

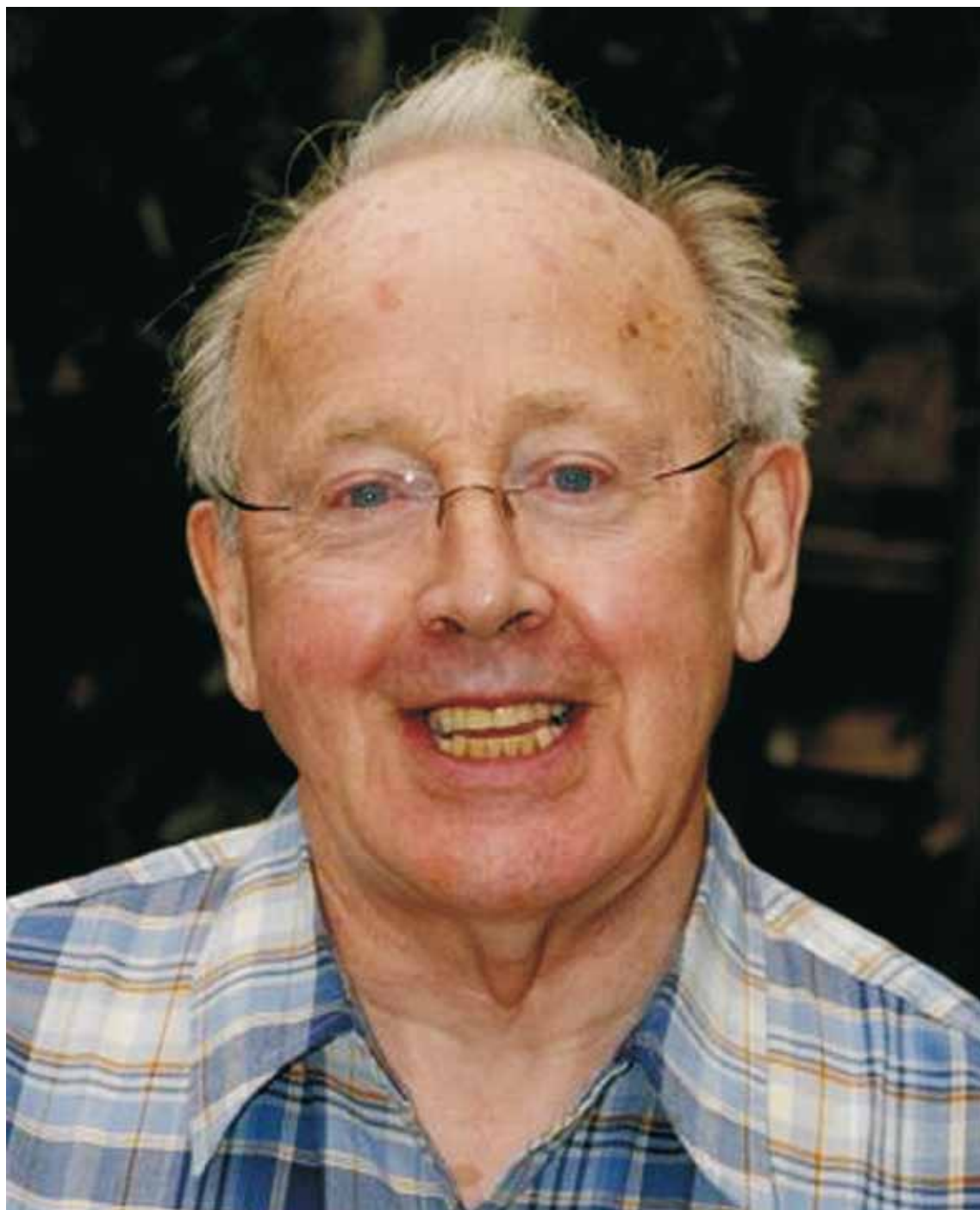


# *Revolutions*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF WOODTURNERS OF GREAT BRITAIN

Issue No 98

September 2011



BERT MARSH 1932 - 2011

*[www.woodturners.co.uk](http://www.woodturners.co.uk)*



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## Chairman's Notes

Well, as you might imagine I've been very busy with the Seminar over the last few months. Even though we have a fairly well tested system there are always complications and unforeseen events. The major problem this time was one of our overseas presenters suddenly had the possibility of cancelling with about two weeks to go. This was due to a serious family illness, so it was necessary to try and arrange a standby situation. Happily, although it generated a lot of work it wasn't needed in the final event. Our invited honoured guest withdrew when it was too late to find a replacement, but happily our President, Ray Key, agreed to be pressed into service to fill the gap. Finally our official photographer Charles Sharpe had to withdraw due to illness. Anyway that is all behind us now and the show goes on.

I'm writing this a week later, (after being harassed by Lionel), and the Seminar is now over. The delegates said they enjoyed it, the trade seemed pleased and all enjoyed the improved venue. We are all exhausted but at the same time pleased that our efforts produced a professional event. I would like to thank all the delegates who supported the Seminar and provided the attraction of the extensive gallery. Congratulations to Paul Hannaby for winning the coveted Tony Boase award and to Tom Streeter for retaining the Geoff Cox award.

Finally I must thank and congratulate all the AWGB committee for their unstinting effort over the weekend. I must specifically thank Adrian Needham for being involved in booking all the accommodation and meals requested, (continuously changing), and coping with the loss of mains water to one block during the event and his continual involvement with the financial requirements of the Internet auction and the event itself. Andy Coates also deserves special mention for his involvement before the Seminar organising the auction participants, (easier said than done). At this point I should mention that the Internet auction sold 35 turnings for over £14,780

The Seminar hasn't taken up all our time, everything else carried on as normal. I recently attended Gilwell 24 - a very large Scout event on the fringe of Epping Forest - a bit like Glastonbury, with activities. In a large marquee our East Herts and Cambridge branches organised demonstrations and set up fifteen lathes with tutors. In all just under 200 scouts and some leaders experienced 30/45 minute turning sessions. This went some way to publicising our scout badge initiative. Shortly after Gilwell 24 they did the same thing on a slightly smaller scale at another event called CamJam. I

.....continued on page 4

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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For name badges, as used at the Seminar  
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All available from the AWGB secretary (details opposite)  
Make all payments to AWGB

## Front Cover

### Photograph of

Bert Marsh

courtesy of Ray Key  
and 'Woodturning'  
magazine

Copy deadline  
for the next  
edition of  
Revolutions

October 15th



would like to see more clubs willing to help the young in this way.

The weekend before the Seminar I visited the Youth Training week-end at the home of Linda and Stuart Mortimer. Eleven young people, nine of them on a first visit, all enjoyed both the turning instruction and taking part in a group activity. Letters have been received from parents congratulating the AWGB and the Worshipful Company of Turners for providing the facilities to allow these events to take place.

Work has progressed on the feasibility study to provide a woodturning qualification. A set of modules has been written for a certificate in Woodturning. Trials will be held at an education centre in South Wales and in the skill centre at Axminster Power Tools. If the trials are successful then it can be expanded and work can continue on the higher qualification - A Diploma in Woodturning.

I would just like to stress once again that if you want the AWGB to continue we need more people willing to assist in running the Association. There is an advert in this issue for a Treasurer - please consider if you have the skills to help with this. Our whole organisation relies on volunteers both at Club and national level - we are all turners working for the benefit of all.

## A Peeling Cut

Here is an example of an idea for a competition! It is a real apple and the challenge is to peel it using a skew. From a technical standpoint it is of course made more challenging as an apple is off centre to start with, unless perhaps it is an EU perfectly symmetrical apple.



Pictured is Denis Woodley of the Cambridge Woodturners Club on the occasion of a local arts and crafts show.

## Unlucky for Some?

Lionel Pringle

The title line of this piece was certainly not true for the vast majority of delegates, committee and presenters who were present at the thirteenth AWGB International Seminar, over the weekend of 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> August. But there is no doubt that for some there was an element of bad luck in as far as the outcome of the two auctions held at this year's seminar was concerned. Auctions are an adversarial arena and there are always winners and losers. I am pleased to say that the element of competition reaped rich rewards for the Association. The second AWGB internet auction saw successful bids placed well in excess of £14000, and due to the generosity of the makers who made their work available the AWGB accrued in the region of £9000 to add to the Member Development Fund. The traditional post banquet auction raised another £2000 plus to add to the pot. This means that we have funds which will enable us to expand on the current programme of courses that are open to members.

We have a wide ranging selection of course types available ranging from youth training through to demonstrator training and specific courses for particular methods and modes of working. For a complete breakdown of what is available to you as a member have a look at our website or get in touch with our Training Officer, Peter Bradwick, whose details you will find on page three of this newsletter.



**Tom Streeter receives the Geoff Cox Award from Peter Bradwick.**



**Tom Streeter's rwinning piece.**

As has come to be expected of AWGB Seminars delegates were once again subjected to a feast of woodturning with a wide ranging collection of demonstrators presenting a myriad of techniques and ideas.

The 'Tony Boase Award', awarded to the delegate who in the opinion of the selectors had provided the best piece of work in the Instant Gallery, was presented by Jackie Boase to Paul Hannaby. The 'Geoff Cox Award', for the best piece of work in the gallery by a junior was presented by Peter Bradwick to Tom Streeter. Well done to both recipients.

As part of the presentations at the Seminar banquet and In recognition of his contribution to the success of our auctions in past years the Association awarded Nicholas Somers, our esteemed auctioneer, Honorary Life Membership of the AWGB. This came as a total surprise to the recipient and had even Mr Somers searching for words.

Many delegates let me know that they were leaving the seminar with all their woodturning juices reinvigorated and raring to go. How many I wonder managed to postpone the temptation of going to the workshop until Monday morning?

Another very successful weekend for the AWGB. We hope to see even more of you in August 2013. In the meantime hopefully the accompanying photographs will help give a flavour of just what went on.



**Paul Hannaby receives his award from Jackie Boase and Jackie receives flowers from Ray Key. Paul's winning piece is shown below.**



**The delegates show their appreciation of the lives of Bert Marsh and Bill Jones.**



**Ray Key opening the Instant Gallery.**





**Nick Somers receives his award from Reg Hawthorne**



**Maggie Wright living dangerously.**



**Marilyn Cambell enjoying her work.**



**Detail of a piece by Trevor Lucky.**



**Joey Richardson holds court.**



**A bowl from  
Les Thorne's  
'Harlequin'  
series.**



**Three splendid examples of Nick Arnall's work.**





Yann Marot at work.



Detail from a Hans Weissflog bowl.



Tracy Owen decorating a platter.



John Wessel working on sheet pewter.



Jason Breach helps Marilyn with the housework.



The delegates besiege the trade stands.



One of John Wessel's beautiful pieces.

## **Bert Marsh**

### **September 10th 1932 – May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2011**

**On May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2011** the world of woodturning lost one of its finest exponents and greatest characters. He was my closest and dearest friend in the woodturning world; we shared and did so much together over 26 years

His talents were exceptional, his understanding of material and form were second to none, and he was a perfectionist in whatever he did. He was a legend in his own lifetime and left his mark wherever he went.

Woodturning was the beneficiary of his talents almost by default; it was his serious heart issues of the late 70's and early 80's that forced him out of the job he loved as a senior lecturer at Brighton Polytechnic. There he helped design the degree course he taught in Wood, Metal, Ceramics and Plastics, his knowledge was wide, wood his real true love.

His book 'Bert Marsh – Woodturner' is a seminal publication, almost biographical, chronicling his childhood, education, military exploits and previous careers plus much more. He was a skilled furniture maker, he studied greatly and had many letters after his name, modesty meant he seldom used them.

I first met Bert in 1985; I had an exhibition at the British Craft Centre (now Contemporary Applied Arts) my wife Liz was with me. Bert came up from the basement and said "you don't know me; I'm Bert Marsh" adding "not bad". We had instant rapport; we had a shared deference and a healthy irreverence towards those we encountered and much else in life.

#### **Competitions:**

I was well aware of Bert's ability as a turner as I had been judging his work for a number years, he swept the board in all the competitions he entered. The show organisers were worried as entries fell; I suggested they made him a judge which they duly did.



**Bert critiquing a piece of Bob Chapman's work at the  
AWGB Seminar in 2009**

#### **Judging:**

From then on he and I judged together for over twenty years at major shows everywhere. His impartiality and ability to appreciate all nuances in the turning field was to be applauded, his knowledge unsurpassed.

I offer this example; we were judging a set of John Ambrose Yew ladles. Bert says "He has done well with these; there are no sanding heat checks." One thing worried him though, purple markings, which I dismissed as something common in Yew. On we went; suddenly he says "We are going back to those ladles. Thought so" he said "That purple is caused by PVA glue". Nothing got past him; the glue sent the Yew purple and in so doing helped disguise the heat checks.

If you were a winner in a competition in which Bert was a judge, your piece had been well

scrutinised I can assure you.

#### **AWGB:**

Bert attended the two meetings in 1986 & 87 held at our home prior to the formation of the AWGB, he attended the first Seminar. He never held office but played an active part in many of the early shows where the AWGB raised money for various charities; he would often help price and display.

He was one of the selectors of an early AWGB Exhibition held at David Woodward's 'From the Wood Gallery'. He was the selector of the 100 objects from the 1997 Seminar Instant Gallery that made up the AWGB 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Publication. It was on his insistence that each piece had its own page. Instead of a show catalogue, we had a major book. The book actually contained 101 pieces. As Bert had not selected one of his own, I asked David Ellsworth to go and select one. He was an official advisor to AWGB for a number



of years.

He certainly should have demonstrated at more than one of the AWGB Seminars and been the Guest of Honour much earlier, he chose to decline both offers on a couple of occasions.

In a way he had a bit of a love hate relationship with the Association for a while. This was around the time of the millennium, he was having health issues again and life became difficult for a time. Around this time our friendship cooled for a short while, I dropped him a line saying we were like two geriatric kids. He phoned soon afterwards and our friendship became even stronger than before.

One of my greatest pleasures was in 2009 when at last he was the AWGB's Guest of Honour at the bi-annual seminar and having the pleasure of presenting him with an AWGB Life Membership plaque. As I told stories against and about him he feigned embarrassment (oh!! not that one, with head in his hands) afterwards he got on my case for not telling certain stories. As I told him, I could have gone on for hours there are so many.

It quickly became the Bert Marsh show, until that time I don't really think he realised the depth of the affection in which he was held by the woodturning community. At 2.00am that morning he was telling a group outside my bedroom window how to cut the tree to get the best grain configuration. Soon after he was banging on my door saying he wanted to talk to me, he got short shift. I told you he was a character.

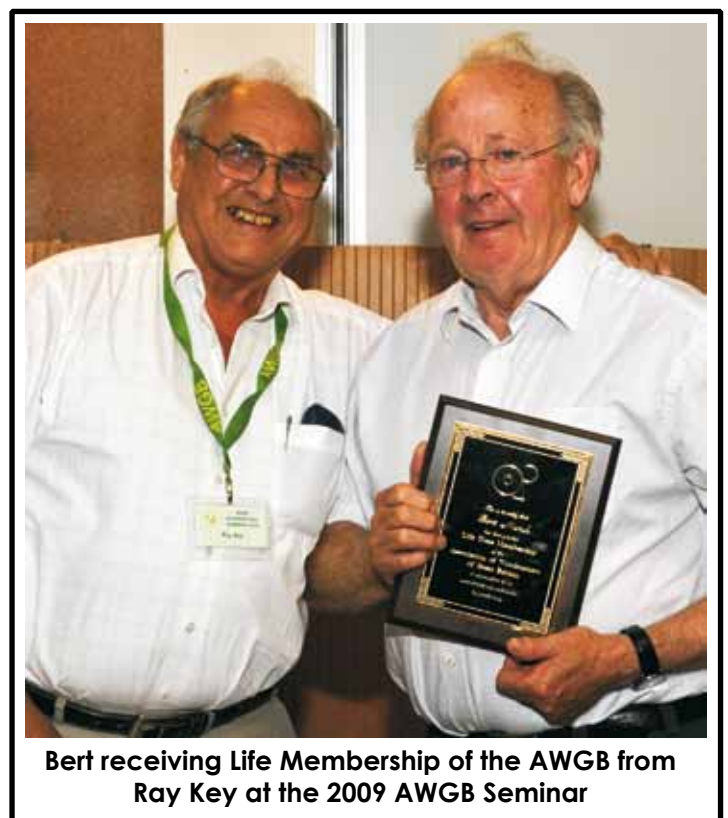
#### **RPT:**

He attended many of the Register of Professional Turners craft meetings; he much enjoyed the convivial lunches and the events afterwards, often orchestrated by him.

He didn't suffer inane conversation or comment easily. One memorable occasion comes to mind; for the third year running the Register's tie-on tags were being discussed. One turner was lamenting he couldn't tie the labels on his bows; Bert helpfully suggested he banged a nail in the side. This was greeted with howls of laughter and total disdain by the affronted turner. He had an impish wit.

The Black Friar was the watering hole after the business of the day was concluded, he became the piper of these outings, fun and merriment guaranteed. A meal at his favourite Italian restaurant with opera singing waiters or a nearby Chinese was the order of the day.

Many a person arrived at their home destinations to find public transport shut down for the night due to the lateness of the hour, an expensive taxi ride was required.



**Bert receiving Life Membership of the AWGB from Ray Key at the 2009 AWGB Seminar**

#### **WCT:**

Bert embraced with gusto his involvement with the Worshipful Company of Turners; he had judged their bi-Annual competitions for years. In 2002 he and I were granted their Freedom by Presentation, an honour that is quite rare. Later that year he took the Livery and attended many of the events organised by the company.

Livery dinners and lunches particularly were to his liking, I was his guest on more than one occasion, and he was in his element. He had an ability to communicate with anyone as he treated the road sweeper or a knight of the realm in just the same way.

On one occasion he was seated next to a Knight of the Realm and enquired if he should call him Sir, the gentleman concerned said no he could call him Bill, Joe or whatever. Bert's response was "Well you can call me Sir", this was just typical of him and one of the reasons he endeared himself to so many.

When he was made a Freeman, he pointed out to the old Beadle the damage to the architrave he had done with his staff, as he banged this to gain the call to enter the Court. The Beadle looked up and embarrassed

said "I didn't realize I had done so much damage." Of course he hadn't, this activity had been going on for 400 years.

Another time Bert arrived late for dinner and waited outside the banquet hall for the procession of the Beadle, the Master, the Lord Mayor and the Wardens to pass. The Lord Mayor noticed Bert and stopped to speak to him, holding up proceedings. All were puzzled on how he knew Bert; they had met previously at the Guild Hall. The Company had commissioned Bert to make a presentation piece to commemorate the millennium. He was introduced to the Lord Mayor then; he must have made some impression for him to remember him again, typical.

### **Woodworking Publications & Shows:**

It is not commonly known that when the 'Woodturning' magazine was started it was Bert who they turned to for guidance. In fact he found himself unwittingly being interviewed to be its first Editor. He was an adviser to the magazine for years.

When Practical Woodworker launched the NEC Woodturning Show in the 90's it was Bert who was turned to for advice. He had considerable input into who was invited to demonstrate etc. He said little about these involvements, he was essentially a modest and shy man, and I know the shy bit might surprise a few, but it is true. He demonstrated at many of the major shows, Wembley, NEC, Axminster to name just a few, and judged competitions at them all. I well remember one Bristol Docks Woodworker Show where he and I were judging, there was an impressive line up of judges for other competitions including Alan Peters etc.

The previous year lunch was taken on a moored restaurant boat; Bert was not impressed with Chicken in the Basket. This time he noticed there was an à la carte restaurant on the boat, that's where we headed with the blessing of the then Editor. When the bill came, the aforesaid Editor turned ashen, I am sure that lunch took care of the entertainment budget for a couple of years.

Axminster was his favourite show; many a social evening was to be enjoyed there after some serious judging and demonstrating. Ready Steady Turn was a notable feature, here you turned against the clock, and the pieces made were then auctioned to raise funds for the Devon Air Ambulance Service. Bert's pieces always fetched the most money. On one memorable day he was turning away and about to start sanding when I appeared behind him, with some 40 grit sandpaper. There must have been 200 people watching him, uproar followed. We did some terrible things to each other over time, all in good natured fun.

Over the years we became a bit of a double act being described at various times by various people as Laurel and Hardy, Morecambe and Wise and Tom and Jerry, the latter was the way I thought of us. This was started by my wife Liz. For several years Richard Raffan, Dale Nish and Bert stayed at our house when the NEC Show was on, each day I drove us all there and back. Bert and I were always joking and taking the mickey out of each other, it was all getting a bit much for Richard and he was telling Liz of our banter. She said to him "They are like Tom and Jerry." On the way home that night Richard told Bert that was who we were like. Bert gets home and says to Liz "You know what that cheeky so and so said? Ray and I are like Tom and Jerry." Liz never did own up, she let Richard take the blame.

### **Exhibiting at Craft Fairs:**

Bert loved to show and sell his work; he loved people and his fellow craftsmen. He encouraged and almost mentored some of those just starting out. It took him back to his teaching days imparting his expertise to students and encouraging their skills. Any show you did would find him in the embrace of some lady; these were either ex students who thought the world of him or good customers. His innocent little boy lost look, worked every time, they all wanted to mother him, and I used to tell him they should smother him.

He was almost ever present from the mid 80's at Chelsea Craft Fair, later followed by Origin. Art in Action was a favourite also. He was selected for quality events nationwide, however he would often show at small one day charity fairs; these were places you wouldn't have expected to find him.

For the most part he was extremely successful at all events; he built up a considerable following and loyal clientele, plus an impressive mailing list. One mutual customer had 150 pieces when he died at a young age; it is not often you find a collector like that for wood in the UK.

Evenings at such events were the time for fun, a meal or picnic, certainly a drink, he loved to orchestrate these evenings. Punting was a love; on the Isis for Art in Action and the Avon in Bath, one year he fell in the Isis only to see his wallet with all his takings, including cheques and credit card slips bobbing on the water, this got his attention. He was a good swimmer so no problem, that night his room was like a Chinese laundry but



with notes, cheques and credit card slips hung out to dry.

I was reminded in the USA just recently of Bert's sense of fun and love to shock by Stony Lamar; he was saying how sad he was to hear of his passing. He recalled going into a bar with Bert and him asking the bar maid if she knew how to make a Screaming Orgasm.

He loved to do things like that, this all started in the 90's in Bath, we were doing some failing show. Seriously bored, a few of us, one a young lady jeweller went to a cocktail bar, Bert was much taken by the descriptive names of the cocktails. Last year in November I was doing a show and he phoned me, opposite me was the same young jeweller some 15 years later. So I handed her the phone to speak with him, it wasn't long before her cheeks coloured, I knew in an instant what he had said. All innocent fun but his impish humour still prevailed despite his health problems. There are legions of stories I could recall similar to this.

#### **Shows in the USA:**

Bert showed a number of times in New York and San Francisco at trade shows; here he had even more fun. One restaurant in New York saw him get all the diners dancing and on the same night witnessed him getting engulfed by hundreds of toilet rolls in the Gents. It could only happen to Bert. Again there are legions of stories here to tell, so many that I could quite literally write a book on his exploits, many of the best were when I wasn't with him, did I have restraining influence on him? I think not. On numerous occasions I cried with laughter and almost fell off my chair as he regaled me with stories of his exploits over the phone. He was something else.

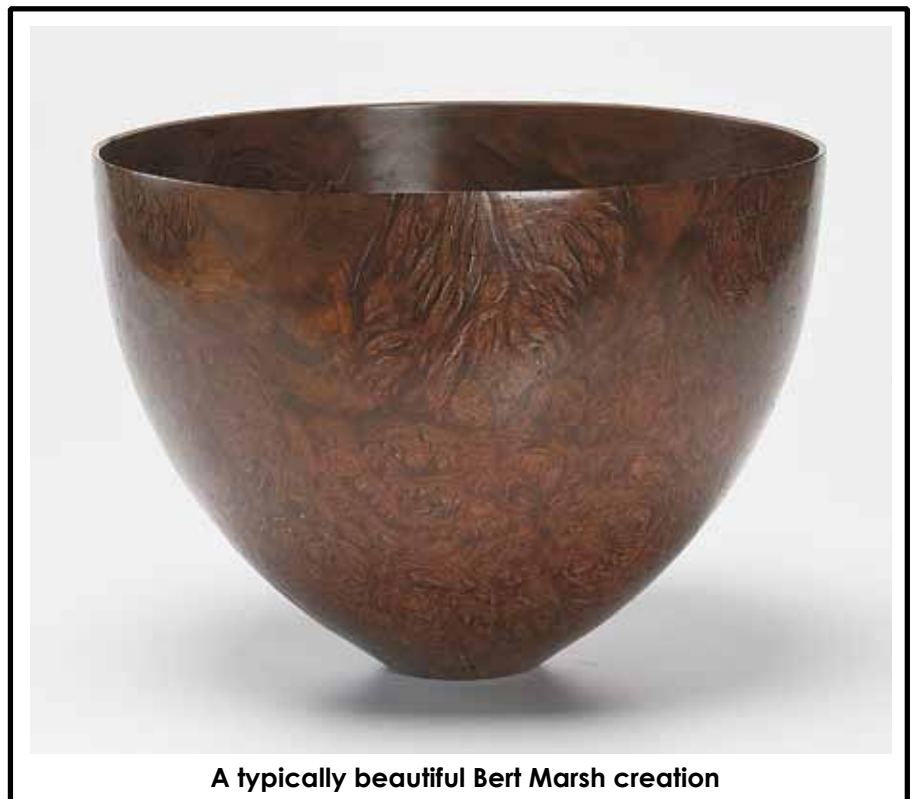
#### **Exhibitions:**

His work was exhibited and appreciated around the world; particularly in the USA. The Del Mano Gallery in Los Angeles showed his work constantly, he had more 'One Man - Featured Artist' shows there than any other turner.

One of his proudest moments was an Exhibition in 1998 at the San Francisco Craft & Folk Museum. Simultaneously in another gallery space the internationally renowned ceramists Lucie Rie & Hans Coper work was being shown. His exhibition attracted a bigger audience, he was also very proud that Lucie Rie owned 3 of his bowls.

His work was shown at leading galleries across the UK and could always be found at Contemporary Applied Arts. He showed alongside

some of the biggest names in the craft world throughout his life. He was respected by all those who knew him: he was a leader in his field for over twenty five years.



**A typically beautiful Bert Marsh creation**

#### **Disrespect:**

Over the years we were unmercifully disrespectful to each other; it was a point scoring game we played. When I look back I did some terrible things. One year there was a review in one of the leading newspapers of Chelsea Crafts Fair saying his stand was like an 'Oasis of calm' I showed up next day with a flower arranger's oasis and placed it on his stand. It was a while before he noticed.

He supplied David Linley for years and he always said his bowls and vases were not for use, which of course they weren't, as they were so delicate. I had great pleasure in telling him one day he had become a maker of bowls for use; he screwed his face up as he did when exasperated and said "What are you on about?" I told him I had just walked past Linley's and all his bowls were full of pot-pourri, he was not amused.

Both the above are mild to one prank I played on him; it had such an effect that he stopped making his tiny little branch wood laburnum bowls for about three years. Then one year he sent me one in the post for

Christmas, he started to make them once again then.

### **Ribald Irreverence:**

Just recently I came across a card from our late great shared friend Keith Rowley. This was congratulating me on becoming a Freeman. He noted that the Rt. Hon. Member from Brighton had been similarly honoured. Keith commented that Bert had been a 'freeman' for years as he (Keith) always had to buy the drinks.

Bert's, 2010 Birthday card to me, about summed up our friendship. *'In these politically correct days, some would call you a person of experience or a wise citizen..... but I say B-----s! You're just old.'* A hand written disclaimer followed saying "Mary had nothing to do with the selection of this card." The B-----s is most fitting, he used to say it was a lovely rounded word, which he used many times as we traded insults on the phone.

### **Generosity:**

Bert was always generous but in his latter years he gave even more. He was always generous when he demonstrated; making sure the supplier of his wood was in receipt of a good bowl. He donated pieces to the AAW and the AWGB Auctions to raise funds for Educational initiatives. At the AWGB Seminar in 2009, at the eleventh hour, a piece from the late Tony Witham was unable to be auctioned. It had been Tony's wish that funds raised from the sale would go to Macmillan Nurses. Bert stepped into the breach and offered to turn a bowl, similar to the one auctioned the previous night on the On-Line Live Auction. It was duly bid up to £500, which went to Macmillan Nurses.

Early this year he sent two pieces for the AWGB 2011 On-Line Live Auction, I said "Why so early?" He said "I might not make it to then." I guess he had sixth sense.

### **The last two years:**

Bert had a severe heart attack on January 17<sup>th</sup> 2010 from which he never really recovered. He contracted a number of various ailments and virus problems in the latter part of 2009 which certainly weakened him. Although seemingly recovered they must have taken their toll, the heart attack that followed was the final straw.

His son was moving house and Bert was in the thick of it helping with building repairs and moving goods and chattels. We used to josh when he or I phoned, is that Bob the Builder or Burgess Hill Removal Services? On Monday Jan 18<sup>th</sup> 2010 at 9.00am I had a telephone call from him, in jocular mood I said "is that Bob the Builder or Burgess Hill Removal Services." "No" he said "It's Bert from his hospital bed on his mobile phone; I have had a heart attack." My response was "Don't joke with me about such things," It was then that realisation struck home.

He had almost died; paramedics rushed him to hospital, straight to theatre for emergency surgery. He had been described for years by the medical profession as a living miracle as his triple bypass was way back in the early eighties.

From that day on we were in constant contact, in fact in the first six months there were only 3 days when we didn't speak. Right through to the end we spoke three or four days a week, if I was overseas it was text message time. He didn't text but he got my messages. Liz and I visited several times; I stayed with Bert & Mary a number of times as we attended WCT dinners during this time.

We didn't just talk about his health but everything under the sun, we put the world to rights many times, and I'm sorry we screwed that up. He was a true friend, a remarkable man who didn't just impact the turning world, but the craft world in general.

Many didn't realise the depth of his knowledge as he loved to joke, he was dismissive of those who couldn't see beyond this façade, he could be extremely serious, he had forgotten more than most will ever know. His work is some of the most copied, but no one quite hits the mark. It is the subtle nuances that he understood, true understanding of the material. Much of what he created was done with passion and came from the soul. Doesn't it show?

I am going to miss him beyond belief, but I have so many treasured memories to look back on.

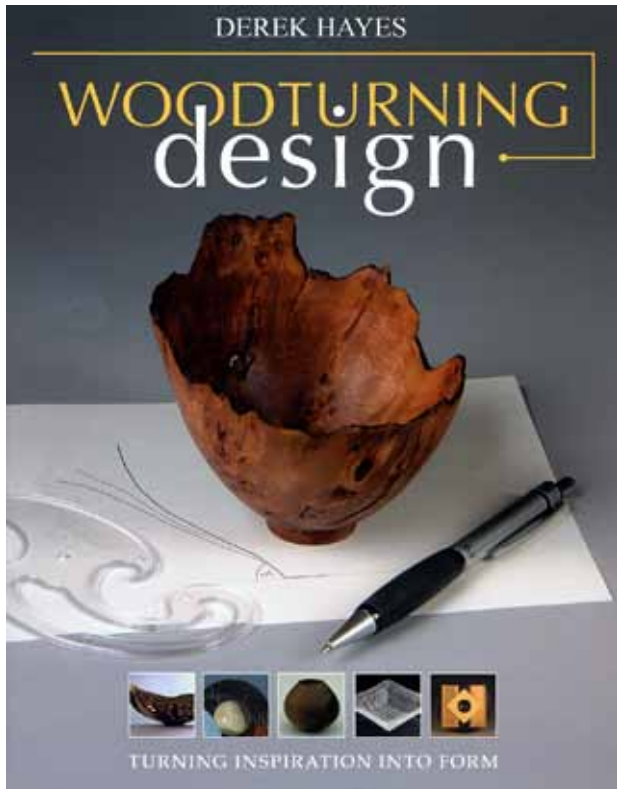
Thank you Bert, for being my friend.

Ray Key  
7<sup>th</sup> July 2011



## Designed to Please

Lionel Pringle



During my time as editor of *Revolutions* one of the constants has been articles by Derek Hayes on that thorny subject of design. Derek's very personal take on this subject has finally crystalized into the form of a well put together and very clearly and beautifully illustrated book.

'Woodturning Design' is a simple title for a subject that to many is a complete world of mystery, to a lot of us, and I have to plead guilty myself on numerous occasions, a clear thought out plan is not high on the agenda. How often have we just slapped a piece of wood onto the lathe "to see what turns up". How much wood has been consigned to shavings and firewood on this basis?

There can be absolutely no doubting Derek's commitment to good design and his desire to encourage that awareness in others. Even a quick thumb through this book will leave you amazed at the absolute beauty of the many objects that are illustrated within its covers, not just items in wood but in paper, metal, glass and ceramics as well.

The book is almost worth buying for the inspiration that some of the illustrations may provide, but that is not the aim, this is a whole lot more than a coffee table book, it is an entirely practical text book and anybody who takes on board only some of the ideas enclosed within its covers cannot fail to see an improvement in the work that they produce.

Mark Baker in his foreword to the book says "A few

simple steps following the guidelines shown and you will be well on the way to creating masterpieces of your own and having a lot more fun too."

*Woodturning design* by Derek Hayes is published by Guild of Master Craftsman Publications and costs £16.99, [www.gmcbooks.com](http://www.gmcbooks.com) ISBN 978-1-86108-865-9

## Bill Jones 1920 - 2011

Lionel Pringle



On 31<sup>st</sup> July the AWGB and Woodturning lost one of its final links with turning as it was practised before the advent of modern technologies.

Bill Jones was undoubtedly the grand old man of turning; he never described himself as a woodturner as he was proficient in the turning of a wide range of materials from Ivory through to bone and exotic timbers. Fame came to Bill late in life after woodturning became a more sociable undertaking and organisations such as the AWGB, AWW and the IWG were formed, and Bill was in great demand as a demonstrator. Bill's easy manner and love of people combined with the simple way in which he was able to describe his methods and techniques soon endeared him to woodturners nationally and internationally. Many of us still remember with affection those early handwritten articles that appeared in the woodworking press in the late eighties and early nineties, they were as much historical and social commentaries as they were articles about turning.

Bill was a great supporter of the AWGB and particularly its seminar; he was the guest of honour in 2001 when he was made a life member. In his eighty-seventh year he made his final visit to a seminar in 2007, and was good enough to provide his thoughts on the occasion for publication in *Revolutions*. (Issue 83, November 2007).

News of Bill's passing came too late for me to be able to do him and his turning prowess justice in this issue, but I would hope that many of you will have stories about Bill that you can pass on and I will devote more space to Bill and his life in the December issue.

## West Sussex Woodturners at Amberley Heavy Horse Day

Jean - a delighted visitor

What better start to the day than a bacon butty? With that and a nice cup of coffee from the restaurant I was ready to go.

The West Sussex Woodturners' stall displayed a good selection of bowls, vases, pens and other items too numerous to mention and the demonstrator's lathes were in action. It wasn't long before they were attracting attention from visitors - one puzzled little lad having trouble with the concept of a 'bud vase' - "why would you only want to put one flower in a vase?" he asked. Mum must be very lucky and only get bouquets of flowers.



### A plethora of West Sussex demonstrators

One lady watched a long square blank being mounted and after watching a couple of passes of the tool enquired "how long will it take to make it round?" The lathe was stopped for her and hey presto there was a lovely cylinder. I think the "oh" meant she was suitably impressed.

Two of the newest demonstrators were taking a fair share of questions; one Australian gentleman was fascinated by Chris's use of plumbing fittings and cricket bat grip as an inexpensive gouge handle system. Beth turned out (sorry for the pun) some more bowls, which she has only recently learned to do, and produced a lovely finish on them. What were the 'old hands' up to? Well, no sooner had they mounted a piece of wood on the lathe than they seemed to be onto the sanding and waxing stage. There's experience and expertise for you.



The Heavy Horses (Suffolk Punch)

Meanwhile the heavy horses and cart were doing a roaring trade with rides, followed by a single white horse suitably dressed for the occasion with harness and brasses, lapping up the attention. They worked really hard, up and down all day, as did the open top bus with it's windy stairs and separate cab for the driver. The agile conductress looked the part with her uniform and leather bag for the fares; did I hear her call "move along please"?

Other stall holders were hard at work demonstrating carving, lace making and the like, all accompanied by background 'country' noises from the sheep and cockerel who regularly made sure everyone was awake.



The 'Woodturners' Hut' or is it Santa's workshop?

A visit to the West Sussex Woodturners' permanent hut revealed further interesting items such as little mice peeping out of apples, keyrings made of laminated brightly coloured wood and useful doorstops etc. A great selection for birthday and Christmas presents - it's never too early to start the Christmas shopping!

Another area attracting a lot of attention was Gil and his wife with some of their owls.





The owls didn't miss a thing with their swivelling heads. Some stood on the bench whilst others opted for an owls-eye view of proceedings from the trees, but they all posed beautifully for the many clicking cameras.

All too soon the day was over, the horses loaded back into their lorry, the escapee lamb rounded up and the bus put to bed. Time to help pack up the West Sussex Woodturners' stall – "are you sure all these poles, planks and lathes are going to fit in that van?" Of course they did. Pockets and turn-ups were emptied of shavings and it was off for home. We will have to return soon to see everything else we didn't get to in this fascinating working museum.

Thanks to Keith and the gang for making us so welcome and putting on a great display.

## No More Pips

Colin Hovland

I wanted to find an easier way to remove the raised point or 'pip' that tends to get left behind after hollowing a box or goblet and so in 2007, after some experimentation, I made this tool.

The circular cutter used, came from a tool supplier's stand at a woodworking exhibition. I wanted the cutter to be able to slice across the raised area in the centre of the base, without being affected by the amount of leverage that comes from the downward force on a standard box hollowing tool.

The tool shaft is a piece of round section silver steel  $\frac{3}{8}$ " diameter. This is ground to a 20° flat slope at one end, and then drilled and tapped for fitting the cutter. The cutter is  $\frac{5}{8}$ " diameter by  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick with a centre hole. A 5mm round head Allen screw is used to bolt it on.

In use, the tool is placed on the toolrest horizontally and in line with the lathe centre, with the cutter facing 3 o'clock. On contact with the bottom of the box, the tool is rotated a few degrees anti-clockwise and advanced across the centre, moving from left to right whilst keeping the tool shaft horizontal. The



### The business end

slope, or angle, on the back of the cutter is used as a bevel, riding on the surface of the wood to regulate the amount of wood being removed.

By using the tool in this way, from left to right rather than upwards, the downwards force is greatly reduced, allowing for a more easily controlled cutting action. This makes for a more positive removal of the raised area, or pip, and due to the slicing action of the cut, will leave a smooth surface free from tear-out of the end grain. This feature was my main aim when designing the tool; however, I discovered that it was capable of more. When the tool is rotated anti-clockwise with the cutter facing 10 o'clock, it can be used in shear scraping mode, to clean up the wall and smooth out tool marks left by other hollowing tools. As the cutter is circular, and also at an angle of 20° on the tool shaft, there is minimal contact with the surface of the wood as the tool is drawn back towards the top opening of a box, which in turn allows a cleaner cut that is easy to control. This is because the tool is being pulled rather than pushed. If you can visualise the fibres of the wood being cut through at a 20° angle instead of in line with the grain, this will show you why the finished cut is cleaner than that of a standard scraping tool.

Although the tool is designed for use on end grain work, it will also produce good results on face plate turning. I have not done much experimenting going across the grain, however, I feel that this tool will be



Two variants of the tool (Might we call it 'Pippa'?)

more suitable for truing up and removing ridges and undulations left by other hollowing tools, which makes it extremely user friendly.



**The tool in action**

It doesn't take long to get the hang of using the tool, but don't try using it with the cutter facing upwards. If it is presented to the wood in this way it will be snatched downwards, and will spoil the surface of the job. Because the cutter is fixed to a round bar, it is easy to adjust the cutting angle as you move the tool across the bottom, and also up the inside of a box or a goblet. Sharpening is very easy; simply remove the cutter from the shaft, place it face down on a diamond hone, and rub it across the surface until the edge is restored.

The tool is going to be produced by Ashley Iles in the near future, and detailed instructions on how to use it can be found on Jon Simpson's web site. The address is [www.wood-be-nice.co.uk](http://www.wood-be-nice.co.uk)

## **How I Learnt About Woodturning (or Confessions from the Shed)**

**John Aitken**

I have never been embarrassed about confessing my mistakes. When you make as many as I have over the years it becomes easier (confessing that is).

I find there is now a set routine when mistakes happen in the shed, I know what I am doing is not the right way, I continue with it until it goes wrong and then, following some choice words muttered under my breath, I furtively look around just to make sure no-one else saw what I did, even though I'm a bit like Billy No-mates, I always work alone. I mentally and verbally admonish myself and start again and do it right vowing to learn from this and never make a similarly stupid mistake ever again and it works.... until the next time!

I can vividly remember all these occasions; well I need to for my own safety. As a novice turner I used

the scraper an awful lot of the time never daring to even pick-up a skew chisel.....until one day, feeling unusually confident I decided to use the skew. This was the day I had lost 2" off of my small bowl gouge using it incorrectly. Deciding that the lathe speed was wrong and I'd used the wrong tool I racked up the speed to warp factor 9 and proceeded to use the skew... as a scraper.

A self-taught turner I did not know about trailing cutters so after carefully ensuring the tool rest was the right height I started the lathe and poked the chisel in the wood. Following a loud bang and violent wrenching of my arm that would put Big Daddy to shame I was showered with the verniers and dividers that had been hung above my head. Aware of a descending dust cloud reminiscent of a Saharan sirocco I dropped to my hands and knees to begin raking through the shavings to find the errant chisel. Coughing and spluttering through the dust and nursing a bruised arm my search was not in vain, I found the chuck key that had been lost the week before!

I'd been turning some small buttons and found that I could do them as fast as my hands could fix the wood in the chuck, until the hand that turned the lathe on worked quicker than the one to remove the chuck key! This resulted in the chuck key disappearing under the bench behind me at 60mph. luckily I had a spare and completed the job but forgot to recover the lost key. Buoyed with pleasure at finding the chuck key I resigned myself to clearing up the shavings. I stood up to get the broom only to hit my head on the handle of the aforementioned chisel that was stuck firmly in the cross beam of the shed roof. It was consigned to the back of the tool rack until the strength in my arm returned and my confidence and courage was restored.

Following my short foray into the martial art of skew chiselling I slowly became more proficient. This had the effect of instilling more confidence in my ability as a turner and allowed me to take on commissions in the knowledge that I had the skills to complete the job. One such job was an Oak platter and feeling like a true professional I selected the wood from the stockpile. This selection process involved carefully measuring every piece of Oak in the rack (pile) and plumping for the biggest bit there.

I screwed it to a faceplate, making sure that the screw holes were shallow enough to turn out, professional see, and turned it round.

I cut the bottom of the plate and formed the chucking dovetail to the correct size, still professional. I turned the inside and sanded and polished, the plate was looking really good. My problem started when I came to reverse it in my Cole jaws. I opened the jaws and put the plate in, no problem. When I tightened the jaws I noticed that the key felt as if it

was turning against something solid but the plate was held so everything should be OK. The jaws that I had been watching had moved inwards to grip the plate, albeit by a small amount, but the plate was held.

So I turned the lathe on. Two things happened at once, there was a loud bang which by this stage of my turning career I was quite used to but what did surprise me was I suddenly went blind. From experience I can tell you that things going wrong in broad daylight are nowhere near as scary as when they go wrong in the dark. An uncanny sense of self-preservation kicked in and I ended up prone on the floor in a movement that Bruce Willis would be proud of.

You see the plate was indeed a good fit in the Cole jaws but to get it to fit in between the buttons I had opened the chuck as wide as possible, so wide that the jaw at the bottom had slipped down slightly so when tightened the worm was not fully engaged in that thread. That was why it felt so hard when I was doing it up. I had started the lathe and when it reached the optimum speed the jaw flew out, upwards, which I guess was better than flying towards me, it hit the beam above my head and very neatly severed the cable which supplied power to the workshop thereby plunging me into darkness. The plate however was undamaged and I subsequently turned it smaller in diameter once I had found the wayward jaw and remounted it in the chuck and replaced the broken wire with armoured cable.

I had by now been turning a good number of years and indeed had started turning full time, the accidents reduced in regularity as my skill increased. This was a true indication that I was at least a wood turner with potential; I had even started to attend craft shows and peddle my wares. I was now confident with my ability to control, to a certain extent, what happened when I was in charge of the lathe.

I was finally able to breathe a sigh of relief that those dangerous days of braving the maelstrom of flying wood and metal were behind me.

Receiving another commission for a rather large diameter item I set about increasing the capability of the Cole jaws. Fabricating some jaw extension plates from plywood and bolting them onto the chuck I was acutely aware that if they didn't run true I could have a problem. I couldn't hide the smile as my newly fashioned jaws ran truer than a politician's election campaign. I had set the tool rest to enable me to clean up the edge and that went without any problems at all. Life really was getting better.

I had bought the lathe second hand from Reg at the club; he supplied me with everything I needed including the instruction manual on the phase converter. If I had taken the time to read it instead of consigning it to the cupboard with the rest of the un-

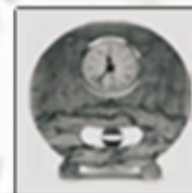
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read instruction books, I would have realised that the spindle of the lathe was programmed to stop within three seconds, which, when I pressed the stop button, it did. Unfortunately my new jaws didn't, because they were mounted on the outboard end of the lathe inertia took over and the chuck started unwinding. Not wishing to lose any more body parts I resisted the urge to try and stop this rotating wagon wheel and watched as it left the lathe with 2lb of my best chuck attached and spun like an out of control UFO across the shed to be fielded in a pincer movement between the band saw and the extractor. When I mentioned it to my son he read the instruction manual for me and showed me how to alter the start-up/stop speed of the lathe, never had that problem again. The new jaws were basically undamaged as was the chuck and the job was finished without further drama apart from one small episode when I thought I had glued part of the job to the bench but it turned out to be just too heavy for me to lift.

There was one other occasion that resulted in bits and pieces flying around the shed. I was drilling a 6mm. hole with the Jacob's chuck held in the tail stock. My usual practice is to drill the hole a little bit at a time and when I feel it go through I withdraw the drill bit holding on to the chuck and peer up the hollow centre just to confirm that the hole goes all the way through.

This time the hole hadn't fully penetrated so I needed



to re-introduce the drill just to clear it out. Remember when I said at the beginning about how mistakes happen in my workshop? I knew that the hand pulling the tailstock back was working quicker than the hand holding the drill chuck in place. It seemed all too familiar to me. The wood I was working on grabbed the drill bit tighter than a Vulcan death grip. The end of the Morse taper which had withdrawn from the tailstock started to gyrate, fight or flight? Fight! I tried to grab it; with a painful rattle on my knuckles the chuck spun out of the hole gouging a lump from the lathe bed on the way and flew off behind the lathe creating an avalanche of Allen keys, jigs and patterns that had been stored on the shelf. I'm not sure if this is what the doctor meant when he said I needed to get my heart beating faster but the adrenaline rush could keep me going for years. And when did this happen? I'm too embarrassed to say!

**Editor's Note:** Confession is good for the soul, or so they say. Do you have something that you would like to get off your chest and admit to? Something that was scary and hairy at the time but which you know will raise a titter with your fellows when looked at in hindsight. Well you know where I am, get it down on paper and share your embarrassment with others.

### Tools Explained

**TABLE SAW:** A large stationary power tool commonly used to launch wood projectiles for testing wall integrity.

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## A Little Help from a Woodturner

### Doug Alderton

Not often is the club (Avon & Bristol Woodturners) approached by a member of the public for help in completing a project that includes wood turned items, so what follows is an account of such an occasion down at 'Mill'. Seven or eight years ago Tony Jones of Portishead was invited by the late Max Carey to have a look around his workshop, and although interested in the craft of woodturning he was more interested in finding someone who would turn a few items for his furniture restoration - renovation projects. No need to guess who stepped forward, our now accomplished chief instructor and demonstrator 'Tich' Renee, always willing to help, and with his vast experience of all types of turning, he was just the man to help Tony.

It may help if we know a little about our welcome visitor Tony, the first thing to note is that his various hobbies take up most of his spare time and to take on another craft of woodturning was out of the question. After retiring early, his way of life changed for the better by leaving the rat race behind and being able to spend most of his leisure time concentrating on his hobbies. His hobbies include, building 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century fully rigged Man-of War ships and racing yachts, sport and fishing.

Like most of us when retiring early we need to supplement our income until we are eligible for the enormous state pension that will sustain us for the rest of our lives from a life of rags to riches! By doing the odd job here and there he came into contact with the general public at large. By doing small repairs to furniture items for some of his friends and acquaintances he started to take an interest in restoring and renovating furniture. A visit to furniture auctions was the start of his present hobby of antique furniture restoration. Tony realized after purchasing furniture in a dilapidated condition at the auction that he did not have enough knowledge, or the skills required to restore or renovate the items purchased. He enrolled on a course learning to renovate and restore furniture and the tutor of the course noted the enthusiasm and interest that Tony showed for the craft. The instructor suggested that it may be helpful to Tony if he attended one of his own courses at his workshop in Devon. Tony was so impressed with the extra tuition that he has attended a course of instruction each year for the past nine years and in my opinion has become very skilled in his favorite hobby.

The items that Tony has asked Tich to turn are parts for furniture that are broken or in some cases did not exist, as the piece of furniture purchased was incomplete. Where possible the same type of colour matched wood as the broken item was used to reproduce the new turning. Any difference in colour would be corrected when the restored article was finished with

the appropriate finishing system which was normally french polish or oil. Most items renewed fall into the category of spindle turning and included missing or broken chair legs, stretchers and back spindles for Windsor chairs and also decorative finials for other antique chairs. Drawer knobs for mirror boxes and drawer chests are frequently required. Bun feet and new mouldings for an antique tea caddy were interesting items to turn.



The most outstanding antique recently restored by Tony with a lot of help from Tich is an unusual Victorian two tier occasional table. At an auction Tony was attracted to this relic of an incomplete table and his thoughts were that he may be able to use the wood to complete other projects as he thought the wood was walnut (**See photo 1**).

A successful bid bought him the relic for a grand total of £13. On closer examination at home he realized that the relic was made of rosewood and not walnut as first thought. Also he found pictorial details of a similar table in one of his reference books, Miller's Guide (2003). It was at this point in time that he decided to have a go at restoring the table to its former glory (**See photo 2**). The first obstacle was to procure sufficient rosewood to replace the missing parts. Not an easy task, as rosewood is getting very scarce especially in large pieces. Another visit to the auction resulted in the purchase of a broken rosewood 'whatnot' which gave Tony enough wood to restore the antique table. The table basically consists of a circular decorated top with a smaller circular shelf both supported from the triangular

base by inline turned columns. The whole assembly screws together with 7/8" diameter threads on the ends of the support columns. Both the top and the small shelf have an elevated ring which is supported by a number of short turned spindles to form an open basket shape. The table height is 29") and has a diameter of 16½". It is not certain for what purpose the table was used, but with the open structure of the basket top and shelf you would easily see the contents on the table also any dust could be blown out between the spindles.

Tony was able to butt joint a piece of rosewood to the small shelf to replace the missing piece and Tich then turned the shelf to the original profile and diameter. To make the top and shelf rings Tony had to splice short pieces of rosewood into segmented rings because of the limited sizes of rosewood available. It was then up to Tich to carefully turn the rings to diameter and to a cross section profile that matched the pictorial detail shown in Miller's Guide. Then there was the not inconsequential task of turning the 42 short spindles required to support the rings. This is where woodturning skill is required to be able to turn a number of identical items without a copying attachment. The remaining item for Tich to repair was the broken screw thread on the end of the upper column which secures the top. By removing the thread and inserting a dowel into the end of the column the male thread was reformed using a thread box. Also by inserting a wooden block into the underside of the table Tich was able to renew the

**Sovereign by Robert Sorby**

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female thread using the matching thread taps. With Tich's contribution complete it was left to Tony to drill out the holes in the rings for the short support spindles and fully assemble the table. This was harder than you would think, apart from getting the holes in the rings in the right place and at the correct angles it was difficult to hold all of the spindles in place during assembly.

The final and most important task was to renovate and clean the relic part of the table and colour match the new wood items and then french polish the table back to its former glory.

One might ask 'what is today's value of the restored £13 table'? Tony points out that a similar antique Victorian two tier occasional table (circa. 1850) made in mahogany in Miller's Guide 2003 gives a value of £850-£1000. Not only have Tony and Tich restored an excellent Victorian antique but have reclaimed, for future generations, a piece of furniture that would have very likely been used for firewood. Congratulations Tony and Tich and thank you for letting us have a brief glimpse into your world of furniture restoration.



2

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# The 2011 European Woodworking Show

Saturday 1 October 10am-5pm

Sunday 2 October 10am-4pm

Now in its third year and growing in quality every year, the European Woodworking Show is fast becoming the most interesting woodworking weekend in the UK. With top class demonstrators, from the UK and overseas, providing a breadth of woodworking disciplines and crafts.

Cressing Temple Barns near Witham in Essex is a scheduled ancient monument. The site has its origins in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and is home to the two finest Templar barns in Europe, one of which, dating from 1205, is the oldest timber framed barn in the world. The site is made up of a group of remarkable farm buildings, the barns, a Templar well and a Tudor walled garden. The European show is based in the historic barns, the cart sheds, large marquees and open space. It is 90% wheelchair accessible (one first floor area).

**What's at the show?** Well expect to see wheelwrighting to woodturning, different forms of carving to chairmaking, basketmaking to bodging, sharpening to pyrography, boatbuilding to furniture making and much more. The show is a mixture of demonstrations and trade stalls including a host of well-known woodworking brands. Garrett Hack, the legendary USA woodworker, teacher and author attends for the first time alongside woodturner Michael Hosaluk from Canada who is recognized internationally as one of the world's most creative woodturners. Mark Hancock and Gary Renouf will also be demonstrating and the show is supported by both the **AWGB** and the **Worshipful Company of Turners**.

Watanabe from Japan returns to demonstrate Japanese joinery techniques with former 'Furniture & Cabinetmaking' editor Michael Huntley. Phil Edwards demonstrates the 'Lie Nielsen' range of woodworking tools, chairmaker James Mursell is returning for his third appearance alongside short course provider John Lloyd. Bob Neill gives Pyrography lessons, Steve Woodley will be timber hewing, Peter Berry, Tim Atkins & Paul Bignell will be carving alongside members from the Essex division of the **British Woodcarvers Association** and special guest Lenka Pavlickova.

The carving, turning, green woodworking and hand tools sections are all bigger than 2010 and are supported by workshop machinery suppliers Felder, Record Power, Brimarc, Trend Tools & Machinery, Camvac, plus timber and other suppliers including GMC books. A Masterclass programme is also being planned. There's a lot going on and more being added by the week.

Take a look at the website [www.europeanwoodworkingshow.eu](http://www.europeanwoodworkingshow.eu) and take advantage of discounted pre-sale tickets. 2500 visitors enjoyed the show in 2010 and with more to see this year expect a good day or two out in Essex. There is story telling for the children, good food stalls, St Peter's Brewery and much more.

**Please note dogs are not allowed at Cressing Temple Barns, either in the barns or in the grounds.**



An example of Mike Hosaluk's work



One of the Cressing Temple Barns

# Woodworks@Daventry

Peter Carless

After the demise of Woodex at the Midlands Exhibition Centre, the Midlands have been left with a big hole to fill regarding woodworking shows. In 2010 Tudor Rose Woodturners organized a woodworking show and Woodworks@Daventry was born. They invited local woodturning clubs to attend and take part in woodturning competitions. With good quality trade stands, demonstrators and the AWGB Travelling Exhibition an excellent weekend was had by all. Tudor Rose had plenty of praise for the quality of the show but they felt the size of the hall could have been larger.

In 2011 Tudor Rose again organized and ran the second show only this time they utilised the large sports hall. The AWGB were once again invited to attend with their travelling exhibition and were allocated a large area to set up the exhibits. Also invited were six local woodturning clubs, Coombe Abbey, North Bucks and Milton Keynes, North Warwickshire and Hinckley, Trent Valley, West Midlands and West Northants. As in the previous year the inter club competitions were very competitive.

The Tudor Rose Committee asked if the members of the AWGB Executive Committee would judge the interclub competitions. On the Saturday after all the club stands were set up, Mike Collas (AWGB Secretary) and two secret judges viewed the stands and selected the best stand in show. There were three woodturning competitions, a rolling pin in half an hour, a bowl in an hour and an egg and cup in one and a half hours. These were judged along with the best piece in show on the Sunday by Reg Hawthorn the AWGB Chairman.

The results of the competitions were:

Best Stand in Show - Coombe Abbey

Best Piece in show - Pat Flynn's open segmented Bowl (Coombe Abbey)

Best Rolling Pin - Coombe Abbey

Best Egg and Cup - West Midlands

Best Bowl - West Midlands



**Best stand in show - Coombe Abbey Woodturners**



**Reg Hawthorne presents the award to Graham Ball of Coombe Abbey Woodturners**

The guest demonstrators, Gary Rance, Les Thorne, Guy Ravine, John Berkeley, John Johnson, Steve Heeley and Richard Findley kept the crowds enthralled and amused with their wizardry on the lathe, and along with the demonstrators on the club stands, gathered large crowds at all their demonstrations. The Trade stands were also kept busy and succeeded in emptying many a pocket.

Mike Collas and I were kept busy on the AWGB stand with a steady stream of visitors, woodturners and members of the general public; they were all impressed with the quality of the exhibits by some of the best woodturners in the country.



**Reg Hawthorne presents an award to Brian Goodall of West Midlands Woodturners**

On behalf of the AWGB I would like to thank the committee and members of Tudor Rose Woodturners for the invitation to show our exhibits and to congratulate them on organizing a wonderful show. Long may it continue.

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# Another Pummelling

Reg Sherwin

For this issue I would like to take another look at pummels, but this time with an 'oval' section skew in use rather than the rectangular skew used in *Revolutions 97*.

To a certain extent then, some of this article is repetitive, but I would rather say something twice as a reminder than risk leaving an information gap in what can be a potentially hazard strewn activity. And of course, we are getting new readers all the time.

You may remember that I suggested the use of the rectangular skew for pummels as it has a much longer 'shoulder' running back from the long point to where the bevel and the edge of the blade meet. (*Revolutions 97*, photo 4). The oval skew has a similar shoulder, but it is much shorter due to the radius across the skew's section. This makes the oval a little more difficult to get the feel of when cutting pummels.

Another contributing factor when pummelling is the width of the chosen tool. Frank Pain's "The Practical Woodturner" has him using a 1½" (38mm) 'Long Cornered Chisel' for cutting pummels. And I suspect that when compared with today's tools, this comparatively heavier skew had big advantages, especially when we remember that in Frank's days, 5" diameter - and larger - oak pummels were, and still are in some places, the norm. The heavier the tool, the less likely it would have been to misbehave in inexperienced hands.

Incidentally, when I was doing the trade show circuit some years ago I was often asked why some of my skews had square ends, the inference being that all chisels were skews regardless of what they looked like at the business end. The term 'skew' comes I feel, from the angle of the cutting edge when compared with the section of the blade. So the end of a skew is not straight but askew! Sorry about that one, but I'm rather proud of it!

My preference for a square ended tool is that I get more life from the edge per sharpening session than I do with a skew, and therefore I often use a 1" square ended chisel for planing cuts. And I have been known to use it sometimes in the hope of provoking questions from an otherwise silent audience. But I think I will leave Frank Pain's 2" square chisel resting on page 14 of his book for now.

And so having advised the use of the rectangular skew for preference in the last article, I would now like to show my use of the oval section version of the tool when cutting pummels.

The choice of which of the two or three oval skews in your kit you should use is often dictated by how sharp they look, which one you have had most success with,

which one you watched being used to perfection at 'The Show' and promptly purchased, or even which one has suffered the least when used to take the top off the varnish tin. I go for sharpness every time.

Another consideration here is the section of the wood which is to receive its pummel. My normal choice would be based on the principal of 'the larger the section the wider the tool.'

For this session I am using 43mm (1 11/16") square pine, 22cm (8 5/8") long. If your chosen practice wood is too long and thin it is likely to whip, so short and chunky lengths are good to start with. And I have chosen pine because it demands sympathetic cuts, reacts unfavourably to scraping, is useful as a teaching wood and is fairly cheap. One of my favourite sayings when teaching is 'If you can get a good surface off the tool on pine, then you are starting to understand how to cut revolving wood.'



I have also chosen my 18mm (¾") wide oval skew. See photo 1. My decision on the choice of tool was based on the fact that I want to explain a method of cutting a pummel on relatively wide wood using a narrow tool. And the same principal will apply equally to both oval and rectangular skews.

To start, find centre at each end of the wood, make a hole on the centre lines to suit the chosen driving and tail centres and mount it onto the lathe. See *Revolutions 97* for a re-cap.

For this job and the chosen tool I set the tool rest at a comfortable height and parallel both with the bed bars of the lathe and the wood to be worked on. The tool will be presented to the rotating wood long point first, as will be seen shortly, but before that excitement starts we need to confirm that all will be safe prior to switching on.

Put the tool long point down onto the rest and with the handle low down, pivot the tool over the rest until the long point is just about touching a corner of the wood. This contact point will vary depending upon your choice of tool and the size of the chosen wood,

but if you don't feel comfortable with the contact, try to find a set-up which feels better. The wood should usually be about 12mm (1/2") from the rest. This set up suits my 3/4 oval but your situation is very likely to differ.

Next rotate five corners of the wood by hand away from you to confirm that it is clear of the rest. Rotating the wood 'Away from you' reduces the chances of a nipped finger between wood and tool rest. This good advice was given to me by a woodworking schoolteacher friend who had probably seen quite a number of nipped fingers in his time. And 'Past five corners means that you haven't missed one of them, 'cos if you have, that's the long one that's going to hit the rest!

Next decide which end of the wood you want the pummel to be and mark a right angled straight line on just one of the faces. It will show as continuous when the wood is revolving.

Next place the edge of the skew onto the tool rest with the long point closest to the rest and short point vertical, then roll the tool to the right so that the short point is as close to 1.30 as you can get it. See photo 2.



Here I am once again using my clock system, where the long point is the central spindle of a clock and the short point is the end of the hour hand.

Upright is 12 o'clock and if the tool is rolled fully to the right it will go through 1 and 2 o'clock until it gets to three. If you prefer to say 45 degrees you are correct, but not everyone reading this would know what 45 degrees looks like when the tool is on the rest. Also, don't forget that I am writing from the turner's perspective, so the camera image in photo 2 is showing the tool at 10.30.

Now line the shoulder of the tool up with the pencil line on the wood. It is this shoulder which will help to guide the tool along the pencil line and into the wood at the required right angle. Look at photo 3. Whilst the shoulder of the tool is parallel with the line, it is slightly overlapping, so the tool will not be going where it should be. A slight sliding adjustment of the

whole tool along the rest maintained the directional line and gave it the required destination, as will soon be seen.



The long point of the tool should be above the centre height before the cut starts, so as to achieve an arcing forwards over the rest and slightly downwards action during the cut. It is a good idea to practice this arcing action off the end of the stationary wood a few times.

Now to the serious bit! Before I even started cutting pummels all those years ago I had discovered the hard way that as the width of a cut increased either up or along the cutting edge of the blade of any turning tool, be it gouge, skew or scraper, that tool had a growing tendency to roll down onto the rest and into the wood. The reason for this is usually that the support for the tool on the rest is not immediately in line with the cut. This means that the pressure from the shaving on the top edge of the tool causes the tool to roll. (See Revolutions 96, photo's 4 to 7.)

Just before you start, don't forget three rules.

- 1) The lower bevel just below the long point controls the amount of work the long point does once the bevel can reach.
- 2) The shoulder of the tool controls the direction of the cut, so it needs to be kept fully but lightly in contact with the revolving and ever deepening right angled corners of the remaining wood to the left of the pencil line.
- 3) The cut needs to be achieved with constant and ever increasing lower bevel contact with the newly cut surface as the tool is fed over the rest and downwards into the wood.

Now set the lathe to run at about 900 to 1200 r.p.m. and maintaining the 45 degrees, plus or minus about 10 degrees at the most, start the cut, remembering all that I have said so far. When it goes wrong, as indeed it almost certainly will do if this is your first venture into pummels, read through the article again and see if the result of your mistake looks similar to one of the problems which I have referred to so far.

One of the quite common problems for students

when cutting pummels is that the skew wants to roll to the right and onto a different contact area between it and the rest. To counter this tool rolling tendency I usually stop a cut once the shaving has got close to half way along the top bevel. Photo 4 shows that I have gone almost too far, the exposed area of the wood being slightly more than half way along the tool edge.



This is partly because I deliberately chose a narrow tool for this article. My normal choice for such a job would have been a 1" skew, which would be quite a lot heavier and more resistant to the downwards pressure from the shaving. But not everyone has a selection of skews so I have opted for this slightly less favourable condition.

And so, going too far into the wood with a narrow tool can lead to excitements, and yet we need to obtain a completed circle which has been cut with a narrow tool, and is at the foot of four vertical and smooth faces.

Many turners would be reaching for a parting tool here, but its use would lead to a rougher vertical surface with torn grain on the walls and probable loss of corners due to the grain breaking out on the trailing edges on each of the four corners.

My way of resolving this problem can be seen in photo 5.



Initially this entry cut is identical to the first 'along the pencil line' entry cut already seen, but it starts some distance along the wood from that first cut. The distance would be dictated by any design detail which might be needed in this area if this were to be a finished piece, but here we are practicing, so whilst there is no specific restriction I would suggest that a 50 to 75 mm (2" to 3") gap between the two lines would be about right, and also leave some space for more practising.

I have put the pencil line on the wood again, just as a guide, but the object of this part of the exercise is to repeat the long point skew entry cuts. However, this time each one is more or less the same distance from its predecessor, but not any wider that is safe and not any further into the wood than is necessary.



Photo 6 shows these progressive cuts getting deeper and deeper than the initial 'starter' cut in photo 5.

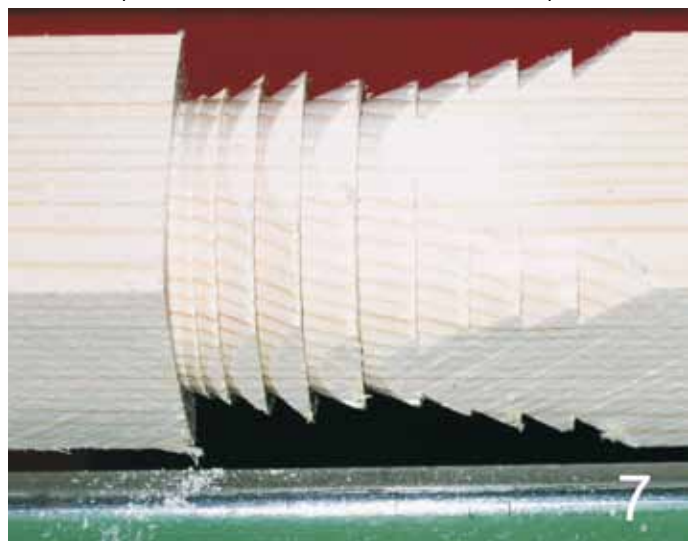
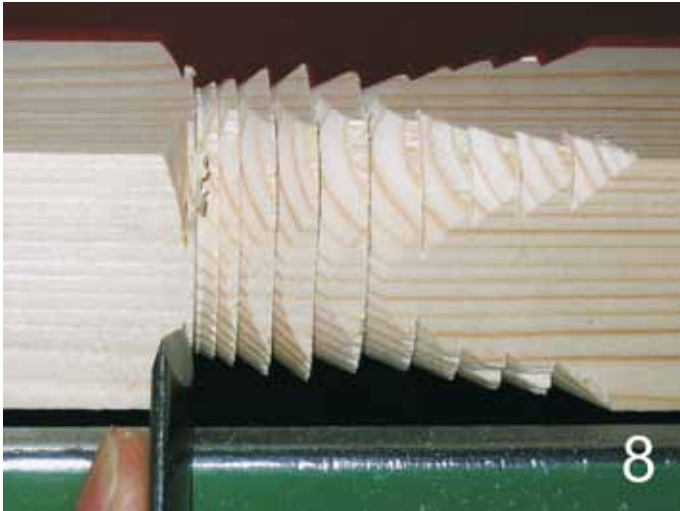


Photo 7 shows that the culmination of these progressively deeper cuts is at the base of the initial entry cut shown in photo 1, and this has now been cleared out with a couple of light cuts, still using the long point of the skew. This in turn has left the pummel ready for the 'softening' operation. Photo 7 also suggests that the vertical faces of the original cut are now slightly concave. This is a trick of the camera,



which wasn't put back into the same position that it was in for photo 4. Sorry folks!

Photo 8 shows the third, and in this case final Corner softening cut being carried out, and still by the long point of the skew.



In this instance the tool starts long point down on the rest, leaning very slightly to the left, sorry, at 11.55, and being eased in an arcing direction slightly forwards and down into the wood.

The directional control now comes from the left hand bevel of the tool, which was the top bevel in all the work done so far. But the cuts still need the point to lead and to maintain some directional control contact on the newly exposed surface just behind it.

I have just described in some detail the first pummel cut I taught myself to produce all those 'Reproduction antique oak legs' years ago, and I have discovered three others since then.

When I see something demonstrated which I can't remember seeing before, in my mind I associate it with the turner I saw doing it in the first place.

The next pummel cut is just such a case. I think of it as 'The Voisey Pummel' as it was the late Nigel Voisey who I first watched doing it. Turning four legs very quickly was one of his party pieces

Nigel started with a pencil line across a table leg length of 3" x 3", or was it 4" x 4" (75mm x 75mm or 100mm x 100mm)? planed all round pine.

His first entry cut was with a skew of something like 1 1/2" width, upright on the rest and pointing slightly to either left or right. I can't remember the finer details, but the cut didn't go in very far, and there was no shaving as such, the wood being displaced rather than removed by cutting. But the remainder of the cuts removed wood very efficiently.

My piece of pine bears no resemblance whatsoever to Nigel's table legs, but the actions are pretty well the same.

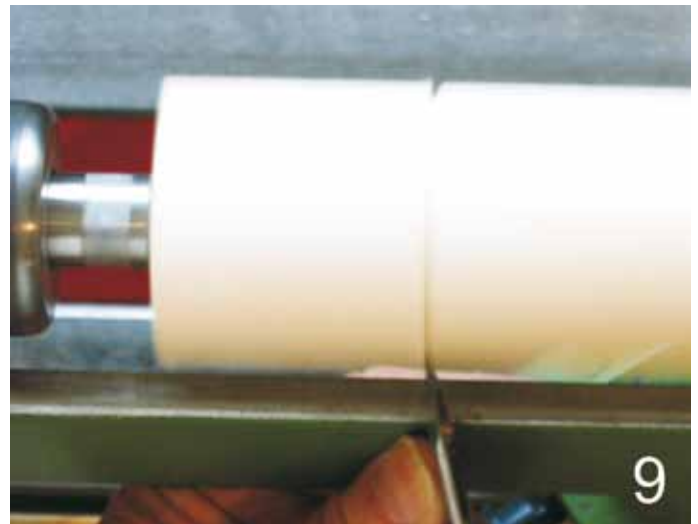
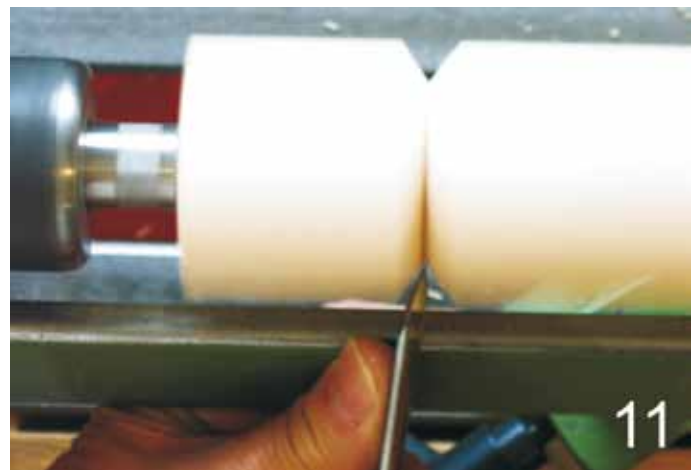
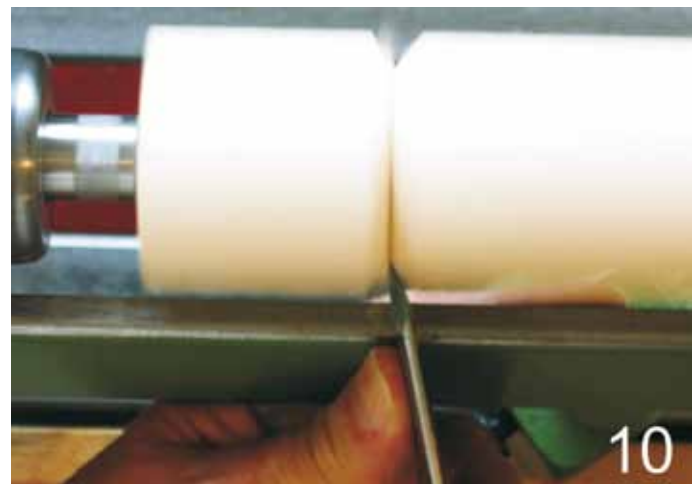


Photo 9 shows the first cut. The tool wasn't pushed into the wood too far, as greater penetration would risk breakout on the opposite shoulder. Photo 10 shows that the cuts, which have been taken from alternate sides in turn, are now almost complete, and Photo 11 shows the final one just completed.

Nigel's next stage would be to take out whichever side of the pummel was not wanted and then finish turning the leg to the required pattern. Again, I can't remember finer details, but Nigel did a set of four legs very quickly indeed



I must emphasise that in all of these pummel cuts, the long point of the skew, as soon as it has made

contact with the rotating wood, needs the support of the bevel, be it the lower bevel in the first phase or the side of the bevel nearest to the wood during the softening operation.

There are two other pummel finishing cuts which I sometimes do and which look attractive, but they involve the use of tools other than the skew, and so would be 'off topic' here.

As is the norm, the instructions here are aimed at the majority, they being right handers. This means that the left handers amongst you might be feeling a bit miffed, but I have often had left handed turners doing right handed cuts, and vice versa, without realizing it, so give it a go as shown. You might surprise yourselves.

Wear protective glasses or a face shield if you are unsure.

Go on a course somewhere. It would be worth the money, and ask around at your local club to see if anyone can recommend a tutor.

You could of course also look at the list of tutors on the A.W.G.B. or the R.P.T. (Register of Professional Turners) Websites.

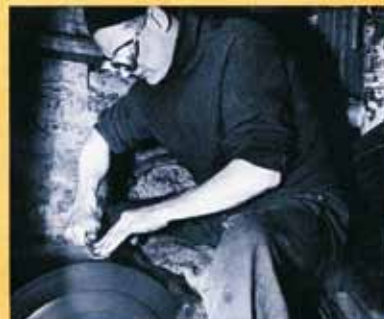
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### **Travelling Exhibition Gallery 2010/2011**

All the pieces loaned to the Association which were displayed at various shows and events over the past year should, by various means, now have been safely returned to their makers.

Due to the variety of methods used and the time scale for the return regrettably we did not have the opportunity to include a message of our thanks to those who had made and loaned the items for the Travelling Gallery. I would now like to publicly put that right by offering the grateful thanks of the Association and it's Executive Committee to all those who had items included in the Gallery over the past year.

At various shows during the year I had the privilege to man the AWGB stand and can honestly state there was not one piece on display that did not attract admiration and interest at some time. The many differing aspects of woodturning exhibited this year, as is usual with our displays, never failed to amaze interested visitors and provide inspiration and discussions along the lines of "how did they do that?"

Without the exhibits to attract both the general public and other woodturners we would have not gained as





### The Travelling Exhibition at Woodworks@Daventry

many new members at the shows during the year as we have.

For the coming year the Travelling Gallery will be selected from the Instant Gallery at the Seminar, but from August 2012 we will again be asking members to submit pieces for consideration for selection for the Travelling Gallery 2012/13 so please start planning and making that 'special' piece that you know will enthral visitors at the shows we attend.

Finally, once again a heartfelt thanks to the makers of the items which we have been proud to have exhibited on behalf of the Association during the year.

Mike Collas  
AWGB Secretary.

## Gilwell 24

Mike Collas

I was recently invited by East Herts branch, via John Leach, to attend Gilwell 24. Originally I was to be a general helper and demonstrator, supposedly to attract Scouts and Scouters into the marquee. On the day there was a shortage of 'trainers' due to a number having to call off at short notice, and so I was enlisted as a trainer. A total of 194 Scouts/Scouters accepted the opportunity of a 'taster session' of woodturning. Had there been more trainers this number would definitely have been greater as there were periods during the day when lathes were idle due to a shortage of competent persons to supervise the making of a spittle, garden dibber, carrier bag handle or mushroom.

Although it was a long day, and eventually quite tiring, the happiness on the faces of people who had experienced the craft of woodturning, in many cases for the first time, and were taking away with them something they had made and could be proud of,

made the effort more than well worth while.

For me it was one of the most rewarding and beneficial days I have ever spent in connection with woodturning, as besides the pleasure I hope I provided to those allocated to my lathe, it brought me back to really thinking about the use of basic tools and what can be achieved with them.

We have already agreed that East Herts can organise a similar event as an AWGB event at Gilwell 25 on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2012 and also at the Essex International Jamboree at Chelmsford 18<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> August 2012. In order to make these events the success they need to be, if we are to be associated with them, they will require the support of members to man lathes so that the maximum number of young, and not necessarily so young, people can have the chance to "try their hand" at the craft so many of us are devoted to. East Herts will require a lot of support from members from many branches in the general area.

To this end please make a note in your diary's forward planner for 2012 of the dates and ensure that if you see nothing else regarding this nearer the time, you make a note to contact East Herts well before the relevant dates to offer your help and support.

Remember events such as these support and augment the basis behind our Youth Training Policy, and as such are worthy of support by as many members as can get to the venues and contribute to helping others.



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Unmistakably Hans Weissflog

### Tools Explained

**SON-OF-A-BITCH TOOL:** (A personal favourite!!) Any handy tool that you grab and throw across the garage while yelling 'Son of a BITCH!' at the top of your lungs. It is also, most often, the next tool that you will need.

## TREASURER REQUIRED

Adrian Needham our current Treasurer will be standing down at the AGM in 2012.

We need to find a willing volunteer to take his place, ideally someone that could shadow Adrian during the remainder of his time in office.

A knowledge of computerised accounting procedures, and familiarity with on-line banking would be a great help, but these can be taught to any candidate who is sufficiently computer literate.

To put your name forward, or for more information as to what is entailed, please get in touch with Adrian, his details are on page three

## Member Training Workshop

Date	Topic / Technique	Tutor	Venue	Spaces
8th October 2011	Artistic spiral work - intermediate	Stuart Mortimer	Grately, Hampshire	5

For further information and bookings contact **Brian Hensby**  
 Tel: 0129734115  
 e-mail: manofkent1@btinternet.com

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