



WOODBITS

NEWSLETTER

Issue 218

July 2024

Welcome

SHAVINGS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I shall start with the very recent and sad news that Malcolm Wickens passed away on 13th July after a short and sudden illness. He had been a member since 2014 who missed very few meetings, was a club Ambassador and an active committee member. Grahame Hill is in contact with Malcolm's family, will communicate the funeral arrangements and will also prepare a formal tribute to Malcolm for our August newsletter.

AUGUST MEETING - In July we were fortunate to have Simon Hope as our demonstrator. It's always a treat to see Simon and this month he showed some techniques for using (Molten) Pewter in our work. Our next club meeting is on 13th August and our demonstrator is Anna- Marie Bennett, who until recently was working with Axminster tools and is now a professional demonstrator specialising in small / miniature turnings. We have a few in the club who are adept at this, so I hope they will be bringing some of their work along to compare and contrast. Here is a link to Anna Marie's 2023 demo at Ashdown Woodturners. -

<https://www.facebook.com/AshdownWoodies/posts/844900320661873/>

TRAINING NEWS - Our congratulations go to Keith Goddard, Paul Boyes and Mark Aizicowitz on gaining their AWGB Approved Tutor qualifications. Also, there is news this month on the collaboration with Men in Sheds at Letchworth which is working towards going live later this year. It promises to be a great facility with lots of kit available – including a great café with home-made cakes.

AUGUST COMPETITION TABLES - The July competition entries were superb, and I continue to be impressed by the skills already available and being developed at our club. In August beginners are asked to bring a Rolling Pin (harder than it looks) and the advanced competition is A Bowl on Feet.

MEMBER REPORTS In this edition, David Evans has contributed his second "Off Centre" article and we also have contributions from Tony Champion and Alan Lewis who have given us ideas for projects. Please keep sending Allen your contributions, all of which will be gratefully received.

Looking forward to seeing you all in August.

Adam Blackie

Chairman

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

Club Secretary : Peter Clark secretary@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk

Newsletter Editor: Allen Kaye hertsandbedsnewsletter@gmail.com

Club News

June Competition

Beginners

1st James Blackie



2nd Bob Marshall

Advanced



1st Harvey Alison



2nd Andrew Holwerda



3rd Phil Walters

Open

1st Harvey Alison
(with thanks to Paul Boyer for help with Celtic design)



2nd Peter Kemp



3rd Tony Taylor

Meetings Calendar

2024

Aug	13th	Anna- Marie Bennett
Sep	10th	Club Night
Oct	8th	Steve Heeley
Nov	12th	Mick Hanbury ?
Dec	10th	Christmas Social

2025

Jan	14th	Gary Rance?
Feb	11th	Steven Kearvell
Mar	11th	Stewart Furini

Competition Subjects

2024

	Beginners	Advanced
Aug	Any Style of Rolling Pin	Bowl on Feet
Sep	An Apple or Pear	Hollow Form
Oct	Paper Weight	Two or More Woods
Nov	Bud Vase	Pen/Pencil/Brush Holder
Dec	Xmas tree decoration	Pair Candle Holders

Raffle purchase Diary for 2024-25

I am the raffle coordinator for the forthcoming year and need to fill the diary for the purchase of prizes. 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 - £100 per month with a maximum number of 5 prizes in total. There is some flexibility as this is offered as a guide.

Full receipts are required for each spend made.

If you wish to discuss any of this information with me then feel free to do so at the next meeting or email/phone,

Steve Beadle

Herts and Beds Raffle Coordinator

Tel 07720 677456

Email Stevebeadle1960@hotmail.co.uk

More AWGB trainers



Adam took an opportunity to recognise three of our members who recently successfully completed their assessment by the AWGB as **Approved Tutors**. They were (left to right) Keith Goddard, Mark Aizicowitz, and Paul Boyes.

Thanks were offered to **Paul Boyes** who liaised with the AWGB and managed the whole process.

The club now has **seven** AWGB Approved Tutors.



Demonstration by Simon Hope. Review by Tony Taylor



Simon gave us another excellent presentation this month using a number of techniques beyond simple woodturning – banding with metal, inlaying with pewter and thread cutting applied to a lidded box.

The end grain piece was prepared in the usual way with chucking tenons at each end and the lid parted off with a thin parting tool.

A short section of brass tubing was mounted with chuck jaws gently expanded inside to trim the ends. This was done using the tip of a bowl gouge lightly scaping. Care was taken to remove sharp edges from the brass, which was then abraded with the (Hope) rotary sander to 600 grit then polished.

The inside diameter was carefully measured with digital callipers and the top of the box body turned down to fit. At this point the brass sleeve should be glued in place with epoxy resin, though this was omitted for the demonstration.

Finished metal band.



The next stage was to hollow the base, either with the traditional spindle gouge or using a round-tipped carbide hollowing tool, finishing with a box scraper. It was important to make the walls perfectly parallel where an internal thread was to be cut.

Although the thread could be hand-chased, it is much more reliable to use a threading jig, of which Simon's company make an excellent example. The work in the chuck is transferred to the jig which is mounted in the toolpost and adjusted exactly to the lathe centre height. The small routing cutter is mounted in a collet chuck in the headstock and the jig set with the cutter axis parallel to the lathe bed and the cutter tip just touching the inside of the work. The cutter is moved out by the intended depth of the thread.

With the lathe running at high speed, the cutter is then wound in say three or four turns. Before cutting the thread, it is advisable to run a little thin CA glue around, wiping off the excess and spraying with accelerator. The thread pitch selected was 10 tpi, which is very satisfactory for softer woods, but finer threads are also available.



The Hope thread chasing jig



Inner threads



Outer threads

The box lid was then mounted in the chuck and a fillet cut the exact size for the outside of the thread. This was done by carefully measuring the inside of the female thread and adding appropriately for the twice the thread depth. Again, the chuck was transferred to the jig and, after applying CA glue, the male thread cut.

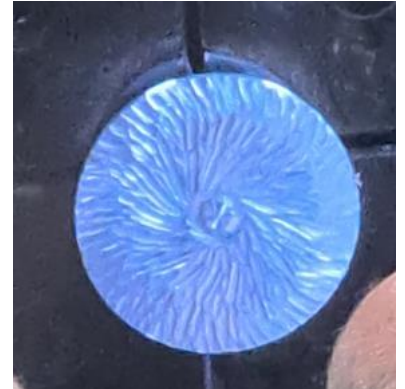
The Hope jig is hinged, so that it can be swung clear to test the fit of the thread, and any adjustment made before returning to position and making a final cut. The thread could be lubricated with an oil and beeswax mix and should run very freely.

The box body was returned to the lathe and the lid screwed on. The whole box outside was then finally shaped with a bead top and bottom. A recess was cut in the lid to receive a pewter inlay. Before the break Simon started to prepare the inlay, which was cast separately in a mould cut in a piece of waste wood.

The pewter was melted in an electrically heated pot (though a small stainless-steel pan and propane burner serve equally well). Responding to a question he stated that some of the older pewter mugs often found in junk shops do contain a proportion of lead and are better not used. There will always be some surface scum that will need removing to ensure the melted pewter is clean.

The pewter must be only just molten. Turning pewter was much like a hardwood timber – it is worth collecting the shavings. A trick to recover the pewter is to collect and burn the collected material. It is inevitable that some rubbish, wood shavings etc will also be in it. It can be quite smoky but an effective way of reusing material that would otherwise be wasted.

Once cooled, the pewter disc was turned to fit the recess in the lid. It could then be polished or as Simon showed, textured with the 'decorating elf' or with a coarser cutter in a mini angle grinder. It was glued in place with CA glue to save time, though epoxy would be more satisfactory. A light spray with clear lacquer will preserve the shine of both brass and pewter.



Club members were very appreciative of a professional and well-prepared demonstration and generally agreed that the club library should acquire a Hope threading jig.

Simon's website below

[Lathe Accessories | HOPE woodturning](#)

Finished box



Training

Club Training Update – Mel Williams

Beginners

Mel Williams has arranged two further dates this year at Aylesbury.

- 19th October
- 9th November.

These sessions are rapidly filling up so be quick and book a slot with Mel Williams (training@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk).

If these dates are inconvenient, we are launching a new option for beginners soon.

Yet more beginners options

Launching in late 2024

We are aware that Aylesbury is not an ideal location for those members who are based in the east of our region, so we are exploring a joint venture with **Letchworth Men In Sheds** to use their facilities. It's early days and negotiations are ongoing, and we should have more concrete plans by the end of the summer.

Mel Williams can be contacted on training@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk

Training support from the AWGB

As a member of the AWGB, all members have access to the support they offer.

The following list is a national one showing workshops that all AWGB members can attend. For more details see the AWGB website.

7 September	Intermediate	Platter	Dennis Wake	Hartlepool Enterprise Centre, County Durham
1 October	Intermediate - Advanced	Bowl & colour	Mick Hanbury	Turners Retreat
11 October	Beginner - Intermediate	Humming Top	Gary Rance	Wendover, Buckinghamshire
6 November	Beginner - Intermediate	Texture and colour	Chris Parker	Leyland, Lancashire

A Day in my Workshop

Introducing a Beginners Training Opportunity – Adam Blackie

The club offers beginners training at our training locations. We prefer this formal arrangement, and you should try to book one of these planned sessions if possible. We aim to run four training events per year, but these are sometimes held at inconvenient times for trainees and are often oversubscribed. Therefore, we are introducing the idea of a “Day in my Workshop” where more experienced club members can “Host” a “Visitor” and provide beginners basics training in the familiarity of their own workshops.

This is a volunteer-based scheme to introduce new members to more experienced turners. The Visitors will be introduced to their Hosts by the club’s training co-ordinator, Mel Williams. Mel will provide advice on PPE, Health and Safety and a sample training plan. The Host will agree the plan with their Visitor.

How does it work?

If you are new to turning and need some friendly guidance, please get in touch with Mel who will be able to introduce you to an appropriate Host.

There is a nominal contribution of £25.00 towards club funds. This is to ensure our insurance covers the club and its members at any club organised event.

Note that training friends in our own workshops is at our own risk, and not covered by club insurance because it is not a club event.

1. Club Admin and Organisation

- a) Our training manager Mel Williams will explain the process to the potential Visitor and acts as an introducer for the Host.
- b) The club already has a PPE and H&S checklist and lesson plan templates, and these will be provided to both Host and Visitor
- c) Following Mel’s introduction, Hosts will contact their Visitor and agree the timing and content of the session.

2. What are the Hosts roles and responsibilities.

- a) Hosts will initially liaise with Mel Williams, who will track the requests from potential Visitors and match them with a suitable Host.
- b) Mel will arrange an appropriate introduction with the Host’s prior consent each time.
- c) Once a Host accepts a Visitor, they are responsible for planning, agreeing a date and training content / objectives.
- d) Hosts will ensure that their Visitors are aware and have understood the PPE and H&S requirements for their workshop.
- e) Hosts will be prepared to provide refreshments and comfort facilities for their Visitor. Visitors will provide their own lunch.

3. What are the Visitors roles and responsibilities?

- a) Visitors will arrange training sessions through Mel Williams. Failure to do so will invalidate the terms of the Club Insurance policy.
- b) Once an introduction is made via Mel Williams, please respond promptly and politely to any subsequent Host communications. Remember the Hosts are volunteers and are giving their time on behalf of the club.

Please don't waste it.

- c) Agree a plan for the day with your Host before you arrive. Have an objective for the day and stick with the agreed plan. This is the best way to learn.
- d) Turn up on time and be prepared to help clear up at the end of the day. This is basic stuff, but it's polite to offer.
- e) Please remember to bring your own lunch. Liquid refreshments will be provided by your Host.
- f) If your plans change and you cannot make an agreed date, contact the Host immediately. You may be able to agree a new date and it's impolite to let down your Host at short notice.

Letchworth Men in Sheds.

New Lathe

It was my pleasure to deliver a third lathe to the Letchworth men in sheds workshop this month. This is part of the set up of our relationship with the Letchworth men in sheds operation which we will be using as a secondary base for our club.

Having negotiated a couple of "Woodturning" days each month, Steve Hart who is leading on this initiative, will be circulating more news in the coming months. There will be a regular timetable announced for our events, so keep an eye out for the news as it comes in. In the meantime, Steve has included an update in this newsletter. I thought you might enjoy seeing Steve, Colin Newman and Dave Washer installing the lathes in the workshop reorganised by Grahame Hill (all H&BW club members).

Adam



Man's Shed (MS) Progress – 16th July Steve Hart

I had a meeting with the MS chairman to discuss our progress and timetable for starting the H&BW woodturning workshops at the MS (Standalone Farm).

It has been agreed (subject to committee agreement) that we formally start the workshops from the 16 th August, we are currently installing the lathes and tooling up.

All users of the workshop will be expected to join the MS (if they continue to use the workshop) which means that they fall under the same governance and insurance scheme provided by the MS. The workshop will be run under the operational manual that H&BW has defined to establish and ensure safe woodturning. The manual will be created by taking our existing guides, reviewing them against the MS's, removing duplication and include any we consider missing – and then signed off.

H&BW are in effect acting as consultants to the MS and by joining the MS (£12 pa) we have access to the workshop.

Workshop Information;

- Workshops will be held fortnightly on 1st (Training) and 3rd Thursday (open sessions) of each month, between 10-16:00.
- Each Thursday – will have a designated workshop supervisor – who will be responsible for the workshop, who attends, what projects are undertaken and by whom.
- On the designated days the workshop will be used solely,
 - For Woodturning.
 - For MS members.
 - Visitors - same rule as our club allowed up to the 4 visits then expected to join the MS.

What are the benefits ;

1. Here is a great opportunity for those who are starting woodturning, establishing or don't have their own workshop. For example - we are working through, workshop layout, lathe positioning, tooling, tools - bandsaw, sharpening etc- so by getting involved you will be exposed to many of these issue(s) – before you make any costly commitments!

2. For the future - Tutor Development – Working at the MS or visiting the MS can give you the opportunity to develop your tutoring (this would be subject to agreement with the workshop supervisor).

3. MS membership – also means you don't pay an entrance fee to Standalone Farm (£9 daily), and you have access to its grounds.

Please contact me if you want more information, comments or do want to get involved.

Regards
Steve

07508004511
sahart@btinternet.com

Projects

Blackwood and pewter lidded box – Tony Champion

The timber is African Blackwood and after turning and sanding with a final grit of 500, it is finished with Carnuba wax applied using a buffing wheel after first using a compound called Tripoli. The Blackwood does not need sealing prior to polishing.

The pewter knob was produced by casting the pewter, in a two part mould as a cylinder, and then turned on the lathe.



Burr and Resin Pendant – Alan Lewis

The pendants shown to the right and in photo 1 were made from a burr and resin hybrid blank available from Emma Cook aka The Tiny Turner, see her website at <https://www.thetinyturner.co.uk/pendant-blanks>. These blanks are about 50mm square and 12mm thick, example shown in photo 2. To do the turning is used a standard ¼ inch bowl gouge.

Step 1

Mark out blank centres and hold between centre and turn to round. I made them 48mm in diameter. I used a steb centre in the lathe head stock and a revolving cup centre in the tail stock.

Step 2

I made a wooden chuck with a 48mm diameter recess and about 4 mm deep, see photo 3.

Step 4

Hold the circular blank in the wooden chuck and turn a gentle curve on the front face, just enough to remove the marks made by the steb centre.



Step 5

Sand through the abrasive grades. I started at 120 and finished with 600. I cleaned the surface with a piece of kitchen towel and applied some sanding sealer to the burr wood part.

Step 6

Next was to turn the blank over (so the curved front face is in the chuck) and reduce the thickness and turn a gentle curve on the back face, making it to match the front face as near as possible.

Step 7

Sand through the abrasive grades, I started at 120 and finished with 600. I cleaned the surface with a piece of kitchen towel and applied some sanding sealer to the burr wood part.

Step 8

Polish all over using the Chestnut polishing kit. The Chestnut polishing uses three different polishing compounds on three different buffing wheels. The first one is used to remove the sanding scratches, the second is used to give the surface a shine and the last one is carnauba wax to protect and give a protective coat.

Step 9

Drill a small hole near the top edge and insert a pinch bail and chain. I bought my pinch bails and chain from eBay.





Off Centre

Woodturning from a different angle

How green is my woodturning by David Evans

Our planet has a problem and it's us. We have been taking more from it than we've been putting back.

A fossil fuel fired power plant burns coal or oil extracted from the ground and in doing so belches harmful gases into the atmosphere. We benefit from the electricity it produces as it heats our homes, cooks our food and turns our lathes. But there's an imbalance between the harm that's done to the planet and the benefits we enjoy.

Over the long term it won't be just the Earth that will suffer. Us and future generations will also start to experience the effects of a warming planet.

There are steps being taken to slow the downsides. Net zero, zero carbon and carbon neutral are labels for the efforts being made by governments and corporations to redress this imbalance. There are steps we as woodturners could also take to help reduce the impact we are having on the environment. In fact, if you are a woodturner you are already part of the green revolution.



Woodturning transforms a piece of timber into something useful or decorative. And because it is made of wood it lasts. At the end of its life the vase or plate can be thrown in a hole to rot or tossed on the cooking fire. Try doing that with a plastic coffee cup. It is this process of transforming log to treen to fire that puts woodturning as one of the early adopters of net zero even before it became a thing.

Our raw material, wood, is the ultimate in sustainability. Chop down a tree and another one grows in its place. How many other professions or hobbyists can walk through their local woods and come away with a fallen limb or log to be crafted into something beautiful or useful. Safe in the knowledge that what they have taken will ultimately be replaced. Not to be spoken out loud, but woodturning is one of the few occupations that will benefit from global warming. Industry is off-setting its carbon emissions by, among other things, reforestation. And with more trees comes more free wood!

Our ancestors would have been pedalling away at a spring pole lathe long before electricity. Today there are the purists that prefer this method of woodturning. The arrival of the steam powered mechanical lathe and the proceeding industrial revolution was arguably woodturnings peak in terms of using more of the earth's raw materials than it was putting back. The arrival of cleaner power sources such as electricity, albeit fossil fuel generated, and more energy efficient lathes and modern power tools has helped to improve this.

Before anyone thinks I'm going to suggest we all return to the roots of our craft, I'm not. I alone would probably generate more carbon dioxide than a steelmaker's furnace if I were forced to peddle a pole lathe for even 5 minutes. Yet there are small changes we could make. I wonder how many of us have considered solar panels on the roof of our workshop and swapping our tungsten bulbs with LEDs. Or maybe replacing an old piece of equipment with something more energy efficient or with a smaller motor.

For the experienced woodturner, you wouldn't want to replace an ageing Graduate if it works well as to do so would be more scrap for landfill. For the newer woodturners like myself the question is, do I really need it? And if you think you need it, perhaps consider the club's sales table or lending library first. Both these are excellent examples of upcycling and waste reduction in action.

For a turned item to really sing it needs a good finish. Be it treen or ornament, historically woodturners would have used naturally derived oils, waxes or lacquers. Developments in this area would have been to combat inefficiencies such as long drying times or difficult application. Tung and Linseed oil for example tick both these boxes, while wax can be scratched off or even melt. These perceived weaknesses were countered with aerosol sprays and high concentrations of solvents. If your work is time critical then of course you'll reach for the aerosol can of friction polish. But if time isn't money, choose a finish that you can apply without the need of a respirator and allows you the time to make a cup of tea while you wait for it to dry.

Making a difference to the planet won't require any radical changes to the way we create. Maybe using less green wood, replacing a few light bulbs and making better use of the club's lending library is all you need to do. Besides, just by being a woodturner you're already making a difference.

David Evans works for NHS England and is new to woodturning.

If you've got an idea for **Off Centre** come and talk to him on a club night or email info@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk

Poetry Corner

ADVICE TO THE MEDIA

So boring, the media's verbal vocabulary
Not always mimicked by the local constabulary
The latest word on the block is 'investing'
Replacing '100 per cent' for digesting
And the superlative word incredible
Used so often has become inedible
Why don't you find original words,
Why must you copy like sheep and the birds
To be original has gone out of fashion
Use of these foresaid words should have ration
Please return to virgin normality
To avoid a stodgy, dodgy reality.

Martin Sexton July 2024