



WOODBITS NEWSLETTER Issue 229 June 2025

SHAVINGS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the June 2025 newsletter.

The club night in June was exceptionally well attended by 58 members and visitors who saw a variety of mini demonstrations and talks on various subjects. Our thanks go to Keith Goddard, Paul Boyes and Phil Francis for entertaining and educating us throughout the evening.

On June 25th our club will be delivering the first woodturning session for spinal injuries patients at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital in Middlesex. They are looking forward to this kick-off event and we anticipate a schedule of regular monthly sessions thereafter. This is a great achievement for the club and my thanks go to all those involved.

Looking forward, our next meeting is a demonstration by Colin Spencer on Tuesday 8th July. Colin's presentation will be about Ornamental Turning and I am looking forward to learning more about this specialist subject. The competition subjects are a simple tool handle for beginners and a hollow form for the advanced turners. The June competition was very well received and I hope you also have time to make and bring something along in July.

Finally, many of you already know that the Harpenden AOTC event was cancelled due to poor weather. The good news is that it has been rescheduled for the 30th/31st August. So if you have any items that could be sold for club funds, please donate at the welcome table at the July and August meetings.

That's all for this month. See you on the 8th

Adam Blackie

Chairman

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Club News

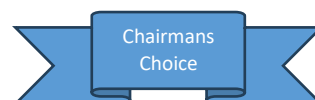
May Competition

Beginners

1st Patrick Stileman



2nd Keith Sutton



Advanced



1st Peter Hoare
(fingernail to give scale!)



2nd Phil Walters



3rd Peter Kemp



Lidded bowl – Tony
Taylor

Open



1st Tony Taylor



2nd Harvey Alison



2nd James Blackie



Two goblets in Rosewood –



Meetings Calendar

2025

Jul	8	Colin Spencer – Ornamental turning
Aug	12	Greg Moreton
Sept	9	Club Night
Oct	14	Kade Bolger (from Canada)
Nov		tba
Dec		tba

Competition Subjects

2025

	Beginners	Advanced
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

Aylesbury Training Event

On the 24th of May Dave Washer, our club training manager, organised a complex event at the Queens Park art centre in Aylesbury. This is a location that we use several times a year to run our club training sessions. Another club member Phil Francis manages the woodworking facilities at the centre. He was also instrumental in setting up our ongoing relationship with their committee.



The first objective of the day was to deliver the AWGB Approved Tutor assessments for three candidates, one of which was our own member James Blackie, the second was RPT Ben Dick and the third Dave Wilks from the Middlesex Woodturners Association. Three of our club members acted as pupils for the tutor assessments and all three candidates were successful. This mix of candidates is a good example of how these events help to support the club and woodturning in general.

James commented on the training day

"I was recently asked if I would like to become an approved AWGB trainer.

Having started turning 20 months ago I was a little daunted by the prospect of taking the exam but I can honestly say it was very enjoyable and worthwhile experience. I have, like most of you, taught some friends and family my newly acquired craft but not necessarily to this level The AWGB provides you with an on line tutorial which I would highly recommend to anyone thinking about instructing others on wood turning. Even if you do not wish to qualify. The skills tests used in the tutorial are essential good practice techniques for all wood turners.

I'm pleased to say that I qualified, and I am now an Approved Tutor.

The whole day's event was informative and enjoyable and great to meet new people who wish to learn and experience our craft."



James tests Phils new lathe

Also worth noting and one of the highlights for me, was seeing the new lathe donated to the Centre by the Worshipful Company of Turners, one of the leading livery companies in the City of London. Several of us used it during the day. In the above pictures James is using Phils new lathe .

Usefully, during the day we made several items for sale at the Harpenden AOTC Craft Fair which was scheduled for June but has been delayed and is now re-scheduled for 30th/31st August.

Several club members dropped-in during the day to look at what we were up to and socialise. I recall seeing Phil Francis, Gary Rance and Bob Marshall, but there may have been more. It was great to see visitors, so if you want to drop by at the next event, please feel free to do so.

The second objective of the day was the delivery of a training session for several of our newer members. We started at 10am with a briefing on safety around the workshop and then the trainees were paired up with trainers.

Following a brief excursion to the excellent on-site cafe an agenda for the day was agreed with each trainee. The day was very successful, with several first-time items being made by the trainees, but as usual the time flew by quickly and 4pm arrived and it was time to pack up and go home.

Keith Goddard sent the following summary of his day at Aylesbury: " It was my first time at Queens Park Arts Centre although I had attended the Junior School 70 years ago. The woodturning section is impressive. Phil Francis has done a great job in setting it up. I taught Claire who does not have a lathe and has never done any woodturning before.



"We started off working with a roughing gouge, skew, bowl gouge and parting tool on some soft wood ending up making a bottle opener for Harpenden AOTC. Claire was an excellent student and quickly developed some basic woodturning skills, so we started making items with the Yew branches that I had. We repeated making a bottle opener which is easy for a first-time turner to produce. After sanding, applying Yorkshire Grit and friction polish Claire was delighted with the result. Claire then acted as a student for an AWGB tutor assessment and received more elaborate instruction on using the skew.

After lunch she then made a Yew Christmas Tree and finished off with a Tea light (pictured left with the bottle opener) and was delighted with the three items and said that she will definitely take up woodturning. I am sure that she will be attending many of our club nights."

Finally, our thanks go to all the club members who volunteered their time as trainers and organisers of this event, too many to name in this short article, but you know who you are, and I trust you know how much the club appreciates your contribution to our ongoing success.

Adam Blackie - May 2025

Introducing new member - Claire Medland

I came to my first club night in May and was greeted by a friendly and helpful group of people who could not have put me more at ease.

As someone who has very little experience of woodturning it was a daunting world of lathes, chucks and something called a skew! A demonstration of bowl turning, a cup of tea and many chats and I already felt part of the group.

I was then invited on Saturday to the training day at Queens Park Arts Centre (what an amazing place). I turned up in all the wrong gear (well you have to learn somehow) and had a fantastic day with a group of like-minded people. Keith is a patient and skilled teacher and I learned a great deal and went home with some wonderful items to show my family and friends. I have definitely caught the turning bug and already have a Christmas list written to build the tools I need! I look forward to getting to know more of you in the future.

A further training session with Keith resulted in the bowls below.

Claire Medland



You can see a picture of Claire and Keith at the Queens Park Arts Centre training event elsewhere in this newsletter.

This was Claire's first visit to a lathe, and she clearly has a talent for it. I look forward to seeing more of her work in future beginners competitions.

Craft Fair News – Adam Blackie

James Blackie and I had the pleasure of visiting the beautiful mediaeval St Dunstan's church in Monks Risborough on the 9th of June, where we saw club member Graham Lester selling his paper sculptures and layered turned art at the annual Art at St Dunstan's exhibition. <https://artatstdunstans.blogspot.com/>.

It is a very beautiful church, set in a delightful location with many excellent hostelrys within a few minutes' drive. I will leave you to imagine what we got up to after our visit. As you might expect there were many beautiful top-quality items on display from all the exhibitors. Plenty of complementary competition for Graham's own presentation.

Here are a few pictures of the event and of Graham's work. <https://www.grahamlester.co.uk/>

If you are exhibiting at a craft fair or art show in the summer, please do send the details directly to Allen and he will be happy to publish them to the rest of our members in this newsletter. Also, if you have attended an event as a craft seller, members would be very interested in your experiences.

Send your material to Allen at hertsandbedsnewsletter@gmail.com



Letchworth Steam Fair – Report

After a number of coffee meetups over the last year, four of us decided to work together to sell some of our output at local events and craft fairs with profits going to charity. After a trial run in Ware, we took space for four tables in the Craft tent at Standalone Farm a few weeks ago at Letchworth and now decided we would share some of our thoughts with members.

Following this weekend, we are now reflecting on how it went and what we learnt to prepare ourselves for our next venture together.

Overall it was such an enjoyable and positive activity and we met and talked with so many people who came to view the items for sale and also talk about their own interests.

One real highpoint was Phil's 'Harry Potter wand turning' demonstrations. Children and adults alike were literally captivated (spellbound?) by the speedy transformation of bits of stick into complex finished wands. Phil also took the time to explain what the wood was and where it came from and this added much value. The speed at which they were turned allowed families to stay and watch the whole process. This idea of engagement with customers was also evident in the production of egg cups by Chris and Keith.

Taking a lathe along and offering demonstrations was definitely a good idea.



We worked hard not to duplicate types or ranges of items for sale and so we were not in competition with each other - this gave us a very wide range of products suitable for everyone. It was clear that there were some other stands in the craft tent that had quite different approaches to pricing. Certainly one area that we all found hard was around the issue of pricing.

As regards what sold, it was quite obvious that the spalted wood pieces were the most attractive. Also, as one of our demonstrators noted last year, be prepared to sell volumes of relatively cheap items and just occasionally one or two of the more significant pieces.

I found the two days a tad tiring; apart from the work to produce the items there was a fair bit of physical work setting it all up. Moneywise we all walked away with a profit on the day; as hobby turners this was good but we felt that we would struggle if making and selling wooden items was our only source of income.

We did decide that a steam fair, although it promised high footfall, may not have the best type of event and for our next outing we will be looking at one more specifically focussed on the craft market. Overall, we had a great time, lots of coffee planning sessions and a fair bit of fun on the way. We did pick up some offers of wood, including some bog yew and a couple of commissions for future work.

Some customers showed interest in woodturning and took away club leaflets and we hope to see them as visitors at Adeyfield.

Allen

“Shavings a’Plenty” - below from left to right - Phil, Chris, Keith and Allen



Herts and Beds GROUP VISIT to Wizardry in Wood

Plaisterers' Hall, London EC2. Wednesday, 29th October 2025. 11.00am arrival

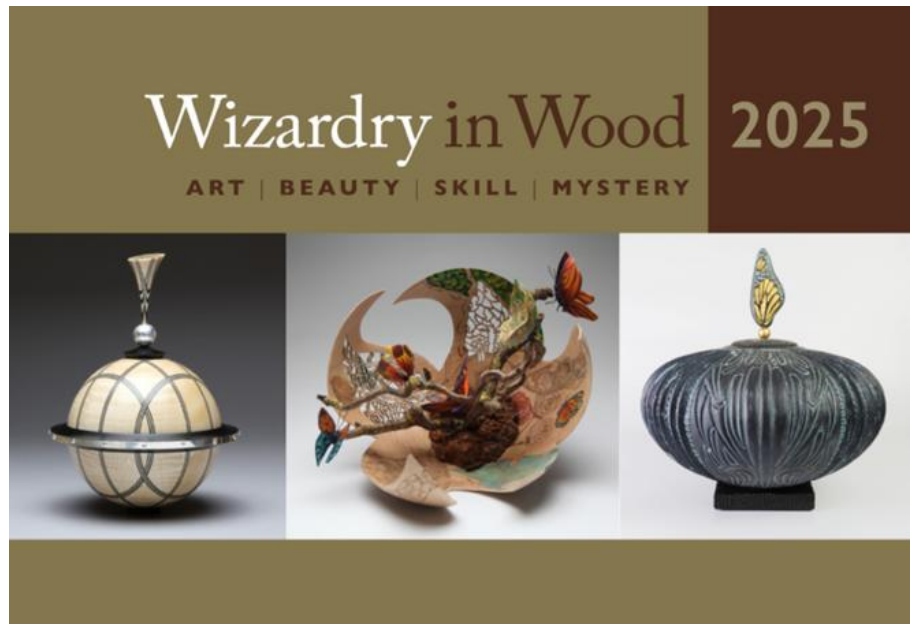
We are delighted to be organising a group visit on Wednesday, 29 th October to the prestigious Wizardry in Wood Exhibition organised bi-annually by the Worshipful Company of Turners

<https://turnersco.com/wiw/>

Held in the beautiful and interesting surroundings of Plaisterers' Hall in the City of London we will meet at

11.00am in time to view the exhibition before heading for lunch (optional) at a nearby venue at around 2.00pm

<https://www.plaisterershall.com/>



Costs

Entry ticket of £12 will be booked by the club in advance.

Lunch (optional, excluding drinks) will be around £35 per head.

Payment will be required by 30th September 2025.

Registration

If you would like to come, please let me know as soon as possible and I will add you to the list. Harvey Alison, James Blackie, Keith Goddard, David Ireson and Phil Walters have already registered their interest. Please join us for what will be a great event.

Attention: Members who wish to enter the Wizardry in Wood Competition!

So many of you are more than qualified to submit outstanding work to the Wizardry in Wood competition and it would be great kudos for the club to be represented. If you are considering entering, then do let me know and the club will endeavour to assist with the entry process if required.

Follow this link for more details: <https://turnersco.com/turning-competitions-2025/>

Adam Blackie

May 2025

Spotlight on: Phil Walters

I used to live in Harrogate where I was Head Chef at the Old Swan Hotel. This was close to my mum and dad who were in Ripon. As they aged and could not take care of the garden as much as they would like I would offer my help whenever I could as

I have always been a keen gardener. Sadly, my father passed away and my mother needed more help than I could offer. She found a “nice young man” called Clive Butterworth (incidentally Butterworth was my mother’s maiden name) who would be happy to mow lawns, trim shrubs and do some weeding all under her supervision and no doubt with copious quantities of tea and cake.

One of her beloved trees became “ill”, a beautiful pink flowering member of the prunus family. Clive did not feel up to the task of felling said tree and so it became my responsibility. I chopped up all that I could and filled the bin leaving only the trunk and some small branches to deal with on a later visit. Shortly after my visit Clive was helping again.

He saw the prunus trunk and asked my mum if he could have it as he had recently started “playing around with his dads’ lathe”. A week later he presented mum with a lovely little beaker (see right) which mum was delighted to show me (and I have since inherited). The beautiful proportions, silky smooth finish and thinness of the walls was a delight to handle especially when compared to the raggedy old trunk that I had dumped so unceremoniously behind a shrub.

I admired this piece so much that I put “learn to turn” at No.1 on my retirement bucket list. My wife, bless her, did not think that I should wait until I retire to start learning and bought me a lathe for Christmas and Birthday 3 years ago. Now, like Clive, I work as a gardener which I have found to be a terrific source of raw material and thanks, in a large part to learning from members of Herts & Beds woodturners, I am able to achieve similar results from raggedy old bits of wood.

Some of my pieces below and on next page





Club night Review by Tony Taylor

Demonstrations by Club Members Keith Goddard, Paul Boyes and Philip Francis

Keith Goddard started the session with a very nicely prepared presentation on making wooden roses.



However, he began by drawing our attention to ways of making it possible to have natural flowers in water in wooden vases. He showed how all sorts of readily available plastic tubes and containers from household products can be recycled and the vase turned to suit.

For wooden roses Keith showed how with a sharp plane one can cut thin shavings of Basswood (e.g. from Hobbycraft) and how these can be flattened in water. Stems were made from thin dowels, some of which Keith had in excess and was providing very cheaply. Petal and leaf shapes were cut freehand with scissors with the long axis aligned with the grain. Petals were attached to the stem in successive layers using hot glue (rather than CA which can be very messy). Sepals were painted green before gluing in place, and the base of the flower finished with green masking tape.

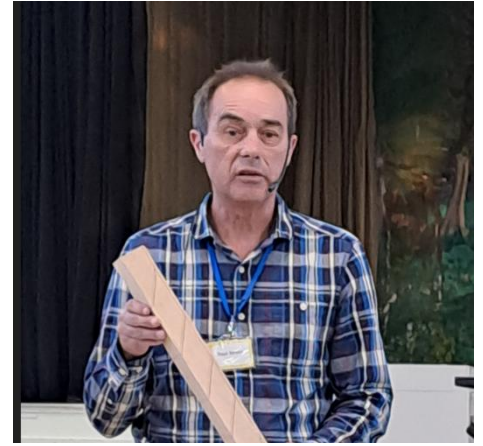
The flower could be coloured by spraying on food colouring using a very handy little sprayer (Mini battery powered airbrush from eBay). Finally, leaves were made by sticking two layers of shavings together with double-sided tape and cutting to shape. Keith's demonstration was full of bright ideas for sourcing materials cheaply. He concluded by pointing out, for those who do not fancy making shavings, that similar effects can be obtained by using thin card (File Dividers from Hobbycraft).



ooooOOOOoooo-----

Paul Boyes demonstrated making the glue-ups preparatory to turning the so-called **Celtic Knot** effect. One starts with square section timber a little larger (about 60 mm) than the final desired diameter. Guidelines are drawn 3 mm in from the edges all round. These define the depths of the cuts which are to be made.

Lines are drawn at chosen angles across the wood on one face and cuts made on these lines with a jigsaw but preferably bandsaw using a jig, leaving a 3mm strip intact, as defined by the longitudinal lines. Two layers of 1 mm veneer can then be glued in each slot. The slots are opened to make this possible by slightly bending the piece. Pump clamps are best for pressuring the joints. Once the first lot of joints are set, the piece is turned through 90 degrees and a second set are marked exactly coinciding with the first, cut with the jigsaw and veneers



glued in place as before. The glue-up should be left for two weeks to ensure that it is fully dried. Now the piece is cut at right angles into appropriate blocks, preparatory to turning. It is very important to centre accurately, drawing the cross lines from the corners of the veneers rather than the corners of the wood.

Paul showed some fine examples of his work, including very smart bottle stoppers in which the veneer dyed black contrasted nicely with white wood. We can look forward to seeing other club members trying out the technique, so clearly demonstrated.



Phil Francis was taken by Pauls' description of how to produce a Celtic Knot; he decided to have a go himself and then send a photo to me for the newsletter.

The result is as below incorporated into a table lamp. Note the symmetry in the three sections.



-----ooooOOOOoooo-----

Phil Francis, well known for his work at the Queen's Park Art Centre, returned to the wooden flower theme with an informal demonstration of making them on the lathe.

The technique here is to simulate a tight flower head of tiny petals by tearing up the end grain, preferably of fresh wood.

He took time at our club night to demonstrate and explain just one of his many projects. He explained that these sold very well and with a bit of practice were quite easy to make.

Thin Hazel greenwood branches are mounted directly into the chuck and then a skew is used to draw out but not remove circles of wood. Small solid wood but drilled vases were turned to display the flowers. Presentation, he noted was key and so for his stall, he has built a bespoke cabinet – below left.

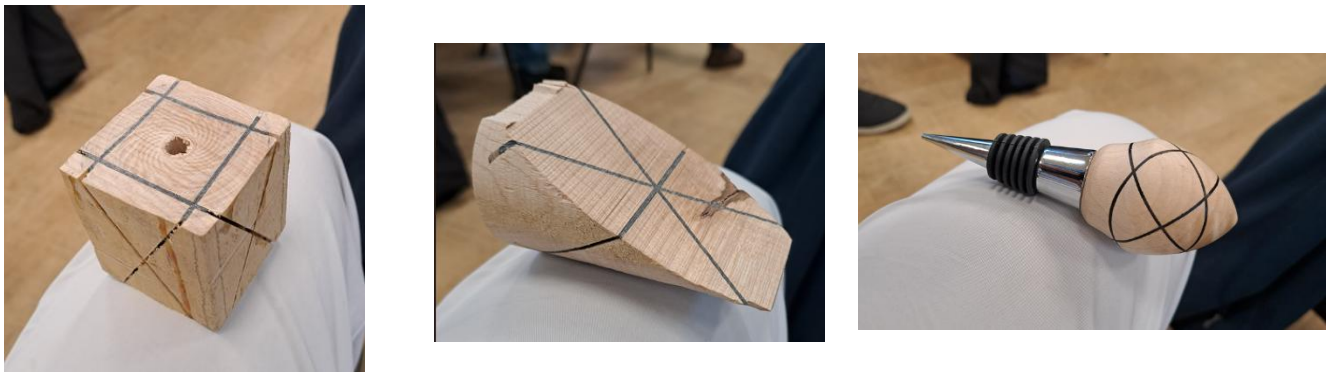


Training Opportunity – Dave Washer

Elsewhere in this newsletter is a write up of the excellent demonstrations at our club meeting earlier this month by Paul Boyes and a Celtic Knot. For me there was so much to remember, which angle to use, which side to cut and of course the accuracy required.

Well, here is a chance to have a day with Paul where he will demonstrate all the cutting requirements, using a bandsaw and jig to accurately cut the timber and of course the gluing up process.

It's always great to go home with a finished item, so Paul has offered to make up several bottle stopper blanks which you can then turn on one of the lathes at the training facility in Aylesbury.



The day is planned for Saturday 19th July at Queens Park Arts Centre, Queens Park, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP21 7RT just off the A41.

The Centre has a well-equipped workshop with a number of lathes and associated equipment so I'm sure you will find a lathe suitable for you. The Centre has good parking and a Cafe serving hot & cold food and a selection of hot and cold drinks however you may wish to bring your own refreshments for the day.

I suggest you arrive about 9:30 - 10:00 and head to the reception where you will be directed to the wood turning workshop. Please can you also bring suitable shoes and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) you may also like to bring your own tools.

The cost for the day to each member is £25.00 so if you would like to attend this training opportunity then please get in touch via email Training@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk or call me on my Mobile 07546 612450

There are a limited number of places for this Training Opportunity so be quick and contact me as soon as you can.

Dave Washer

Training co-ordinator

Mobile No. 07546 612450

For Sale and Wanted

Woodturning Lathe

Lathe:- Record Power NOVA 1624-44. Outtrigger for oversize bowls etc

2MT. 8-Speed, via pulleys, 178, 300, 570, 850, 1200, 1800, 2400 and 3000rpm. 1.5HP motor. New Spare Motor available.

Looking for about £650.

No longer marketed by Record, now being sold direct as NOVA.

Contact: Tony Bilsdon – 07766 346189, or 01442 300677
Must Collect



-----ooooOooo-----

Free

Mike Pearson has an old belt driven table saw, a Startrite band saw. and a foundry/grinder Pedestal available.

Please contact him for more details.

mikepearson1@btinternet.com

Poetry Corner

A WORD TO THE WISE ON SOCIAL MEDIA.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

The older generation survived the second World War
Refinding a rational life just like before
We did not need to know, at ALL times of night and day
What our contemporaries did in their work and their play

The old adage we can never sever, birds of a feather flock together

We made friends and acquaintances, in our specific type
Accepted praise and criticism and ignored any hype

This platform of world wide nature did not exist
The all consuming SOCIAL MEDIA, so hard to resist

Such mixed effects from its first arrival
It is here to stay with no known rival
The good and bad in equal measure
Contrasting in value to our perceived pleasure

It allows anonymity to have a say
Regrettably social misfits can have sway

Giving opportunity as does not befit
To threaten decent people with their poison from the pit

A simple, simple remedy to counter this condition
TURN IT OFF, IGNORE, maintain your own position

So what, It matters not, what others think
Stay true to yourself, away from the brink

Martin Sexton. 17th June 2025