

Revolutions

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS OF GREAT BRITAIN

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February 2007



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Chairman's notes

When you read this issue of Revolutions, Christmas and the New Year will be but a memory, but I hope that you all had an enjoyable Christmas and I wish you all the best in this New Year.

You may recall that last year in this issue's notes I stated that it would be my last as Chairman, well here I am again saying the same thing, the only difference is that this time I am definitely not standing for re-election, and at this moment in time I have no idea who will fill the position as Chairman. To date we only have two candidates for the other posts that are becoming vacant at the Annual General Meeting. This seems to be the norm, not just for the AWGB but for many other organisations, I would have thought, that with a membership of over three thousand, we could have expected a better showing than we have had up until now.

As technology has improved most of the committee work is done via email, cutting down on the amount of travelling to meetings. On average there are only two meetings a year now, compared with the five or six when I first joined the committee. Life on committee can be hard work from time to time, but this is more than compensated for by the friendships that have been formed over the years, not only from those on the committee, but from other members of the Association. I am sure that this past two years would have been far more difficult for me if I had not had these friends and colleagues, and I thank them for all their help.

Seminar

The planning for this year's seminar is well under way, as you will have read in the last issue. I was hoping to have had some further outstanding news to impart, but we are still awaiting a final reply. Rest assured that a successful outcome will mean the 2007 seminar will be one that you cannot afford to miss. Unfortunately we will not have confirmation until after you have read this, keep an eye on the AWGB website for more information. (Ed's note. see page 2)

Woodturning Shows

We were invited to have a stand at the International Woodworking show held at the Staffordshire County Showground, and, for the first time, were invited to The North Of England Woodworking Show held at the Great Yorkshire Showground. Unfortunately I was not able to attend either event so I am unable to make any comments, but there are reports on both shows on pages 12 and 19.

Hopefully I will be able to meet some of you at the International Woodworking Show at Alexandra Palace on 9th to the 11th February 2007.

Young Turners Training

I am hoping to arrange a woodturning training day for juniors, which will be held near to Colchester sometime in June 2007. (See page 9) The setting up and confirmation of this event has been delayed for various reasons, I may be able to confirm the date in a stop press. We will only be able to cater for about six students at this event.

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

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**Front Page
Traction Engine
by
Nigel Edwards.**

**First prize winner
in the
Prestige section
at the
Stafford Show
last year.**

**Copy deadline
for the next
edition of
Revolutions**

**March 16th
2007**

Editorial

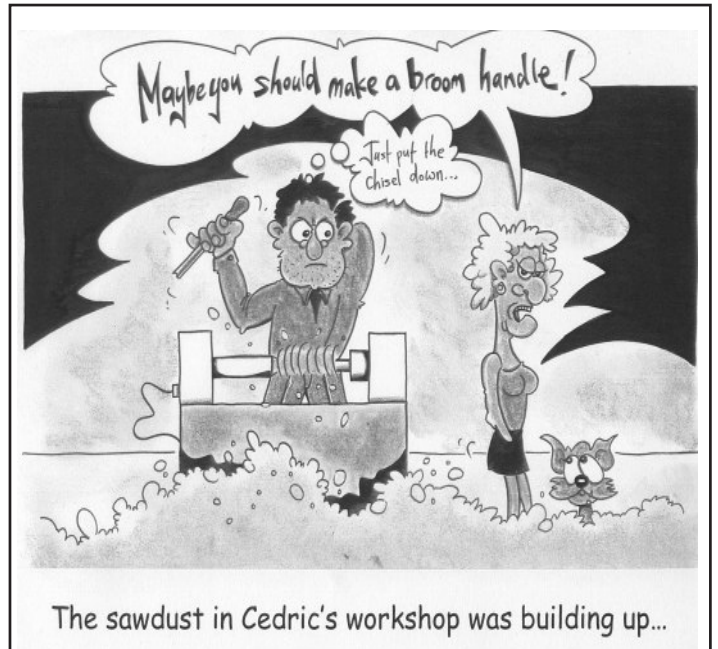
Before I move on to start haranguing you from my pulpit, I would like to pay tribute to all those people who will be leaving your Executive Committee at the forthcoming AGM. Tony Witham, Mike Morley, Peter Hockley and Ray Tunstall, have all done sterling work over many years to ensure the continued worth of the AWGB, but particular mention has to be made of Tony who has served on this committee in many different roles without a word of complaint, (well not many anyway), he is proving to be a very difficult man to replace. It is to be hoped that all these retiring members will continue to have a part to play within the membership of the Association and we wish them all the best for the future.

You will have read in Tony Witham's final set of notes about the difficulties that we are currently experiencing in finding people who are willing to come forward to act as committee members, be they directly elected or co-opted. Tony correctly states that this is not just a malaise within the AWGB, but is something that affects all membership based organisations both at local and national level. For whatever reason, people just don't seem willing to put something back into the organisations that they claim to support. Thousands of people seem to be of the opinion that a membership fee is all that is necessary to be a "part" of an organisation. This is not the case, without an input of some description from all members at all times, and without a regular turnover of people at the top, clubs and groups of all descriptions will cease to thrive and become, at best, mediocre.

With a membership in excess of three thousand there just have to be people out there who have the ability and the talent to help an organisation such as ours thrive, you can't all be sad old "no hopers"! If I have managed to touch a nerve please get in touch, you can get a lot more out of the AWGB by putting something in.

Some of "Revolutions" contributors seem to constantly see the deadline date published on page 3 of the newsletter as the date on which they must submit their offerings. This is not the case, it is the date on which I intend to wrap the whole thing up and despatch it to the printers, most of the setting out will have been done long before this date. If you have something you wish to have published please let me have it sooner rather than later, don't leave it until the last moment!

Can I also reiterate the request made by myself and my predecessors with regard to photographs? In order to be able to convert them to a state suitable for reproduction in the printed media it is necessary to have the files as large as possible, exactly as they come from the camera in fact. Converting them down to neat 4" x 4" prints probably means I cannot use them. For those of you still using 35mm film, I will need the negatives or the slides to work from and not prints. Thankyou for your attention.



Apologies

My apologies to Gordon Cookson who penned the article on "Oil Fishes and Allergies" in issue 79. For some obscure reason I re-christened him Charles, fortunately his cheque was made out to the correct person.

Cornish Rose Bowl

Chairman of the North Cornwall Woodturners, Roger Gubbin, has secured a commission to turn a trophy for the Duchy of Cornwall. The bowl, a 15" by 6" Rose Bowl, to be turned out of Oak from the Duchy estate, and to include an insert of Cornish Tin, will be presented annually at the Royal Cornish Show.

Congratulations to Roger for securing such a prestigious commission. The AWGB and its members look forward to updated news on Roger's progress.

From the Workshop Floor

Manager to interviewee: "For this job we need someone who is responsible." Interviewee to manager: "I'm your man then – in my last job, whenever anything went wrong I was responsible."

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Revolutions if you fail to
renew**



The Association of Woodturners of Great Britain

Annual General Meeting

Great Kingshill Village Hall, Great Kingshill, Buckinghamshire, HP15 6EB on
Sunday April 1st 2007, commencing at 2.00pm prompt.

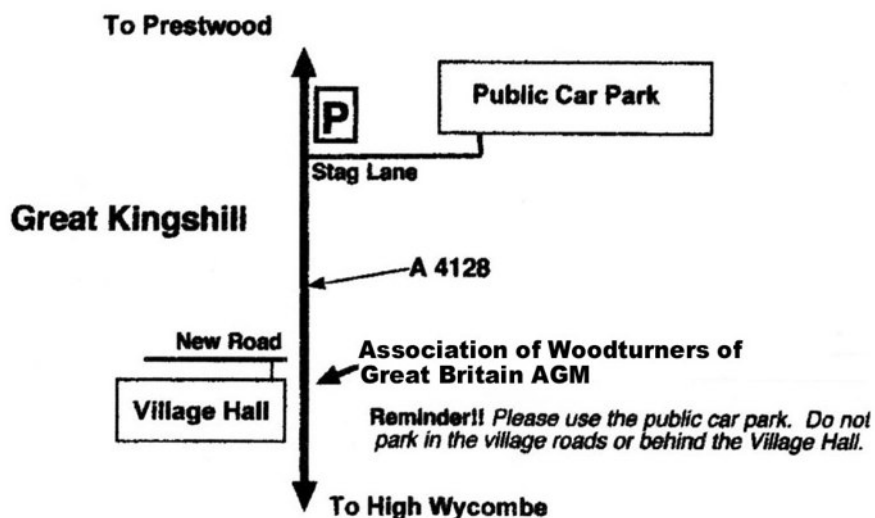
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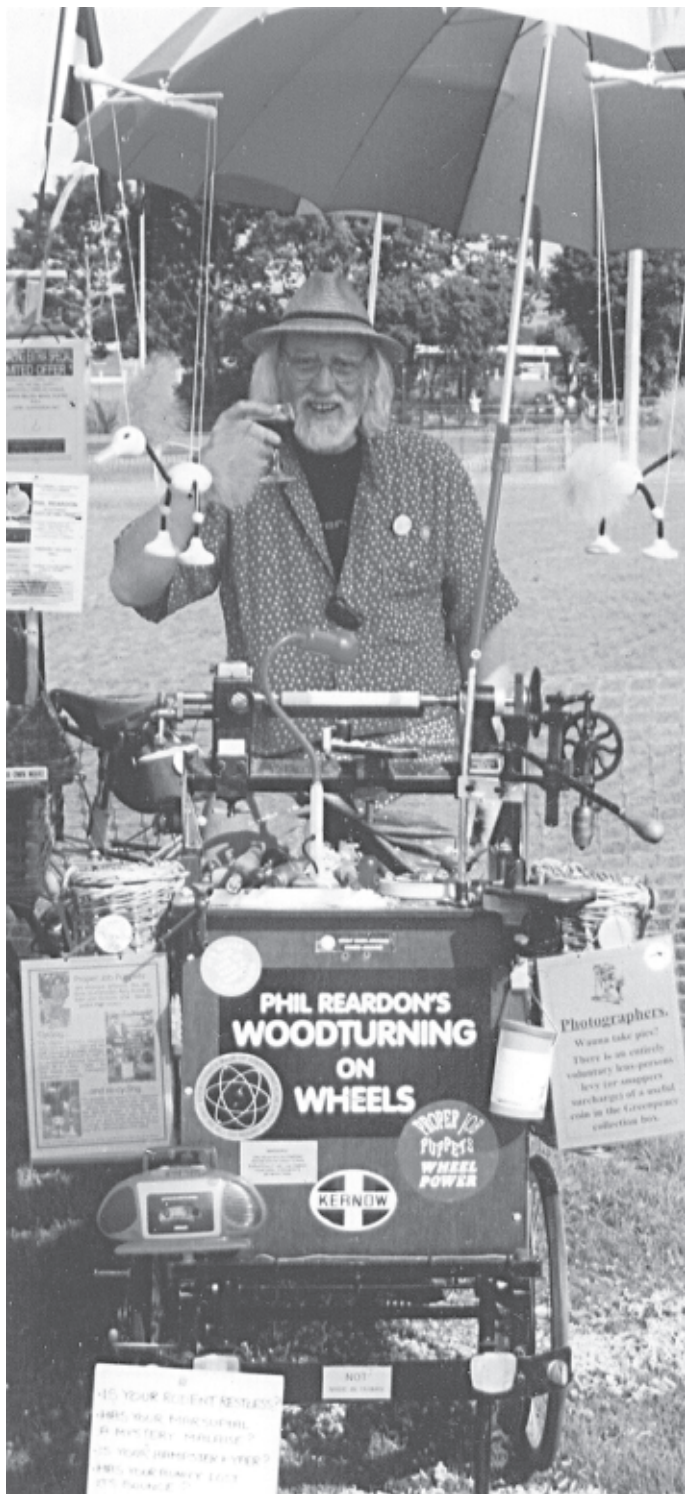
- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of the AGM held at Daventry Community Centre, on Sunday 2nd April 2006.
- 3 Honorary Chairman's report.
- 4 Honorary Treasurer's report and subscription recommendation for 2008.
- 5 Election of Officers
- 6 Election of Executive Committee Members
- 7 Election of Regional Representatives to the Executive Committee.
- 8 Discussion.

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

Directions to Great Kingshill: M40 Junction 4 turn off towards High Wycombe. Take A4128 towards Prestwood & Great Missenden. The Hall is located in New Road, which is on your left as you approach the village.

Please park in the Public Car Park about 200 yards past the Hall towards Prestwood.





The Instant Gallery

As announced in the last issue of *Revolutions*, this year's Instant Gallery at the Seminar will include more examples of members' work than ever before. If you intend to participate as a delegate, and we hope you will, then you need do nothing at the moment, other than begin to form an idea of what you may wish to submit.

There are three areas in which others may wish to participate, in the senior section, in the junior section or in the "Phil Reardon" competition. You may enter whatever you like in the first two categories, not too large please! The latter category is open to all, and is designed to celebrate the work and life of Phil Reardon

whose sense of fun was renowned in the woodturning world. You are asked to produce, using mostly turned elements, an animated toy incorporating the appreciation of the absurd that was part of Phil's unique approach to turning.

An application form is enclosed with this issue, please be sure to follow the comprehensive instructions to the letter and ensure that your writing is legible. Additional copies of the form are available via our website.

New Woodturner's store in Shropshire

Neil Webster, woodturner, proprietor of *The Old Barn Workshop*, and sponsor of the Mid-Wales AWGB branch, has opened a new shop for turners, stocking Henry Taylor, Crown, Planet, Chestnut, Hegner, Jet, Tormek, blanks and more.

The Old Barn Workshop

Units 17,18,19

Oswestry Town Market Hall

Oswestry

Shropshire

SY11 1PZ

Open 8.30-4pm Wednesday/Friday/Saturday

Tetrasphere - again

You may recall that in the article on the Tetrasphere (Issue 79) a challenge was put to confirm or refute Mike Morley's figures for the tetrasphere. We are pleased to report that two respondents both agreed with the result but provided slightly different methods of proof. The (very) small prize went to Donald Todd of Kilspindie in Perthshire and we have sent him a copy of "Wonders in Wood". The second reply came from Bill McKenzie of Pontyclun in Wales (must be a foreigner there) and we have sent him a car sticker as a consolation. Thanks go to both of them and Mike is relieved to have been proved right.

How to turn a Heart

by Peter Johnson

Introduction

With Valentine's Day imminent, you may be stuck for an idea for your loved one (no, not your lathe!). Alternatively you may have an eye on the Craft Fair circuit. This article describes how to make an attractive looking heart, as shown in Photograph 1, using straightforward turning techniques, i.e. no carving, nor the necessary use of an ornamental lathe. In fact all my hearts so far have been produced on a small Axminster M330 wood-lathe. This involves off-centre or eccentric turning techniques, much more to the liking of an ornamental turner, but not outside the scope of plain turners.



Photograph 1: sample of wooden hearts.

As can be seen from Photograph 1, the surfaces of a heart are not truly circular in nature, but form complex surfaces in 3 dimensions. Since the conventional use of a wood-lathe only produces circular cuts, how can we approximate the complex surfaces of a heart with surfaces generated on a lathe?

My first idea was to turn a doughnut in the shape of a heart; the doughnut being the type with a hole in the middle rather than jam. By making the cross-section of the doughnut heart-shaped rather than circular, we could then cut the doughnut on a band-saw to produce lots of hearts. These would not exhibit the shapely curves of the hearts shown in Photograph 1, but would require some secondary and tertiary turning operation. Because I couldn't work out how to do this effectively, this approach was not pursued.

My first real attempts to make a heart centred not upon unhealthy doughnuts, but upon the idea that a heart is similar in shape to a much more healthy apple; something that most turners can make. The idea was to turn an apple with a heart-shaped profile and then use off-centre turning to achieve the full heart. Of particular difficulty was the effective shaping of the top of the heart. After several deformed and abused looking apples I abandoned this approach (though there may be merit in exploring this approach further) and retreated back to the drawing board.

Looking at the side view of a proposed heart shape, as shown in Figure 1, we can see that the heart exhibits mirror symmetry in two planes; about the centre line in Figure 1a (plan view) and about the centre line in Figure 1b (side view). Referring to Figure 1c (top view) we can see that the heart's surfaces can be approximated by a circle offset from the centre of the heart. By using two stages of offset turning, two sides of the heart can be achieved. However, this will still leave the vee part at the top of the heart, shown as shaded in Figure 1d to be removed. This can be done by using off-centre or eccentric turning about the axis AA' shown in Figure 1d, being careful to avoid the tip

of the heart. As can be seen, to achieve the desired heart shape, the work-piece needs to be mounted on the lathe in three different turning operations.

To most turners, eccentric turning usually involves the use of the eccentric chuck. It is usual to maintain the axis of the work-piece in-line or parallel with the axis of the lathe (between the mandrel and tail-stock). To avoid confusion, I shall refer only to the use of off-centre turning rather than eccentric turning. In this context, off-centre turning refers to the mounting and remounting of the work-piece such that the work-piece does not necessarily maintain it's axis parallel to the lathe's axis.

All dimensions shown are in millimetres.
Drawings not to scale.

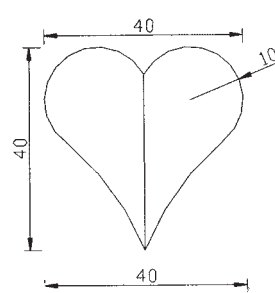


Figure 1a: heart plan view.

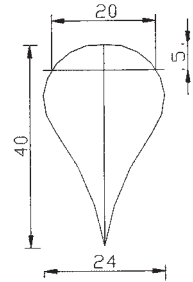


Figure 1b: heart side view.

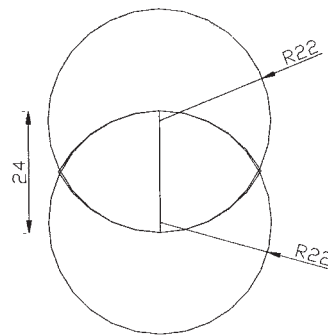


Figure 1c: heart top view showing circular approximation to surface.

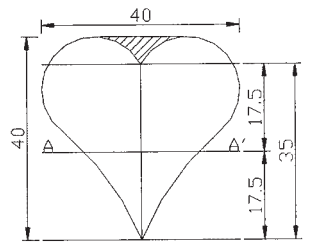


Figure 1d: heart plan view showing vee area to be removed.

Figure 1: shape of heart.

Method

There is no reason why you should stick to the dimensions shown here, but I suggest that you do as a starting point. Once familiar with the process, there is no reason why any dimensions may not be used within the limits of the lathe, to produce hearts of various sizes and proportions.

Firstly cut a piece of wood 60mm long (along the grain) and 40mm square. Any wood will do, but reddish or brown woods would be most appropriate; I have tended to use mahogany-like woods. Mark one long side as the reference side and one of the end faces as the bottom side. Place the reference side face down, and on the long side opposite to the reference side, draw the shape shown in Figure 2a. I have made a cardboard template to draw the shape quickly.

With the reference side still face down, draw a vertical line bisecting the bottom side and another vertical

line bisecting the face opposite the bottom side (top side). Then accurately cut, using a band-saw (or fret-saw), to the line in Figure 2. Then, using a block of wood 20mm thick as a gauge (or in my case a rule that is 20mm wide), draw all around the wood 20mm up from the reference side, as shown in Photograph 2. I shall refer to this line as the centre plane line.

All dimensions shown are in millimetres
Drawings not to scale.

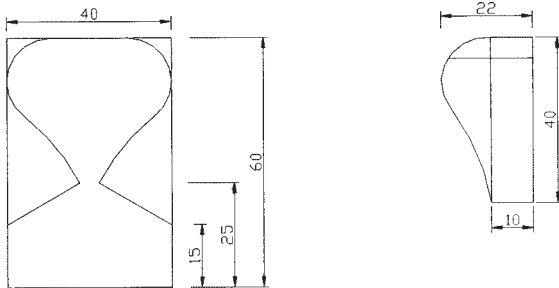
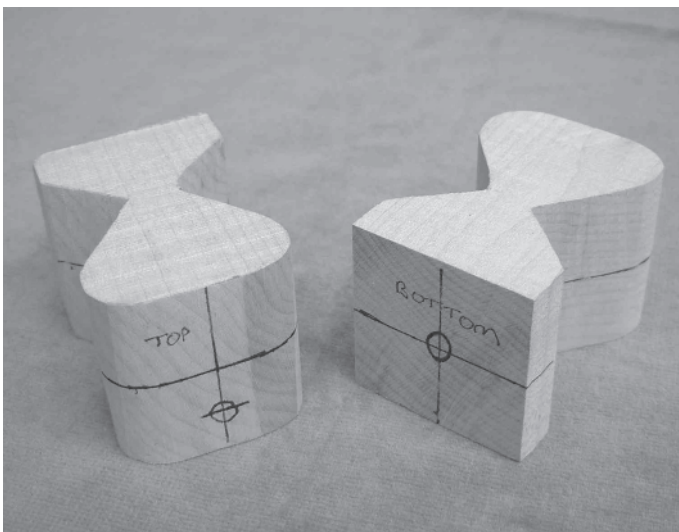


Figure 2a: heart cutting template. Figure 2b: heart hollowing template

Figure 2: heart template.



Photograph 2: marked out wood.

On the top side, mark across the vertical line at 9mm below the centre point of the top side. Using a centre punch, mark this crossing point and also mark the centre of the bottom side. We are now ready to mount the wood in the lathe between a drive centre in the head-stock and a revolving centre in the tail-stock with the bottom side at the head-stock end. Ensure that the mounted wood will not foul the tool-rest and we're ready to turn.

The objective is to turn away the wood down to the centre plane line on the heart shaped section of the wood. The centre plane line allows us to accurately control when to stop cutting to achieve the desired heart shape. If you find that the start and finish of the cut don't both coincide with the centre plane line, then don't worry, just average the cut between the centre plane lines on either side of the cut as best you can. For instance, if on one side, the cut does not quite reach the line and on the other side the cut exceeds the line, then just cut until both sides are of equal error. Do not over-cut both sides of the heart near the top side otherwise it will become smaller than required. However, ensure that you cut on both sides slightly

below the centre plane line near the tip of the heart to ensure that you can part the heart off in the next phase. After you are satisfied with the shape, sand with a relatively coarse grade sandpaper; I use 120 grit. There is no further need for sanding with finer grade sandpaper at this stage because a small amount of hand-finishing is required at a later stage with 120 grit sandpaper.

Now remove the work-piece from the lathe and place the reference side down. You may need to refresh the centre plane line at this point since the sanding may have removed it. On the top side, mark across the vertical line at 9mm above the centre point of the top side. Depending on the previous turning operation, you may find that this point is just a little on the turned surface. In this case, just estimate where the crossing point would be. Mark this crossing point with the centre punch and return the wood to the lathe between the bottom side centre and the newly marked top side, with the bottom side at the head-stock end. You can now turn the other side of the heart down to the line as before. Make sure that you turn the top part of the heart first and work your way down towards the tip of the heart. Just before parting off near the tip of the heart, sand the work with 120 grit sandpaper. Then continue the cut until the heart is parted off. This will have left you with a heart shaped piece of wood with the exception that the vee at top of the heart is still present and which now needs to be turned to shape. If necessary, sand to shape the tip of the heart with 120 grit paper.

We now need to mount the heart in the lathe so that it rotates on an axis passing through the sides of the heart, as suggested by Figure 1d. To do this effectively we need to make a jig or chuck to securely hold the heart in this position. If we consider the process so far, each side of the heart forms a circle with a centre approximately defined by the top side off-centre crossings, as shown in Figure 1c. If we measure this radius of the maximum radius, typically 22mm, we can begin to make the jig.

Mount a 100mm by 100mm bit of wood (beech is good) on a faceplate, of 35mm thickness. Square off the face if necessary. With the lathe rotating, mark with a pencil, a circle with radius of 20mm. Also mark a circle of radius 10mm, as shown in Figure 3a. Hollow out to this smaller radius through to the faceplate. If you are worried about marking the faceplate, then before mounting the wood on the faceplate, put a backing board behind it. Now hollow out the 20mm radius circle to a depth of 10mm.

Ensure that at a depth of 5mm, you undercut the hole to a radius of 22mm. Make a template of the side of your heart as shown in Figure 2b. You can use this to shape the hollow to achieve a close approximation to the shape of the heart, as shown in Figure 3b. Don't worry about being too accurate apart from near the maximum radius of 22mm. I tend to over-cut near the faceplate (corresponding to the tip of the heart) since the grip is obtained at the maximum radius rather than at the tip of the heart. Any departures from the ideal heart shape tend to occur near the tip because of the

off-centre parting off. The use of the 10mm radius hole and over-cutting near the faceplate allows for some degree of error here. When hollowed, remove the wood from the lathe.

All dimensions shown are in millimetres.
Drawings not to scale.

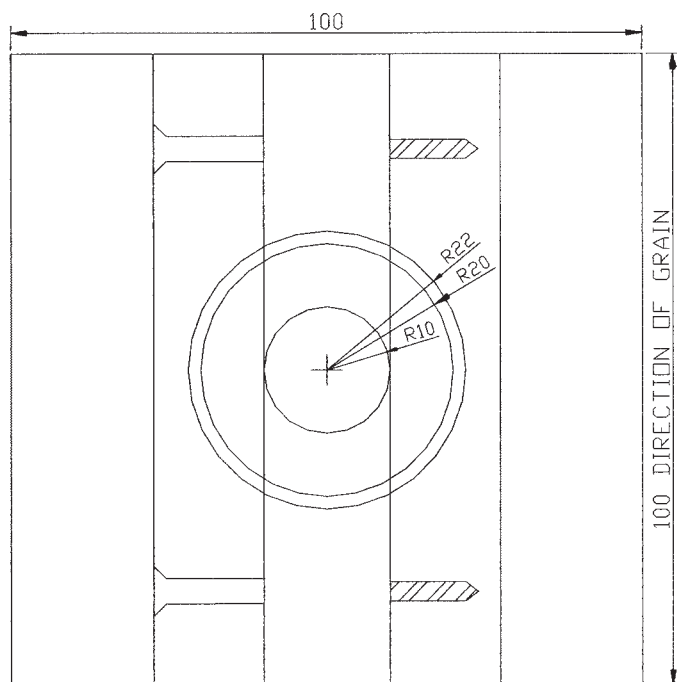


Figure 3a: chuck plan view.

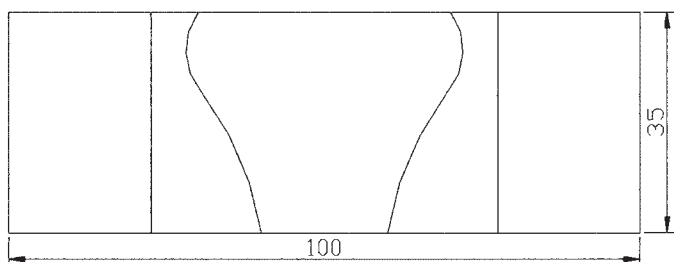


Figure 3b: chuck side view.

Figure 3: method of making the chuck for holding the heart.

Remove the waste wood as shown in Figure 3a. I found that the best way is to band-saw off the bulk of the waste and then plane each piece down gradually until a good snug fit of the heart is obtained. One further shaving will ensure a tight fit. Screw the two pieces to form the jig with the heart in place. If like me you made the fit of the chuck near the tip of the heart loose, then ensure that you centre the tip of the heart in the bottom of the chuck before tightening. I pack the tip of the heart with foam (mouse mat) just to ensure that the heart doesn't move during turning.

We now need to determine the centre line on which to mount the jig and heart between drive centre and revolving centre. We need to ensure that we can turn the wood at the top of the heart while not affecting the tip of the heart. Figure 1d shows how this is achieved. The centre points will lie on the vertical lines formed by the joining of the two halves of the chuck.

The vertical height of the centre points is defined as the half way point between the tip of the heart, and the deepest cut of the top of the heart. In practice we need to be a little towards the tip of the heart to ensure that we do not turn the tip of the heart. However, we don't want the centre points too near the tip because this will reduce the curvature of the cut at the top of the heart, making it more difficult to blend the curves in the subsequent stage. When the centres have been marked, mount the jig/heart between centres. Ensure that the tool rest won't be fouled. Then turn away the wood to achieve the desired shape. The centre line (previously referred to as the vertical line) on the top of the heart gives the centre of the wood to be removed. Note that part of the jig will also be turned away. When happy with the shape, sand as before using 120 grit paper. Remove the heart from the jig and you will have a heart shaped piece of wood with fine intersection lines between the three stages of turning. Give these intersection lines a fine sanding with 120 grit to soften them and to blend them together. This should only take a few moments. Then hand finish in your usual style. I progress through the grades, applying cellulose sanding sealer after 400 grit. I give the heart a final rub with fine webrax, and then buff the heart with a Carnuba wax based buffing wheel mounted in the lathe. Finally I finish with a soft polishing mop for a final shine.

Young Turners Training

An Introduction to Woodturning Day is to be held on the 2nd June 2007 at Great Bromley in Essex and is specifically aimed at those with little or no experience of woodturning.

This training day is for those from fourteen years to eighteen years of age.

Application forms are available from Tony Witham by telephone on 01255 671697 or e-mail him at tony@awitham.freemove.co.uk.

Handbooks

Our Members' and Branch Handbooks contain lists of members who demonstrate, teach and accept commissions, lists of corporate members, affiliated branches and associated clubs. Before new editions are printed for 2007, would any of you who are currently listed, in whatever capacity, please check your details for accuracy, and advise David Buskell and/or Lionel Pringle of any changes that need making. It is known that the 2006 Members' Handbook, in particular, contained a large number of inaccuracies. It is no good telling us that an entry is wrong after it has been printed. If you are not listed and would wish to be, please get in touch with David and ask for the necessary form.

Plymouth Woodturners

In March 1999 several of us got together to form a woodturning club which would be under the auspices of the AWGB. The word spread and eventually, after holding a preliminary meeting, the club was formed in July with about twenty members. A committee was formed, and Tobias Kaye was asked to be our President, to which he agreed. We arranged to meet at the Methodist Church at Woodford in Plympton, and we still meet there on the third Friday of every month.

The first thing we had to do was decide on a name. Several names were proposed, but Plymouth Woodturners was chosen in the end. We spent a long time deliberating over the wording of our Constitution, and felt we had to get it right first time. We have not had to change it yet! We also drew up a Code of Practice for Exhibitions and Sales. We held a competition among the members for a club logo, and if my memory serves me correctly the prize was alcoholic! The logo was good too! Once we were up and running more woodturners came to join, and we now have over eighty in the club. We try to have a demonstrator or talker every month, but sometimes this falls over and a member has to stand in, and they are usually very good and interesting. We have got a sound system, a television camera and adapted set so that demonstrations can be seen and heard by all.

At every meeting there is a competition to make a specific item with small monetary prizes for the first three. Also, there is an annual overall prize for the first three presented at the AGM. Participation is voluntary and members judge entries during the refreshment break (coffee and biscuits!). The competition subjects start off reasonably easy at first and get progressively harder i.e. garden dibber, mushroom to necklace tree. This is a fun way to improve our skills; there are always lots of questions along the lines of "how did you do that?"

We are very lucky in that our Vice-President owns a shop-fitting firm and allows us to hold our demonstrations in his large and well equipped workshop. The club also holds self-help clinics there four times a year when several lathes are on the go, and questions can be answered practically, and then "now you do it!" Sadly, he will be retiring soon and we will have to find another venue. We try to have two all day demonstrations by well known turners every year, and sometimes more than two.

The club organises a number of exhibitions and sales of members' work each year. Also we have had a stand at a number of local village fairs, church fetes and charity events where we demonstrate the craft of woodturning, always popular with the public. The club tries to give some financial support to local charities through these events. We have also manned the AWGB stand at the Axminster Power Tool Show held at Westpoint, Exeter

We have a library from which members can borrow videos and books for a small monthly charge. This money is put towards buying new books and videos. We also have a club lathe for loan to members so they

know what to look for before buying one, in addition to the one we have for demonstrations.

Committee meetings are held quarterly. Various members of the committee have responsibilities and they report back to the committee at these meetings. The club meetings following committee meetings are called business meetings, but the business part doesn't take long now, so we still have a demonstrator/talker. The club runs a very interesting web site on www.plymouthwoodturners.org.uk which has pictures of members' work and applicable club information. From the start we set out to have a happy and friendly club, with everything out in the open. An account of each meeting is sent out every month by e-mail and snail mail, and a copy of the committee meeting's minutes is sent out quarterly to all members. Used machinery and tools are advertised at the same time. The Secretary is Richard Smith and he can be contacted by e-mail on plywood@blueyonder.co.uk or telephone 01752 778671. It goes without saying that any AWGB member in the vicinity is welcome.



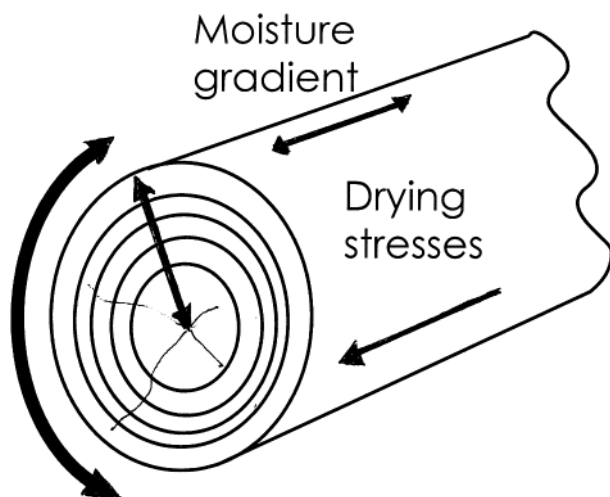
A club sale at the Barbican Glass Centre

Drying Wood : a Bodger's View

by Donald Todd

In Andrew Hall's recent article on turning goblets in the round, he mentions experimenting with methods of drying the logs prior to turning. I have been bodging, mostly spindle turning green wood, for over 10 years now, and while my requirements are different from many other turners, I have developed a practical understanding of wood's drying characteristics. My experience is with most of the native hardwoods, with the notable exception of Oak and Sweet Chestnut, which have acidic sap. I aim to keep the wood green until I turn it, as I am using a Pole Lathe to emulate 18th Century practice.

Wood is composed mainly of cells which are partially closed tubes, mostly running in the same direction "along the grain". In the hardwoods, some of the cells are larger open tubes, called "vessels", which carry much of the sap during the growing season. The distribution of vessels varies with the tree specie and can be used as a means of identification. In woods that are termed "Ring Porous", such as Ash, a large proportion of vessels are grown in Spring, far fewer in Summer, giving the wood very distinct growth rings. In "Diffuse Porous" woods, such as Beech the vessels are distributed much more uniformly. Many woods fall between these extremes. In addition to "Free Water" within the cells, including the vessels, there is also water within the cell walls themselves. Loss of this "Bound Water" results in the cells, and consequently the wood, shrinking. Very little shrinkage occurs along the length of the cells. Also shrinkage radially is about half that tangentially, possibly due to the presence of some cells which run radially and partially constrain the contraction. These compose the Medullary Rays and are areas of weakness where cracking frequently starts. The tubular nature of the cells and the presence of the vessels explain why moisture moves much faster (10 - 15 times) along the grain than across it and thus escapes from the ends of a cut log. Movement in this sense is how the tree circulates its sap.



The live sapwood is a bit like a mixture of wet spaghetti and macaroni, the latter being the vessels. When all the water has run out of the macaroni the pasta itself starts to dry, exploiting the ventilation of empty vessels, and shrinks as it does so. The heartwood is already partly dried out. As the cut end of the log dries, stress starts to build up across it and a moisture gradient develops from the face into the bulk of the log. Stresses also develop along the fibres from the surface in proportion to this gradient. By slowing down the loss of moisture from the cut end, the gradient and associated stresses are reduced. This in turn reduces the likelihood of cracks developing. It should be noted that the stresses across the face are still present both during drying and at completion, though it is possible to get away with it if you are careful and lucky.

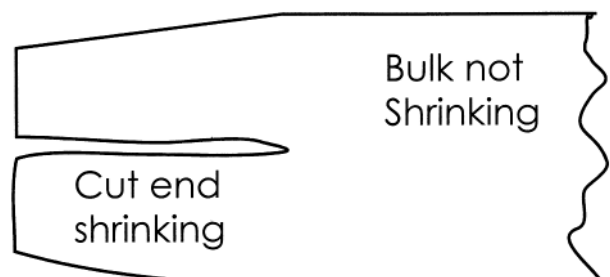
As an illustration, I have cut one inch sections of the more common woods, about three inches in diameter, and air dried them slowly in my outhouse. None of them

has cracked after one year, mostly indoors. The point here is that such a small length effectively has no bulk and the moisture gradient does not develop fully. The sapwood has a chance to catch up with the heart and drying is from both sides simultaneously. There may also be a degree of compression of the heart by the sapwood which inhibits or hides cracking at the centre. The same effect is being used when you rough turn a bowl blank in the green. I also cut very thin sections of a one inch green Cherry branch. These cupped as they dried, but did not crack. In this case the stress is being relieved by the cupping. Conversely, last year when I was carving the seat for a Windsor chair from a board of seasoned air dried Elm, I made the mistake of working on my patio on a nice sunny, breezy day. The front edge of the seat (end grain), exposed to the sun and wind started to crack due to the very fast drying conditions.

The amount of sap in the wood depends on when it was cut, how long and in what conditions (size of piece, exposure to wind and sun, time) it is left lying. If felled in the dormant season there will be little "free water" in it. Cracking of such a log starts almost immediately (within 1 minute) from the centre which is the driest part. I frequently hear the crack start while I am still cutting through a felled log. I always cleave a log in two straight after cutting it to relieve the stress. If the tree is felled in the growing season it will be full of sap (in the outer, sapwood) but the heartwood is still relatively dry and will soon start to crack. It is essential in all cases to slow down the drying as soon as possible. Put paint or some other impermeable layer on the cut end and shelter the wood from direct sun and wind, though you may find that the sapwood is too wet at first. I put pieces in polythene bags for short periods until I get them painted, but most of the woods under consideration do not keep well in the green state, and sealing them in bags accelerates fungal attack. While many turners like to see spalting, it is the last thing you want in chair legs. I store green wood in lengths up to five feet long out of the wind and sun, cleft in two or four, with the ends painted. However, I try to avoid storing more than my immediate needs.

It should also be noted that wood, even in "finished" articles will lose or absorb moisture according to local conditions. It is quite possible for a piece to crack years after being made, when subjected to excessively dry conditions. Beware central heating.

I would strongly recommend "Understanding Wood" by Bruce Hoadley, Taunton Press, for a more detailed examination of this topic. This book should be in every Club's library as it is a veritable mine of information.



P.S. Medway Queen

by Peter Martin

It cannot be very often that the AWGB website contributes towards saving the history of the nation. This was the tool that was used by John Kempton, the Chairman of the Medway Queen Preservation Society, in order to trace the Kent Branch, with a view to converting some of the timbers removed from the vessel into saleable commemorative artefacts, to raise funds for the restoration of the last and earliest paddle steamer in the UK.

The Medway Queen was built on the Clyde in 1924. It is 180ft long and has a gross tonnage of 316 tons. It guaranteed its place in history by completing 17 trips to Dunkirk during the evacuation, bringing 7,000 servicemen back to these shores and saving them from almost certain death. Not only did she serve as a troop carrier during that momentous period in our history but she also served throughout the war as a minesweeper, and was used to evacuate children from Kent to East Anglia. In 1953 she attended the Spithead Review to celebrate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth the Second.

Before, and after World War 2, she plied her trade for many years around the Thames and Medway estuaries, making regular pleasure trips to the very popular coastal resorts. Her last recorded trip was to Southend in 1963 and she was subsequently destined to be scrapped and broken up. She was saved from the breakers and taken into service as a marina clubhouse in the Isle of Wight in 1966. Even that was only a short respite and she was the victim of her own success, when she became so popular, that she was exchanged for a larger vessel.



The PS Medway Queen at Dunhead Creek

Since that time it has been a constant battle to preserve this historic vessel. She has been sunk and refloated, replated and patched on numerous occasions and in 1987 she was finally floated and towed to her present permanent location at Dunhead Creek on the Hoo Peninsula in Kent.

The Preservation Society have now applied for and have been granted a Heritage Lottery Grant of £1.86 million and the hull is currently being completely rebuilt.

They themselves are required to raise an additional £225,000 by any means at their disposal and, hopefully, the AWGB can go a little way towards achieving that goal.

The old mast, a huge spring beam and a quantity of mahogany handrail have been removed and condemned by the Lottery administrators. With the help of David Reeks' expertise, the Kent Branch are currently developing a programme of ideas to ensure that we maximise the value of this historic timber, whilst still retaining some of the history in the wood. The Kent Branch website, www.geocities.com/kent_awgb will contain additional information as it becomes available. Information about the ship and her history can be found at www.medwayqueen.co.uk/

A time and place - with the right ingredients

Nick Hunton, Event Co-ordinator for the International Woodworking Exhibitions put on by Encanta Media/Magicalia, looks back at the the Stafford show in October and forward to the Alexandra Palace event in February.

What is the recipe for a good show? In my view, with an established event, it has always proved to be a balance between the old and the new, bringing with it the familiarity of an event that has a good track record, where you can find the right mix of commercial stands and those added features of interest from which you can learn without digging into your pocket.

Getting that balance right is never easy, as woodworking enthusiasts are always keen to build on what they know and yet find new tastes, new products, new ways of working and new paths to follow, and this is what as show organisers we try to cater for. We encourage leading manufacturers and suppliers to come and offer their products to a discerning and enthusiastic audience. In turn, we aim to provide those extra features of interest where all enthusiasts can learn from the masterclasses, demonstrations, displays and stands offering an insight into the more specialist interest areas that lie within the broad range of woodworking craft skills, applications and areas of knowledge.

Looking back now to our Stafford show last October, it would seem that one of those new ingredients that did not appeal so much to woodworking tastes was the change to a new venue, and the event at the County Showground drew disappointing visitor numbers following the move from Stoneleigh Park in the previous year. This was a shame as there was plenty going on with plenty on offer and a good line of demonstrators, with woodturners including more familiar names like Ray Jones, Gary Rance, Jamie Wallwin, Reg Slack and Les Thorne. Also those less frequently appearing at shows such as Mark Hancock with his sculptural forms and Joey Richardson, who is

very much at the forefront of leading others down the piercing and colouring path so much influenced by Binh Pho and other turners from the States. There was plenty more beyond the woodturning world, and a regrettable absence from Alan Holtham, who was out of action having turned and twisted his own leg on the stairs the day before the show. Turning clubs and associations were also strongly in evidence with fine displays and active stands from the AWGB and the Register of Professional Turners plus the Northern Federation also hosting a good sized stand for the first time at this event.

Also catching the interest of many turners were the outdoor demonstrations of log and timber conversion by Richard Dunmore who normally works on farms and large estates clearing and converting timber into usable and valuable material. Richard suddenly found new paths opening up with clubs and individuals asking whether he was available for demonstrations and talks or indeed whether he could provide services to them in converting timber to boards which as groups they could make use of and which would make the venture commercially worthwhile. On the competition side there were some fine entries from turning enthusiasts as the pictures on the front and back cover indicate, and the special Visitors Choice Awards sponsored by the AWGB went to Graham Ball for the Enthusiast category and Nigel Edwards in the Prestige section. Whilst the two categories of entry are designed to give newcomers the chance to compete fairly as the old-hands of previous winners move into the Prestige section, it is sad to see that there are comparatively few new entrants taking up the challenge of producing good work and entering it for consideration in the Enthusiast category. With high value prizes on offer from sponsors, we could certainly have hoped for more entries, and there is always a worry that if there is not sufficient interest from turners in such a competition, sponsorship will fall away as it has done in other areas, and we will no longer be able to mount such a competition. That would be a loss for potential entrants and also for those who really enjoy the fine display of work that this makes when they visit the show. It should not be underestimated the importance that a display of this kind with work in a variety of styles and at different levels of technical difficulty really has in inspiring others to try new areas of work for themselves.

However, by the time that you are reading this, our next woodturning competition will be calling for entries, and with sponsorship to the value of £3500 secured on this occasion from Record Power, Craft Supplies and The Worshipful Company of Turners, I hope that you either already will have considered entering or will at least do so now. And whether you win or not, you will at least gain a pair of tickets giving you entry to the show to make it worth your while. We also hope that the entry will be sufficient to guarantee this competition's future with continued sponsorship from important benefactors and groups who have an interest in promoting fine woodturning.

The competition will of course be featured at The International Woodworking Exhibition at Alexandra

Palace, north London which takes place from 9th to 11th February. In this case there is no change of venue, so show location and layout will be on usual lines, but there will be another recipe on offer in terms of the new and familiar. Whilst at the time of writing the line up of masterclasses, demonstrations and display is not fully confirmed, there will certainly be a mix of the new and the familiar. On the international front you will find a new woodturning masterclass with Helga Becker, one of Germany's leading woodturners who has just opened a new 'turning college' attached to her own workshop near Stuttgart. Other turning demonstrators will include Mark Hancock, Gary Rance, Stuart King, Mick Hanbury and Reg Slack, with further input from the AWGB, the Register of Professional Turners, the Society of Ornamental Turners plus two clubs from the South East, the Surrey Association of Woodturners and Cheam Woodturners Association. You can find out full details of the line up, how to get there, prices, plus full competition details on the show website: www.getwoodworking.com/iwe.

Awards For All

Forest of Dean Woodturners are the latest of our 50 affiliated branches to receive, what they describe as, a substantial award from the Awards for All division of the National Lottery.

The award has funded the purchase of much-needed woodturning and audio-visual equipment which will vastly improve the quality of the demonstrations by guest woodturners at the club's monthly meetings. The equipment includes a modern lathe with accessories and a video projector with cameras and lighting and a PA system, so that demonstrations can be shown on screen, in detail, as they happen.

As I say, quite a considerable number of branches have successfully negotiated this path, without any mishap. If your branch has yet to take advantage of this excellent scheme and you would like to know more, please get in touch with our Secretary, David Buskell, who will be only too pleased to point you in the right direction.

From the Workshop Floor

Experts are people who know a lot about very little, and who go along learning more and more about less and less until they know everything about nothing. Lawyers, on the other hand, are people who know very little about many things, and keep learning less and less about more and more until they know practically nothing about everything. Judges are people who start out knowing everything about everything, but end up knowing nothing about anything, because of their constant association with experts and lawyers.

On The Edge with Christian Burchard

by Nick Arnall

In 2005 I attended The Utah Woodturning Symposium where my work was received extremely well. Later that year I was invited to demonstrate my decorating and turning techniques at the 2006 Symposium. I decided to prolong my stay as the AAW Symposium was only a few days later.

In an exchange of pictures with Art Liestman I said I would be attending Utah and the AAW symposiums and hoped to see him there. A few days later Art phoned and asked if I would like to attend a course at Anderson Ranch with Christian Bouchard entitled "On the Edge". I had to apply and wait to see if I had been successful. After a period of nervous waiting I was accepted.

My trip to the United States of America was not a simple one, what had started out to be work for a week and then a week's holiday now had been extended by a further two weeks. Once the Utah and AAW symposium, which was in Louisville Kentucky, were over I flew on to Vancouver to stay with Art Liestman. Art and his local woodturning club made me very welcome and showed me around some of the sites.

We had decided to take a three day road trip from Vancouver to Andersons Ranch. Boy is North America a *BIG* place, every hour or so the entire landscape changed. We finally arrived at the Ranch which is in Aspen, Colorado late on Sunday July 2nd. At this point I had been away from home for three weeks and was a little homesick. We checked in at reception where our rooms were allocated. We were pointed in the direction of the Sam Maloff Wood Barn. Here we left our tools and selected the lathe we would use for the next 5 days (I got to use a Oneway 2436). Anderson Ranch is extremely well equipped. We then met with Christian and the other members who had already arrived. They were

Stephen Hatcher, Molly Winton, Joe Flemming, Jay Littlepage and Art Liestman. Mark Kauder was not to arrive until after we had all gone to bed.



The Students

We headed to the café for our dinner. Here we met with other people attending the Arts Centre courses ranging from drawing, sculpture, painting, ceramics and wood bending to mention but a few. After our lunch we had a slide show. The interaction with the other members of the course was very intense and I felt a little bewildered by it all. It was late before we headed to our beds, these late evening chats were to be the norm.

Monday, the café opened early allowing us to have a long breakfast. Mark had arrived late the evening before so we were now all together and eager to get going. We were welcomed by the Ranch staff and given a brief introduction about the Centre. We were then shown around the workshops and introduced to our workshop assistant Jason. His job was to cut our wood using either the band saw or chainsaw; we were not to use these pieces of equipment. If we needed anything he would go off and find it.



The working environment

Now we were able to begin, but no, it was Christian's turn to discover what we as individuals hoped to gain from the week ahead. Part of Christian's directive was that we were not to use any abrasive. This was to increase our level of tool control. Towards the end of the week it was suggested that by leaving deliberate tool marks it showed some of the process of manufacture. These group sessions were to become a major part of the week, we all had slightly different aspirations and skill levels.

It was time for lunch at the café which constantly provided us with great meals and they always had a vegetarian option which I sometimes preferred.

Lunch over we all returned to the workshop to start turning. Christian had brought along a large amount of wet Madrone Burl. This was going to be great fun; we could also select timber from the pile outside the workshop. My first choice was a piece of box elder to create a fluted & twisted hollow form, something that I had had in my mind for some time, this took me until Tuesday lunch time to complete.

During the week Christian demonstrated for us on a number of occasions. He showed how he turned spheres which he then offsets to create deep grooves

on the piece. This I accomplished but only on a cylinder, it was an interesting technique to learn. I plan to include this technique somewhere in my work. During the week we were encouraged to push our technical boundaries and this inevitably led to a number of failures, however these help lead to a greater understanding of the materials we had chosen to work with.

I found the Madrone a very easy timber to turn, carve and generally manipulate. One particular project used a flat sheet of Madrone cut very thin for me by Christian. I then heated it rapidly in the microwave and wearing gloves rolled it to form a tube, this I then pierced and bleached to remove all its colour. The ease with which I was able to manipulate the Madrone when hot was remarkable. I have not had time to experiment since getting home but feel there are a number of possibilities available to me.

My favourite, and probably most memorable, part of the week has to be the group discussions on the deck outside, along with the interaction that went on constantly. One morning we had gathered together a number of woodturning books from around the world. We went through these page by page discussing everything from the individual piece to the photographic technique, what worked and what we felt did not. It was very interesting to hear the way opinions changed as the week progressed, how others became less restrained with their views as we got more relaxed with each others company. We also had a number of slide shows where we again discussed various work from numerous makers, interacting with some of the other craft groups was on occasions interesting. I got involved with the wood bending group one evening turning wheels for them to fit to a piece they were making to place in the auction on Friday. One curious event we all became aware of at night, as we were warned not to move around outside quietly, was the song to the Bears. Use your imagination to envisage us all walking back to our dorms singing to scare the bears away. We still do not know if we really needed to, but there were precautions around to prevent them getting in at night.

Throughout this time we all managed to create a number of pieces, some more successful than others. Friday lunchtime we finished, and set about cleaning and tidying away. Earlier that day the work we donated to the Ranch was collected for the auction which was to be after the farewell lunch (a great barbecue). We then had the auction which goes towards funding scholarships at the Ranch, we were told we had raised more money than any other wood group had done previously.

After this we returned to the workshop to have our final critique with Christian where we all talked openly about our work during the week. I feel I have gained enormously from this experience.

All we had left to do was to watch Jason print our t-shirts that we had designed during the week, have a farewell beer and chat, this went on for quite a while as you can imagine.

I would like to thank the AWGB for the grant they awarded me to help towards some of the costs of this course.

Chasing the Thread

by Martin Davies

I took up turning fairly late in life after retiring from the Royal Air Force. During a visit to a Show, I saw John Berkeley demonstrate the art of chasing threads in wood. I was fascinated and wanted to learn how to do that. A couple of shows later, I took the plunge and bought a pair of thread chasers and the arm rest I had watched John using. The next evening I went into my garage and had a go. Strangely, the tools refused to flow across the wood in the way I had seen John demonstrate. After several attempts, I managed a rather shaky male thread. Female threads, however, were to remain a mystery to me - I simply could not complete one.

Just over a year ago I joined the AWGB and discovered the development scheme. I decided to apply for a grant to spend a day with John Berkeley and was delighted when I was told that my application had been accepted. I immediately telephoned John and arranged a suitable date.

On the appointed day I arrived at John's home just after 8:45 am having driven through thick patchy fog. John immediately put the kettle on and, over a welcome cup of coffee, we discussed what I hoped to achieve and agreed the outline for the day. After a comprehensive safety brief we moved into the workshop.

A piece of Boxwood was mounted between centres and I was invited to rough it to a cylinder with a dovetail spigot on one end. This was fastened into a chuck and John then demonstrated how to prepare and then chase an external or male thread. Now it was my turn. I felt nervous at first, but John's calm manner settled the butterflies in my stomach and I proceeded, under instruction, to chase a reasonably decent thread.



Chasing the female thread

Next on to my 'bête noire' the female thread. The wood was hollowed and the technique demonstrated. My initial effort was disappointing, but it gave John the chance to see what I was doing wrong. A little more guidance and, much to my amazement, a perfectly reasonable female thread appeared. Time for a break.

After a cup of tea and a chat covering a range of topics, we returned to the workshop to start the real business of the day, producing a small box with a threaded lid. Not only was John expecting me to turn more threads, but they actually had to match so that the lid screwed into the body of the box.



Chasing the male thread

John produced a nice piece of Boxwood which I mounted between centres and roughed to a cylinder, this time with a dovetail spigot on both ends. This was mounted into a chuck and a portion parted off which was to form the lid. The remainder in the chuck was roughly shaped and then hollowed to make the body of the box.

At this point disaster struck. My over-enthusiastic hollowing went too far and we had to start again with a new piece of wood. After discussing what went wrong, the second attempt was considerably more successful (at least it was in one piece instead of two). Then the inside of the box was sanded with several grades of abrasive and finished with melamine lacquer.

Now for the female thread. I approached this phase with some trepidation. However, to my surprise, but not John's, I managed to produce a reasonable thread which was then cleaned and waxed.

Following a break for Lunch, the lid portion was mounted in the chuck and a tapered spigot carefully formed so that the size of the male thread could be determined by pushing the body onto the spigot, a ring of wax showing the required diameter. The spigot was turned to the correct diameter and a male thread chased.

The body was screwed onto the lid portion and the body shape refined, sanded and finished with melamine lacquer.

A scrap piece of Boxwood was then mounted in the chuck and hollowed ready for yet another attempt at a female thread. Despite a slight hitch this was completed successfully and the lid then screwed onto the scrap so that it could be shaped, sanded and finished. The resulting box was more than I ever imagined producing in just one day.

Over a final beverage, John and I reviewed the day and discussed potential problems and solutions. I then loaded everything back into my car, said farewell to John and departed for home with my precious box safely cushioned in bubble wrap.

The following day, I found a piece of Anjan in my scraps box and had a go at producing a box on my own. The exercise was not entirely without problems, but, thanks to John's detailed explanations I was able to sort things out and produce an acceptable box. Not competition quality perhaps, but a major achievement for me. I will need to practice until the technique becomes almost automatic, but I now know I can do it.

The day I spent with John Berkeley was both enjoyable and instructive and I learned a lot more about turning than simply how to chase a thread. My thanks go to John for sharing his knowledge and for making it a day to remember.

My thanks must also go to the AWGB for providing the grant which enabled me to receive the training from John.



The finished box

Spanish Seminar

By Colin Simpson

If you fly into A Coruna airport in North West Spain and then travel eastwards for about an hour and a quarter you might well end up in a small town called Xermade. If you continue roughly east you may happen across a sharp bend in the road on which stand four buildings, two of which are derelict. If you blink – assuming that you have managed to negotiate the bend – you will have missed it. This place is called A Fraga. There are no trains, no buses, taxi drivers seem not to have heard of it and it is not on the satellite navigation system. There is no mobile phone signal. What I did find at A Fraga was a very warm greeting from my host for the next four days, Tito, and a superb dinner.

This unsuspecting bend in the road is home to Spain's largest woodturning convention. Each year for the past six years turners from all over Spain congregate here

to immerse themselves in four days of woodturning. A superb exhibition of turned work was part of the event and held in Xermade. I was invited this year to go along to demonstrate for them.



One of four buildings at A Fraga. The workshop is a relatively new building just up the road

Spain has no woodturning clubs and certainly no national body like our AWGB. In fact it is very difficult to set up any type of club in Spain due to an enormous amount of bureaucracy – a hang over from Franco's time as President. There are far fewer woodturners in the whole of Spain than at some of our local clubs. Those that do turn seem to do so in isolation. However, this is slowly changing and there is a very active Spanish forum on turning on the internet and this is helping bring together like minded people. The convention at A Fraga is the annual highlight for many of these turners and they return each year to renew old friendships and make new acquaintances. What struck me initially was the enthusiasm and friendliness of all the people who attended. Certainly there was a wide range of different skill levels from beginner to the very experienced and many were making gallery quality pieces. If we think that the British public do not consider woodturning as an art form then the Spanish have this issue in spades. A local paper interviewed Tito who said that some turners here were capable of making a living from their work but when the interviewer spoke to members of the public who were looking round a gallery of work, they expressed their doubts. This is not a reflection of the quality of the work on display but rather recognition of the fact that woodturning is not held in high esteem by the Spanish public. Certainly the prices being asked were much lower than we could ask here in the UK.

I flew out on a Wednesday and was told that I would be giving a demonstration on Thursday morning and another in the afternoon. I went to the workshop after an early breakfast to prepare and sharpen my tools. I was due on at 09:30. At about 09:45 a few people started to drift in, then a few more. I was starting to get a complex, but was told that this is typical and the Spanish are so unconcerned about the time and that it had nothing to do with my demonstration skills.

I found it frustrating at first but soon got to enjoy this laid back attitude. The audience did eventually turn up and, with the help of an interpreter, I think my demos were well received. After these two formal demonstrations, for me the next three days were far more relaxing. I did give a few more less formal demos and I had the opportunity to see other demonstrations and, of course the exhibition in Xermade.



Manuel forging a new hook tool

The highlight of this visit for me was watching Manuel Castro's demonstration. Manuel has been turning since he was a small boy. He uses hook tools that he makes himself from what he calls fast steel – what we know as High Speed Steel. I saw him make a tool on a small portable forge, weld it to an old ferrule and then sharpen it. Some of his ferrules and handles were used by his grandfather. When a tool wears out, Manuel simply makes a new tip and welds it onto an existing ferrule. He then went on to use it to make a butter churn. The whole process was fascinating to watch and Manuel made it look so easy. He invited me to have a go and it's not as easy as he makes it look. It is a very different technique to the one I use with my gouges. On a bowl or dish the cut starts at about seven o'clock and moves up through an arc in the centre. The steeper the side of the bowl the higher the handle has to start. And before anyone asks, yes I did have a catch and yes, the piece did fly off the lathe, and yes, it was captured on three or four video cameras and numerous still cameras.

I thoroughly enjoyed the few days I spent at A Fraga and I was delighted to be given the opportunity to attend. I understand that some of the organisers are

going to attempt to cut through some of the bureaucracy and create a national body of woodturners. I wish them luck as I believe that this can only help the woodturners of Spain, and hopefully increase the public's awareness of our craft.



Stages involved in making a hook tool



One of many interesting pieces on show in the gallery

Right - Stages in the use of a hook tool. Note the toolrest. The tool is pivoted in the dips.



Photographs courtesy of Ron Wicks & Colin Simpson

AWGB at Harrogate

by Dave Grainger

Our first appearance at the North of England Woodworking Show In Harrogate really started with a bang. The night before the event began, when three members of the executive committee went out searching for a place to eat, fireworks were being liberally displayed in various parts of the town. Unfortunately such a welcome meant it was difficult to find a restaurant that could accommodate us. Harrogate is a town which hosts a variety of functions, several of which were about to take place during the last weekend in November

The North of England woodworking show takes place annually in the Flower Hall at the Great Yorkshire Showground. Stands were manned by all manner of traders who sold every conceivable woodworking tool. There were also displays of work from educational establishments, The Woodcarvers Association, The Northern Federation of Woodturners and others promoting their particular activity.

During the afternoon of the Thursday, Tony Walton was seen talking shop to various traders who were busy setting up their stands. In fact Tony was already doing his trade liaison bit. It was not just idle chat. Tony had already unloaded the items for display and we began setting up the space allotted to us for the AWGB stand. It was not long before we had the banners and posters on the walls and the exhibition pieces carefully unpacked and put on display. During this time a lathe had been kindly loaned to us by Mark Baker of Hegner UK Ltd. Shortly afterwards David Buskell arrived, after a long and difficult drive on the A1. David gave our efforts an approving nod and we three went off to our digs. On Friday morning the Flower Hall was a hive of activity. The traders were putting last minute touches to their displays, whilst a large number of visitors eager to spend money on tools and woody things were building up at the entrance. David Blanden from West Cumbria had agreed to be part of the AWGB team, and was rescued from the crowd. At 10.30am the show was declared open and the hall began to fill and money had begun to change hands. Brian and Olive Partridge had arrived to support us and Tony began demonstrating the turning of a small lidded box. Olive had disappeared but was soon back with tea and coffee for the team, Thank you Olive.

Jim Pearson from Strathclyde arrived to complete the team and the AWGB stand came alive with visitors, enquiring at the advice clinic, viewing the slide show or watching the demonstrations taking place on the Hegner machine. Tony's wet, thin stemmed goblets seemed to draw large audiences. Some among them were just waiting to see the stem break. The stand was visited by a large number of members from various parts and non-members who apparently knew nothing of the AWGB's existence. Some people joined the Association straight away and there were enquiries about branches. Two branch startup packs were given

to enquirers and our supply of the book "Wonders in Wood" rapidly diminished. The lathe was never idle for long and the function of the woodturning advice clinic worked well throughout the weekend with answers being provided by the members about timber, tools and how to grind tools to achieve the best results.

We all agreed that our appearance in Harrogate was an outstanding success for the Association. I am convinced that we have made an impression amongst the woodturners in the North East, and we look forward to being involved in more activity in this region in the future. Thanks to all those who provided invaluable help and assistance, it was greatly appreciated.



Keeping the attention of the audience

Woodworking Shows

The AWGB will have it's traditional place at the International Woodworking Show at Alexandra Palace at the end of February, it is to be hoped that as many members as possible will come along and renew old acquaintances.

Following on from our successful debut at the North of England Show at Harrogate last November, we have been invited to have a full-blown presence at the Scottish Woodworking Show in March. Until now the AWGB flag has been more than ably flown by Strathclyde Woodturners and it is anticipated that they will be highly involved with us as well as manning their own stand. Making our presence known beyond the Midlands is long overdue and it is to be hoped that we will acquire lots of new members, and some new branches, as a result of these activities.

We have also been invited to take part in the show put on in West Sussex by timber specialists W L West & Sons Ltd of Petworth. This is another opportunity to participate in an event in an area where the AWGB does not have a particularly strong presence.

All in all, what with the seminar as well, 2007 looks like being an extremely busy year, hopefully by the end of it the Association will be bigger and stronger than ever.



**Dave listening to members points of view
with intense concentration**



A fresh play on the term "woodentop"!!



Jim Pearson hard at work demonstrating



**A visitor admires Tony's thin stemmed
goblet**

**Some of the "sights" at the
North of England Woodworking Show
at Harrogate in November 2006**

**All photographs courtesy of
David Buskell
with the exception of that of Brian Scott
which is courtesy of David Blandon**



Yasuhiro Satake at work



A soup bowl in use



Yasuhiro Satake, Seminar Highlight



Examples of Yashiro's
"Gallery" work



Seminar Highlight, Yasuhiro Satake

Whilst at the time of writing the AWGB is still awaiting the outcome of an application for a grant to assist with travel costs, there is an extremely strong possibility that the star of the show at the 2007 International Seminar will be the appearance of the Japanese turner **Yasuhiro Satake**. We are indebted to Bill Tingey, who will be acting as translator for Yasuhiro, for the photographs on the preceeding page, and the information that follows.

There is no denying the fact that the history of wood-turning in Japan is ancient. Turned items dating from around 200 B.C. were discovered at one archaeological site, suggesting that turnery was already well enough established for turned bowls to be in use, although not necessarily on a daily basis. Later on, when the Imperial court was resident in the nation's second great capital of Heijo-kyo established in 710, large quantities of turned goods were produced for the court. Then, during a six year period from 764, one million turned small wooden memorial towers, looking like miniature pagodas and containing Buddhist inscriptions, were produced by order of the Empress Shotoku, in an earnest attempt to bring peace to the then troubled nation. It was from this solid base that turnery developed and spread throughout the nation.

Yasuhiro Satake is an experienced wood-turner living in Yamanaka, which is one of the country's foremost centres for turnery close to Kanazawa. Yasuhiro is quick to point out that the development of the craft would be unthinkable without the use of "true" lacquer as a finish. Refined from the sap tapped from the sumac tree (*Rhus verniciflua*), it is known in Japanese as urushi. It has been in use in Japan for at least six thousand years and continues to be extensively utilised. Applied thinly to a wooden core, it is employed not only as a finish but also to form a ground and primer for subsequent middle and top coats, each application being cured before being rubbed down. Warmth and high humidity are required for urushi to harden into a surface which is highly resistant to most substances, repels water and is an insulator against both heat and electricity. It can cause severe skin irritation, although it is not common. It does take, however, a great deal of effort and dedication to apply the considerable number of layers required to produce this highly durable finish. Unless it becomes cracked, the finish ages gracefully and despite its hardness, urushi is soft to the touch. This is particularly important as turned bowls and other items are picked up during the course of a meal. Drinking soup directly from a bowl, for example, is the norm.

Yasuhiro's workshop is unusual for two reasons. First of

all, although there are some 200 turners in Yamanaka

itself, his is one of just three locally, in which family members are employed. Apart from himself, his two elder sons, Katsumi and Yasushi are now working with him and his wife, Ikue, who operates a copy lathe, when she is not doing housework. His uncle, Takeyoshi, is also a skilled turner and is still actively producing work at the age of 75. Yasuhiro's father was also a turner but is now content to tend his farmland.

Unlike many other turners in the area, Yasuhiro not only turns but lacquers work, too. He also produces batches of bowls or other items for specialist lacquerers. Some of his work is high-quality tableware, whereas other pieces are one-off examples of studio craft. These, too, he lacquers and sells directly from the workshop or at exhibitions.

Both kinds of work must first, of course, be rough-turned. In this state bowls are left to dry for about two to three weeks indoors until the moisture content is about 20~30%. Then they are further seasoned in a smoke room to reduce the moisture content to about 7%.

Dry wood shavings are allowed to smoulder in a drum below a room where the rough-turned goods are stacked. This method of seasoning has several advantages. First of all, the warmth speeds up the drying process, which is further aided by the fact that much of Yasuhiro's work is made from end-grain blocks. The long tube-cells in the wood therefore resemble a bunch of miniature straws and any moisture is driven out of the open ends. Smoking also keeps any hungry insects away, helps prevent cracking which may occur during drying and, perhaps most importantly, produces a much crisper cut during the final turning.

Before this, however, comes a further period of about one week when the moisture content is allowed to return to about 9%. All the air drying is done indoors on the first floor of the workshop, where the spectacle of hundreds of bowls stacked in columns to the roof is simple proof of how turnery in Japan is still a living craft and industry. It is only after this that the art and skill of the turner reach their zenith.

In ancient times, lathes in Japan were a two-man device—one person pulling on two ends of a rope twisted around the lathe shaft while the turner worked with his chisels. This style of lathe was used until the introduction of electricity in the late 19th century but one thing remains unchanged. The turner is seated and rests his turning tools on a moveable, sloping wooden rest standing on the floor, or on a staging that reaches almost to the level of the chuck.

Nowadays, rather than sitting directly on the floor to work, the turner often sits on a board slightly below floor level with his feet in a well, where two peddles

controlling the speed and direction of rotation of the lathe are located. A continuous drive from an electric motor is transferred via two webbed belts to the drive shaft, on which there are three pulleys—the one in the centre is fixed to the lathe shaft, while the ones on either side run freely. The speed and direction of turn is controlled by the position of the belts—one looped, the other twisted to provide reverse—on the fixed driving pulley. The belts are slipped across on to the fixed pulley with the foot peddles. Shaping is usually done with the piece turning towards the turner as is usual, but sanding is sometimes done with the piece turning away from the craftsman. Some turning is also done with the direction of turn reversed and the tool used above centre.

At Yasuhiro's, there are four lathes positioned on staging in one corner of the workshop. Turners sit opposite each other across a common alley so that they can face each other and if needs be, discuss work in progress. Each turner has a window with supplementary lighting being provided by a fluorescent tube.

The centre of the chuck is about 25 cm above a set of boards, on which the rest stands. These boards can be removed to accommodate large pieces of work but there is always space on which to stand the rest. With a large piece, for instance, the turner may shift his position from the side of the piece to the end in order to gouge out the interior of a vessel.

The chucks themselves are made by the turner and are jam-fit chucks. They are often made of zelkova and Yasuhiro has a large array of chucks from which to choose. A block is held in place by five sawn-off nails for the turning of the outside of a bowl. This arrangement looks unbelievably simple and even crude but is highly effective. A different chuck, which accommodates the foot of a bowl, for example, is used for the gouging out of the interior. The piece is tapped into the chuck and is literally jammed into position. A slot in the chuck facilitates the extraction of a piece, should it be jammed in too tight to be taken out easily.

Almost all of the turning is done below centre. Where as generally in the West the tool is put against the block above the centre with the wood driving onto the tool, in Japan, although the piece is also turning towards the craftsman, the cutting is done below the centre of the shaft, meaning that the wood passes the tool in a different way. The tools too, therefore, are quite different. They are either hooked tools, not unlike those used by pole turners, or a form of scraper. Yasuhiro uses a slip stone to sharpen his hooked tools.

Like many of the craftsmen and women in Japan, Yasuhiro Satake is able to draw on a traditional skill and design base, from which to develop his own work.

There is always the danger, however, that tradition is allowed to become a ball and chain and the craft simply becomes the pursuit of technical perfection. Designs, too, have become so refined and perfected

over the years there is sometimes no need or even a desire for change. But there is an unexpected anomaly here. With so many Japanese now having been brought up in modern concrete and glass surroundings and living a life-style based more on a convenience store culture than that of their forebears, traditional forms often appear as something new and modern to them. In fact, many of the traditional designs have a timeless quality that appeals not only to the young in Japan but to many discerning people across the World. Sadly, however, this does not mean that demand for the handmade article is high.

The soup bowl is perhaps Japan's most intriguing piece of turnery. Their high foot makes them easy to pick up and their overall size is determined partly by a helping, the size of which depends on the type of soup being served. The functional aspects and dimensions of such a bowl are therefore quite strictly determined and it is the job of the craftsman or woman to work within those constraints while still trying to incorporate their own stylistic or design devices to satisfy themselves and the needs of the times in which they live.

The steady demand for such standard items as soup bowls, coasters, trays, small serving dishes and fruit bowls provide a craftsman like Yasuhiro with an order book to pay most of his bills. The more highly prized studio pieces he makes are the icing on the cake and help to build his reputation. Some turners would only

More Sweepings From the Workshop Floor

A business man was interviewing a nervous young woman for a position in his company. He wanted to find out something about her personality, so he asked, "If you could have a conversation with someone living or dead who would it be?" The girl thought about the question: "The living one," she replied.

A man walks into a butcher's shop and asks the butcher, "Are you a gambling man?" "I am" replies the butcher. "OK" says the man, "I bet you can't reach up and touch that meat hanging from those hooks". "I'm not doing that" replies the butcher. "I thought you said you were a gambling man?" "I am – but the steaks are too high."



11th INTERNATIONAL WOODTURNING SEMINAR LOUGHBOROUGH University 10th - 12th August 2007

***During its 20th Anniversary Year the AWGB presents the
11th International Woodturning Seminar***

***The Seminar Fee is £240 which includes entry to all of the
seminar demonstrations, trade stands, the gallery of turned
work, seminar refreshments, lunches, dinner and the banquet on
Saturday evening***

***Bed and breakfast single accommodation available on the
University campus at £80 for the 2 nights or upgrade to an en
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DON'T MISS IT – BOOK NOW,

Oak platter

By Andrew Hall

Earlier this year I was commissioned to turn an oak platter for a retirement present. As the client's favourite wood was oak, and I had previously made some oak wardrobes, the client thought that a platter to hang on the wall would compliment the wardrobes.

Photo 1

The tools used to make the platter were from left to right:-

Round scraper, square scraper, large left curved scraper, 1/2" Bowl gouge, all rounder gouge "(swept back wings) 3/8" square ground bowl gouge, 1/2" square ground bowl gouge and finally a 1/2" and 3/8" spindle gouge. I made this project board as it is handy to have all the tools selected for a project prior to the start. I use power sanding disks to finish the platter, shown in the bottom left of the photo, and it's handy to have the chuck Allen keys at the ready.

Photo 2

The oak for the platter was harvested locally at a place called Rushy Ford in County Durham. The gentleman who owned the land contacted a friend of mine who is a commercial bowl blank supplier and asked if he would like to purchase an oak and a cherry tree that had unfortunately been blown down in the storms of 2002. I helped him out by supplying my van to pick up the timber, and in return selected four nice pieces for my efforts. I like bartering.

Photo 3

The maximum diameter I could get for the platter was 14" which I marked out with an old compass that I bought at a car boot sale for a couple of pounds.

I then cut out the platter using the band saw, I have a 14" band saw and use a 3 skip per inch x 3/8" blade to cut virtually all of my blanks and find this to be the most useful all-round blade. The main consideration is to keep the blade roller guides and guard as close as possible to the thickness of the material being cut.

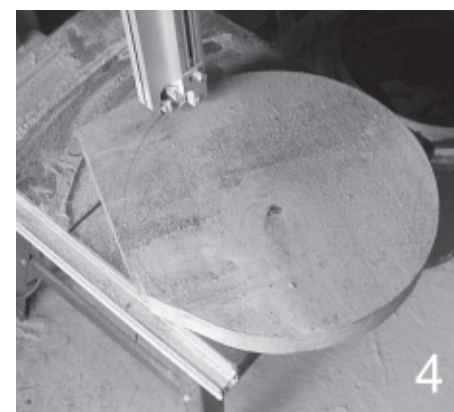
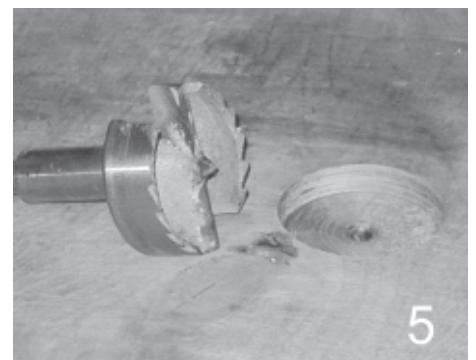
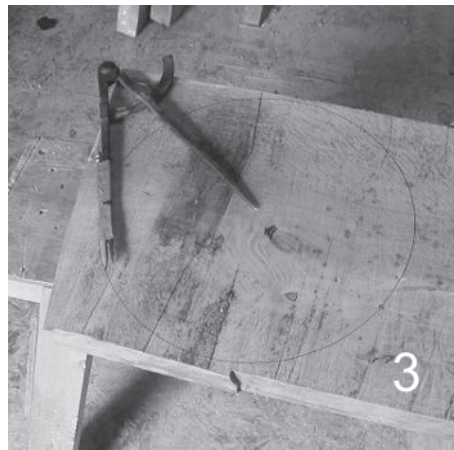
I keep a bin behind the saw to dispose of the off cuts as they occur, they do not last long in the bin as they are burnt on the wood burner to keep the workshop warm in the winter

Photo 4

I then drill a hole in the centre of the oak using a pillar drill and a 2" saw tooth bit. The centre of the platter is already established as a mark will have been left from the compass.

Photo's 5, 6 & 7

Mount the blank on to the lathe on a scroll chuck utilising the internal dovetail jaws into the 2" hole. The lathe used for this project is my restored 1946 Graduate bowl turning lathe. The lathe still has the original motor; however I needed to replace the stop/start button to comply with current regulations with regard to PAT (portable appliance testing). The lathe is not really that portable as I have bolted it into the concrete which has had a brilliant effect on the lathe's stability and vibration with large turned pieces. I have not added variable speed to the lathe and retained the 4 speed belt change pulley system.



Photo's 8, 9 & 10

I have had several tool rests made by a local engineer for the three lathes in my workshop. The rest in photo 8 is 14" long and very sturdy which is ideal for roughing large blanks to shape quickly. Photo 9 shows the basic ogee shape of the underside of the platter with a large dovetail to accommodate the dovetail jaws on the scroll chuck.

Prior to reverse chucking I would sand the rear of the platter starting with 150grit through to 600 and applying two coats of sanding sealer at grit 400 and 600. I mix the sanding sealer 50% thinners and 50% sealer. Photo10

Photo 11

The front of the platter has a large rim a quarter of the width of the finished platter. I have undercut the dish in the platter and finished the edge with a bead tooled with the small spindle gouge. Notice the natural crack on the shake in the centre of the platter. This will be stitched with leather to make a feature of the shake. As an alternative the crack could be filled with car

body filler coloured with artists' pastels or a natural black plastic padding leak fix filler and sanded to a finish.

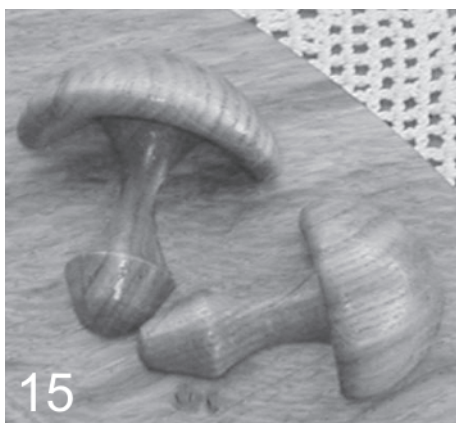
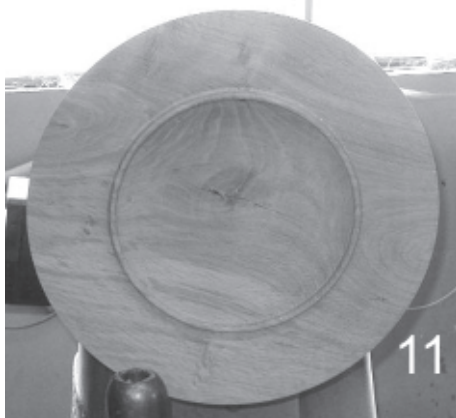
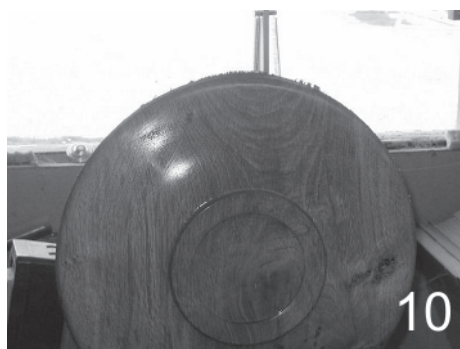
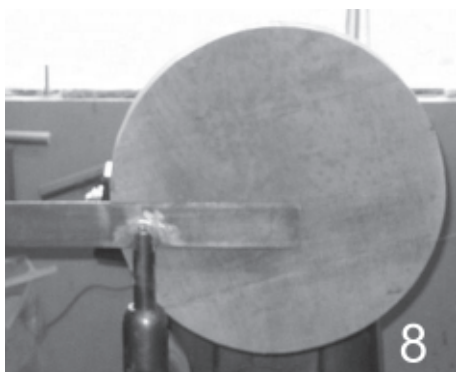
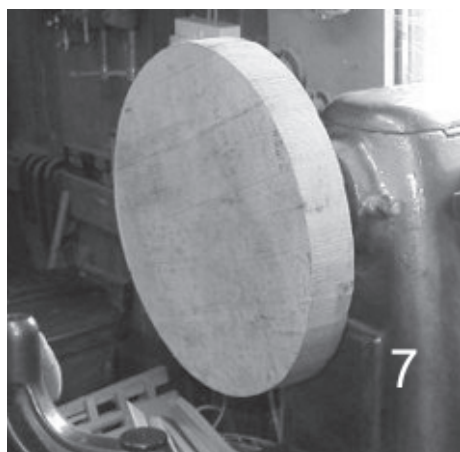
The inside of the platter is sanded and finished in the same way as the underside of the platter.

Photo's 13, 14 & 15

I have turned and decorated the platter with acorns and mushrooms. Each piece is turned as two pieces of oak glued together with paper in between so that they can be split easily and glued on to the platter. If the grain direction is carefully chosen the acorns and mushrooms can appear to have been carved on the platter.

Photo 16

The completed platter has been cut back using very fine grey web wax and finished with wax polish buffed to a satin sheen.



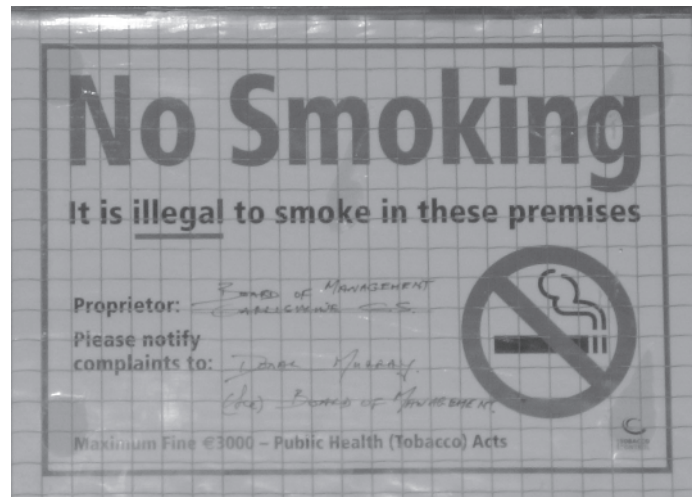
The Irish Seminar – Carrigaline 2006

by Adrian Needham

As my mother came from Limerick I have many happy and vivid childhood memories of holidays in Ireland but, for a whole host of reasons, life had conspired to keep me away for the best part of fifty years. However, courtesy of the Irish Woodturners Guild I received an invitation to attend the Irish Woodturning Seminar 2006 at Carrigaline just a few miles from Cork. Setting about making the travel arrangements I took cautious note that the flight out fell on Friday 13th! As ever, the papers enjoyed a little scaremongering about paraskevidekatriaphobia – fear of Friday 13th but, although the terrorist alerts relating to the threat of carry on liquid explosives did seem a little closer I am pleased to say that I did not succumb. It did set me to wondering where Fear of Friday the 13th might have come from and a little research suggested that the belief in Friday the 13th as a day on which Murphy's Law reigns supreme and anything that can go wrong will go wrong appears to be largely a 20th century phenomenon. Thinking that Murphy might introduce an Irish connection but, as Murphy of the law was an American scientist concerning himself with rocket experiments, I let the matter drop.

The day came, the flight was uneventful but the welcome on the part of the Cork Chapter was really quite splendid. Delegates, organisers and presenters gathered for pre dinner drinks setting the scene for what proved to be a very special social communion without, it seemed, anyone having to make any particular effort – it just happened and to me seemed to be the glue that held it all together. On my various trips to watch London Irish play rugby at the Madejski in Reading I had heard the term 'Craic' bandied about but without much explanation – to me it seemed it was a term to indicate the bar where people met for a drink. In Carrigaline, although still defying precise definition, its meaning did become much clearer, reflecting the pleasure of like minded people gathering to enjoy each others company and interests. It is also suggested that the word itself might be an acronym reflecting the component parts of a fine gathering - **C**eol (Music) **R**ince (Dance) **A**mhrain (Songs) **I**nis Scealta (Storytelling) **C**ainte (Gossip). Suffice to say the whole atmosphere of the Seminar did afford me a greater understanding of the 'craic' lending reinforcement to the phrase 'Guinness is good for you'.

But what of the Seminar itself? The venue was a local secondary school which provided ample suitable accommodation and was only a short walk from the hotel where meals were taken. One feature that is worth a quick mention as it may herald things to come for the UK, and certainly it exercised the organisers, to ensure compliance, is the ban on smoking – this picture of a sign in the school places a slightly different emphasis on 'no smoking'!



The programme showed a promising line-up of demonstrators, some who I had seen before, some I knew by reputation and others who were going to be a new experience – choosing my own programme was difficult such was the talent on offer. Saturday saw the start of the demonstrations. Delegates were up and about early and caught the traders a little on the hop as they frantically tried to complete the set up whilst delegates searched for 'bargains'. There was also the 'Instant Gallery' with a wide range of turned items including some entertaining novelties. I started with Christophe Nancy creating a 'seed'. Turning, hollowing, carving, shaping and texturing punctuated with occasional 'microwave' sessions were all part of the routine – is this a new essential piece of equipment for the workshop? The resultant form speaks for itself – this was certainly something I would want to try in my workshop.



Johannes Michelsan - shaping a hat

Next I looked in on Johannes Michelsen – a hatter of note – making a Derby. Lots of different techniques pulled together with a novel approach to get a grind that will undercut the rim, or is it the brim. At the end a very simple but effective jig to squeeze the hat out of round to get the fit.

I moved on through the programme with perennial favourites Jimmy Clewes and Reg Shirwin and the Irish turners Bill Henry and Robert O'Connor being the other big names in the main line up. Special mention also goes to the Cork Chapter who kept one of the demonstration rooms going throughout the Seminar. Amongst their line up was a young turner Sean McGann who I saw giving a one spot demo before lunch on the final day. He featured a discus type bowl using colour and the ebonising torch, engaging his audience throughout and with more than the simple enthusiasm of youth - I suspect he has the capacity to go far as a woodturner and wish him well.



Sean McGann - a name to remember

My trip to Carrigaline proved to be all I could have hoped for. The Seminar itself provided an excellent programme that must surely have fired the enthusiasm of the delegates: no doubt many went home with an enthusiasm for a new technique or a different approach to design. The quality of the main demonstrators was beyond any dispute and, as I have said, I was particularly impressed with young Sean McGann. I also noted that there was a very good smattering of youngsters amongst the delegates which bodes well for the Irish Guild. Finally, the hospitality shown to me by the Irish Guild, and the Cork chapter in particular, was quite splendid, helping to make the visit to Ireland one to remember.

From the Workshop Floor

Two cockney owls were in a bar playing pool, one missed a shot and said to his mate, "That's two 'its mate." His mate replied, "Two 'its to who?"

Turn Essex 2007

A date for your diary

Chelmer Valley Woodturners 'Turn Essex 2007' event is returning to Chelmsford and will be held on Saturday 19th May 2007 at St Peter's College in Fox Crescent. The charity we will be supporting is the Essex Air Ambulance, a service that many Essex people and visitors to our county have found invaluable. Previous events in 2001 and 2003 have raised over £3000 for the service.

Planning for the event is now in hand and clubs from our region have been approached. The format will be club meeting club with competitions for the best club display of turned work, (AWGB clubs only), and the best club stand, (open to all). A trophy will be awarded in each category, the winning club will hold their trophy until the 2009 event. Trade stands will cater for the needs of the turners.

Make sure that your club is represented in the competitions and bring your members along to join in the fun of a good day out, and show off your skills and prowess. If your club has not yet received the initial e-mail, and you wish to attend, please contact our secretary John English on 01702 546486. Formal invitations, containing details of the competitions, other events, catering and location will be sent out later.

This event will be open to the public. Based on past events we can expect an attendance in excess of 500 people. With this in mind we have already booked the arts display stand in the foyer of the Civic Theatre for the month of February to display the work of our members to the theatre goers. Plans for a photographic display of work in the atrium of County Hall are also in hand. Other events and advertising in the media will occur nearer the date.

For Sale

Myford Mystro lathe mounted on and including strong wooden bench.

Specifications: 3/4 HP reversing motor. Speeds (RPM) 350 566 916 1483 2400.Length between centres 40" Dia: over bed 11" Spindle and tailstock taper 2mt overall length 70" Manual belt change.

Complete with 3 toolrests, various chucks, including bowlturning chuck.Many extras too numerous to mention here.

Price: £650. ono.

Les Perrin 02088689943, lperrin@hotmail.com

More Shavings

This chap dropped out of medical school. It was tragic. He really wanted to be a doctor, but he just couldn't stand the sight of cash.

The Battle of the Sexes

By Frank Simpson

We are approaching the time of year when covert manoeuvrings take place in the woodturner's marital home. Being the owner of a perfectly adequate lathe – but – being a man, I always want something better. *There are two approaches to this thorny problem:*

Method One: Look at something within a reasonable price range and start to have frank and open dialogue with the Keeper of the Purse Strings (hereinafter referred to as the KOPS). Explain that you will have no trouble selling your existing lathe as they are still popular and will fetch a reasonable price. Say that the price difference will only be about £1000 and, being a reasonable man, you won't ask for another birthday or Christmas present for some years to come.

Your grovelling, naughty puppy dog approach is doomed!

You will be asked "what's wrong with your present lathe as you haven't had it long. If it will sell that quickly, then it must be a good one"

KOPS, of course, will remember every word of the conversation that took place when you entered into negotiation for the current lathe.

All the plus points that you eagerly spouted will be recounted back to you with unerring accuracy.

Sorry, my friend; socks, handkerchiefs or if you are lucky, driving gloves will be the pinnacle of your festive activities.

Method Two: Around now, complain about being stifled in your job and say that you have a burning desire to be your own man, driving and controlling your destiny. KOPS will ignore this for a while (as she's used to male moaning) but will start to worry when leaflets from the Business Initiative Board and Start-Up Agencies start to swamp the front door mat. Leave financial summaries around, showing how much you could have when the house is sold and the mortgage paid off.

Study VB36 lathe leaflets and talk knowingly about investments and the need to keep skills going in this computerised age.

"You're not thinking of becoming a professional turner, are you?" KOPS asks incredulously "Yes, why not" you reply with a puzzled look on your face as though you cannot believe such a silly question.

Up till now KOPS has supported your efforts and cooed enthusiastically when you have produced a bowl in only three days but being a pragmatic wife, she knows your output might feed the goldfish but little else.

KOPS will not be able to sleep at night as she tosses and turns and wonders how the bills will be paid. Don't weaken – keep up the unrelenting pressure.

Eventually, KOPS will suggest that you could upgrade your current lathe but not to one of those green, expensive things. "Perhaps you'll get a little bit quicker with a slightly better one" she sighs.

Don't look smug – you will be rumbled. Put on a crestfallen look and slouch away with a defeated demeanour, dragging your heels to your shed. Don't

shout "Y-E – E-E –S" too loudly as all KOPS have radar – like hearing as well as cunning intuition.

Good luck

More from youth

by Malcolm Baker

I was first properly introduced to the skill of woodturning when I was the age of nine. My parents were worried that my dyslexia was holding me back at school, I was struggling in my lessons and I needed something to build my self confidence. I had a two day woodturning course at a craft village.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, although I bought a lathe shortly afterwards, it was 2003 before the workshop was set up. I am now seventeen and have been woodturning for three years. In that time I have taken part in a number of events organised for young people including TTT1, TTT2 and a recent event held at Stuart Mortimer's home. All have been very successful in bringing young woodturners together. Indeed I didn't know there were so many young people woodturning around my age. I would like to thank all the people that have made these events possible because without them I wouldn't have had the chance to improve my skills and meet so many new people.

Due to the introduction of copy lathes and CNC machines, woodturning and other important skills have been taken off the school curriculum. I feel that this is a great shame as it has stopped young people from being able to try woodturning and is jeopardising the future of possible woodturners.

Due to my dyslexia it takes me longer to learn things, including woodturning, and although I may not be at the same level as other people my age, it is something I enjoy greatly. I am able to show my creative ability in my woodturning, where in other normal areas I am not able to do so. It was believed by many of my school teachers that I would not do well in my GCSE's, I believe that my woodturning has given me the confidence to do better in all of my curriculum activities. I took my GCSE's last summer and proved all my teachers wrong coming out with four C's and one B. Since I have left school I have qualified as a cabinet maker and pool lifeguard. This coming year I am studying level three City & Guilds Cabinet making and I hope to include some woodturning in my project. After that I am not sure what I am going to do but I know for sure that my woodturning will help me on my way.

It is for this reason that I feel that more teenage turning events should be held to encourage others and safeguard the future of woodturning for many generations to come. Please visit my site at www.malcolmdyslexia.piczo.com and see my work.

Editor's note: I understand that one of the young people from this successful weekend, Richard Bicheno, recently gave a very creditable demonstration at the Chelmer Valley branch. Another step forward!

Turning English

by John Grissom



My tuition experience with Nick Arnall actually began at the 2005 symposium at Loughborough. I had seen Nick's work before but at the symposium I had the opportunity to meet and talk with him. His excitement and approach to woodturning was contagious and I knew he was the one I wanted to learn from. I applied and received a grant and was on my way. I phoned Nick and he remembered me right away; big bearded American, I am hard to miss. We set dates and decided on hollow and thin walled turning.

Day one

The day began like all days here, with tea. We discussed safety, projects and goals for the tuition. He then put me straight to the lathe, rounding and roughing out a green ash log. He stood behind me and pointers and hints mixed with jokes helped me to relax. I squared the ends, put a tenon on one end and began shaping the other for a 7-8 inch hollow form. I roughed it out as Nick showed me some new techniques and explained why some of the techniques I used worked.

We then changed lathes, placing the rough form in a scroll chuck. We discussed the next few steps and began. We refined the shape, working to a gentle curve from the top to the foot. Nick began at this point to push me to form a smaller and smaller foot. We discussed how the smaller foot gives the piece lift and proportion. The foot was smaller than most of my previous forms and we were still roughing it. We got close but left room to adjust once hollowed.

We concentrated on the top, from the apex of the curve to the hollowing hole. It pushed me to dance around the curve with grace, not by short flat sections. Nick would clean up big tear out or catches but then make me take a final cut. My 7-8 inch hollow form was already approaching 6½ inches. I (we) got the curve perfect and I was ready to hollow; Nick was not. I first had to sand and finish the upper curve area; if I waited I would have to do it all by hand. We sanded and applied an oil finish.

Now we hollow! Nick has secrets for hollowing: take your time, use long strokes to keep it even and feel

with the tool. The small hollow form took no time to empty. It seemed we were clearing out shavings more than actually hollowing. Nick did have one secret tool; a thin half inch wide, bent end piece of metal, used for pulling out shavings before blowing the rest out. My lesson with hollowing was to increase my stroke and movement. Using my Little Brother ring tool I would leave what can only be described as hills and valleys. Nick helped me to gain the rhythm and flow of cutting with the Little Brother, producing a smoother and even inside.

We measured the depth, marked the bottom of the foot and measured cutting in to mark the foot. Nick pushed me again to make a smaller foot, giving the piece lift. We obtained a nice shape, sanded and finished the side. We reversed the form on a jam chuck, using the original mark in the foot end to line-up with the tail stock. Undercut the foot, adjusted the sides and foot, sanded and refinished the finish. Lunch!

Returning to Nick's shop we admired and critiqued my hollow form, decided to add a rim and got a cup of tea. Nick pulled out a glue up of a contrasting wood on a waste block to make the rim. Cut and fit the collar, shaped, sanded and finished the added rim. Placing the rim on the hollow form, I was finished. Nick was not, asking if I was ready to start a tall thin walled vase. A cup of tea later we began roughing down a green log. Into the scroll chuck and shaping the outside began. Nick talked of keeping it simple and ensuring a good curve, stopping often and checking the curve. The outside came quick and smooth, leaving the last two inches for once the hollowing was done. The hollowing was better, a much larger opening to hollow through, and faster. I used both the Little Brother and the Keyton system, discussing limits, pros and cons of both. Sand the inside and outside with oil before reversing and jam chucking. The tailstock is pulled up for safety and the final two inches finished out and a bottom undercut.

Nick and I took a step back and reviewed the two works. He had me critique the pieces first before he gave his view. We reviewed the day before ending with a cup of tea.

Day two

Day two began with a cup of tea while discussing the two pieces again. The thin walled vase had begun to warp and concerns, solutions and artistic uses were discussed. Nick then pointed to the corner at the largest log I had ever seen, and it was waiting for me. The plan was for Nick to relax while I showed him everything I had learned the day before just on a larger piece. I followed the same procedure and had no problems producing my largest piece ever (8" tall and 8" wide). The size allowed me to try every hollowing tool Nick had. I was very impressed with myself and my hollow vessel.

This was the end of the second day. We finished with discussing the 2 days and the pieces created. Nick was on his way to America to teach and give some demonstrations and I was off to my shop to practice. We agreed to get together and complete our three days with texturing technique after the summer.

Design in freedom - Part 2

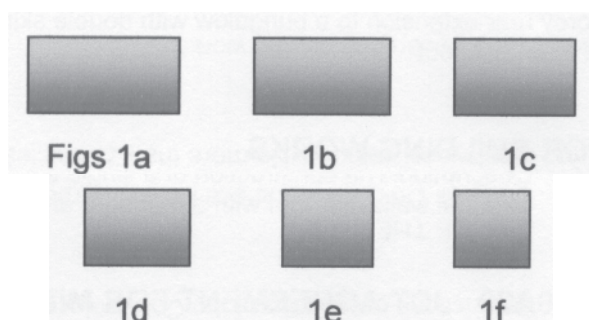
by Derek Hayes

In the first of these occasional articles (Revolution No 78, August 06, P10) the idea of a list of unwritten laws for woodturning design held within the subconscious was muted.

Feedback suggested an interest in delving deeper into some of the arguments raised. To this end, we will investigate the concept of shape and form using the circle as a starting point in the design of forms.

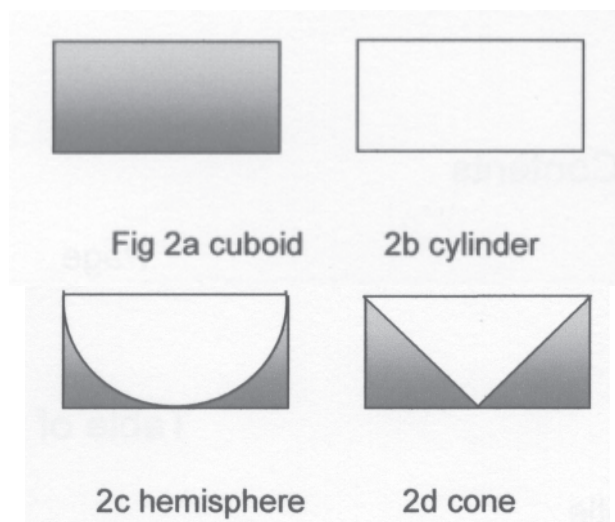
Unlike the turned domestic item, where good design begins with an awareness of purpose - the Bauhaus idea of *form following function*, 'vessel-orientated' pieces have no need to obey such a rule. This offers a range of design opportunities. In woodturning, line, like most art forms, describes shape, indeed without line there is no shape. I suggested that although inherently a 3D form, woodturning could be considered as 2D by virtue of the fact that in silhouette, bowls already provide the majority of their visual information. The 3-dimensional description form is the more usually applied term and is brought about by side-lighting and relief-techniques such as carving, texturing and colouring etc. Your perception of the object depends on its relationship to the textures and colours around it. Subtle lighting or bright lighting can 'lift' or 'lower' an object quite considerably. (Bert Marsh, Wood Turner, GMC 1995, Page 21)

Concentrating on the 'pure' form without texturing, colouring, carving or lighting, proportion is usually the first consideration and to this end it is useful to stay with the 2D view. Whilst it could include the ratio of colour I will concentrate on the height/width relationship of the turned form. This gives rise to the question, "Is there a perfect ratio of height to width?" In an attempt to answer this, most books on wood-related crafts will refer to the Golden Mean, the ratio 1:1.618. Look at the rectangles shown in Fig 1. Does one of them present itself to you as the most attractive?



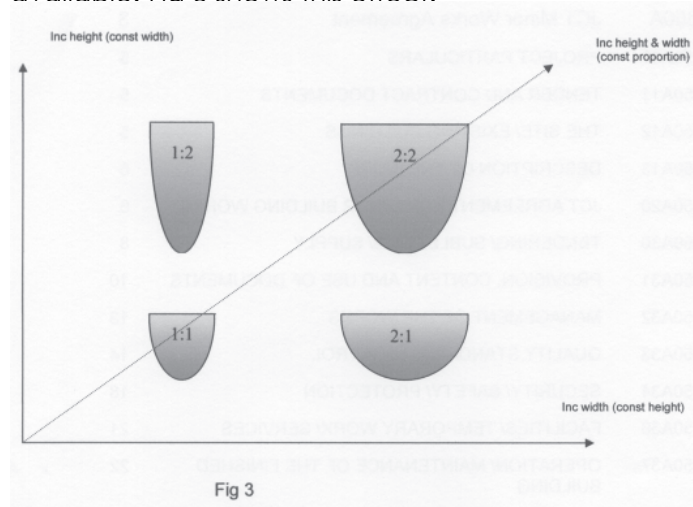
The golden mean would suggest you choose 1c, but perhaps you prefer 1d which approximates to the A4 paper system (1:1.414). For reference, the ratios from 1a to 1f as shown are 1:2, 1:1.8, 1:1.6, 1:1.4, 1:1.2, 1:1. We will only be considering bowl forms and not tall vessels as this would complicate the issue. To see what I mean, turn this page on its side and see if your favourite remains the same.

By now, most of you will be thinking, hold on I don't turn rectangles - my bowls are round! Let's look at the 1:2 ratio (Fig 1a) and mentally turn a bowl from it.



The largest form possible, the cuboid 2a would have a square plan (rather tricky to turn!), offering the maximum volume and surface area, 2b would be a more believable cylindrical form. It is interesting to note that a cylinder with the same diameter as the cuboid when viewed in 3D appears narrower. 2d would be conical giving the minimum possible volume for a vessel with convex sides, 2c is a hemisphere which incidentally gives the maximum volume for the minimum surface area - the reason that bubbles form in nature.

The choice of the 1:2 ratio for Fig 2 was chosen specifically to enable the possibility of producing the hemisphere. If the ratio is changed by either increasing the height or the width this form would no longer be available. Fig 3 shows this effect.



Staying with the circle, the open form describes shapes which flow outward with a rim diameter of at least that of the circumference). The simplest is shown at Fig 4a (where $ac=2R$); hardly a stable shape with the base

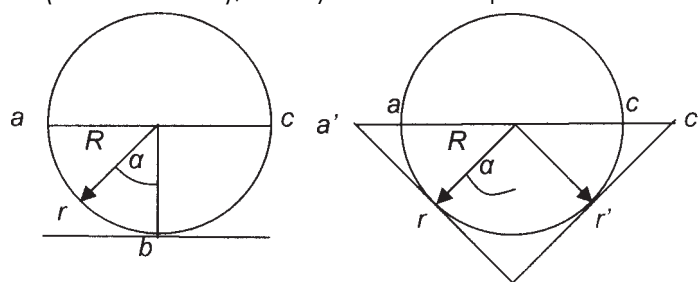


Fig 4a

Fig 4b

consisting of the single point b.
 With $\tilde{\alpha}$ at an angle of 45° to the vertical the radius R touches the circle at point r.
 If then we draw a tangent at point r we begin to see the makings of a typical open form with a new, larger diameter a'c' (Fig 4b)

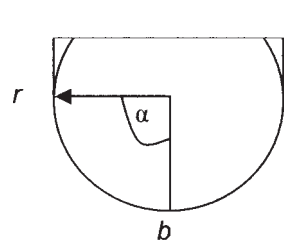


Fig 5a

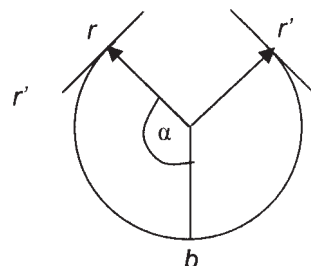


Fig 5b

A different form can be produced by changing the point on the circumference at which the tangent is drawn. With $\tilde{\alpha}$ at 90° , a tangent at r produces straight sides above the horizontal again producing an open form with a constant diameter of ac.

If $\tilde{\alpha}$ is $> 90^\circ$ and we draw a tangent to the new point r we create a closed form. So a tangent at any point where $\tilde{\alpha} \leq 90^\circ$ will create an "open form" using a simple definition of the opening being as large as the widest diameter of the form. The definition of when a bowl becomes a platter is much more to do with the ratio of height to width. The smaller this ratio the more obviously it is a platter.

If, as in Fig 5b, we increase $\tilde{\alpha}$ so that it is $> 90^\circ$, the form becomes closed with its opening being less than its largest diameter.

It can be seen that the advantage of using the circle for discussion is that although in practice, the line of the bowl in Fig 5a on one side is made of 2 curves br and ra (an arc and a tangent), the curve appears continuous as we have opted for a tangent at point r. If the curve is created by a line other than a tangent from the circle there is an observable disjunction at the point r.

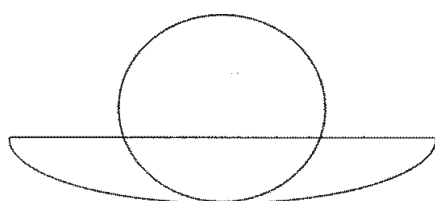


Fig 6a

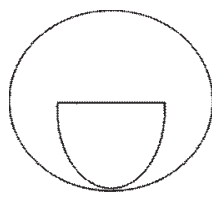


Fig 6b

Fig 6a and 6b show two ordinary woodturning forms (ignoring their single point bases of course). I have included a circle to give an idea of variance from the circular form rather than to suggest that the shape arises from adaptation of that circle.

Consider for a moment Fig 6a as we increase its diameter whilst maintaining its height as shown in Fig 7. The base becomes "flatter" as the angle of incline ($\tilde{\alpha}$) becomes more acute.



Fig 7

Note it is not the angle of incline which defines the bowl/platter nature, but the height (shown here as R, the radius of the enclosed circle).

This incline angle is very important in making the bowl either 'work' or not. Richard Raffan suggests (Turned-Bowl Design, Taunton Press 1987, P55) a general rule that "the curve should set off from the base at no less than 35° ". Raffan argues that if this incline angle is too shallow (or acute) the form becomes "slumped and heavy".

This is something you may care to investigate by looking at photos or real examples from professional turners. Better soon your own work - take a digital photograph of a bowl in silhouette, print off the picture on matt paper and draw in circles to test for a fit. In Fig 8a and 8b I have overlaid circles on examples of some simple turnings to show variance from the 'perfect circle'. In 8a there are no obvious tangential inclines whilst 8b's vertical tangents at the sides flow upwards. Do your preferred examples suggest any common geometric features which make them more attractive than others? I would guess that most would prefer 8a to 8b for instance.

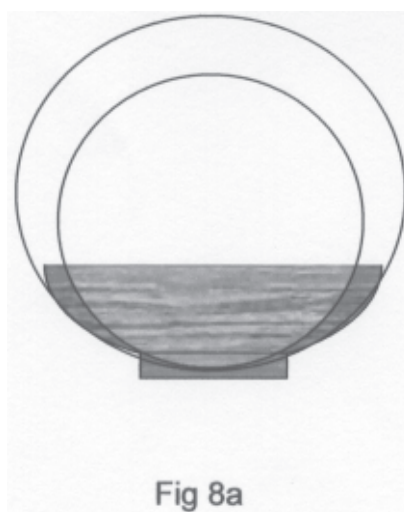


Fig 8a

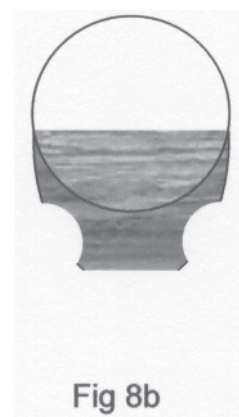


Fig 8b

To summarise, any curve (ie any line which isn't straight) has an infinite number of variations, whilst in practice those generally found attractive are surprisingly few. Although the circle is a good starting point to categorize open forms and remains the simplest curve, it is rarely seen in turned items. It is much more likely that we will observe catenaries (curves formed by items such as the necklace and shown in Fig 7). Unlike a row of pearls however, the bowl needs a base, not only on which to stand but also, to enhance and complete the form. This will be the starting point for our next visit to woodturning design.

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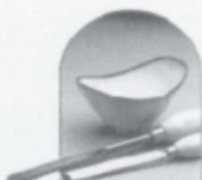
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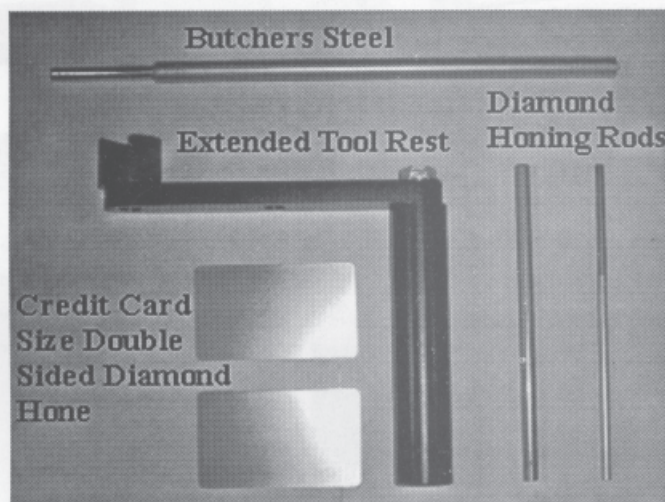
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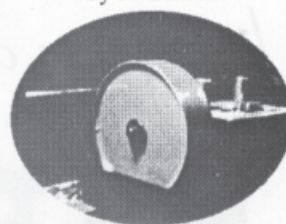
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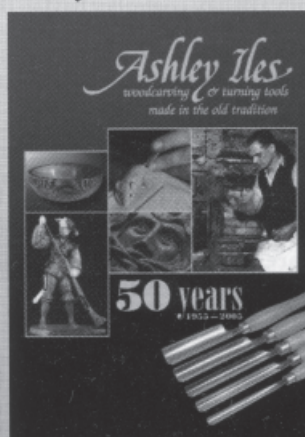
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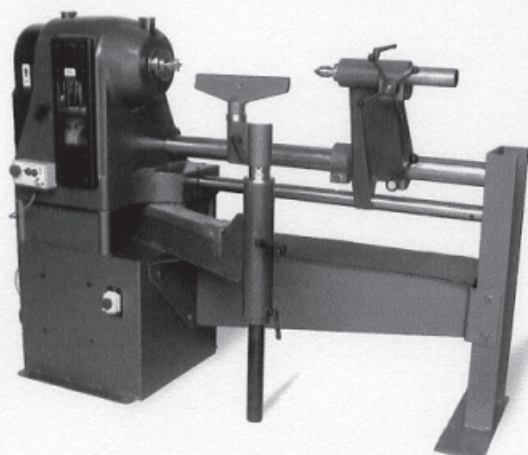
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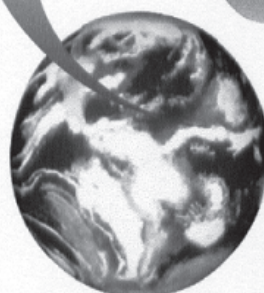
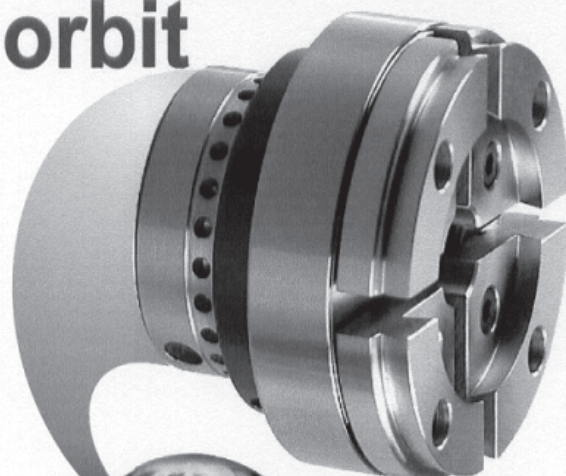
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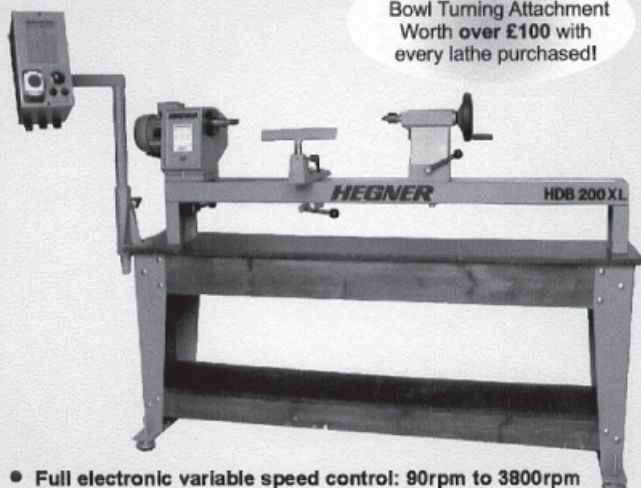
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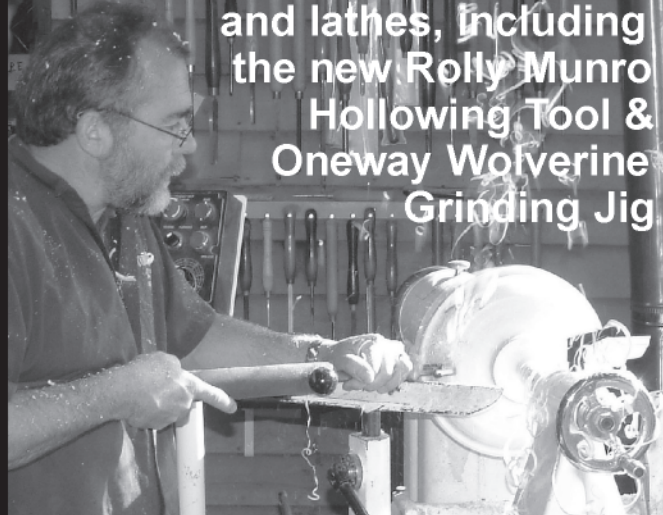
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