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AWGorBlimey!

It's Newsletter No. 008 (April '89)

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES.

A very warm welcome to our new members. Another 90 since our last Newsletter, making a grand total now of 670.

The Chapter scene is very active. Kent has got its act together with a membership of 38. Well done David, Bill, John and Rose, and British Gates of course, who put a brochure in each one of their recent mail shots. Mike Cripps has got Middlesex all legitimate now, with a proper Committee, instead of doing it all himself.

Mike however, has launched an ambitious event for the Middlesex, London, Oxfordshire, Herts, Bucks and Berks. members of the Association. This is a one day event with Chris Stott and Don White as the demonstrators and a slide presentation of the 1985 Arrowmont Exhibition. Mike's idea is to bring these groups together and to generate the enthusiasm in the counties which have yet to form their own Chapters, showing them what they can do with a little imagination and a lot of hard work.

Next year your National Committee hopes to see more of these kind of events being staged with 2 or 3 of these countries leading turners demonstrating and imparting their hard won skills to you all. We will be looking to local Chapter organisers in the regions to help bring these about, with a good deal of support from the National body. We would like to see these taking place particularly in the North and East, but in no way do we preclude the Midlands, South or West, although they have already organised active demos/seminars.

Del. Stubbs, one of our U.S.A. demonstrators at the '89 Seminar has indicated that he is willing to visit Chapters and do demo/lectures while he is over here this year, and requests have already been received for his services from one or two of our go-ahead Chapters. Mike Cripps will be sending all organisers Del's fees and other requirements soon, but if you can't wait, get in touch with Mike at 41, The Greenway, ICKENHAM, Middlesex, UB10 8LS.

The '89 Seminar is now almost fully booked, but contact Margaret Lester, 5, Bridport Rd., BEAMINSTER, Dorset, DT8 3LU, if you want to try for a place at this late stage.

There are a couple of changes in the event. Our photographer is now Andrew Watson, who comes highly recommended, and Kurt Johansson will also be in attendance on the Luna stand. He will be using hook and ring tools.

All demonstrators will have dust extractors and helmets provided as we emphasise health safety.

Those of you who are new to the A.W.G.B. may not be aware that the plans to build a copy of the lathe which I had built for Ed. to demonstrate on in 1987, and subsequently modified for my own use, are available. An excellent lathe if you want to turn really large face plate work. A cheque for £10, made out to the A.W.G.B. should be sent to me. All profit goes to the Association.

The Wembley Practical Woodworking Show was mentioned in the last Newsletter, stating what a success it had been for the Association. However, there was a sad side to the event. One of our members, Francis Read, who had been asked to exhibit, died just prior to the show, but his widow and son asked that we should show his work, as he had been so delighted to have been asked.

On the Saturday of the show, the unforgivable happened. A piece of his work was stolen. This left us all with a sick feeling in the pit of the stomach. On the Sunday I told Bert Marsh of this and the next week-end a small rosewood dish came, asking that I send it to Mrs Read, in Bert's words, "not as a replacement but as a 'thank you' for allowing Mr. Read's work to be shown".

This reflects the sort of fellow Bert is, and demonstrates the caring side of the Association.

Ray Key. Honorary Chairman.

EDITORS ROSTRUM.

I have chosen to record the agenda of a recent 'formation' meeting which was convened to establish a local Chapter. Whilst not 'news' in the accepted sense of the word, it might inspire some other groups to get themselves going.

The agenda covered the election of a Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and Committee, to agree on a subscription to cover initial costs, a programme for future meetings, discussion of public exhibitions and demonstrations, future membership recruitment to A.W.G.B., role within the National Association, any other business and the date of the next meeting.

Just two or three people could do this in an area, recruitment being one of the first priorities. Come on folks, get it going.

We are going through a transitional period with regards to the newsletter. When I started editing it in '87, we had a manageable number of editions to get out. The task has got increasingly difficult with each edition, due to the greater membership. Happily, one of our members Mac. Kemp, is 'in the business' and has volunteered to arrange printing, stapeling, folding and stuffing all of the newsletters into all of the envelopes, then sticking all of the stamps and labels on. God Bless you Mac! You will surely go to Heaven, but not for a long time yet!!

And now, a plea! As already (over)stated, I am most anxious to get news from around the country on who is doing - or has done - what, and where. I suspect a lot of potential contributors feel that they couldn't write enough to make it interesting, whilst others have trouble in knowing when to stop. (The editor of the magazine which I write for still uses the scissors on occasion, on my offerings, and I've been submitting stuff to him for a few years now).

Could contributors restrict themselves to no more than 300 words please? This will make their task less daunting and bring my 'in' file back to more manageable proportions.

Finally, I can report the latest in the on-going Mike Cripps saga. He has survived an assassination attempt! 'Cripps, the Continental Crypt Creeping Crafter Crunched!' Ask him about it at Loughborough!

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS.

The Irish Woodturners Guild '89 Seminar is to be on 15th. - 17th. September. The venue is Sligo and further details can be had from the Secretary, Danny McGeever, Teesan, Drumcliffe, Sligo, Ireland. Del. Stubbs, Liam O'Neill, Niall Fitzduff and Willie Stedmond are the main demonstrators. Last year's event was recorded recently by our own Mick O'Donnell, in Practical Woodworking, and this is along the same lines, so it should be worth the trip. You might even take the fishing rods with you and make a week of it?

LOCAL CHAPTERS.

The Avon chapter is now underway, with monthly meetings. The last one was at 'The Green Dragon,' which is probably a Chinese Restaurant. Communal timber purchase, friendly work criticism, and a monthly 'theme' are ideas which have been put into action, the most recent theme being something made from a piece of 'found' wood.

Devon has been at it again, with yet more well attended meetings. Recent attractions have been Toby Kaye with a demonstration of finishes on the lathe. He convinced the delegates of the effectiveness of cloth backed, resin bonded, resin coated, aluminium oxide abrasive, hand and power sanding through the normal range of grit sizes. (Whatever happened to the dried skin of a dog fish? ed.) Bulk buying was arranged for abrasives, wax emulsion end-grain sealant and chisels (What about gouges? ed). Exchange or sale of turning blanks will be arranged as a summer evening car boot event, which might lead to bulk buying of timber. Other meetings have had the seasoning and drying of timber as themes, using air, kiln and micro-wave, 'but get the permission of 'er indoors first'. Their next meeting is on Wed. 10th May, 7 p.m. for 7.30., at Otterton Mill.

Dorset member John Sheerman wrote to me a few weeks ago, saying that he was somewhat reluctant to get a local chapter going but, well, someone had to do it. John, I feel that those sentiments are representative of many of our members in 'none chapter' areas, and with any luck your efforts in Dorset might lead to someone else taking the bull by the horns.

John's meeting has now taken place, the result being that - thanks to Cecil Colyer, who seems to know many hidden turners, - 13 people attended, only five of whom were A.W.G.B. members. A secretary/organiser was appointed, an agreement was made to have a more structured meeting in the future, brief talks by those present were given on their products, a subscription to cover local chapter costs was agreed on, as was the general dislike of the term 'chapter' and the threat to come up with an alternative word, and the date of the next meeting, which will be at Geoff Manley's shop and workshop on Saturday 24th. June, at 3.00 p.m., when Geoff will be talking about chucking and tool sharpening.

John also told me of those present, 'one person is pioneering an entirely new concept in turning with laminations and the quality amazed us all. I cannot say any more on that as it is still in the experimental stage and I would not wish to be the source of industrial espionage'.

It was decided that no fixed venue should be arranged for each meeting, but that they should be on a roving basis. A very interesting idea came from the meeting, which was that Dorset and another chapter get together, (a kind of twinning arrangement? ed) and that a joint exhibition, or alternatively an exchange exhibition, be arranged between the two of them.

Anyone interested in making contact with this new chapter, or in attending the Geoff Manley talk, should write to John Sheerman, 15, West Street, Chickerell, Weymouth, Dorset, DT3 4DY.

The newly formed Kent Chapter has organised itself, with David Crawford in the chair, John Hunnex as secretary and Eileen Dawes, a members wife, as treasurer.

(Eileen, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. ed.) A local membership fund of £10 per head was agreed, which will cover the cost of postage, venue renting, photocopying, snacks, etc. If special events were arranged, other ways of funding them would be arranged. David and his wife Diana were very generous with their warm hospitality at this most successful day.

The grape vine tells me that following his recent successful show at Strood Library, John Hunnex went down with a virus. As a result, things must be a bit quieter in Kent, but get back to your lathe soon John, it can't be the same without you!

The Middlesex chapter held another meeting in January and first came a Del Stubbs video on bowl turning, which included his use of a de-clutching arrangement, thus avoiding the sudden surge in acceleration which most of us suffer.

There followed a look at the members work, including two spinning wheels. One from Dennis Carey, who gave me information on the meeting, and the other one from Noel Mears, which was later to be seen on the A.W.G.B. Stand at Wembley.

After the Tea Interval, well it was in a cricket pavilion, Doctor Carol Morris gave a lecture on the history of the pole lathe, her interest first being aroused by the discovery of wood cores which were found on archeological digs.

With no more evidence than the cores to go on, she discovered how the timber was held, driven and turned, and how the tools were supported. She also deduced that occasionally bowls were turned in strings.

The programmed meeting was rounded off by Brian Clifford's arm chair tour of the 1987 International Woodturning Seminar, with the aid of slides and comments from Brian, Ray Key and a dozen or so others who had attended Loughborough '87.

As a bonus came the news that Valerie Cresswell and her Son-in-Law had got permission to mount a display of the chapters work in a local Building Society window.

Thank you Dennis, for going to the trouble of writing, and it wasn't professional jealousy which made me edit your enviable prose, it was lack of space!

The recently formed West Midlands Chapter held an event at Spock Morgans new Emporium and Doug Vaugh was there:-

'Our thanks must go to Spock for hosting the event and to Alan Washer, of Multistar, for demonstrating their chucking system and new lathe to the 16 members who 'turned' up. Try as he might Alan couldn't stop the 2 hp motor and torque converter combination, even on a big bowl. (and neither could I, although I was working left handed, ed.)

The pro's and con's of the ring tool were discussed and put into practice. With the variable speed Multistar lathe set at low revs, the tool was found to give a good finish on end grain, although a steady hand was required to control it.

'The tea flowed profusely throughout the event, although whatever happened to the sausage rolls and cake is anyone's guess'!

Worcestershire held another meeting recently, with the main 'attraction' the showing of a video, shot by one of the members, - don't give up your day job Phil - and is of your Newsletter Editor turning a translucent goblet. No, it's NOT for general release, and I've got the only copy. I hope! We do plan to make other similar videos, on specific themes, but we have a steep learning curve ahead of us. Our next meeting is to be at 7 p.m. for 7.30, Thursday 19th. May, at my Avoncroft workshop. Theme for the evening, something made from 'found' wood. Yes, I know we 'found' the theme from another chapter, but it is a good one, and imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. If anyone would like

to bring a piece of un-turned 'found' with them, we might see what could be made from it there and then. (Me and my mouth. ed) Any none Worcester members in the area who would like to attend and who don't know where the Museum is, please let me have a S.A.E., for a map.

BUSINESS SPONSORS NEWS.

Gerry Baker of Luna Tools and Machinery Ltd., tell me that they will be exhibiting and demonstrating their V-Matic and Avant lathes on their trade stand at the '89 Seminar, and Kurt Johansson will be using the ring and hook tools during the event.

L.R.E. are awaiting the arrival of the first batch of General lathes into this country and have sent me information sheets on them. Mouth watering they look too. Those of you who are going to Loughborough will see them there.

SEMINAR REPORTS.

Lee Cooper, of L.R.E. sent me a report of the '88 A.A.W. Philadelphia Seminar, the edited highlights of which are recorded here:-

'The seminar was held in the luxurious surroundings of the Center City Holiday Inn, -I suspect the cleaning staff are still trying to get the shavings out of the carpet-, and was attended by 250 members, this being the limit set by the organising committee.

'Things got underway on the first morning despite the non arrival of the lathes, - somewhat of a disadvantage for a woodturning seminar - (Loughborough lathe suppliers please note. ed.), thought they finally arrived later in the morning, and just in time. Mark Lindquist had entertained the delegates with his slide show of his life and work since his first interest in woodturning at the age of 12.

'The main demonstrators were our own Ray Key, turning boxes, bowls and platters, and the home team of Del Stubbs, - turning goblets with the aid of back lighting in a darkened room, - Dale Nish, who's name is well known for fine turning and who, with Del. is one of our Loughborough '89 overseas demonstrators, and Bob Stocksdale, who's career stretches way back to between the wars and who is now into his 7th. decade and still turning out some very fine work. This helps to confirm the old adage, 'Woodturners don't die, their bowls just get smaller.' (Lee said that, not me! ed.)

'There were also demonstrations of special interest such as Mike Mode with what can only be described as a spectacular method of turning by strobe light, which he has been developing over the last 12 months or so. His speciality is turning natural topped boxes, and as the work piece appears to be stationary the finished shape can be seen in detail whilst still being turned. The temptation to reach in and touch can only be curbed by the thought of spending a few hours at the nearest casualty dept., wondering if both sets still add up to ten. OUCH!!

'Gerry Glaser on tool steels, Dennis Stewart on concentric bowls and miniaturist Bonnie Kilen on 'Alice through the microscope' were yet more of the special interest demonstrations.

'The 'Instant Gallery' which showed members and demonstrators work was without exception of a very high standard. On the last day an auction of goblets, bowls, boxes etc., which had been donated by members, raised about \$7500 for the Association, a David Ellsworth piece fetching over \$900 and a Ray Key bowl selling for over \$200'.

Thanks for an excellent report Lee and I'm only sorry that a lack of space made me edit some of it.

Jack Hill attended last years Mike Scott day at Avoncroft and somehow found time to write a report of the event. Once more, edited highlights follow:-

".. Mike, first an accountant then an artist by training but a woodturner by inclination spent the whole day working at his machine, demonstrating and talking about his work. He likes to exploit the organic and sculptural qualities in each piece of work he produces, relying on simple forms to achieve his aims. He further enhances many of these shapes by using various techniques such as fuming and burning and creating textural effects by deep scoring and carving. He adds rope, leather, metal straps and nails to achieve appropriate effects.

"Mike emphasised that form was all important in the production of a satisfying turned object and beginning with a discussion of a variety of drawn shapes, he then demonstrated his lathe techniques and talked us through his thinking as he sought out the form which he wanted from the piece being turned. When he produced his propane torch (and Reg. dashed off to check his fire insurance,) a few eyebrows were raised, but later when he started work with his chainsaw, more than eyebrows were raised by those clever enough to have got front row seats! They need not have moved, however, because Mike, clad in helmet, visor and big gloves, was quite safe.

"All in all it was a most entertaining and educational day. Mike produced several items in the course of demonstrating his different techniques and when he had finished, those of us who stayed had the benefit of a short demo on spindle turning from Reg, who also made the tea. (It was coffee in fact, but I suspect that anything which filters its way through Jacks face furniture tastes like tea! ed.) Thanks Reg and thanks Mike for an interesting day; well worth the journey from Sussex."

And thanks Jack, for finding the time to write such a detailed report despite the upheaval of moving from Lancashire to Sussex. Best of luck in your new venture!

Dennis French has also done a day at Avoncroft, and Phil Brownlees, who makes good coffee and occasionally signs cheques, 'volunteered' to put pencil to paper.

"Twenty delegates spent a day with Dennis French at the lived in workshop of Reg. Sherwin at Avoncroft Museum. After a slight delay whilst a suitable platform was sorted out to compensate for the extra height given to Reg's graduate, via two pieces of scrap iron, (I'll get you for that, Brownlees, ed), Dennis proceeded to display the versatility of the four jaw self centering chuck, explaining in some detail the different jaws and fitments which can be made to fit them.

'On to turning. A bud vase, sugar bowl, key ring, cord pull and scoop, all turned without fuss or hurry. By this time one of the most noticeable features of Dennis's turning became apparant. The use of a spindle gouge for all types of turning, bowl and spindle. As Dennis pointed out, they are a bit cheaper and when you use one every six weeks it all adds up.

After an excellent lunch, which was served in the museum cafeteria, it was back to the shavings, with cruet set, platter, roughing out a bowl blank and turning a table lamp all completed.

The safe wiring of a table lamp was covered, and all too soon the day was at an end.

I hope I can speak for all the delegates in thanking Dennis for his flawless balancing act and unflapability in using an unknown lathe, but most of all, for so willingly parting with what must be such hard won knowledge.

Thanks Dennis. Phil Brownlees.

P.S., When is the next one Reg? (Plans are afoot, watch this space, ed.) (It ought also to go on record that just two days before this event, Dennis suffered damage to a finger and was working with some dozen or so stitches in it. That is professionalism! ed.)

Dennis Carey, one of our Middlesex chapter members has been most prolific, with

a very good value report on the Wembley Show, which he attended in the role of steward, and did sterling service throughout.

Dennis reported that 'When the show opened on Thursday morning, none of us knew what to expect. Within the hour we knew! The world and his wife seemed to be beating a path to our door. It was, beyond doubt, consistently the most crowded stand in the show.

'Questions on specific techniques, what the Association was about, how did the turner make that? All of these were asked, and answered.

'One man from Kent drives his lathe from a lawn mower engine, as he hasn't got electricity. Another wanted to know how to dry 'a bit' of timber, and when pressed, admitted that he owned 16 acres of standing timber, and a defunct orchard.

'Many conversations took place during this hectic four day period. Typical was a three sider, which went "Well, this man's got these boules, (tree trunks) and he only wants £50 each for them!" - "That stuff sells for £15 a cube!!! - 'I can get a lorry!!!!'

Dennis's report is full of interesting impressions and memories like these, but the one which stands out for me is 'The warm feeling we soon felt came from the awareness that the A.W.G.B. is not just an inanimate organisation but is about people. Nice people and hundreds of them'.

Thank you Dennis, not only for your report, but most particularly for the splendid job which you and your fellow stewards did during the whole event.

BEADS AND HOLLOWES.

An alternative to the Paraffine wax treatment, (sound kinky!), to stop end splits, would be to use P.V.A. glue, such as 'Resin W' straight from the bottle, no thinning required. (Thanks Mr. Marsh. Anybody want to buy a package of paraffine wax? ed.)

FOR SALE, SWAP, BARTER, BEG, BORROW OR STEAL.

FREE, (or possibly at the cost of a small donation to A.W.G.B. funds), is a lathe of somewhat dubious parentage. I suspect it was originally driven by overhead shaft and flat belt. It has also been a treadle lathe at some time but is at present lacking both treadle and flywheel. It has two headstocks and a tailstock giving something like 8" swing. It also has a four foot long bed, fabricated metal stands, pivots for the treadle, tool rest and banjo assembly, one or two other goodies and a generous amount of rust. It needs a liberal application of elbow grease, a few sheets of abrasive paper and a litre or so of W.D.40. Any member who can give it a good home and some tender loving care can have it. Contact me at Avoncroft.

Bill Carden offers an Arundel Lathe, K600, 36", with 3/4" x 16 TPI spindle, T.O.N.V.R. Switching, mounted on a 'Nigel Voisey' cement weighted bench stand. Two screw chucks, face plates, cup chuck, three assorted length tool rests, bowl turning bench mounted rest, dead centre. £525. Buyer Collects. Contact Bill at 19, Cavour Rd., FAVERSHAM, Kent. (0795) 535397.

HELPLINE.

My request for help in defeating the static problem on my dustmaster visor brought forth a number of responses from some very knowledgeable people, and thanks to all of them. Assorted pieces of the replies are as follows:-

'Remove toe from earth socket and place it in live socket. Static will then be the least of your problems'. Bert. Marsh.

'Simply hold the visor under the tap and both the dust and the static will go. This works best after two or three washings. Also, a sheet of perspex which costs less than £4 from Wilkinsons, the hardware shop, will produce over 50

replacement visors when the lacquer sticks. It cuts easily with scissors.'
Jonathan Dingley-Linton.

'Purchase an anti static gun from any good 'Hi-Fi' shop'. (Hi-Fi? we're still using wax cylinders out here! And that advice came on the back of a reproduction £5. note. My case comes up next week).

'Purchase an anti static spray, or sachets and wipes', from the same 'Hi-Fi' shop, this time with a picture of what I need, just to let the shop man know that such animals exist.

The winning reply must be the one from Roy Cooper, of L.R.E., who sent me a genuine fiver, wrapped round an aerosol can of anti-static foam. The back of the fiver bore the message, 'try this'.

I returned the note with another message. 'The wiper was useless, but I have high hopes of the foam'. Roy, I will buy you your liquid prize at Loughborough.

The other request for help regarding the curing of box seems to have come up with the answer that there is no way of accelerating what is naturally a long and slow process. What about 'putting some down' for your grandchildren Jonathan?

LETTERS.

From Phil Lees, a recently retired optician.

'Do you see what I mean?'

How would you like to be a saggermakers bottom knocker and not be able to see which bottom you were knocking? It sounds funny doesn't it, but it wasn't so funny for the worker whose job depended on his or her seeing ability. We take our vision for granted, until it begins to fade, and then various things can happen. You give up watching T.V., 'because it's all rubbish anyway', you give up reading because 'the print is so bad'. You can't see the slot in the screw because 'they make them so small these days'. The bulbs need changing because 'the light is so bad'. In short, your getting older.

The focussing muscles in your eyes are weaker, your near vision is more difficult and you need glasses for work. You may need single vision lenses, bifocals, trifocals or varifocals. I personally find varifocals the best, and so does a woodturner friend of mine, an all round good sort. (Somebody reads my adverts anyway. ed). Woodturning demands good vision at varying distances, and that is where varifocals excel. Much better than two or three different pairs of glasses.

However, all eyes are different, and all working distances and conditions are different. You may need to see work anywhere between 3" and 24" away, as well as watching the clock. If you recognise yourself in these lines, go to your optician. Tell him what your problem is, what kind of work you do, and at what distance you do it.

If you are lucky he may be a part time turner like me, and he'll probably laugh at your feeble excuses for not coming sooner. And while you are at it, check over your lighting.

And another one from Geoff Heath, who complimented the success of the 'For Sale' feature, as it had success where other, more expensive, methods had failed. Asked how the purchaser had heard of the availability of Geoff's Tyme Cub, he said, 'Well, it's a long story, but I know this chap who plays the bagpipes'. Thanks for your unsolicited testimonial Geoff, and I am still looking forward to meeting you at Loughborough, to continue our discussion on friction drives!

DEADLINE.

The deadline for the next edition is **MONDAY JUNE 13th.**