



WOODBITS NEWSLETTER

Issue 240

May 2026

Shavings from the Chairman

Welcome to our first summer newsletter of 2026.

It's been a lovely warm start to the summer, and I hope you are all enjoying the glorious weather.

I've been spending a little more time in my workshop now that the sunshine is here. This month, I've been experimenting with making bowls from old planks of wood that had been sitting in the workshop for quite some time, inspired by the excellent demonstration from Nathanael Griffiths at last month's meeting. If anyone else has tried the technique recently, we'd be delighted to see the results on the display table at our next meeting on 9 May, which will be a club night.

Some members of the committee are busy organising a variety of activities for June, including a Midsummer quiz and an ornamental turning evening. We'll also have all three club lathes in action to demonstrate some interesting candlestick techniques ahead of the club collaborative competition in October. You'll find more details about the competition elsewhere in this newsletter, including the exact candlestick specification, and we'd love as many members as possible to make a contribution to our club's AWGB entry.

There's also some positive news from Horatio's Garden, where the equipment that was stolen has either been replaced or we now have plans to replace it. We are still looking for a couple of chucks with a 3/4 inch spindle and a 16 tpi thread, so if you have one you would be happy to donate, please do get in touch.

There's also more news on the training being arranged by Dave Washer in Aylesbury, and if there are any particular techniques you'd like to see covered, please do let him know.

Finally, I'm very pleased to share that the club will be giving demonstrations to multiple schools at the Flamstead Arts and Heritage Fair on 5 and 6 June. This fits beautifully with our theme for the year of encouraging younger turners into the craft, and you'll see a lovely example of that later in the newsletter. If you have any young people enjoying time in the workshop over the summer, please do send us a picture—we'd be very happy to include it in a future edition of the newsletter.

Best wishes

Adam Blackie

Chairman

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Club News

May Competition

BEGINNERS



1st Gary Atkins

2nd Alison Bissby



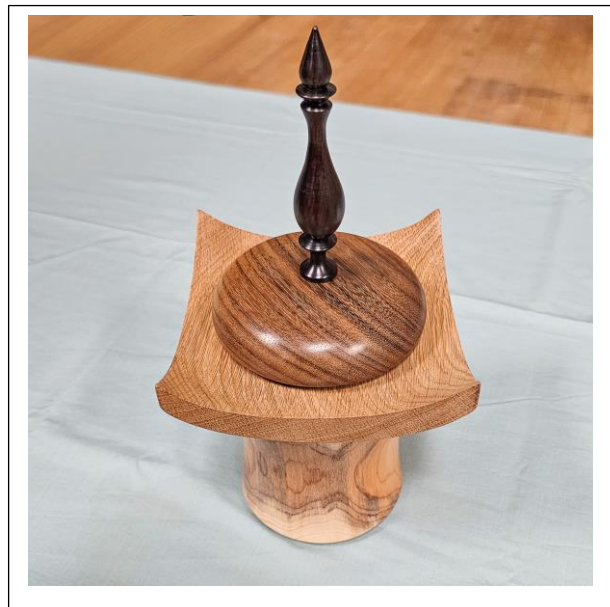
Only 2 beginner entries this month,
hoping for more next month.

3rd

ADVANCED



1st Harvey Alison



2nd James Blackie



3rd Peter Kemp

OPEN



1st Harvey Alison



2nd Peter Kemp



3rd Tim Pettigrew

Meetings Calendar

2026		
June	9 th	Club Night
July	14 th	Liz Pearson
August	11 th	Geoff Harris (Pole Lathe)
September	8 th	Club Night
October	13 th	Steven Kearvell
November	10 th	Richard Peers
December	14 th	Club Night

Competition Subjects

2026		
	Beginners	Advanced
June	Hedgehog or other Creature	Bangle
July	Honey Drizzler	Natural Edged Bowl
August	Ball and Cup	Hollow Form
September	Small AWGB festival competition candlestick	Medium or large AWGB festival competition candlestick
October	Platter	Bowl on Feet
November	Xmas Decoration	Wall Plaque
December	20 to 30cm Long Spurtle	Textured Platter
January	Paper Weight	Offset Goblet
February	Ring Finger	Wool Bowl
March	12 to 15cm Dia. Bowl	Natural Edged Vase

Training Update - Dave Washer

The **Introduction to Multi-Axis Turning** is now fully subscribed however I do have a provisional date later in the year for another course, and have 4 members on the list so far, if this is something you would like to do please give me a shout and I'll put your name on the list.

Bowl Hollowing/Hollow form course.

Dates are now set for 11 July 2026 and the course is now fully subscribed, once again if this is something you would like to try please do get in touch either by email training@herts&bedswoodturners.co.uk or my Mobile 07546 612450. and we may be able to arrange another course later in the year.

I have a provisional date booked at Aylesbury to present a **sharpening course**, the course will include a demonstration using the Robert Sorby sharpening system and using a grinding wheel, if any Members wish to take this one day course then please contact me at the following training@herts&bedswoodturners.co.uk or my Mobile 07546 612450.

You may also be interested in the excellent training opportunity to the well-attended '**A day in my workshop**' where members can visit one of our members workshops and have a day of one-to-one training, honing your skills and techniques, a small fee is required for the day to cover club insurance and add to the club funds. It's a good way to get to know other club members too!

The club can also offer a discount on all group training delivered by a registered professional turner. This is limited to 50% of the total group cost or a maximum of £70 per person. I can provide further details if you are interested in this option.

Please do get in touch if you have any Training or Specialist Technique's you would like to try as I'm sure we can find a member willing to teach and support.

Dave Washer

Email - training@herts&bedswoodturners.co.uk

Mobile - 07546 612450

Nathanael Griffiths Demo review

Nathanael Griffiths, winner of Channel 4's Britain's Best Woodworker in 2023, gave a demonstration at the club in May.

Seeing some of the segmented pieces of Nathanael's work on the display table showed his huge talent as a wood turner, and this is particularly impressive given that he is only in his early twenties.

Nathanael demonstrated for us how to make a bowl from a board. Starting with a 24 x 125 x 125mm square board, this was initially glued onto a piece of scrap wood mounted on a faceplate, then roughed down to a circular blank with a bevel on the outer edge angled in towards the headstock.

An outer ring was then parted from the blank using a thin parting tool, with the diameter of the widest part of the ring being the same as the narrowest part of the blank on the opposite site to ensure that there is a good match. This was repeated a second time, with copious quantities of hot glue used to hold everything in place while the segments were being parted.

By the tea break Nathanael had created three pieces which, following sanding on a disc to create perfectly flat ends, fitted together to create a basic bowl shape



The three pieces were stuck together with hot glue, then the whole piece was glued onto the wood mounted to the faceplate, for turning. The turned bowl was then sanded and finished with wax, and acetone used to break the glue seal. The end result was an impressively elegant thin-walled bowl.



This is a method for making bowls that I had previously heard of but not seen. The beauty of it is that very little wood is wasted and for this reason is good to do with a piece of special wood.

Nathanael was relaxed and a very good communicator, explaining what he was doing at every stage. This, in spite of the AV malfunctioning resulting in one, then both monitors losing a signal, and people fiddling around trying to get them working whilst he calmly carried on with his demo.

In all it was a superb demonstration and I'm looking forward to trying this technique for myself.

Patrick Stileman

Celebrating the next generation of wood turners

One of the great joys of any woodturning club is seeing fresh enthusiasm arrive at the lathe. Across workshops, open days, demonstrations, and mentoring sessions, younger turners are discovering the same excitement that draws many of us into the craft: the feel of tools in hand, the character of the timber, and the satisfaction of shaping something beautiful from a simple block of wood.



For many youngsters, woodturning offers something increasingly rare: a chance to slow down, work with care, and create something real in a world filled with screens.

Just as importantly, it opens the door to sustainability, repair, and making objects that are meant to be valued rather than thrown away.

Clubs have an especially important role to play. Skills can be taught, but confidence grows through encouragement, patience, and shared experience. When experienced members take time to explain a technique, demonstrate safe practice, or simply stand alongside a beginner for their first few cuts, they do far more than teach a project—they help pass on a tradition. That generosity is what turns interest into commitment and beginners into lifelong turners.

As a club, we should take real pride in supporting the next generation of woodturners. Every young person encouraged to pick up a tool, ask a question, or try the lathe for the first time represents a bright future for our craft. If we continue to welcome, teach, and inspire, we can be confident that the shavings will keep flying for many years to come.

The credit for his month's picture comes from one of our own members workshops. A grandson completing his Duke of Edinburgh silver award. He chose his technical skill as woodwork and is also lucky to have such a skilled Grandpa.

If you have a young enthusiast in your workshop, please let us know.

AWGB Collaborative Competition. 10/11 October 2026

The club committee is excited to announce that we are currently exploring creative ways to enter the 2026 AWGB Collaborative Competition. This year's theme is Shakespeare in Stratford, and our concept draws inspiration from one of Shakespeare's most powerful tragic plays. It's a fantastic opportunity for us to showcase our talents and come together as a club.

The competition will take place during the October festival, giving us plenty of time to plan and create something truly memorable to represent our club. As one of the largest and most vibrant clubs in the AWGB community, we want to make sure as many of our members as possible are involved in this exciting project. Your creativity and enthusiasm are what make our club special, and together we can achieve something remarkable.



Our concept is straightforward - details will be shared in upcoming newsletters and meetings, so watch this space! For now, we're inviting every member to contribute by making a single candlestick without a base (just a small tenon). The parameters are shown in the sketch on the next page. The candlestick should be a set height, but you're free to choose the style, wood, and finish, allowing your unique artistic touch to shine through. This is a brilliant chance for everyone, whatever your skill level, to get involved and be part of something special.

Harvey Alison will be coordinating our collaborative effort. If you're keen to take part, simply add your name to the list. We'll be in touch soon with further details and guidance. Don't miss out on being part of this inspiring group project—your participation will make all the difference!

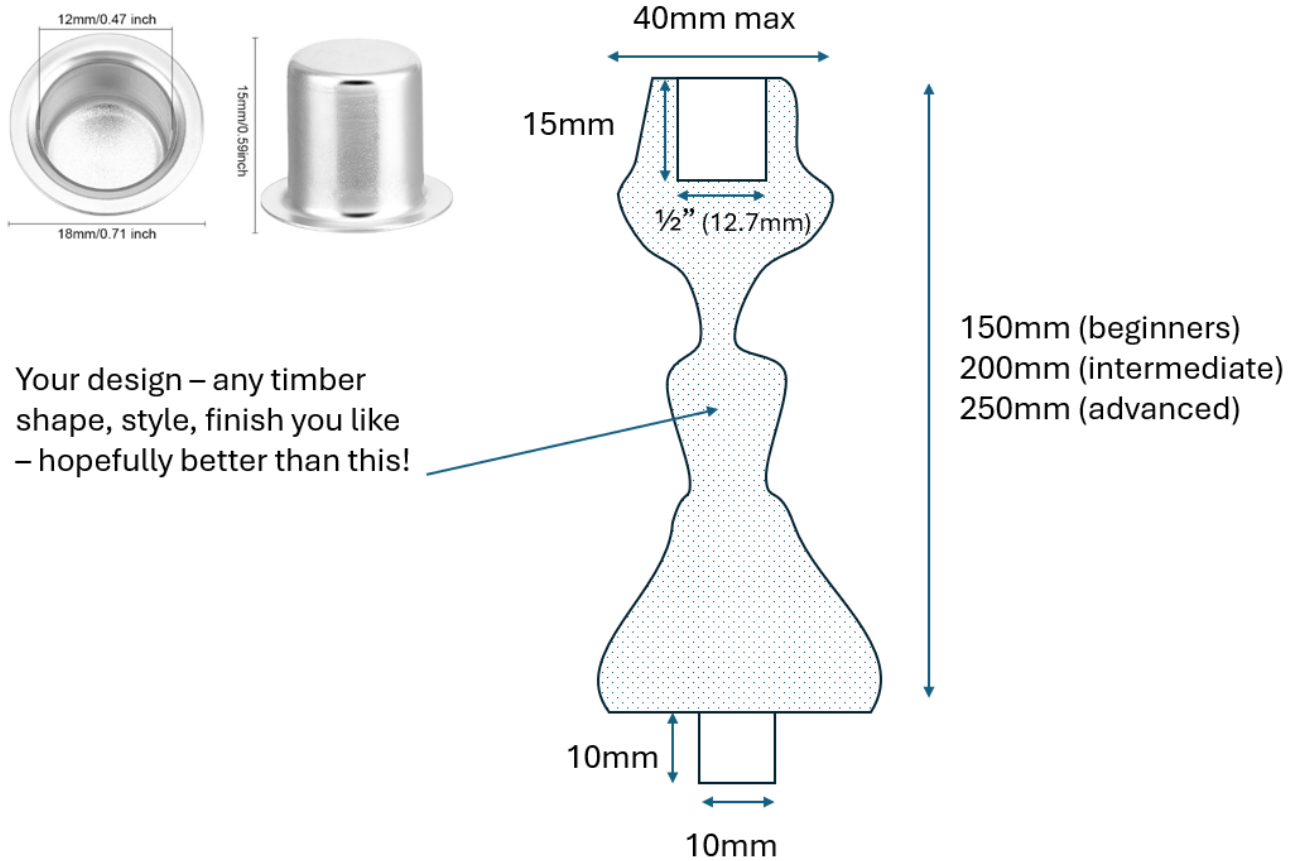
The deadline is mid-September, so there's plenty of time to get involved if you sign up early. Let's work together to make our entry a real showstopper!

The specification for the candlesticks we need are as follows.

NOTE ON DIMENSIONS:

The height is a MAXIMUM dimension (they can be smaller) and will vary depending on your own consideration of whether you are a Beginner, Intermediate or Advanced Turner. You decide.

The width is a MAXIMUM dimension (it can be smaller) of 40mm for all turners. This applies to all parts of your candlestick.



Your design – any timber shape, style, finish you like – hopefully better than this!

150mm (beginners)
200mm (intermediate)
250mm (advanced)

INTERESTED?

Over 36 members have already signed up and you have plenty of time left to make your contribution.

Contact Harvey Alison harvey@kimbleturning.co.uk to take part.

Middlesex Seminar Announcement



ANNUAL SEMINAR

Sunday 28th June 2026

9.30 – 16.30

Demonstrator: Andy James
International Woodturner &
Demonstrator

Projects: Andy will demonstrate
a selection of his signature
contemporary pieces, showcasing:

Creative bowl forms
Decorative and texturing techniques
Colour application
Design and finishing methods

This promises to be an inspiring and
informative day for all members.



A buffet lunch will be provided together with soft drinks.
There will be a raffle with some excellent prizes.

Tickets cost £25.00

Tickets cost £25.00 and are available online at:
<https://middxturners.com/clubevents/annual-seminar/>

Any queries please contact treasurer@middxturners.com

Gateway House, North Harrow Car Park, Pinner Road. Harrow HA2 7SY

Horatio's Garden

Our latest session at Horatio's Garden took place on 20 May at Middlesex Hospital. We had a lovely turnout and kept busy for two hours, which flew by with plenty of cups of tea and generous slices of homemade cake along the way.

I tend to focus on making pens, as they are a simple and enjoyable turning project. Much of the preparation can be done in advance, which means the final turning and finishing can be completed by the patient.

The picture here shows one of the pens we made. These are always well received because patients can take away something they have made themselves. Just as importantly, the sessions give people a chance to focus on something different during their recovery at the spinal injuries unit of the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital.



The other picture this month is a quick snapshot of part of the garden at this time of year.

It's a lovely reminder of why these sessions are so worthwhile.

Being here for a couple of hours midweek, enjoying the view with a cup of tea and some homemade cake, is hard to beat.

Finally, although the break-in at the garden and the loss of most of our tools was a real setback, most of the equipment has now been replaced.

We are still looking for two chucks to replace those that were stolen. The specification is 3/4 inch spindle, 16 tpi thread, and ideally 35 millimetre jaws. If you have a spare chuck you would be willing to donate, please do let us know—it would be very gratefully received and put to good use.

Adam Blackie

Horatio's Garden Link. - <https://www.horatiogarden.org.uk/the-gardens/horatiogarden-london-south-east/>

Poetry Corner

FLAMSTEAD HAWK, TRAVELLERS AND SCARECROWS

Malicious Hawk and Friendless Lane Travellers lately made Flamstead a newsworthy name
This ancient Herts village with centuries of forebears and hitherto little-known shame
These latest stories have attracted much attention in the national news
Not sought by the locals, even so distracting from current world's fearsome views

More mundane, the upcoming Scarecrow Festival's fun filled expression
Looming high on the horizon, the twenty second succession
Affording pure pleasure for young and old,
A weekend devoid of woes, if truth be told

As ever the proceeds go to charity's assistance
To which scarecrow admirers bear no resistance
Help for the needy from good hearts and ambitions
Easing stress in these increasingly testing conditions.

Martin Sexton 5th May 2026