



WOODBITS NEWSLETTER Issue 227 April 2025

SHAVINGS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the April 2025 newsletter.

This month's newsletter contains some delightful and interesting articles from members, two poems and features many new names as winners of the April competitions. It's this last part that I am particularly excited to see – newer members coming through as competition winners. Well done and please keep it coming. – This month's competition subjects are Light Pulls and String Boxes. Useful items for your smallest room and for your garden!

Our next meeting will be on 13th May and features a demonstration by James Burton AKA Rabbit Stew Crafts. We'll be seeing plenty of hints and tips on bowl making and selling techniques. Also available will be some part turned bowl blanks for members to complete in time for the Harpenden Craft Fair in June, where we will be selling them to raise the final amount for our upcoming audio visual upgrade.

Following the April AGM the committee are settling into their new and ongoing roles and I am looking forward to working with them all in 2025, part of which features beginners training sessions. Places are still available on a beginners training day at Aylesbury on 19th July. Dave Washer is co-ordinating training for the club, so contact him on Training@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk.

See you on the 13th

Adam Blackie

Chairman

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Club News

April Competition

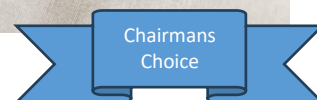
Beginners



1st Patrick Stileman



2nd Mike Pearson



3rd Andrew Mackness

Advanced



1st Peter Kemp



2nd Peter Hoare



3rd Harvey Alison



Open

1st Harvey Alison



2nd Tony Taylor



3rd Chris Bentley

Annual Woodturner Prizes 2024-2025



Beginners Annual Prize 1st James Blackie



Beginners Annual Prize 2nd Melvyn Hogg



Beginners Turner of the Year 3rd Patrick Stileman



Advanced Turner of the Year 1st Harvey Alison



Advanced Turner of the Year 2nd Peter Hoare



Advanced Turner of the Year 3rd Peter Kemp



Open Turner of the Year 1st Harvey Alison



Open Turner of the Year 2nd Peter Hoare



Open Turner of the Year 3rd Tony Taylor

AGM Report – Patrick Stileman

Last month's meeting included the AGM, which was well attended. If you wish to see a copy of the full minutes please send me an email requesting this. A brief summary of the meeting is as follows:

Adam Blackie hosted the meeting as Chairman. He recounted that the club had had a very successful and busy year, in which the meetings had been well-attended and there had been an increased connections with other organisations, which he would like to develop further.

The Chairman thanked committee members and club night helpers for all their assistance. The Chairman said that this would be his last year in the role and that he would like someone to volunteer to take over next year.

As Treasurer, Adam Blackie, reported that the club was in a good place financially, and that we have reserves of approximately £4000 which he is intending to spend on new audio-visual equipment to improve the broadcast quality of the demonstrations.

All current officers stood for election. No other nominations were received so all were unanimously voted back into post. These are:

Chairman. Adam Blackie

Treasurer. Adam Blackie

Secretary. Patrick Stileman

Inspector of Accounts. Keith Goddard

All current committee members were unanimously voted back into post. These are: Steve Hart, Chris Squires, Geoff Selly, Harvey Alison, Dave Washer, Allen Kaye, Steve Beadle, Peter Hoare, Paul Boyes, Phil Walters, Stephen Hill.

In addition to the above, Bob Marshall volunteered for the role of Demonstrator Organiser.

Patrick

Secretary

secretary@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk

Meetings Calendar

2025

May 13th James Burton

Jun 10th Club Night

Jul 8th Colin Spencer – Ornamental turning

Competition Subjects

2025

| | Beginners | Advanced |
|------|---------------------|--------------------|
| May | Pair of light pulls | String box |
| June | Platter | Lidded bowl |
| July | Tool Handle | Hollow form |
| Aug | Pair of coasters | Natural edged vase |
| Sept | An Apple | Box with finial |
| Oct | Spinning top | Pair of goblets |
| Nov | Kitchen Roll holder | Mug |
| Dec | Dice shaker | Winged bowl |

Raffle purchase Diary for 2025-2026

I am the raffle coordinator for the forthcoming year and need to fill the diary for the purchase of prizes for the months as stated below.

Following the AGM I need to fill the next years calendar of volunteers - if you would like to help please email me the particular dates you can cover.

To ensure we get a selection of prizes we ask different members of the membership to the club to buy the raffle prizes. This ensures we have a variation every month.

As a guide we have increased to spend on prizes to £ 80 .00- £100 per month with a maximum number of prizes being normally FIVE in total although there is some flexibility. Full receipts are required for each spend made

If you need to discuss any of this information with me feel free to do so

Steve Beadle

Herts and Beds Raffle Coordinator

Tel 07429326669

Email ~ Stevebeadle1960@hotmail.co.uk

'An interview with' Harvey Alison

Fresh from his Turner of the Year (Open and Advanced) awards I took the opportunity to pose some questions to Harvey and select some photos of his work.

Allen

What is your favourite wood? I source almost all my wood locally - every tree has a story! My favourite so far was a burred chestnut that had been struck by lightning, which has yielded lots of beautiful pieces with swirling grain.



Which woods do you avoid? I am always happy to try new timbers, although occasionally I have come to regret it. Tony always says life is too short to turn poor timber, and I have experience of when he has been absolutely right. I will not be turning palm timber again in a hurry, as it was dusty, hard, and unforgiving, although that may have something to do with the resin used to stabilise it!

What are your favourite finishes and when might you use each? I prefer matte or satin finishes, and not because they don't show up all the tool marks, honestly! Penetrating oils are good for utilitarian items I find, as they protect the timber and can be easily touched up. Oil and wax has been used since antiquity and is my 'go to' finish - if it was good enough for the Pharaohs, it is good enough for me! In the future I aspire to keep bees, so maybe one day I can source my own finish.

What was your worst accident in the workshop? I have been pretty fortunate not to have had a serious accident so far. I did once nick a finger on the band saw, but have always used a push stick since then. I have had a lot of woodturning 'accidents', but fortunately we have an open fire!

Describe how you minimise dust in your workshop. I use a full face shield, and a bin collector behind the lathe. When I upgrade my workshop, which I plan to do this year, I intend upgrading to a multi port cyclone system with 4" ducting, plus an overhead air scrubber - very much looking forward to not having dust collecting in all corners. I will not have open shelves again!

How long have you been turning? It must be about 10 years now, and it has definitely grown in recent years into my main creative outlet. Many of my best friends are turners!

What happens to all of the items you make? Good question! For many years they have been used and displayed around the home, or donated to good causes. People have been kind enough to ask for things to be made, and in recent times I have taken on a few commissions. This year I have taken the step of setting up Kimble Turning, and I plan to enter competitions like Wizardry in Wood.

What are your ambitions in respect of woodturning? To continue enjoying it! I suspect that I will always be developing my skills and knowledge, with the help of the many other talented turners at the club - there is always something new to learn. The club has been very important to me, and I can now give a little bit back by sharing what I know with new turners at the training days. As time goes on I can see myself making more artistic work that is well made and expressive, rather than simply functional.

What lathe do you use? I have a Coronet Herald that I have used for many years now, which has been great. However, as my turning has developed, I have decided to upgrade, and am looking forward to picking up the second hand Vicmarc VL300 which I have bought recently.

Do you have any other hobbies? Gardening has become a passion since we moved to a more rural area, and I am excited about the new 'no dig' vegetable plot we have established. I have friends who are arborists, and offer help with felling and processing timber with them - a highly complementary hobby for a woodturner!

Do you use any carbide tipped tools? If not why not? Yes I do - I bought a carbide tipped hollower from Simon Hope at the AWGB seminar last year, which cuts nicely on the inside of boxes. I have absolutely no prejudice against carbide tools, although I am glad to have learned using steel tools as I feel that has been more conducive to learning about working with timber as a material, and about the history and heritage of woodturning.

Name 4 of your 'goto' gouges. For spindle work, I use the 1/2" skew and spindle gouge for most things. For faceplate work I love my Ellesworth ground bowl gouge, and of course a large scraper.

What sharpening system do you use. I got the Sorby pro edge when I was starting out because I wanted quick and accurate sharpening, and have stuck with it.

Where do you get your ideas from? I write pages of longhand text to allow me to meditate on ideas, which come from everywhere these days. Noticing small things in nature often leads me down interesting paths. As I find inspirational turners and wood artists online, I often add them to the links page of the club website.

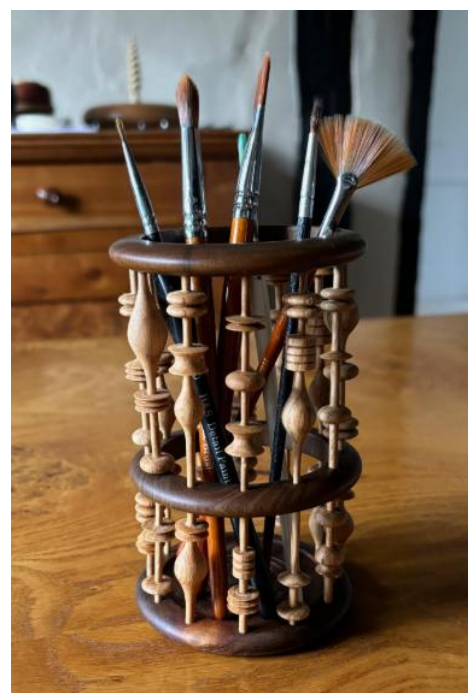
Describe a project that did not go as planned and what you did to save the day. I have had many bowls with 'character' grain and inclusions fail mechanically on me, and I am also a longstanding member of the funnel club! I usually save the day by reminding myself that every day is a school day, and ensuring there is a good dram available for consolation in the evening!

Which professional turner do you most admire. There are so many wonderful turners out there, but I personally admire our club professionals Gary Rance and Mike Fitz, who I am pleased to call my friends.

What tool do you regret buying? Regret buying tools? What a strange question! Does not compute 😂



Some examples of Harvey's recent projects – here and on next two pages.





Pieces by Harvey Alison





Pieces by Harvey Alison



Spotlight on the work of James Blackie

James Blackie is our new club photographer and was Club Turner of the Year (Beginners) for 2024-2025.

I'm James Blackie and a retired Construction Manager. I first started woodturning on 18 th October 2023 when I went on a 2 day bowl making course for beginners at Yandles in Martock Somerset. I had so much fun I just had to take up this hobby. I came away with a Record power Cornet herald lathe, a set of Robert Sorby chisels and Sorby sharpening system, some blanks and other bits.

Safe to say the course cost me rather a lot. I had earlier that year constructed a new summer room and small workshop in our garden not anticipating purchasing so much gear. Of course it hasn't stopped there and as you all know there are so many tool options available relating to woodturning activities.

My workshop is compact and therefore I have to be tidy and organised as much as possible. Safety is always most important and I think it is always best to enter the workshop with this at the forefront of your mind.

Aside from the Lathe I think the most useful tool to have is a good sharpening system as sharp tools are always the safest ones.

I joined the club in Feb last year and have benefited from engaging with other members, seeing the demonstrations by professionals and entering the table competitions, which I find challenges both beginners and also the more experienced members. I have benefited from talking to the more experienced members throughout the year and hope to pass on my own experiences to others in the future. I will encourage anyone who turns wood to join this or any local club.

I have produced a fair variety of objects over the last year from pens, bowls, hollow forms, boxes etc. I am currently looking at attempting hollowing spheres and possibly making a Chinese ball puzzle along with planning to do some segmented bowl or hollow forms later this year. All sounds great? Well no as I still have to practice my skew chisel work which is still the most challenging method of turning for me. Some of my favourite pieces are probably the more simple turnings where the wood itself provides the beauty and joy of admiration.





Pieces by James Blackie



Demonstration -by Chris Bentley. Review by Tony Taylor

Chris gave us an introduction to spindle turning. It was well planned and very useful for beginners, but also with some valuable reminders for the more experienced.

He started by introducing the basic tools: roughing gouge, skew chisel, spindle gouge and parting tool. Next, Chris showed how to make the basic cuts of pommel, bead, cove, taper and fillet. He particularly favoured the round skew for cutting beads.



The round skew has the great advantage that the shape ensures that the cutting force is directed to the point of contact with the tool rest and so makes a catch very unlikely. For repetitive work Chris explained the use of the marking stick.

The audience were very appreciative of the demonstration, not least because it was under the eyes of Gary Rance, the master of spindle turning.

Ideas, Hints and Tips – Part 1 – Keith Goddard

At the AGM Keith gave members a number of money saving and extremely useful ideas for use in our workshops. The second part will be next month but if members wished to contribute some of their own useful tips please send them to me, Allen

When I see the beautiful items produced at each meeting, I somehow feel inadequate with my own woodturning. There again my forte is production turning, producing lots of items which sell well. All my sales income goes to charity and so I am not only very busy, but I need to be safe and keep my costs down. Here are some of my suggestions and ideas that I hope others will find useful.

- In the production of nearly 100 snowmen, I have used a lot of Acrylic Lacquer, Toolstation sell a 500ml spray can for £6.15 which is about half the price of that sold by well-known producers.
- I use CA superglue to attach the snowmen hats and Toolstation produce 20 and 50ml bottles of high and medium viscosity glues at very good prices and they also sell the activator.



- As I am on blood thinners, I like to wear gloves to protect my hands. Screwfix sell three fingerless gloves at £9.99 which are very good.
- When teaching full facemasks are not ideal and I like their DeWalt safety goggles at £9.99 which are less likely to mist up if wearing a surgical mask.



- Anti-Mist
- Adjustable Straps
- Anti-Scratch Lens



Men Sport Cycling Cap
Bike Helmet Quickly
Drying Skull Hat
Outdoor Riding Cap UK
Color: black
£2.77

- My wife complains that my hair gets full of dust when woodturning. I have purchased a cycling cap which protects my hair and will easily fit under a full-face mask. I paid £1.91 on eBay but they are now £2.77, from China. Prices oneBay vary immensely.

- I am also producing bud vases for the flowers and as an additional feature I have bought 100mm x 16mm plastic test tubes on eBay at 20p each which fit comfortably in the vase and enable water to be added to display a real flower.



- I have a 50mm sanding pad and got fed up using scissors to produce the discs from sheets of Rhynogrip. I purchased a 50mm half round hole punch on eBay which with two strikes produces perfect results.

More from Keith next month

Woodworks at Daventry

**FREE
PARKING**



**FREE
ENTRY**



WOODWORKS @ DAVENTRY

Friday 9th - Saturday 10th May 2025

10am - 4pm

Daventry Leisure Centre, NN11 4FP

PROFESSIONAL TURNERS

**STEVE
HEELEY**

**SIMON
HOPE**

**EMMA
COOK**

**MICK
HANBURY**

**ROB
TILL**

**CHRIS
PARKER**

11 Woodturning Clubs with display stands

Trade Stands

Raffle 1st prize

Axminster AW305WL variable speed lathe

Refreshments supplied by Towns Womens Guild

Mick Hanbury event

Come and watch

MICK HANBURY

Demonstrating in person
at East Herts Woodturning Club on
Sunday 25 May 2025 10 till 4
at Sawbridgeworth, Herts, England

Cost £25 to include sandwiches, tea, coffee and biscuits

Spaces are limited and will be allocated on a first come basis

For more information and ticket purchases contact
glynn.goodwin@gmail.com

Disappearing British birds

Yellow Hammers & Green Finches - a note from our resident Twitcher Chris Squires.

Both of these species are resident birds to this country, slowly becoming harder to spot because of loss of habitat and disease . These are just two birds of many species fast disappearing.

The Yellow Hammers can be found along hedgerows deep in the countryside. They quite like open farmlands and gather in areas such as livestock and arable fields. Listen out for the characteristic call. They can be attracted using a little bit of bread and no cheese.

Green Finches are all rounders, found in the countryside, gardens and parks. They have become less common due to infections, which they pick up from bird table bad management, leaving seed and food waste which creates infection.



Photos by Chris Squires



For Sale and Wanted

Dust Extractor for Sale

Dave Deacon in Potters Bar has an Axminster Trade extractor for sale. Reasonable offers considered (ebay currently has one at over £150).

If you are interested please contact him directly.

E-mail - dave.deako16@gmail.com or

Telephone - 01707 653391



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Morticer for sale

Philip Francis in Aylesbury has a morticer for sale (collect only).

Model **Rexon SM-16A**. He is looking for £40.00 If you are interested please contact him direct.

Email: philipfrancis51@yahoo.com



Router Table, Router and Accessories for sale

Adrian Peter is selling some Trend router equipment on behalf of John Lowe. John is looking to sell the items as one lot in preference and is looking for in the region of £100.

If you are interested please contact Adrian – his details below:

Tel 01582763340 M 07747894577

adrianpeter374@gmail.com

- 1 Trend CRT Mk2 Router table with all original accessories.
- 2 Trend T5 Router with fine height adjuster - and with case.
- 3 A box of 12 assorted Trend profile cutters
- 4 2 Trend cutters for raised/fielded panels and cupboard door frames
- 5 A trend corner bead cutter.



Poetry Corner

There are two poems this month, the first a follow up on the Harris Hawk and the second a traditional firewood poem.

The relief ofFlamstead

Hawkey Harris by name and habit
Prompting the nations non stop rabbit
Three weeks of freedom is at an end
Flamstead's calm he sought to bend
He attacks no more
after his Fifty score
The terror is gone, his rampage over
The village dwellers are back in clover
Caught strange to tell by his same name captor
Ending the terror of the Hertfordshire raptor
Look out come August, SURE, he'll appear again
In the SCARECROW FESTIVAL
Of well known fame

Martin Sexton 4th April 2025

The Firewood Poem

This was sent in by Phil Walters and Chris Squires – looks very useful for both woodworkers and woodburners..

Beechwood fires are bright and clear
If the logs are kept a year,
Chestnut's only good they say,
If for logs 'tis laid away.
Make a fire of Elder tree,
Death within your house will be;
But ash new or ash old,
Is fit for a queen with crown of gold

Birch and fir logs burn too fast
Blaze up bright and do not last,
it is by the Irish said
Hawthorn bakes the sweetest bread.
Elm wood burns like churchyard mould,
E'en the very flames are cold
But ash green or ash brown
Is fit for a queen with golden crown

Poplar gives a bitter smoke,
Fills your eyes and makes you choke,
Apple wood will scent your room
Pear wood smells like flowers in bloom
Oaken logs, if dry and old
keep away the winter's cold
But ash wet or ash dry
a king shall warm his slippers by.

This firewood poem was written by Celia Congreve, is believed to be first published in THE TIMES newspaper on March 2nd 1930.