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AWGorBlimey!

It's Newsletter No.5. (October '88).

Some of our members who notice these things might well have realised that this edition is somewhat late in arriving.

The recent industrial inaction by Postman Pat's friends was the cause of this delay, but hopefully things are now back to normal. All except his black and white cat of course, which is probably now walking with a limp, due to the extra work which I was given!

Reg. Sherwin.

Newsletter editor.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES.

'Trust you like the Logo.

'It is twelve months since we started our Association. How time flies. Much has been done but we have only touched the tip of the ice berg. However, things are moving in many of the right directions.

'I would like to remind those of you who have yet to renew your subscriptions to do so right away. Your support is vital to the Association's development. Renewal response has been excellent to date, I may add. Whilst on this subject, we would like you all to try to recruit a new member. To this end we enclose two of the brand spanking new Membership application forms. These give the Association a very professional and organised look. They may have been some time in coming but we feel that they were worth the wait. The logo incorporated will appear on all Association stationery and promotional material from now on.

'If you require more forms, and we hope you will, contact the Secretary, who will be delighted to send you them.

'Whilst on the subject of promoting, could I draw your attention to rule C, section 2 of our Constitution, which states "Members shall not be entitled to use the name of the Association for trade promotion, except at the discretion of the Committee". This of course also applies to the Logo. The reason for this rule is that membership is open to all, thus forming a non selective body.

'Local Chapters.

'There has been a good response in the regions with many people willing to organise or at least set the ball rolling. Some thirteen groups are under formation to date, and more are on the way. We trust that all those who attend and join these chapters will become members of the National Association, thus availing themselves of the services which we can offer.

'The Leeds Practical Woodworking Show on September 1st.-4th., provided the public with an opportunity to see an excellent display of work from our members. Thanks are due to Committee members Mike Scott, Len Grantham and Mike Cripps. Also some local members who helped steward the stand. I am sure that many more of you should have had your work on display, but in the

main, we are unfamiliar with what you make. So please send photographs to the secretary if you don't want to be overlooked for future events.

'I am pleased to say that we have found a worthy recipient for one of the lathes we have on loan offer, and this was presented at the Leeds show. It is the Cub lathe, generously donated by Tyme of Bristol. And with the lathe is a Combination chuck donated by A.W.G.B. member Tony Waddilove and a set of tools donated by business sponsors Charltons Timber Centre. Our thanks to the generosity of those people.

'Remember, we still have a Myford to find a good temporary home for. Ideally we would like this to go to another youngster, so if you know of one, please let us know.

'Our name is spreading, many members joining us from overseas; Australia, U.S.A., Europe, Scandinavia etc. Articles have appeared in overseas Journals. One by member Cecil Jordan in the American Woodturner and another in Turning Points by Al. LeCoff, plus a note on one of our items in the New Zealand 'Faceplate' magazine. The world is getting smaller.

'Could I make a plea for any members out there who are qualified Solicitors and Accountants and who would be willing to advise your Committee on any legal or monetary matters that might arise as the Association grows, to get in touch with our Secretary. We would also like to hear from any Insurance Broker who can offer policies on Seminars, Mini Seminars, Exhibitions etc, at competitive rates. As we grow, we need professional advice to be readily available.

'Keep on turning, and most of all, enjoy it.'

Ray Key.

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS.

Mike Scott will be explaining his distinctive designs and demonstrating some of the techniques with which he achieves them at my Avoncroft workshop on October 30th. The day is timed to co-incide with the final day of a display of Mike's work at the Jinny Ring Craft Centre, Hanbury Rd., (B4091), Bromsgrove, which runs from 5th. to 30th. October.

Admittance to the Jinny Ring is free, but the first 20 A.W.G.B. members to send me a cheque for £10 will secure a place on the 30th. The fee includes two long sessions from Mike, with an hour light comedy relief on spindle turning from me, coffee at suitable moments and lunch in the museum cafeteria.

Mike has also offered to do a critique on any piece of turning which delegates may care to bring on the day. I shall certainly offer up something. (See 'Exhibition Report' later). Lets make a show of it, but I suggest we limit ourselves to no more than two pieces.

The event will be open to non members from 20th. October, at a cost of £13. Book now to avoid disappointment. Cheques should be made payable to A.W.G.B. Why not make a week-end of it? When you apply, enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for the Bromsgrove Town Guide, which lists other attractions and accomodation.

Reg. Sherwin (me. ed.) will be entertaining the Avoncroft Museum visitors on 15/16 Oct. (Medieval week-end), and 12/13th. November, (Christmas Craft Fair). I shall also be demonstrating at Telford, Shropshire, on 30th. Sept., Biddenden, Kent, on 22nd. Oct. and Stoke Prior on 5th. November.

Are there no other members who are at it anywhere?

STATIC EXHIBITIONS.

Turton Tower, Bromley Cross, Bolton, is still showing a number of exhibits from A.W.G.B. members Mike Scott and Jack Hill, amongst others. The exhibition was detailed in Newsletter No. 4 and runs until October 2nd.

TEACH-INS.

Tobias Kaye tells me that his monthly 'Woodturners Surgeries' are very successful, bringing in about 50/50 amateur and professional turners. Great stuff Toby. Keep up the good work, and keep on passing out the A.W.G.B. information sheets. For a cost of £5.00, each visitor has the chance to get either turning or carving problems sorted out on the first Saturday of every month, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Toby's workshop is at 10 Whites Cross, Lower Dean, Buckfastleigh, DEVON, TQ11 0LS. (Leave the A38 at the Lower Dean exit and look for the workshop sign 100 yards down the road.)

Mick O'Donnell is working in Eireland, with a demonstration on 1/2nd. October and a five day teaching workshop from 3rd. to 7th. Contact Joe O'Neill, 27, Ballinteer Drive, Dundrum, County Dublin for more details.

New member Liam O'Neill runs two and four day courses for beginners and more advanced turners in his workshop in Shannon.

Close to the airport, the workshop is easy to get to and only a few minutes away from Limerick City. The cost is £60. (IR£ ? ed.) per day. For more details of these working holiday courses in a beautiful part of the world contact Liam at Bay 19, Smithstown, SHANNON, County Clare, Eireland.

LOCAL CHAPTERS.

The Devon Chapter held its inaugural meeting at Willowfield, Week, last month. The following is an extract from a letter which I recieved from Keith Sinclair, who hosted the meeting.

'We toured Keith Sinclair's workshop and discussed the pros and cons of the various items of equipment. This was followed by discussion of the turned work, a wide range from thimbles through bowls and dishes to small furniture. Clearly, one of the topics which will interest future meetings is the design of turned work, why one shape succeeds whilst another one fails. Coupled with the design will be how to produce it at good quality.

'The AWGB exists to interest all woodturners, from novice to full time professional. Its aims are to stimulate improvement in the quality of and facilities for the training of woodturners; to promote the image of woodturning both in the gallery world and in the mind of the buying public; and to do all in its power to improve the enjoyment in and the quality of wood turnery'.

A second letter has arrived from Keith, which I also re-produce here, as it could prove inspirational to other chapters:-

'The second meeting of the Devon Chapter took place on 26th. August 1988, at Dave Regester's workshop, with much discussion of timber sources and prices, and the full range of production techniques. Discussion then moved indoors (thanks for the coffee Christine), and the subject matter widened.

'We agreed to fund the Devon Chapter with an initial £5. per member. Costs at present are limited to stationery and postage, future costs depending on future activities. Keith Sinclair agreed to act as secretary/treasurer, which is sufficient to keep the Chapter going for the moment.

'All members are encouraged to join the national Association of Woodturners, and most already have. The benifits are seen as the newsletter

with its range of news on people and events, availability of speakers and demonstrators for local meetings, information on suppliers, promotion of quality standards, publicity and training.

'The training item provoked much discussion. The national committee is seeking to promote a City and Guilds standard of qualification. Local members doubted whether there would be demand for such a course, thinking rather that there should be a series of modules starting with the one day beginner and progressing through 2 to 6 day courses at more advanced levels. The main demand would be in the leisure/pleasure area, which does not prevent the courses aiming at excellence.

'Local benefits are seen as pooled knowledge and experience, design discussion and criticism, and public awareness of our activities through press release and exhibitions.

'Local training was discussed, and there are already courses available in the area, together with Toby Kaye's Saturday morning workshop. (See 'Teach-Ins, ed.) If demand is demonstrated, other courses can be set up, on a commercial basis.

'Supplies of materials and equipment was seen as a common need. Bulk buying of items from sandpaper to trees will be discussed at future meetings.

'So, the Devon Chapter of the A.E.G.B. is under way. If you want to belong, and were not at the last meeting, please phone or write and tell me. If I don't hear from you, I will assume that you are not interested.

'The next meeting is on Wednesday 2nd. November, 7.30 for 8.00 p.m., at John Taylor's house. Bring a turned article, be it one you hate or one you love, for group discussion'.

Keith Sinclair, Willowfield, Week, Dartington, Totnes, Devon. TQ9 6JW. Tel. (0803 867252)

Thanks for your letters Keith, and please keep me informed about yourselves. It is encouraging to see that Devon is off to such a strong start.

I think that publishing the final paragraph of Keith's first letter in this Newsletter is in fact preaching to the converted, but I have left it in as it sums up so very well what the AWGB is about and could quite well be used as part of a Press release to advertise meetings of other Chapters.

I also feel that the activities of individual Chapters are of great interest and inspiration to others. But don't just write to *me* about them. I can only get to existing members through these pages. Write to the local press, as I suspect Keith has done. And what about putting on a display of members work in Bank and Building Society windows, with some suitable literature? That should get a few more members enrolled.

Kent should be running well very shortly, due mainly to the efforts of Bill Cardon with not a little assistance from John Hunnex. Bill arranged a programme in a local High School which he is tied in with another official body, The Educational Technicians Association, which uses the same facility.

He had access to a Graduate, which John 'drove' and a Jubilee. Also on the one day programme was a small trade show and turning demonstration by Mr. Jarvis and his son of 'The Turning Point', Biddenden; six turning videos, and two local ladies who demonstrated lace making and spinning. Light refreshments were on sale.

My spy tells me that the day was very successful indeed Bill, no small thanks to the effort which you put in. '....There were people showing an interest in joining the Association and they were given application forms and copies of the aims and objectives of the Association' she went on.

The Middlesex Chapter is holding an event on Friday 18th. November, with Mike Cripps as the organiser. It will be in the Ickenham area and your newsletter editor has threatened to demonstrate. Be warned. More details in the next newsletter, or nearer the date from Mike, at 41, the Greenway, ICKENHAM, Middlesex.

The Norfolk Chapter held its inaugural meeting in July and will arrange a calendar of events for the next year. (This has now probably been put out to members. ed.) There will be outside visits, talks and demonstrations, all to whet the appetite of the woodturner. The first event was a Woodturning Extravaganza, (Good word that Tony, where did you get it from? ed.) and was held on Saturday, 24th. September, at Tony Waddilove's Norfolk Woodturning Centre, Hill Farm Workshops, Great Dunham, Kins Lynn, Norfolk.

The day boasted demonstrations, advice, equipment, supplies, machines, videos to watch and lots more to see. Refreshments were available, as were special bargains for all. Featured were displays of turned work by Association Members.

There was also an Association table which Tony told me encouraged nine woodturners to join on the day, with even more people waiting for application forms, which they should now have.

When I met a somewhat 'Extravaganza lagged' Tony at our A.G.M. the next day, he confirmed that Norfolk has really got its act together.

I didn't get time at the A.G.M. to ask Tony for a report of the day, but possibly someone who attended will send me something for the next Newsletter?

Staffordshire and South Cheshire are meeting monthly at Leigh Memorial Hall, Leek Rd., Stoke on Trent. The July meeting enjoyed a talk on the merits and applications for a wide range of chucks. A starter competition is to be judged in October, when members will exhibit a goblet each. Contact addresses were in the last newsletter.

Worcestershire got off to a good start and we held our first recruitment evenings at Avoncroft on 12th/13th Sept. Our Chapter secretary will soon be getting press releases out to local newspapers, detailing the programme for the rest of the year.

At the Leeds show one of our Yorkshire members, whilst speaking to Mike Cripps, offered to organize a local chapter. I suspect that Mike has by now made contact with all in the area and I expect that we shall soon have yet another pin in the map.

General. Part of a letter which arrived from a member a few days ago referred to the areas where local 'Chapters' had not yet been formed. The writer suggested that these be known as 'Paragraphs'. Come on folks. Lets hear of a couple of 'sentences' being submitted to the local press, so that they can put the 'word' out and I can then start getting 'letters' to publish.

Finally. It ought to be said that anyone organising a local Chapter event will not yet be covered by the A.W.G.B. insurance scheme, which at the moment, only covers events which are organised on a National basis. For instance, both Ray Key and I were covered by our own public liability insurance scheme for the recent Avoncroft demonstration, as was Don White and Dennis French, for the Bristol day. The disclaimer notices which Mike Cripps sent out to local organisers should be posted in prominent positions around the site of any demonstration.

Whilst we are looking for a comprehensive policy which all Chapters could avail themselves of, we have not yet found one. For more information on this very important subject, contact Secretary, Hugh O'Neill.

BUSINESS SPONSORS.

The list of business sponsors remains unchanged from the last newsletter and the only news which I have of them is that Charlton's Timber Store have donated the turning tools which Ray mentioned in his Chairmans Report, that Lee Cooper of L.R.E. Machinery and Equipment Co. Ltd. recently attended a Woodturning Seminar in the States and also, no doubt, promoted the business, and that Frank Boddy have very kindly invited Association members to a conducted tour of their Boroughbridge Mill and Yard. They will show us what happens to the timber between felling and selling. The date of this interesting day out has now been fixed for Saturday 22nd. April, '89. More of this in a future edition, but why not start thinking about organising a bus trip from your area?

Do any other of our business sponsors have anything to report for the next issue?

SEMINAR REPORTS.

Member Keith Sinclair, attended Dave and Toby's West Country Extravaganza. He writes,

'A full house of woodturners met at the Mill for a day's immersion in turning talk and action. The Devon Guild of Craftsmen's gallery contained plenty of inspirational work, while the demonstrations had the chips flying outside.

'In the morning Tobias Kaye took us through the problems and pleasures of large bowl turning from wet wood. The Harrison lathe danced happily across the floor under the unballancing effect of the burr-elm block, but we saw how Toby's gouges transformed the piece into the recognisable Kaye contours. Interesting to see his chuck researches put into practice, plenty of ideas for all to use.

'After lunch the Skew Chisel took over, with a little help and guidance from Dave Regester's hands. Many details were unconventional to published practice, but the finished products poured off the lathe to show the effectiveness of the techniques. As Dave admitted, many years full-time practice are needed to master that art. For me, the high-light was watching captive loose rings appear on a lace bobbin, mainly using a 3/4" skew!! (A 1" skew in fact. I had it from the horses mouth. ed.)

'At the end, with gentle proddings from Dave and Toby, using skew and gouge respectively, of course, an inaugural meeting of the Devon Chapter of the A.W.G.B., was agreed for July 2nd., 7 p.m., at the home and workshop of Keith Sinclair, Willowfield, Week, Dartington, Totnes, Devon. Maybe we'll turn a little oak from this acorn.' (It has already started to sprout a shoot, see LOCAL CHAPTERS, DEVON. ed.)

A second report of the same event arrived shortly after the preceding one and whilst I do not have space in this edition of the newsletter to publish it, I hope to do so in the next letter, if only for one gorgeous line. In the meantime, John Taylor will have to wait a while longer before the writs start flying!

Whilst not really a seminar report, I feel justified in mentioning a one day demonstration which I did recently at 'The Turning Point', British Gates, Biddenden, Kent, if only because of the potential benefit to the A.W.G.B. The day went very well. My reconing was that we had 100 or so turners attending, despite the mid-week date. And most of them heard for the first time of the A.W.G.B.

British Gates have offered to send out our new brochure to everyone on their 600 strong mailing list.

EXHIBITION REPORTS.

Member Graham Colyer asked Mike Scott to report on the 'Well Turned Wood Show'. Mike's report follows:-

'The Walford Mill Craft Centre, opened in 1986, was the host to this exhibition organised by woodturner Graham Colyer from Ilminster in Somerset. In a most attractive setting just outside Wimborne Minster, the Mill houses a retail shop, gallery, demonstrations area, workshops, index and resource centre and an adjoining restaurant.

'The aim was to show a variety of work by Dorset Craft Guild members, together with a display of ornamental turning loaned by the Worshipful Company of Turners from their London Collection. The educational emphasis of the Guild was well illustrated by showing stages of the making process and lathe demonstrations. Fred Payne's magnificent Holtzapffel lathe was on show, and I was itching to have a go! Books and videos were on sale and the woodturning video of Richard Raffan was being shown. A selection of pieces were specially marked for the visually handicapped to handle.

'There were over 200 items on display from 18 Guild members, covering the full spectrum of woodturning, both in the range of objects and in their quality. Whilst the majority of the work was good, few of the pieces were exceptional. The inclusion of quite a number of mediocre or poorly executed pieces diluted the impact of what could have been an excellent show. Craftsmanship must include good design, yet there were many pieces on show which displayed little or no attention to form and balance. An example of this which crops up all the time were the pieces with large deep recesses in the base. It seems that no attempt is made to incorporate the recess into the design of the outside profile, resulting in a ghastly dénouement when one turns over a bowl to inspect the underside!

'On a more positive note, there were examples of excellent design, workmanship and innovation. I particularly liked Melvyn Firmager's tall hollow lacewood vase, and admire the skills that this technique demands. Graham Colyer's experiments with double sided shallow forms with sensuous curves were intriguing and beautifully finished. I hope he continues with these as they are an exciting development. He was showing some 53 pieces ranging from a pair of graceful candlesticks to mirror frames and a variety of smaller bowls, some of which I felt did not do justice to his obvious talent. His father, Cecil Colyer had his superb maple and silver-inlaid mazer as a centre of attraction together with an assortment of salad and other bowls.

'I thought that Nick Barberton's work was the most consistent. Simple attractive forms, well executed, neat bases(!) and a variety of open and closed shapes, all of which worked well. His ash stool was unfortunately marred by the misalignment of the wedges in the legs showing through the top of the seat. A small matter, but one which did spoil an otherwise fine piece.

'Amongst the other work represented, I liked Peter Dalby's natural-edged open forms with clean simple lines; John Corrigan's miniature yew 'Goblet in the making'; Peter Gray's shallow dishes; John Makepeace's superb adjustable dressing table mirror in padao; Geoffrey Manley's elegant pink ivory and ebony goblets and Ted Payne's spinning wheel.

'I found the display somewhat random and would have preferred to see members work grouped together with some sense of unity. The use of waney-edged planking as shelving detracted from the objects themselves. I find wood needs a contrasting colour to show it off best. Unfortunately the dust from the turning demonstration was finding its way onto the objects: perhaps it would have been better housed in another part of the building

'Despite my grumbles about the display and the quality of some of the work, I really enjoyed seeing such a large variety of turned objects under one roof and am grateful to have been given the honour to voice my thoughts about it. All credit must go to Graham Colyer for the tremendous effort he put in to organise such a comprehensive exhibition.'

Thanks for all that Mike. A very concise look not only at the work but also at how it is displayed. I am only too well aware that my knowledge of what is and is not good design leaves much to be desired. One of the things which I personally want to get from the Association is more information on this all important subject. Whilst 'good' design is certainly in the eye of the beholder, there is a lot of room for improvement on certain parts of my sales table! Maybe we will get some pointers on 30th. October?. See 'Forthcoming Attractions'. What do other members want of *their* Association? Let us know please.

Member Brian Clifford gave me the following report of the Practical Woodworking Show at Leeds, when we met at our A.G.M. last week.

'The A.W.G.B. made its first major public appearance at the Practical Woodworking Show at Leeds University on 1 - 4 September. The stand was provided free of charge by the organisers. We must express our sincere thanks for this generosity - without it the Association would have been unable to attend the show.

'The main feature of the stand was a display of members work. This ranged in size from an exquisite miniature goblet (one of a set of various sizes) made by Maurice Mullins, to a huge bowl made by Mike Scott. The exhibits varied in type and included coffee and display tables, small boxes, a cruet set and an array of bowls and other vessels. All together there were some 30 or so items. There was also a slide viewer and a video machine. The latter ran continuously with alternate showings of the videos by Richard Raffan and Del Stubbs. On one of the walls there was hung a small display of videos and books for sale. On view for much of the show (until it was presented to Kath Etheridge) was the Tyme cub lathe donated by the manufacturers, together with various accessories, tools and materials. High on the wall at the back of the stand hung a huge reproduction of the A.W.G.B. logo. On hand were several thousand copies of the new A.W.G.B. leaflet.

'The stand was manned by committee members Mike Scott, Len Grantham and Mike Cripps, with a supporting cast of Bill Newton, (a local, self confessed eccentric turner) and Brian Clifford. Local members Harry Middleton and Joan Eaglestone came to help out on the Friday.

'The stand commanded a considerable amount of attention and was thronged for most of the show by visitors taking a close look at the exhibits. Some of the more delicate or valuable items were in a glass case but all of the bowls were displayed on open shelves and people were encouraged to handle these. There was no doubt that the quality of the work was greatly admired. To many it was a source of inspiration and an encouragement to get back to the lathe and have another go. A few of the beginners found it a little daunting as they felt their own efforts fell so far short of what was on show; we tried to encourage these to persevere and keep practicing. It became clear that the local Chapters are likely to prove to be one of the most attractive features of the Association as they will provide a resource where the less experienced members can obtain help and encouragement. One of the useful functions we were able to perform at the show was to introduce people with queries to the appropriate persons on the commercial stands.

'From the point of view of the Association the show must be judged a

success. We got a lot of publicity amongst the people who matter most - woodworkers. Some 30 new members were recruited at the show and a considerable number of leaflets were handed out. Time will tell how many the latter will produce but, however many that is, there is no doubt that we made a lot of friends, not only amongst the public but also amongst the professional people on the other stands.'

Brian Clifford.

Once again, one of our members has shown a willingness to spare us some time and to share his views on a recent event. Thanks for your effort Brian.

MEMBERS PROFILE

The members profile for this edition is of Mike Scott. It is purely co-incidental that he wrote the piece in the last heading. I did consider substituting another profile for Mike's, but decided that you ought to have a little of his background, for two reasons. Firstly, it will show with what authority Mike has spoken and secondly, I had already got the profile typed out and into the newsletter before his report arrived anyway!

Those of you who are not familiar with Mike's work have yet to realise the existence of one of the more intriguing areas of turning. Mike's profile, as submitted, suggested that as he had exceeded my '200 word limit please', I could edit if I wished! Mike, I wouldn't know where to start!!

Mike writes:- 'Born Oxford 1943. After 20 years in accounting and administration I finally gave up the 'Rat Race' and an unhappy marriage, and spent the next four years in intensive personal growth.

'During this time I qualified in Therapeutic Massage, studied Eastern philosophy, Holistic medicine and meditation, repaired and resprayed cars and lorries, learned signwriting, was employed as a vegetarian Chef in a Holistic Guest House, spent a year building fibreglass bodies for the Aston Martin Le Mans Challenge, took a year out at the Crewe and Alsagar College doing their 'Creative Arts' degree course, worked with a friend setting up a local handyman service and finally realising that somewhere I must have a modicum of talent, actually took the plunge, (with the help of the Enterprise Allowance Scheme), and set up my own business making initially meditation stools and posture seating.'

'In May 1985 I bought my first lathe, a Coronet Hobby, in order to turn stool legs etc., and suddenly realised what a wonderful tool this was.

'By November 1985, I was already making 'one-off' pieces and selling them to galleries in the North West. By May of the following year I was selling work in places such as Oxford Gallery and Courcoux & Courcoux, holding my first exhibition in August 1986 at the Leeds Craft and Design Shop.

'I had arrived, after 18 months of sweat, blood and tears, working 16 - 18 hours a day on the lathe, reading, studying and absorbing all I could about form, design and technique, at the beginning of an exciting journey of discovery about the wonderfully limitless possibilities of working with wood.'

Quite a background Mike. And I thought that I had been busy. I have taken the liberty of adding just a little more, from Mike's own brochure. I think it describes just where Mike's 'journey of discovery' has taken him so far.

'I like the simple forms and endeavour to bring out something of the organic and sculptural qualities inherent in each piece I bring to the lathe. I use unorthodox methods to achieve the right effect for each piece,

fuming, burning, scoring, stitching, carving, using rope, leather, metal bands, and nails where appropriate.

'.....My work falls somewhere in between that of Jim Partridge and Mark Lindquist, and I find inspiration from many sources, mostly ceramics, exploring the infinite possibilities in the same way that some potters have done.'

DIG-INS.

Some recent correspondence with one of our members caused me to chastise him mildly for sawing the corners off his square spindle blanks prior to putting them onto the lathe. I wished to re-assure him that a roughing gouge was quite a safe tool, and much quicker than a saw. The reply which I got assured me that the roughing gouge was a regularly used tool, but that garden sticks and smaller spindle turning blanks could be had from the triangular off cuts which the afore mentioned gouge could not produce.

TOUCHÉ! Mr. H.

(But I am more interested in speed than in bean sticks).

BEADS AND HOLLOWES. (Yet another new feature from your brain stormed editor. The title of this feature has, like 'dig-ins' been blatantly filched from a member, who offered it as a possible title for the newsletter. Hope I am forgiven? Like 'Helpline', I should like to make it a means of passing on useful information from member to member. I will kick it off with the following:-)

Way back in the mid 60's when I was working for an engineering Company and newly interested in Woodturning, I had desperate need of a pulley of a specific and non standard size. The machine shop could have made me one, but at great cost, and I didn't want to risk getting it done as a 'foreigner'. After a few weeks of head scratching, I suddenly realised that I had a lathe and some plywood. I made up a temporary pulley of the required size and fitted it. That was some 22 years ago and it is still in use!

Does anyone else have similar tips to pass on?

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

WANTED. Submissions for this part of the newsletter!!

SPECIAL OFFERS TO MEMBERS.

Association member Les. Syson, of Church House, Eaton, CONGLETON, Cheshire, CW12 2NH, offers his book, 'The Watermills of Britain' to members at £7.25, including P.&P., a reduction of £1.70. Les says 'But what woodturner is interested in Watermills?' Well Les, you are for one! Are there any takers?.

HELPLINE.

Further to the Helpline answer which Ray Key gave in newsletter No.4., regarding sanding drums, your eagle eyed editor has also seen that pneumatic sanding drums, and other similar equipment, can be had from:-

Gibbs Constructor (1961) Ltd., Gibbs Rd., EDMONTON, London N18 3PB.

I know no more of the products than as seen in their advert, but they could be worth looking at if you are interested.

Also,:-

Member Albert Lain, of Grove House, Rendham, SAXMINDHAM, Suffolk, IP17 2AS, writes:-

'I am turning an increasing quantity of shallow platters on both faces up to 24" diameter and no more than 1" total thickness and am finding chucking by means of tight fits into false wooden plates a slow part of the manufacturing process. (Not easy to get the right fit every time and actually testing the fit causes delay). Can anyone give me a lead in my search for a supply of either heavy duty expansive chucks as described in 'Woodworker', Jan. '86, page 63, or better still, vacuum chucking as described in 'Woodworker', Feb. '88, page 174.

'All help will be gratefully received'. Alberts tel. No. is 172 878 567.

Albert, have you tried the 'Master Chuck' wood jaw plates? Any other ideas folks? Please let me know how your request gets on.

LETTERS.

Bill Newton, a member from Bradford has written giving me details of some experimentation he is doing with an elliptical chuck. Bill is using a Myford lathe and the chuck has hydraulic assistance. The mind boggles!! Anyone who would like to swap information with Bill on this subject should contact him at 5, Beacon Brow, Horton Bank Top, BRADFORD, BD6 3DE. Bill was in attendance as an A.W.G.B. stand steward on the week-end of the Leeds Practical Woodworking Show.

He also wrote very kindly and at some length on the fact that some professional woodturners are nowadays showing themselves and are prepared to discuss methods which until recently have been 'secret'. Whilst I must agree with him in general, I have heard from more than one source, that Frank Pain seems to have had no secrets and was more than willing to share his experiences with all.

Anyway, in the ensuing discussion with Bill, I said that we all suffer dig-in's from time to time, but firstly, the understanding of why they occur and then the ability to foresee and avoid them are just a matter of practice, practice, practice.

One of the differences between a professional and an amateur is that the professional usually has a rent man knocking on the door, which is a great incentive to getting the problems sorted out.

Speaking as a professional, and I think that I am speaking at least for my fellow committee members, if not for any member, I am only too willing to help in any way that I can, to further the craft which I enjoy. If I can do that by demonstrating, teaching and watching others at work, then I will.

Cripes, that is starting to sound like an editorial!

Contact has been made with three other newsletter editors, one from the States, one from Eireland and one from New Zealand, and I shall be scouring their periodicals for items which I think might be of specific interest to G.B. members.

Our tireless secretary, Hugh O'Neill, has written me his usual epistle, some of which is for publication in the newsletter. I am to appeal to any members who's address is not correctly reproduced on the newsletter envelope to write to Len. Grantham, from whom the address labels now come, to advise him of the correct address. Len's correct address is 1, Duncan Court, Lord President Rd., North Berwick, East Lothian, EY39 4RJ. And no-one picked me up on my 'deliberate' wrong spelling of Edinburgh in

the last newsletter. Or maybe no-one reads it?

Hugh also tells me that not only is he on the board of management of a local Hospital, he is now their official ball maker. No, it's not another Harefield hospital job. Hugh has been appointed to supply the coconut shy with ammunition, 'made from willow, so as to be light enough to bounce off the fruit without dislodging too much of it'. We hear tell that Hugh's accuracy in throwing balls is only marginally better than his accuracy in turning them. The last time he threw at the shy the ball went wild, hit the prize stand and broke a glass bowl. With all aplomb, Hugh pointed to the coconuts and said 'I'll have that one'.

Having just returned from a trip to 'Abroad', Hugh offers the following philosophical thoughts:-

'Sometimes we look enviously at the state of woodturning in the States, with their great appreciation of turned wood. (Is it true that on piece sold for \$38,000?

'Visiting Turkey last year and Norway this, has made me realise that we are not doing too badly. All turned work seen in Turkey was crude, obviously scraped, and sold for pence. In Norway there were a few reasonable pieces at U.K. type prices, - bowls from £20 to £90-. But there was little originality and indifferent workmanship. Laminated and built up work in pine featured strongly.

'Much of the turned wood in Norway goes to provide the plates and bowls that are then painted with the traditional 'Rose Painting' method. That the underlying object was made of wood had no significance.

'Several Norwegians seeing pictures of my work immediately asked 'Do you do export?'.

Hugh sent me some more observations during his Norway trip and I shall record them in another newsletter, together with an appeal to fellow woodturners who demonstrate their craft at fairs. Yet another contentious subject with which I have some sympathy. We will discuss!

Somerset member Graham James, wrote to me regarding Bert Marsh's answer to the moisture content problem in 'Dry' timber. Graham has been in the timber trade for some 30 years and although now retired, is still involved with 'Woodworker' magazine, being one of the panelists enlisted from time to time, to field the many questions which that magazine gets from its readers.

Graham feels that whilst Bert's answer was 'first class and cannot be faulted', the timber merchant ought also to be represented in the discussion. To edit such a long and detailed letter, and cost demands that I must, I feel that I am probably going to do him down. But hopefully Graham will agree that I have brought out most of the salient points. Here goes:-

When people buy kiln dried timber from merchants, they have to accept that whilst it was dry to a specific moisture content when leaving the kiln, it will quite quickly take on moisture again, if stored in a non compatible area. (Blotting paper like I suppose. ed.) Under open storage and in most favourable summer conditions, timber will reach a minimum m/c of not less than 16% and rise to at least 20% in the winter. Therefore, timber kilned down to 10% is liable to great variations under these conditions. (I have been shown 'Kiln Dried' timber which was stored in a timber merchants fog bound open shed. And I suspect that we users are often just as guilty. ed.)

The mear waxing of end grain is no guarantee of m/c either, as who knows what happened to the timber between kiln and wax? Also, wax will keep moisture either out or in! To have a better idea of how dry the timber is,

the purchaser should, if possible, note the conditions which the timber is stored under, ask the supplier when drying took place, who did it and how long ago?

Graham also says that he used Protimeters for many years and found them accurate and satisfactory in every way. The meter must be kept in good working order and fitted with new batteries of course.

Regarding the bubinga bowl, Graham makes the very valid point that trees have natural stresses within them whilst they are growing, and these are not subdued by drying. He has heard ash 'explode like a cannon, noise and all', during cutting. Elm also has been known to move on the lathe when certain 'wild grain' conditions occur. (My own experiences bear this phenomena out, notably on a piece of 1½" sq. x 40" long sycamore, which I was turning and which suddenly creaked quite audibly out of truth when part turned on the lathe. ed.) So, could David Hinchley's bubinga bowl have had some stresses within it, which, like Lady Smith, were eventually released?

The great 'Spalted' debate continues. Graham refers to 'doat', which has been known for years and which is described as an initial sign of rot. (I am not going to call Graham a 'Traditionalist' as styles/traditions are changing all the time in our craft and the word is therefore somewhat risky to pinpoint). However, he is not enamoured by articles showing this defect. -Readers of 'Woodworking Crafts' might remember the Dale Nish/Hugh Blogg debate in which I was slightly involved and for which I would have sold tickets, had it become a face to face confrontation.

Graham also suggests the setting up of a panel of specialists from within our own ranks, who could field the kind of questions which I hope 'HELPLINE' and 'PROBLEM SPOT' will bring forth. Such specialists might be box turners, spindle turners, timber merchants, botanists, cost accountants, photographers, or whoever. Do any of you have any specific skills which you would be willing to share with we mere mortals, for the cost of a few minutes with a writing impliment?

Once again Graham, I hope that my editing was acceptable to you. Thank you for such a detailed letter.

Finally, Graham has made an offering for Problem Spot. Read on.

PROBLEM SPOT.

Graham James from Somerset asks the following interesting question:-

'What causes Olive or Black Hearted ash, beech etc? Is it always a sign of deterioration? Is it something in the soil where the tree grows? I have just completed the turning of three bowls of varying size, from the slabs of pieces of an acacia tree which a neighbour felled last year.

'....Turning from the crescent shape of the slab, with of course the annual ring following the shape of the bowl, I managed to include some sapwood on the underside of each. This varied in colour from yellowy brown to greeny black, with a very attractive appearance, although unfortunately only seen from the underside.

'I have sawn acacia from the log on numerous occasions over the years and have never before noticed this variation of colour in the plank. Is it therefore some form of decay or a lucky result of the drying process? I am all ears.'

Thanks for the question Graham. George Sturt in his 'The Wheelwright's Shop' refers to discolouration in ash, and its consequential lack of certain properties, but I would like to hear from someone on the matter. Share your knowledge with us please.

Bert Marsh, that fount of all knowledge on timber, its structure, properties and diseases, has come to my aid once more. In Problem Spot,

newsletter No.4, I asked if my spalted beech bowl might be doing something nasty on the side board, Quatermass wise. Bert has re-assured me as follows:-

'Spalted' has now become a common term given to timber that has been attacked by certain fungi. These can cause some decay and staining, and often dark zone lines which can enhance the appearance of a normally bland coloured wood.

'There are numerous different fungi that live on wood. Some grow on living trees, others on dead trees and sawn timber. But in all cases, the wood must have a moisture content greater than 22%. Once below this point the fungal attack will die.

'Spores, which are the seeds of fungi, are produced by mature fruiting bodies which take the form of bracket or mushroom type growths near the affected area.

'Millions and millions of spores are always available, just waiting until conditions are right for their development.'

'Therefore the spalted bowl is not infectious and nothing nasty is going on inside it.'

Thanks are due once again to Bert for a very authoritative and concise answer to what was a question I suspect many of us had asked at one time or another. Who's turn is it to ask the next question. Come on folks, don't leave it to 'dim' me to make a fool of myself, lets *all* learn.

Bert also responded to my editorial comment on his last answer regarding the moisture content, -or apparant lack of it-, of freshly produced shavings. He agrees that wet shavings indicate wet timber, but makes the point that shavings which appear dry have not necessarily come from dry wood.

DEADLINE

The deadline for the next newsletter is Monday October 17th.

WARNING.

This may be the last newsletter which you receive!

Unless that is, you have paid your subscription for the 1988'89 year.

What about checking NOW?