



**WOODBITS
NEWSLETTER
Issue 225
February 2025**

SHAVINGS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the February 2025 newsletter.

Spring is here, the bulbs are showing their heads in the garden and your workshop should be warming up. So, no excuses for the competitions this month, which are a Bud Vase for beginners and a Coloured Ball for the advanced group. This ties in nicely with this month's demonstrator, Stewart Furini, who is a specialist with colour and always a treat to watch.

<https://www.stewartfuriniwoodturning.co.uk/>

Regarding demonstrators, I have received several suggestions for future meetings and would welcome any further ideas. Following Paul's resignation from the Committee we also need a volunteer to help arrange the demonstrators for the club. If you want to help, please let us know.

Dave Washer has now booked two training days at Aylesbury: 24th May and the 19th July. Contact Dave to book one of these popular sessions.

Finally, we announced last month that Peter Clarke is unable to continue as club secretary and I can announce that Patrick Stileman has volunteered to take over from him. Please congratulate Patrick when you next see him.

See you all on the 12th.

Adam Blackie

Chairman

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Club News

February Competition

Beginners



1st Melvyn Hogg



2nd Patrick Stileman



3rd Stephen Hills

Advanced



1st Peter Kemp



2nd Harvey Alison



3rd Peter Hoare

Open

1st Chris Bentley



2nd Harvey Alison



3rd Peter Hoare

Professionals
Choice..



Chairmans Choice..

Meetings Calendar

2025

Mar 11th Stewart Furini

Competition Subjects

2025

	Beginners	Advanced
Mar	Bud Vase	Coloured ball
Apr	Egg	Pair of egg cups
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

STUART KING

Stuart is the longstanding President of Middlesex Woodturners and he has demonstrated at our club on a number of occasions.

He gave a talk with lots of photos called “Sixty Odd Years a Turner” to The Society of Ornamental Turners (SOT), a week earlier than expected because of a booking problem, on Saturday February 15th in Northolt.

If anyone is qualified to give a presentation on the many different aspects of woodturning, there is no one better than Stuart. He has devoted much of his life to the subject, whether that is ‘hands on’, or doing historical research, whether pole lathe turning or ornamental turning, he has done it all.



Stuart was honoured with Life Membership of the Society at this event.

Details of future Society meetings (quarterly) can be found on the Meetings page on the societies' website <https://www.the-sot.org/meetings.php>

Chestnut Products

Chestnut products will again be running an event in August this year – check out their website if you are interested. [Woodturning Weekender 2025 | Chestnut Products - First for Finishes](#)

It is worth mentioning here that this Terry Smart from this company has often given a talk to the club about finishing – they produce regular newsletters which are often full of useful information – see link below:

[Welcome to our Newsletters | Chestnut Products - First for Finishes](#)

Raffle purchase Diary for 2025

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

Tel 07720 677456

Email Stevebeadle1960@hotmail.co.uk

Training opportunities

Please contact me if you are interested in attending one of the training days in Aylesbury

Dave Washer

training@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk

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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. Its available to any club member free of charge.

For those new to the club the tool lending Library can be accessed here

The value to the club is that:

- Club members can try before they buy or
- 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. There are couple of examples of feedback from members in this 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

Berkhamsted School demonstration event- David Evans

It's a Saturday morning and a dozen A level students from Berkhamsted School have given up their time to attend a woodturning demonstration. Members of the Herts and Beds Woodturners are showing the teenagers how to turn a few simple items.

Club member Keith Goddard is telling some of the youngsters how the workshop they are now in used to be the school dining hall when he was a student there back in the 50s. Today the clatter of cutlery and whiff of boiled greens has given way to the whirr of 3D printers and polymer moulding. Yet sitting amongst all the modern technology and materials is a solid looking Union Graduate wood turning lathe.

Today it's taking centre stage as the students get back to basics. Nicole Graham, a design and technology teacher who helped organise the demonstration said it was important for students to get hands on experience of making.

'The process of creating something is not just a beautiful piece at the end,' she explained. 'It's really good to have some real experts in.' A glance at the students' course work lining the walls gives you some idea of how far teaching and technologies have advanced over the last 20 years or so. No longer simple wooden footstools or hot air engines. Today's generation are turning out what look like prototype wind turbines or items to help feed or exercise your pets.



Ms. Graham points to the array of computers where the students begin their design journey, researching materials, techniques and searching the internet for inspiration.

She says it's important that students understand not all manufacturing is done by robots.

The enthusiasm with which the students have taken to getting to grips with chisels and blocks of wood soon becomes evident. Joining Keith today is fellow club demonstrator Steve Hart and chairman Adam Blackie. They are talking the youngsters through woodturning and tool sharpening as well as guiding and encouraging.

Early into the session one student (right) is getting some hands on experience by helping Adam replace the belt on a demo machine while her classmate proudly displays a bottle opener he's just finished.

"I went from being scared to using the lathe to being able to use it competently enough to make a bottle opener I was happy with," said one student reflecting on the morning's activity.

The demonstration at Berkhamsted School in their modern Design and Technology workshop neatly illustrates the existential crisis facing the craft of woodturning and the national network of clubs and associations. Namely, there now so much reliance on technology that the younger generation may have lost sight of the individual processes that go into manufacturing an item. And in doing so, who will replace today's woodturners when they finally hang up their tools.

The good news is that there are plenty of younger turners coming through to inspire and sustain the craft. Last year Herts and Beds Woodturning Club hosted demonstrations by Kate Kitchen and Nathanael Griffiths, both of whom are in their 20s.



The club has seen a healthy influx of new, next generation woodturners. Currently 5% of members are aged under 40, 19% aged 40-60 while the majority are still in the 60-80 age bracket. Jack Parker, 30, has been a club member for over two years. The cabinet maker is a regular attendee at club nights but admits balancing this with a full-time job does present its challenges. However, it's at club nights that he gets the inspiration from demonstrators and the more experienced members that inspires him to keep turning up every month.

"You can pick up tools and useful information," he said. He enjoys the organised Club Nights where members pass on their knowledge directly to new members using one of the club's in-house lathes. He says the friendly atmosphere and encouragement is also what brings him back each month.

Back at Berkhamsted School, Ms. Graham's initiative to pair the students with what she calls 'real people' seems to be paying dividends. A student is discussing with Keith how to go about setting up a small workshop at home while another, having fixed the belt on her lathe, is starting work on a key ring. Looking about the room each student is actively engaged in discussing a technique, watching a demonstration or proudly showing a turned item. The mood in the room this bright Saturday morning is positive – and that can only mean good things for the future of woodturning and its clubs.



Demonstration - by Steve Kearvell. Review by Tony Taylor

The first part of the demonstration was to make a three-cornered pedestal bowl. Steve started with a 90 mm cube of Ash and emphasised that the sides should be precisely equal. Two opposite corners were flattened so that the piece could be held between a steady centre to drive and a ring point centre at the tailstock. Accurate centering is very important. A guide mark was made on the tool rest about 10 mm to the right of the free corners and a 3/8 sharp bowl gouge used to shape the base of the bowl.

The lathe was run at 800 rpm and care taken to align the bevel with the direction of cut. The corners of the wings should be about 5 mm thick. The base was reduced to a waist and a 30 mm chucking tenon formed with a parting tool. The cut surfaces were sanded to 400 grit then coloured using the Hampshire Sheen Intrinsic colour.

This was followed by cellulose sanding sealer and two coats of wax. The piece was then reversed to be held in the chuck in order to hollow the upper surface. Steve started cutting from the centre then changed to a push cut from the outside inwards. The aim was to make the wings an even thickness of about 5 mm. A light cut with lathe running at 1900 rpm was best. The upper surface was then sanded, sealed and waxed.



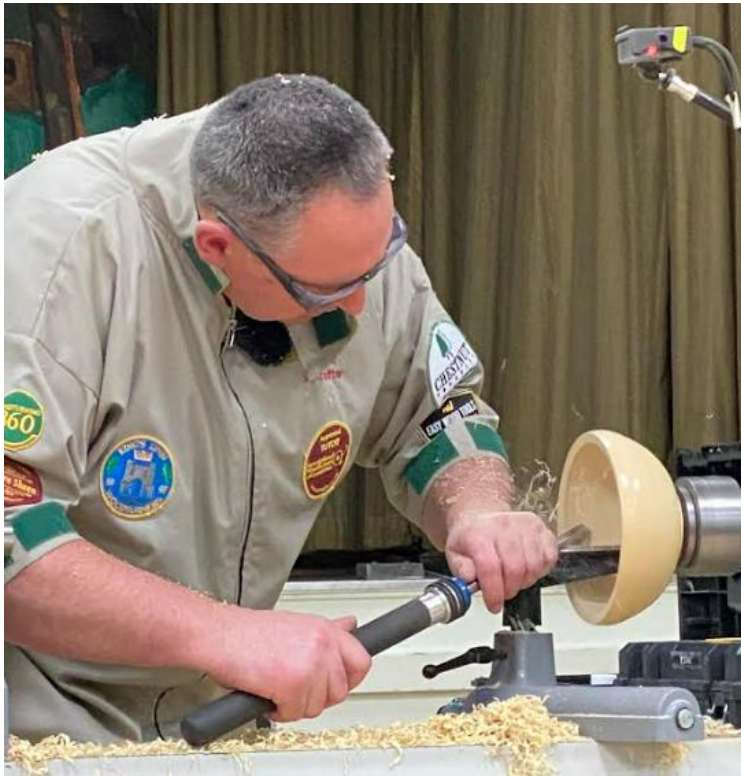
Finally, after parting off, the bottom was sanded using an arbor mounted in a Jacobs chuck. The result brought a round of applause.



The second item was a straight-forward bowl turned from a blank about 8 x 2.5 inches. It was mounted on a screw chuck and trimmed round using the bowl gouge, cutting with bevel contact from right to left in the direction of the bevel. The underside was trued up using a pull cut.

Steve emphasised that one should present the tool with bevel contact, and avoid scraping, which blunts the tool quickly. A chucking mortise was cut about 6 mm deep and a foot defined, about half this thickness. The bottom of the bowl was shaped, first with a pull cut and finished with a light push cut. It was sanded with the inertial sander to 400 grit, then sealed. Steve tested the finish by buffing with shavings, then waxed and buffed.

The bowl was reversed on the chuck for hollowing. It is best to leave the central region to last in to provide support. The inside is best power sanded rather than with the inertial sander. Sanding sealer was applied with paper towel, then denibbed and given two coats of wax.



Club members were very appreciative of a well-prepared and nicely delivered demonstration. There was much of interest both to new and to experienced turners.

Robert Sorby ProEdge Review - Mike Pearson

This is the second time I have been lucky enough to be able to borrow this Sharpening system from the club lending library. I would make the following comments

- The first time I used it was the only time I had used a belt sharpening system. I found it very easy to use and it did a good job of everything I sharpened.
- The belts were quick and easy to change, as was the angle of the guide which had pre-selected angle for various tools.
- The fingernail jig was also easy to use and worked very well.
- It does seem quite expensive but definitely works better than other sharpening systems.



Also, all of my chisels and plane blades are the sharpest they have been for a long time.



I'm sure in the not too distant future one of these will be permanently fixed to my bench. I would recommend one to anyone who needs a good reliable and flexible sharpening system.

Mike

Thread cutter Review – Harvey Alison

The club purchased a thread cutting jig for our lending library following an excellent demonstration by its creator Simon Hope last year. The jig offers the benefit of cutting threads in almost any hardwood, something that is not possible with traditional thread chasing tools. It also lowers the bar of technical proficiency and physical dexterity required, making thread chasing more accessible for new turners. So although I already have thread chasers, I borrowed the jig from the club lending library to try it out.

The first thing to say is that like most of the club lending library items, the jig came in a sturdy bespoke box made by our chairman Adam, which keeps things safe and together, important for a tool like this with several separate parts. The club has bought the 'spindles' necessary for cutting all the most common thread sizes, measured in TPI (threads per inch). For my experimenting, I mainly used the 12 TPI spindle, which is ideal for threaded box lids.

Although it is designed to make thread chasing simple (Simon certainly made it seem so in his demo!) in reality it took a little while to get familiar with how the parts fit together and work. I recommend watching the instructional video on YouTube a couple of times before getting started at the lathe to avoid frustration:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvfzclmOACo>

I found that the importance of tightening everything down before cutting cannot be overstated, as thread cutting is a reasonably precise activity, which was quickly lost if there was any play in the jig. I also think that I was not helped by the lack of stability in my midi-sized lathe, as the jig is relatively heavy, and is probably best used on a full size lathe like the clubs' demonstration machine.



Having said that, once I had the hang of it and had cut a few test threads, I was able to achieve a fairly decent result on a project, which was a threaded insert for a hollow form (see pictures). I made things easier for myself by using holly for the threads, a close grained timber that takes threads well using traditional chasers.

I was also able to cut decent threads in sycamore and ash, which are relatively open grained hardwoods which do not usually take threads well. However, when doing this it was crucial to stiffen the timber using repeated soaking with thin superglue. The jig has been well thought out to support this, as you can wind the cutter in and out so that it goes back into the threads precisely, and the hinge plate makes access to the work straightforward.

Some techniques are the same as for traditional thread chasing and so are worth researching a bit and having a go at in addition to using the jig if possible. Lubricating the threads with wax and cutting chamfers

/ recesses for the cutter to cut into are all the same. Our club Professional Gary Rance is offering a thread chasing lesson this year, free to AWGB members, which would be well worth attending.



In conclusion, a useful asset to the club lending library, something that is a bit specialist and expensive, so great to have the opportunity to try before purchasing. For some projects, this jig will work where nothing else will, although it does not exceed the results achievable by a competent turner with hand thread chasers for most applications.

Thread cutter shown below – for more details see [Threading jig FULL KIT - Hope Woodturning](#)

Harvey



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For Sale and Wanted

For Sale

Various items

Tony Bilsdon has a number of items for sale as below. If you are interested please contact him on 01442 300677 for further details.

Charnwood Pillar Drill – W370 – now superseded by W380, although Operating Instructions are the same.

Suggested selling price £45



6inch Bench Grinder, mounted on moveable stand, fitted with a Wolverine Woodturning Jig.

Suggested sale price £50



Lathe:- Record Power NOVA 1624-44. 8-Speed via pulleys, Outrigger for oversize bowls etc No longer marketed by Record, now being sold direct as NOVA.

8-Speed, via pulleys, 178, 300, 570, 850, 1200, 1800, 2400 and 3000rpm. 1.5HP motor. 2MT. New Spare Motor, plus a lot of odds and sods I have available then looking for about £600-£650.



Bandsaw - Record Power BS300, Mounted on wheeled stand

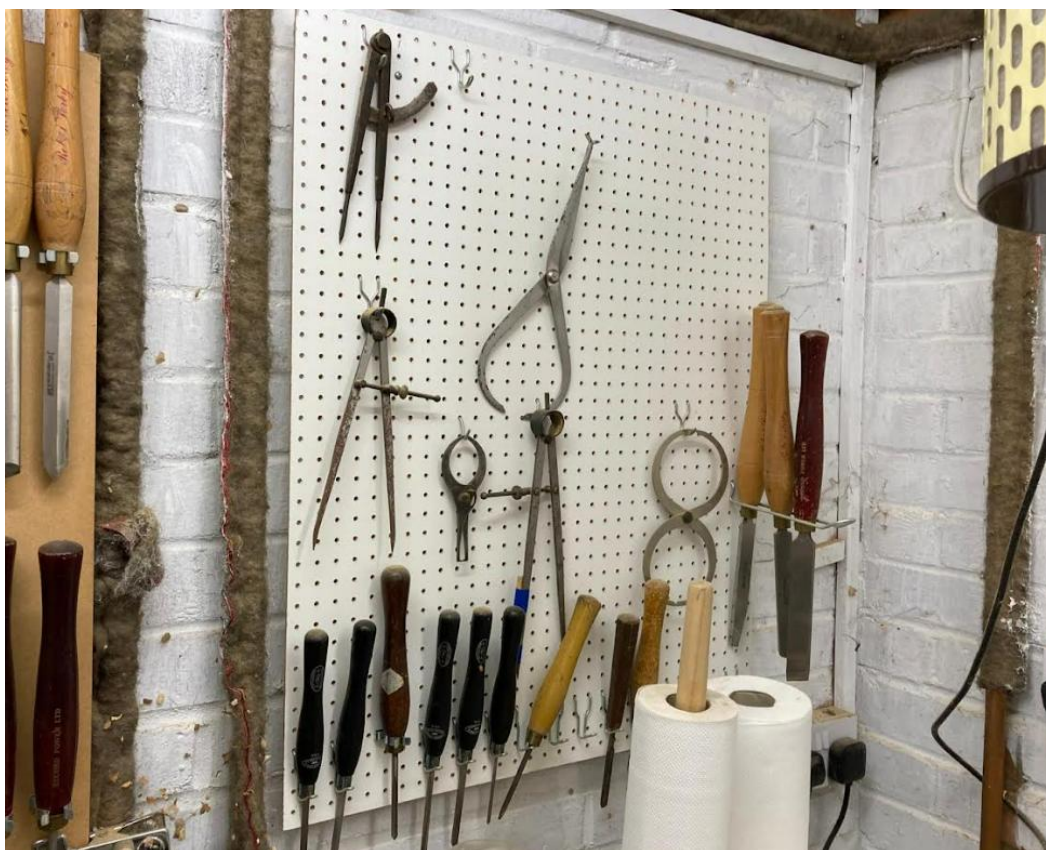
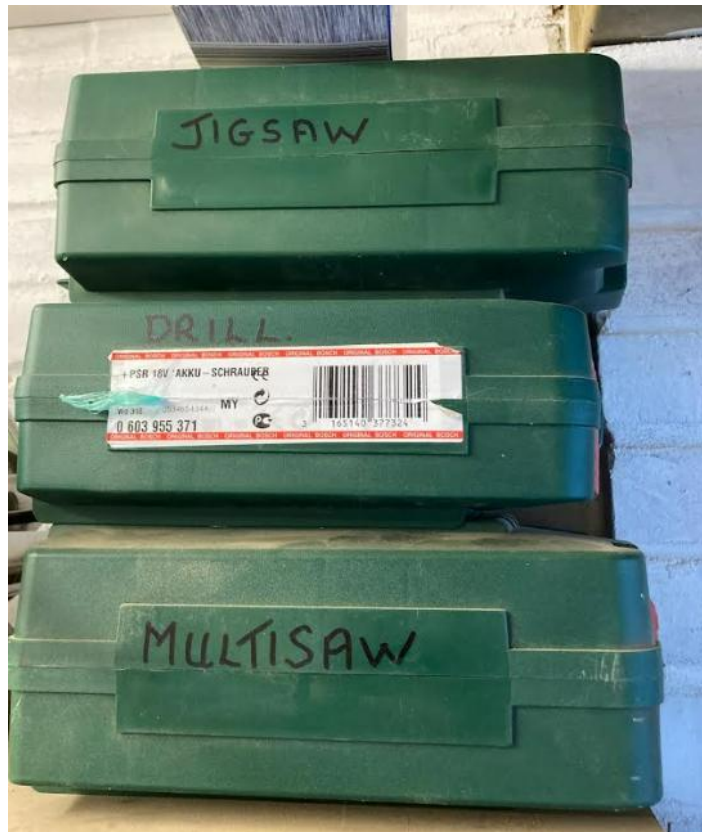
Extras include:-

Record Power DVD - Bandsaw Master Class – The Basics with Alan Holtham – approx. 55mins. Homemade Jig for cutting circular blanks

Suggested selling price £300



Also – Tony has some small hand tools, wood and other woodturning items. These will be for sale at the next club meeting.



Dust Extractor

Philip Francis has a beefy looking Mardon extractor for sale.
Cost £40 buyer collect from the Queens Park Arts Centre Aylesbury.

Contact Phil as below:

philipfrancis51@yahoo.com



Lathe for Sale

David Brooks has a Myford Mystro lathe in my garage which he would like to sell If any members are interested. Its in very good working condition - photo below. He is looking for £400

David lives in Mountsorrel Leicestershire brooksie46664@gmail.com

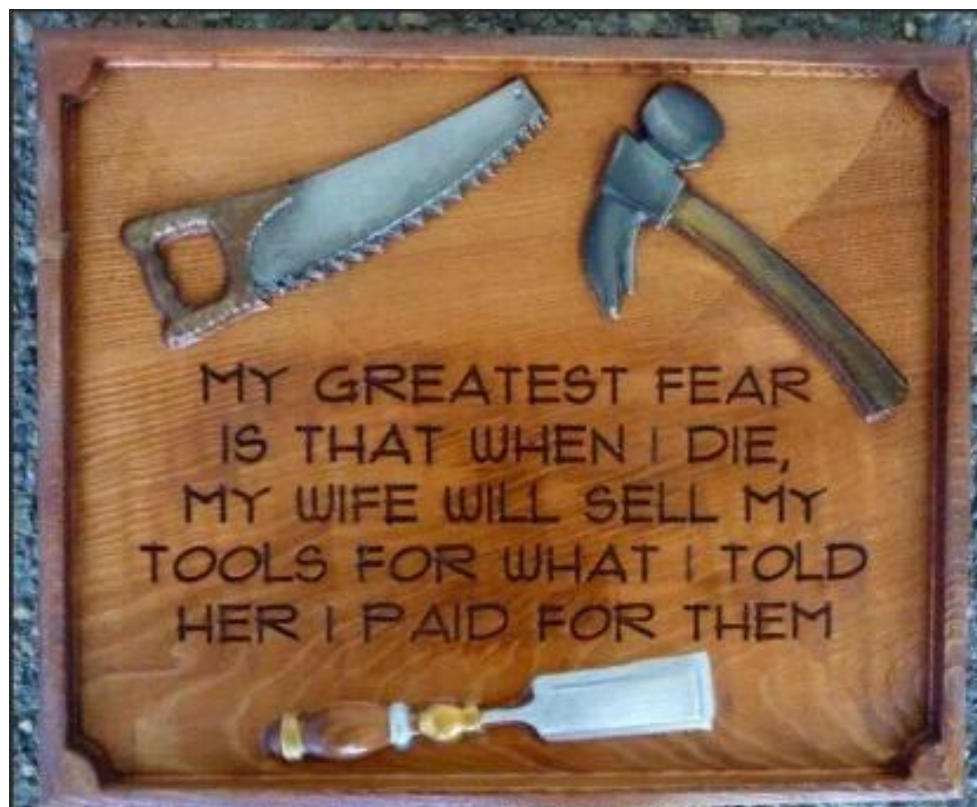
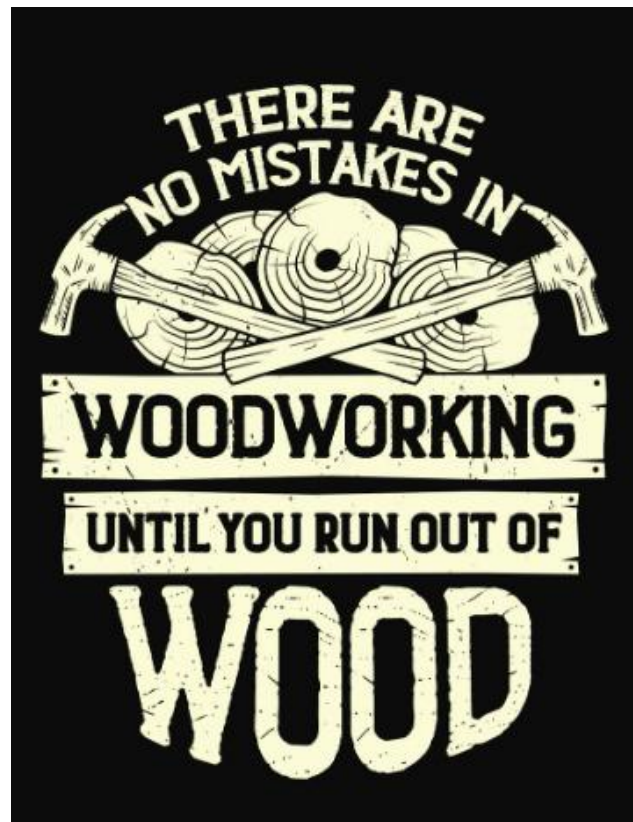


Lathe for sale

Chris Squires has a Union Jubilee lathe for sale. See photos below. Offers over £100. If you are interested in this please email him directly on stanleysquires@yahoo.co.uk



Posters for your workshop





Off Centre

Woodturning from a different angle

Just do it by David Evans

The club's recent event at Berkhamsted School highlighted a challenge faced by woodturning clubs the country over – how to maintain relevance and survive in the modern age. The good news is that the youngsters in the room that day showed a real enthusiasm in what they are doing. They crowded around their ancient Union Graduate lathe as club member Steve Hart gave a demonstration of techniques. The event was organised by Nicole Graham, the school's design and technology teacher. She wanted pupils to get some 'hands on' experience. From what I could tell the event was a success.

Much of today's design and manufacturing has been outsourced to machines and technology. In schools design and technology pupils might spend as much time in front a computer as they do at lathe or work bench. Where there used to be a pencil behind the ear there is now a smart phone in the back pocket.

But there is no substitute for experience as many members of Herts and Beds Woodturners will testify. And as Ms. Graham clearly identified. So yes, our club and others across the country needs new, younger members. But we still need to value the many existing members that have learned their skills from

'doing'. In his book *The Craftsman*, Richard Sennett discusses how technology is in danger of distancing the craftsman from the craft. Computer aided design (CAD) takes a lot of thought and stress out of designing, say, a building or a pepper mill. Yet the same technology puts a distance between the creator and the created and this can lead to poor design.

Sennett quotes Italian architect Renzo Piano who describes CAD as part of a closed linear system; the user enters some data; the computer does the calculation, and a printer spits out the blueprint. Piano says the craftsman's approach is circular and open-ended and ultimately better. Describing his own process Piano says: "You start by sketching, then you do a drawing, then you make a model, and then you go to reality - you go to the site – and then you go back to drawing. You build up a kind of circularity between drawing and making and then back again. This is very typical of the craftsmen's approach. You think and you do at the same time."

It is that thinking and doing that most club members will recognise. The downside can be a blackened nail or crushed finger, but small price for a beautifully turned bowl. So, let's welcome the next generation and technology to the world of woodturning, but never lose sight of the value gained from the years of just doing again and again and again.

David Evans is a novice woodturner. 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

GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY

Here in our octogenarian years
What privilege to outlive our early year's fears
Youth expended in a lifetime's pursuit
Recalled whilst wearing yesteryear's worn down suit

Growing old with grace in our slowed motion race
As a coffin club recruit we now must face
With stunted memory functions and no prescribed unctions
Sometimes dull, erstwhile sharp
Whilst inexorably expecting the sound of the harp

Visions of familiar names, faces and places called to mind
But avalanched tip of the tongue loss with no words we can find

Comparing notes with pals suffering just the same
Growing old together is the name of the game
At these closing stages we should keep the same attitude
The favoured generation, accepting with gratitude

All walks of people we have met through life's pleasure
We give thanks to them all in our autumn of leisure

Martin Sexton February 2025