



WOODBITS NEWSLETTER Issue 233 October 2025

SHAVINGS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the October 2025 newsletter. In our October meeting we were lucky to meet Kade Bolger during his tour of the UK. He provided an impressive demonstration pretty much using only his skew. I hope members were inspired to practice with their own afterwards.

Our next meeting will be a demonstration by Chris Fisher AKA the Blind Woodturner.

<https://theblindwoodturner.co.uk/> . This is another must see event, and I look forward to a good turnout on the 11th November.

COMPETITIONS

I am writing this on the evening of the club's visit to Wizardry in Wood, organised by the Turners Livery Company. The quality of the items in the various displays and RPT sales stalls was breathtaking, much like the items at our own club meetings. The competition subjects this month are a Kitchen Roll Holder for Beginners and a Mug for Advanced. The latter were well represented at Wizardry in Wood too.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING!!!! At our October meeting I asked members to make a few Christmas trees for us to top up club funds via Christmas Craft fairs. Please consider bringing a few to the next club meeting where I will be very grateful to receive them.

Outside of club meetings, the club will be turning again at Horatio's Garden and the turning days at Letchworth Mens Shed continues to gain momentum. If you wish to be involved with either of these opportunities, please let us know via a committee member.

See you on the 11th November

Adam Blackie

Chairman

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Chairman and Treasurer: Adam Blackie treasurer@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk

Club Secretary: Patrick Stileman secretary@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk

Newsletter Editor: Allen Kaye hertsandbedsnewsletter@gmail.com

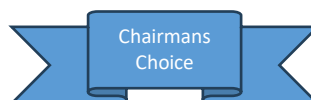
Club News

October Competition

Beginners



1st Colin Newman



2nd Gary Atkins



Advanced



1st Tony Taylor



2nd Peter Hoare

3rd Peter Kemp



Professionals
Choice

Open



1st Tony Taylor



Professionals
Choice

2nd James Blackie

3rd Peter Hoare



Meetings Calendar

2025

November 11th Chris Fisher
December 9th Club / Fun night
Jan 26 13th Gary Rance
February 10th Mike Wood
March 1010 Stuart King
April 14th AGM+

Competition Subjects

2025/6

Beginners

Nov Kitchen Roll holder
Dec Dice shaker
Jan 20 to 30 cm spurtle
Feb 12 to 15cm diameter bowl
March Tea light holder

Advanced

Mug
Winged bowl
"Apothecary" vase
Something offset
Textured bowl

Projects

Chess set Geoff Selley

Nearly two years ago Geoff was asked to turn a pawn for a friend's chess set that had sadly lost one. This built a technique and over time he has made numerous pieces using yew and mahogany.

The photo below is Geoff's most recent third set – this time for made for a friend's grandson. It took forever as usual he said ; the main stumbling block was carving the four knights.

'No board required this time so saved some time but made two extra pawns as they often go awol! '

The wood is beech salvaged from Berkhamsted Golf Club damaged chairs, and mahogany table legs from our club's wood sales.



Appeal for Donations: AV Upgrade

Dear Members,

This is an appeal for your support.

The Committee want to provide the best experience for our members and visitors. One of our current goals is to upgrade our Audio-Visual (AV) equipment. This upgrade is essential for enhancing our demonstrations, especially now the club has grown.

As many of you know, the Christmas Fundraising event at Apsley Paper Mill has been cancelled this year. This and the (now delayed) AOTC at Harpenden have been crucial in raising funds for our activities and meetings.

Without the funds from our usual fundraising events, we are now in a challenging position with this project, so we are asking for donations to help us achieve this upgrade. Every contribution, no matter how small, will make a significant difference and bring us closer to our goal.

How to Donate:

1. Online Donation: Visit our Just Giving page at <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/herts-and-beds-woodturners> and follow the instructions to make a secure online donation.
2. Bank Transfer: You can transfer your donation directly to our bank account:
Herts & Beds Woodturners
Bank - Lloyds
Sort - 30-92-77
Account - 01458241
Reference – Your Initial and Surname +AV
3. Cash Please drop a little extra into the welcome table collection at the start of any meeting. Your support has always been the backbone of our club, and we are incredibly grateful for any assistance you can provide for this project.

Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

On behalf of the Committee,
Adam Blackie
Chairman
Herts and Beds Woodturners

TOOL LENDING LIBRARY UPDATE

This is a reminder that we have a popular lending library of the more esoteric or expensive tools that turners use infrequently. It's available to any club member free of charge.

For those new to the club the tool lending Library can be accessed via a link at the bottom of the Membership page on our website - <https://hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk/membership>

The value to the club is that:

- Club members can try out new tools before committing to an expensive purchase
- Club members can borrow a tool for a specific job

Here is a list of the items currently available.

1. Micro-drill detailer kit - inc 15 assorted cutters
2. Robert Sorby ProEdge Sharpening System
3. Lion Art Deep Hollowing Tool
4. Crown Spiralling Tool + Knurling Tool
5. Hamlet Brother System 2 Deep Hollowing system.
6. 3/8 Captive Ring Cutter
7. Bowl Coring System.
8. Axminster AWSL Benchtop Lathe
9. Carving jig.
10. Pyrography Machine
11. Pen and Keyring Turning Kit and Bottle Opener Mandrel
12. Long Hole Boring Kit
13. Sphere Jig
14. 16 TPI Male and Female thread chasing tool.
15. Fluting jig with index system.
16. Threading Jig.

Once the loan is completed, we ask that you share a little about your experience of the tools with the club. E.g. Show and tell what you made or an article for the monthly newsletter.

Finally, if you have suggestions for other tools for the library please get in touch.

Tool Library Contact

Adam Blackie

07941 270640 treasurer@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk

Demonstration by Kade Bolger Review by Tony Taylor

Photos by Andrew Holwerda and James Blackie

We were very pleased to welcome Kade, a distinguished professional and production and artistic turner from Ontario, Canada. Kade started with some very well chosen advice regarding safety relating to eyes, ears, face, lungs and feet.

The first part of his demonstration concentrated on the use of the skew. The style which he particularly prefers is half an inch wide, ground at 70 degrees with bevels at 25 degrees. He also likes to slightly round the toe and heel. Kade showed the effectiveness of the skew for rounding using a peeling cut. The other way of rounding was to use a fairly aggressive planing cut.



In this case one must be careful not to start at the free end as this could raise a dangerous splinter. To use the planing cut as a finishing cut it is best to raise the tool rest and to make the point of contact about one third up from the heel. The cutting edge should be at about 45 degrees to the axis. V cuts were made with the tool first held upright then progressively to one side then the other. It is best to enter with the toe (long point) of the skew.

Beads were formed from V cuts using the tip of the tool. Kade also showed his skill at forming coves with the skew, entering a little further up the bevel from the heel. For this purpose it is an advantage to have the skew with rounded corners as this less likely to catch. A sharp skew used properly should leave a surface which needs little or no sanding. Kade recommended 320 grit.

The second part was devoted to making an ornament suitable as a Christmas decoration. In making numbers of these Kade starts with 2 inch cubes of wood bored centrally with a 7 mm hole. Three of these can be mounted on a mandrel with 7 mm spacers.

For the demonstration he mounted one between centers and rounded it using peeling cuts with the skew. This is to form the body of the ornament and would be shaped either as a sphere or a hot air balloon or a

variation of this. In parting off, Kade used a thin parting tool home made from a knife blade. The ends should be slightly undercut to ensure a tight fit with the cap and finial. After the skew, finishing needed only 320 grit sanding. For production a large number would be hung on a nail board for finishing. The cap and finial were made from one piece mounted in the chuck.



For mounting the chuck spigot was made curved so that the grip could be changed for multi-axis turning. The body of the finial was shaped in the usual way, but to make the tip it was offset by small steps and turned with a very swept back detail spindle gouge. After parting off the finial the cap was turned from the remaining wood, starting by drilling a small hole for the hanging hook. Finally, the parts were glued together. The pieces of work which Kade had on view had an exceptionally lustrous finish.

He explained that this was obtained by several coats of tung oil, initially thinned. The whole demonstration was very well prepared with an excellent commentary and detailed practical tips.

It was greatly appreciated by the club members.

Identifying wood by density – Allen Kaye

Over the years I have learnt to identify some woods by such things as their grain patterns, colour, bark, leaf etc but I have never been good at it - especially if it just a simple block from a friend or off the sales table. I do however have a technique that helps me and that is by reference to tables of density. If you have a simple shape such as a rectangular block then you get the volume by multiplying length by breadth by height. Measure the mass on a kitchen scale. The table assumes cm and grams as units.

Once you have the volume then calculate the density using the equation: $\text{Density} = \text{Mass} / \text{Volume}$.

Volume of cylinders can also be calculated using Height times cross sectional area and for odd shapes you can follow Archimedes and push it into a full container of water and measure the volume of the displaced water.

It is not an exact science as there will be variations according to the dryness of the piece but you will be able to limit a range of woods easily enough to then choose the right one.

Wood	Density in grams per cubic centimeter
Alder	0.4 - 0.7
Apple	0.65 - 0.85
Ash, white	0.65 - 0.85
Ash, black	0.54
Ash, European	0.71
Aspen	0.42
Balsa	0.16
Bamboo	0.3 - 0.4
Basswood	0.3 - 0.6
Beech	0.7 - 0.9
Birch, British	0.67
Box	0.95 - 1.2
Butternut	0.38
Cedar of Lebanon	0.58
Cedar, western red	0.38
Cherry, European	0.63
Chestnut, sweet	0.56
Cypress	0.51
Douglas Fir	0.53
Ebony	1.1 - 1.3
Elm, English	0.55 - 0.6

Greenheart	1.04
Hemlock, western	0.50
Hickory	0.83
Holly	0.75
Iroko	0.66
Larch	0.5 - 0.55
Lignum Vitae	1.17 - 1.33
Lime, European	0.56
Mahogany, African	0.5 - 0.85
Maple	0.6 - 0.75
Meranti, dark red	0.71
Myrtle	0.66
Oak	0.6 - 0.9
Oak, English Brown	0.74
Parana Pine	0.56
Pear	0.6 - 0.7
Pine, pitch	0.67
Pine, Scots	0.51
Pine, white	0.35 - 0.5
Plane, European	0.64
Plum	0.65 - 0.8
Poplar	0.35 - 0.5
Rosewood, East Indian	0.90
Sapele	0.64
Satinwood	0.95
Spruce	0.4 - 0.7
Sycamore	0.4 - 0.6
Teak, Indian	0.65 - 0.9
Utile	0.66
Walnut	0.65 - 0.7
Yew	0.67

Unsung Heros- Pete Moncrieff-Jury

With kind permission of the Author Pete and his publisher, I duplicate an article seen in a recent copy of the Woodturning magazine.

It seems an appropriate time given the passing of some of our members over the last few years. Allen

Like perhaps a lot of you reading this, have reached a venerable age where many acquaintances and friends are quietly moving on to the next phase in life. Many of our clubs consist of a large percentage of older and, indeed, elderly people, who perhaps started as members through their love and enthusiasm for our mutual crafts. As they get older the ability and at times the desire to be involved in woodturning and other related crafts diminishes and the reason for attending the clubs is often a social one. Being able to meet and spend time with those who have like-minded interests and perhaps with whom we have developed a friendship outside our common interests becomes the main purpose of our attending the meetings.

Many of these are those I mentioned, the older members, the ones who perhaps have spent much of their life involved in the craft to some extent and have those often-ignored attributes of experience and wisdom. We look to the famous to be shown how things could be if we were as good as them, but often if we looked at those closer and less well known in our clubs and meeting, we would find examples of how to do things when nothing goes right, how to adapt and make the best of mistakes, how to cope with failure.

I would never want to decry or demean the value and the enormous input of the well-known names within the woodturning world, but I do believe that we also need to look at those closer to home. In the past few months several well-known, well-admired and influential woodturners have passed away and the outpouring of affection and sympathy for their families and friends has been both very public and well deserved. Their contribution and their influence over the years has been great. Not all have been elderly though, some have been comparatively young and that perhaps makes it harder to accept and also should make us all stop and think. It is sad to hear of the passing of the well-known turners in our community and they will be sorely missed for many reasons that have been quoted elsewhere. But when we look closer to home we can recognise that there are many who are not well known who have also been of great influence within our clubs and organisations. That little old man in the corner needs to hear someone say thank you, the lady who has spearheaded female participation in the craft, the quietly spoken gentleman who keeps to himself but has influenced many to try something different. All need to be recognised and appreciated.

In our clubs there are hundreds if not thousands of people who have influenced others, mentored them, encouraged them and inspired others. Often without realising it, often with little or no actual recognition. Our craft, while acknowledging the importance and value of the well-known turners, perhaps depends mainly on those who are quietly in the background. Thank you to those who have passed who are known and will be greatly missed, but thank you also to those who are not known and whose influence, encouragement and inspiration has been the bedrock of the craft through the clubs and meetings.

Pete

For Sale and Wanted

Various

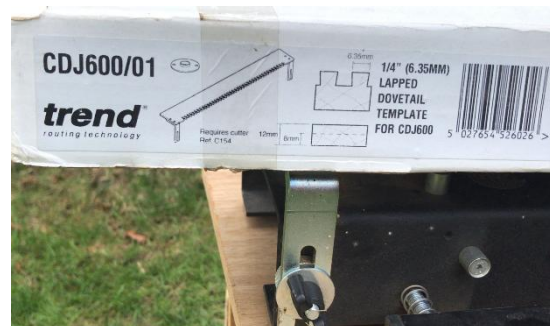
Chris Squires has a number of items for sale as below. Please contact him for more details.

stanleysquires@yahoo.co.uk 07807 858108



Dovetail jig. Never been used £70 ono

Dovetail jig 2. £30 ono



Trend router 1/4inch
– never been used

Bosch router table
and Ryobi router -
£100 ono



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Poetry Corner

21ST CENTURY MOBILITY CHARIOT

Sit you down, take your ease
I'm here to help so therefore please
This century's mobility chariot is in play
The agonies of painful muscles kept at bay

Not drawn like the historic by galloping gray horses
Instead Ni Cad lithium ones to round most known courses
Unlike the former with evil intent
Instead, welcome relief for youthful spirit spent

Around the streets or through the shops
The bonus for complaining bodies never stops
But beware, the seated eye level condition
Causing third party exclusion, no awareness recognition

The trick is to arrive with trumpets blaring
Induce their reaction with eyes a glaring
All chances of anonymity taken away
Here you are and you're here to stay

The silent approach is the constant surprise
Just use the hooter for inclusion's prize
At the end of it all, you had your outing
All on your own, no need for scouting

Martin Sexton. October 2025