straits of Magellan and the mountain-slopes of Tierra del Fuego consist largely of two Beeches one evergreen, (*Nothofagus betuloides*), and one with deciduous leaves, *N. antarctica*.

There are a number of *Nothofagus* species from New Zealand and Australia.

**Notable, Ancient and Champion Trees.**

The tallest Beech in Britain is at Yester House, East Lothian, a towering 43m, but a comparatively slim specimen at 2.7m (8ft) girth when compared with a monstrous specimen at Knole park in Kent which is nearly 10m (33ft) in girth and is also the tallest English Beech at 32m (107ft). Other notable trees in England are at Bridge Park and Broadstone Warren in East Sussex, and in Savernake forest in Wiltshire. There are trees with huge girths at Stradbally Hall and Glenville Park in Ireland.

In the past, Beech trees were pollarded - their branches cut off at about 4m above ground to provide wood and forage which prolongs their life. The ancient pollards at Burnham Beeches (near Heathrow) or Epping Forest are a classic example.

There is the famous "Autograph Tree", a Copper Beech, at Coole Park, County Galway, once home of Lady Gregory, famous as the headquarters of the Irish

Revival. Summer home of W. B. Yeats for nearly 20 years, it was the subject of many of his poems. Guests who carved their names on the tree included G. B. Shaw, J. M. Synge, W. B. Yeats. The house was pulled down in 1941.

At Knap Hill near Woking there is a spectacular, large, twin stemmed weeping Beech planted as one of 5 in the 1820's. The other four grew normally, but this one developed a bizarre growth pattern with branches growing at all angles.

**Folklore and Tall Tales.**

Throughout Europe Beech is associated with learning, it's "bookish" connections have been mentioned above. However there is not a great deal of Beech related folklore in Britain, but there is the tale of St. Leonard. He was a hermit living in a Beechwood glade in Hampshire. The saint loved the trees, but during the day he could not sit under their shady branches because of the vipers, which swarmed about the roots, and at night he couldn't sleep because of the racket made by nightingales. So he prayed that both the serpents and the birds might be taken away, they duly were, and from that day forth no viper has stung and no nightingale has sung in the Hampshire forests. I'd give him five out of ten for that, and probably suggest he see a psychiatrist.

Likewise a man from the Pyrenees, who in a legend got turned into a bear because he spent too much time black-smithing. For some reason he is told he is not allowed to climb Beech trees. He therefore spends his life trying to knock them down!

You can stuff a mattress with Beech leaves and it's better than straw. Evelyn says, "being gathered about the fall, and somewhat before they are much frostbitten, they afford the best and easiest mattresses in the world to lay under our quilts instead of straw; because besides their tenderness and loose lying together, they continue sweet for seven or eight years, long before which time, straw becomes musty and hard." Worth remembering next time you need a new mattress!

A speculator in the reign of George the First, proposed a scheme for paying off the national debt with the oil



**Spalted Beech bowl**

of beech nuts. Wonder if the Chancellor has considered that one?

Beech trees formed a part of the sacred grove of Dodona in Ancient Greece. The branches of the trees would whisper prophecies to the oracle there. It was from this grove that the timber for the talking figurehead of Jason's Argo was cut.

The sacred grove of Upsala in Sweden was made up of great Beech trees. It was here that the Vikings would sacrifice all sorts of animals and indeed humans.

There is a story that Gutenberg, the inventor of printing, was amusing himself by carving out letters from the bark of a Beech tree. Wrapping them up when still damp in paper, he was surprised to find the impression of them on the paper when he reached home. This gave him his big idea. Carving others he found that they gave clear impressions, and so the art of printing was born.

In the "Golden Bough" Frazer tells us: "... even in the time of Pliny a noble Roman used thus to treat a beautiful Beech tree in the sacred grove of Diana on the Alban hills. He embraced it, kissed it, he lay under its shadow, he poured wine on its trunk. Apparently he took the tree for the goddess." Hmmm!

A second reference shows that we should not imagine that ancient Italy in Roman times was all Oak forest. Theophrastus has left us a description of the woods of Latium as they were in the fourth century before Christ. He says: "The land of the Latins is all moist. The plains produce laurels, myrtles and wonderful Beeches; for they fell trees of such a size that a single stem suffices for the keel of a Tyrrhenian ship."

The third reference concerns the use of a tall, slim Beech-tree as the centre for the bonfire on the first Sunday in Lent, in the Eifel mountains. Such fires were at one time common practice throughout Europe and are part of the early Spring Festival of "The stirring of the seed", better known these days as Imbolc, Candlemas and related to Valentine's Day. The fire symbolised the change from the 'death' of winter to the new life of spring. The seed was felt to be 'stirring', and the cracking of the seed (germination) was encouraged with festivities and carnivals, also in the hope of increasing fertility.

### **Beech Mast**

Beech-mast, the fruit of the Beech-tree, was formerly known in England as "buck;" and the county of Buckingham is apparently named from its fame as Beech-growing country. Buckwheat (Bucheweizen) derives its name from the similarity of its angular seeds to Beech-mast. Beech-mast has been used as food during hard times; and in autumn it provides an important supply of food to park-deer and other game, and is a valuable source of food for pigs, which were turned out into beech-woods in order to forage for the fallen mast. In France it is used for feeding pheasants and domestic poultry. Well-ripened Beech-mast yields from 17% to 20% of non-drying oil, formerly used as lamp-oil, and used in parts of France and other European countries as a cooking oil, and as a substitute for butter in Silesia. In World War 2 it was collected in



**Leaves and fruit of the Beech**

this country, even more so in Germany and occupied Europe for use as cooking oil. It takes a long time to collect enough mast for a decent snack, but lightly toasted and salted, Beech-mast is delicious.

### **Uses.**

British Beech varies in colour from cream to brown. Healthy timber is often pinkish-brown with small darker flecks. A lot of European Beech is steamed, giving it a more consistent pinkish colour. Some specimens are quite highly coloured and streaky. Paler wood has a higher value for kitchenware and furniture, and "whiter" Beech tends to be more available from Germany than from Britain. There is of course Spalted Beech but this is dealt with elsewhere in this article.

Beech usually has no strong odour and is excellent for food use. Wooden spoons, chopping boards, spatulas, ice-cream and take-away chip forks are routinely made from it and can be found in any large store or supermarket. These items also wash well, which is in contrast with the lack of durability shown by beech when used outside. It rots very quickly, and unless it is kept permanently wet, (it was used for ship- building) or pumped full of preservative it will quickly deteriorate. Another problem with Beech is that it is very susceptible to woodworm. When treated with preservatives it has been used for railway sleepers. I was once given a piece of exotic wood by a farming friend, who had found pieces of a dark and dense wood he didn't recognise. It was only when I was nearly choking on the fumes that I realised that it was beech treated with creosote!

Beech is not strong or durable enough for construction work, internal or external, but it is an excellent wood for chair making. Large plantations were maintained in the Chilterns and the wood used wet on pole lathes by Bodgers for all parts of Windsor chairs except the seats, which were traditionally made of Elm. When split with a froe or wedges, wet turned Beech rarely warps or splits and is excellent for chair components. When drying it does tend to go oval, but a skilled chair maker can use this to advantage by using its dictable



**Spalted Beech vase**

drying characteristics to construct a chair strongly and without glue. Beech also responds well to steaming and so was suitable for the bow backs of Windsor chairs.

Other traditional uses include toys, shoe-heels, rolling pins, platters, clothes pegs and so on. It was also used for carpenters planes, stonemasons mallets, granary shovels and many articles in turnery. Elsewhere in Europe it was used for parquet-flooring and in France it was made into 'sabots', wooden shoes that kept the damp out better than any other wood. Beech when dry, and not rotten, is one of the best firewoods, burning fiercely and long.

#### **Spalted Beech.**

This is the form of Beech best loved by Woodturners making decorative items. Beech starts to rot quite quickly after felling, and a by-product of this is the formation of irregular bands/seams of colour in the fallen wood as the fungi take hold. Usually the colours that predominate are black and blue, but there are sometimes shades of orange and green. The patterns formed by these lines of colour are usually asymmetric and can be very beautiful. If clean white Beech is required the log should be converted quickly and the wood kept dry and covered and ventilated. If this is not done and especially if the whole log is left lying, then the wood will start to spalt. I understand that

"spalting" is a term coined in the USA, which is rather more complimentary to this process than the traditional English terms. These are "dozy" and "punky" which give a good impression of how timber merchants viewed this wood. I have seen fresh cut Beech, which is already spalted, the tree having started to rot while living. Sometimes this wood is useable, sometimes too spongy.

The cutting of spalted Beech is critical. If you cut too early, the wood will just look a bit cloudy, or dirty, and will not be very attractive. If you cut too late, the wood may look spectacular, but be too soft to work, (although there are ways of stabilising such wood with detergent solution, or cyanoacrylate glue that can work). Working such wood can be an unpleasant business as it is often very soft and dusty. Since the dust may well contain fungal spores it would be a good idea to protect yourself from it as much as possible. Sometimes the wood is good natured and responds well to both cutting and scraping tools. More often it is a struggle to get any sort of consistent surface and there is much recourse to scrapers and good old 80 grit. But the end justifies the means!

#### **Working Characteristics.**

Straight grained un-spalted Beech is usually a pleasure to work, even if it does not have much visual interest. It is one of the woods best suited to skew chisel work, and responds just as well to gouges and scrapers. The surface of spindles can sometimes feel a bit "woolly", so I will try and reverse sand them if possible. Cross grained or knotty wood is best avoided for furniture or joinery related work, and can be hard going – the "hard bits" in Beech can be very hard!

Unless you can find some unusually coloured or grained Beech, most attempts at ornamental work will be a disappointment. It is best suited to workaday items, such as kitchenware. Bowls and platters will be functional, but not stunning to look at.

Beech is often stained but if hand stained the results tend to be patchy, the differing take-up of the stain on end and side grain being all too obvious. Sprayed finishes work much better. Beech does take paint well.



**Spalted Beech bowl**

# ***WANTED***

The editor of this illustrious publication is looking for articles to help fill the pages. These can be informative, educational, humorous or provocative. We currently pay the princely sum of £50 per printed page for all suitable material. Don't worry if you didn't obtain O'level English, we have a ghost, affectionately known as "CD" who will sort all that out for you.

Are there any amongst you who is a dab hand at drawing? It would be good if we could have the occasional cartoon to bring a little something extra to the format.

Maybe there is someone out there who could devise a crossword from time to time.

If you have an idea that you think would enhance these pages please get in touch with the editor, his contact details are to be found on page three.

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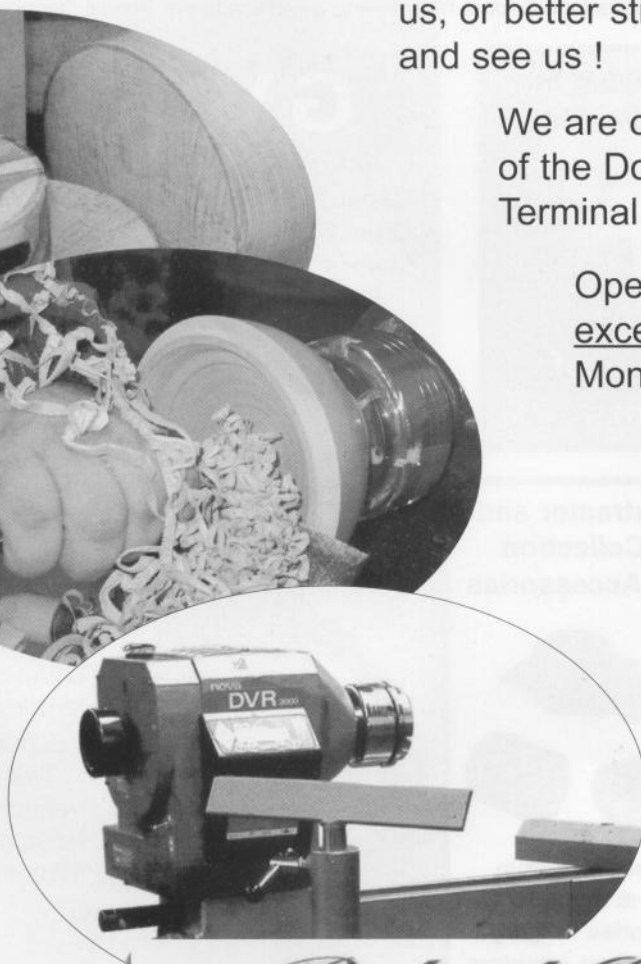
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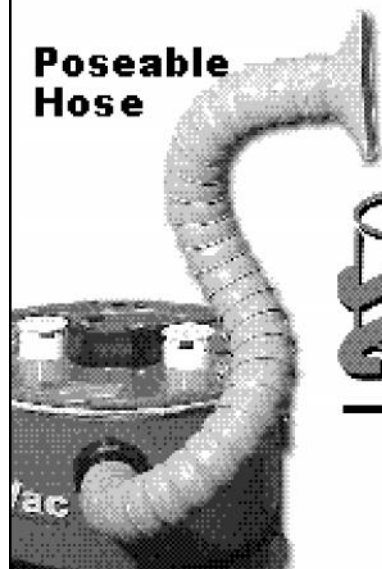
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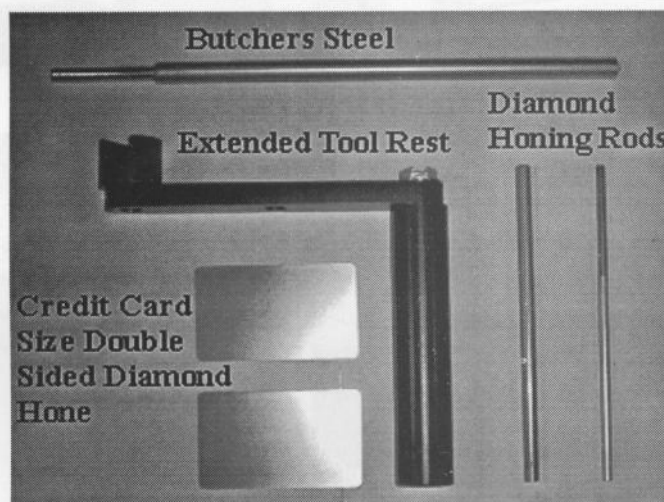
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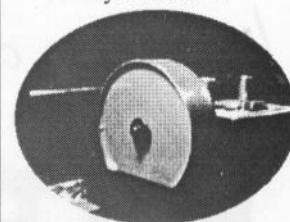
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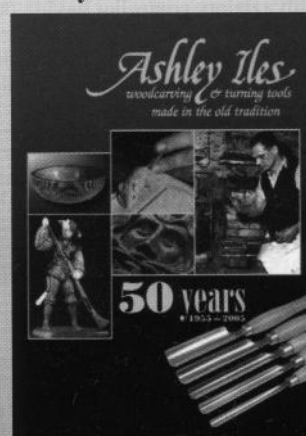
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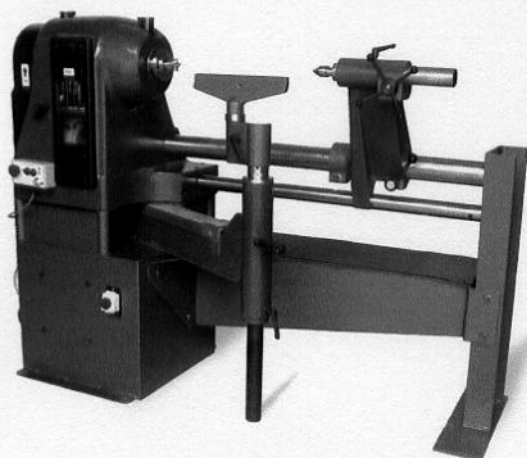
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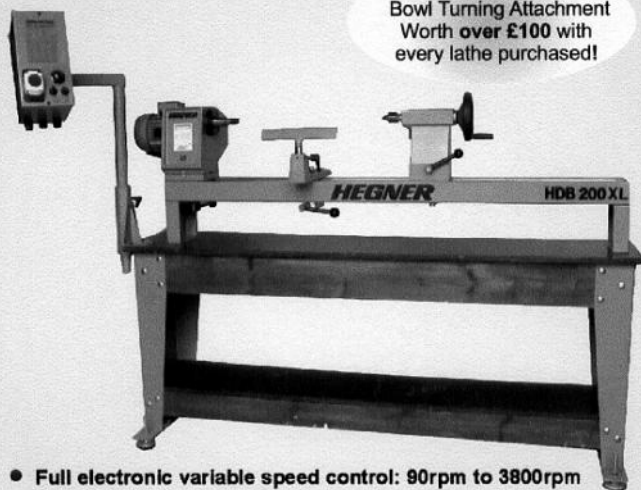
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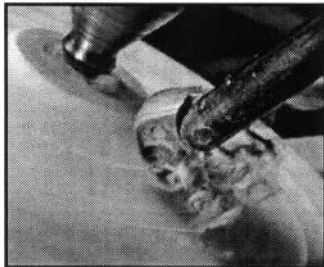
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