



# WOODBITS NEWSLETTER Issue 224 January 2025

## SHAVINGS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the January 2025 newsletter. In January we kicked off the year with a demonstration by Gary Rance, our resident club professional. Gary made one of his signature pieces, a bell saltshaker. It's an ingenious design and Gary offered to run a workshop for members wanting to make one.

Dave Washer starts his first year as our training co-ordinator and he has started to book venues etc. If you have any particular training needs please see his article in this newsletter and get in touch. Membership renewals are rolling in with the running total at around 70 members as I write this. If you have yet to renew your subs please do so in February, otherwise this is the last newsletter you'll receive because the list will be updated this month.

Extracurricular plans this year include a workshop at Berkhamsted school, plans for workshops at Middlesex hospital and ongoing Men In Sheds sessions at Letchworth. If you want to get involved with these events, please contact a committee member.

Committee news this month is that James Blackie has agreed to be the new club photographer. His responsibilities include documenting the competition entries, providing content for social media and recording highlights of our club demonstrations. So, please keep him busy by entering the competitions.

The competition subjects for February are anything involving two woods for the beginners and a decorated platter for the advanced category. The weather is turning and it's a little warmer in your workshop so please do bring something if you can. Our February demonstrator is Stephen Kearvell who will be coming down from Norfolk for our meeting on 11th February. His website is here - <https://skkrafts.woodturners.uk/>.

You'll be glad to hear that the TV monitors have been upgraded at Adeyfield, so we will be back to two screens for the demonstration.

Finally, Peter Clarke is unable to continue as club secretary. Jobs include recording the minutes of our quarterly (evening) meetings and co-ordinating the agenda. It's also a great way to get to know other members of the club. If you have any admin skills and can help, please contact me or Peter and we'll explain what's needed.

Adam Blackie

Chairman

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# Club News

## January Competition

### Beginners



1<sup>st</sup> James Blackie



2<sup>nd</sup> Melvyn Hoggs



3<sup>rd</sup> Mike Pearson

Advanced



1<sup>st</sup> Harvey Alison



2<sup>nd</sup> Peter Hoare



3<sup>rd</sup> James Blackie

Open

1<sup>st</sup> Peter Hoare



2<sup>nd</sup> Harvey Alison



3<sup>rd</sup> Allen Kaye

## Meetings Calendar

### 2025

Feb 11th Steven Kearvell  
Mar 11th Stewart Furini

## Competition Subjects

2025

	<b>Beginners</b>	<b>Advanced</b>
Feb	Two Woods	Decorated platter
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 TALK

Stuart Stuart is the long standing President of Middlesex Woodturners. He has demonstrated at our club on a number of occasions and members may be interested in a talk "Sixty Odd Years a Woodturner", given by him to The Society of Ornamental Turners on Saturday February 22 in Northolt.

See [www.the-sot.org](http://www.the-sot.org) for details.

Do go and support him. Stuart will be honoured with Life Membership of the Society at this event. If you are coming, please let Gordon [gordon.cookson1@btinternet.com](mailto:gordon.cookson1@btinternet.com) know so he can book you in for the excellent buffet lunch.

## 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](mailto:Stevebeadle1960@hotmail.co.uk)

## Training opportunities

As we move rapidly into February leaving the cold, wet and windy January behind, it may be time for you to consider taking advantage of the available training offered by our club.

The club intends to hold three training days at Aylesbury this year (more can be added if required) which have been very successful in previous years, so if you have a specific area of turning that you would like to try or would like advice on a technique, then please give me a shout and I'm sure we can arrange for a suitably skilled member to take you through the various stages and techniques, taking home your turned piece at the end of the day.

You may recall from Gary Rance's excellent salt shaker demonstration at the last club meeting, Gary offered members a chance to attend his workshop to make one of the shakers, at the moment there are no dates fixed however he has said that the day will usually be on a Friday with a maximum number of 4 candidates. Gary has also said he is willing to put on additional dates if required. He has also extended the offer of providing training in his workshop to bowl, box and spindle technics and for us newbies basic wood turning. The club can also offer a discount on all group training delivered by a registered professional turner. This is limited to 50% of the total group cost or a maximum of £70 per person. I can provide further details if you are interested in this option.

If anyone is interested in Gary's workshop days then please contact Gary's mobile No. 07759 116937 or myself at the club meetings or via email [Training@hertsbedswoodturners.co.uk](mailto:Training@hertsbedswoodturners.co.uk)

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

Once again if you do have any requirements for training then please do get in contact via one of the following, email [Training@hertsbedswoodturners.co.uk](mailto:Training@hertsbedswoodturners.co.uk) or at the monthly club meetings.

Many thanks

Dave Washer

# 'A Day in my Workshop' – Patrick Stileman

I am fairly new to the world of woodturning, and just over a year ago I bought a lathe, bandsaw and various pieces of equipment from scratch, and set them up in a small workshop that I created in part of an out-building. Due to heavy work load and a busy domestic calendar I have had less time than I would have liked in getting to grips with what I'm doing, and I have relied on YouTube videos to try to fathom it all out, with only limited success.

I joined the Herts and Beds Woodturning Club in October 2024 and I signed up to the 'day in my workshop' scheme that the club runs. On 5th December our Club Chairman, Adam Blackie, came to my house and we had a very enjoyable day in my workshop covering some basic techniques, in particular simple ways of creating coves and beads, and use of the skew chisel. In the morning we destroyed a length of 2x2 turning it into a cylinder then creating shapes in it, and in the afternoon we made a couple of Christmas trees.

Adam made the first tree as a demonstration out of a beautifully spalted log (sycamore, I think) which I had fished out of my sister's firewood pile, and with much assistance from Adam I made the second tree from an ash log. After a couple of dramatic catches leaving unintended gouges (rescued by Adam) we finished the day with two pretty trees.

It was such a useful day for me and I have made a huge leap forward in my woodturning as a consequence of it. I now better understand how tools should be presented, hand positioning on tools, and when to lift and lower the back elbow. I have since practiced and am so happy that I appear generally to be able to create the shapes that I am actually intending!

A huge thanks to Adam for spending his day with me, to Dave Washer as the training coordinator, and to the club for providing such a fantastic scheme to help its beginner members.

Patrick Stileman





# Demonstration - Gary Rance. Review by Allen Kaye

We were again fortunate to have the opportunity to watch and listen to Gary – he explained he has been turning for 50 years and demonstrating in 9 countries for 35 years. Originally, he aspired to be a gamekeeper but then changed to woodworking and woodturning.

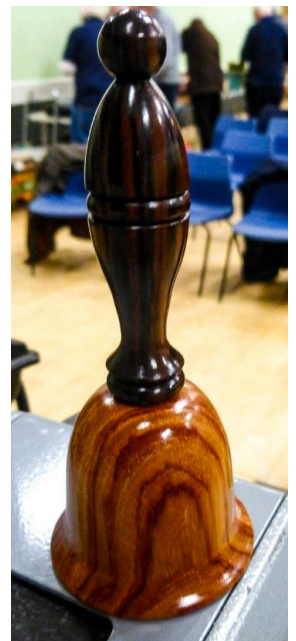
He gave some early and useful reminders about the importance of H&S – safety glasses and good boots are essential – when demonstrating necessarily he does not wear a mask but in his own workshop he always uses a powered respirator. A compromise in the hall was to use a small fan to push the dust away to the side away from him and the audience.

Started with some spindle turning basics – beads, coves and ogees. He now uses a round skew instead of a square skew for more control but appreciates that less experienced turners will choose to use a roughing gouge to turn a blank round which is much safer. In passing he reminded us of the need to get the lathe at the right height – the line between the lathe points should be at the height of the elbow to avoid back strain.

As the Beads, Coves and Ogees were explained/demonstrated and an emphasis made on where to stand and the movement of the hips and body rather than swinging just the hands. He demonstrates with softwood pine because it forces you to cut the wood rather than scrape it.

## Salt Bell – see right

This was the focus for the main part of the demo – it is an ingenious design of salt sprinkler which works by shaking it up and down rather than side to side. Works just as well for sugar. Gary does have the plans available for this on his website – see [Salt Bell Plan | Gary Rance](#)



Starting with a 3” blank and 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>” diameter – slightly larger maybe to start maybe to cope with mistakes, sanding etc. Walnut and Tulip wood was used.

The basic operation and construction of the salt dispenser was first described to give members a sense of the final object.

In the professional world of production turning, it is often important to create multiple pieces of the exact same dimensions and we saw regular use of the vernier gauge with the points filed off! to stop it catching as it is used when the lathe is turning. Less capable turners would be advised to stop the lathe before checking diameters. Another useful tip was to use ‘tell sticks’ – essentially they are pieces of wood with the key diameters and distances marked on that are held up at the back to help keep the dimensions on track all the time. A further option is to use ‘finger drop’ system at the back which can be programmed for particular projects – key for production turners as it again saves time when making multiple items.

The blank is turned round between step centres and the inner funnel part of the mechanism created and a hole drilled through the middle (bigger hole – more salt per shake) – slowing the lathe down when drilling. This is now parted off using thin tool. No sanding needed as this part is never seen.

Outer bell shape now turned. Central part drilled – taken steady to avoid too much heat. The handle is to be screwed onto the base and a thread chaser was used in the top ready for the handle. The internal funnel is glued into the base with due regard to lining up grain.



Another useful tip accompanied by a scary tale reminded us that when drilling on the lathe using a morse taper – always hold onto the drill and morse taper when retracting it. If you don't then there is a chance that the morse taper will come loose – with disastrous consequences maybe..



The base is now shaped as a bell, sanded and finished. Gary noted he does not routinely go through all of the grades of sanding – maybe only 120, 240, 400 and 600 – missing out 320. Keep sandpaper moving at all times.

The handle (of ebony) is turned – a matching thread put on one end (practice first on a test piece) shaped to design. This was seen to be a delicate and time consuming business. Wax can be used to help lubricate.

Finishing – to avoid the small hole at the bottom getting clogged up – insert a piece of wire first. One coat of sanding sealer and then lacquer.

## Spinning top

After the break Gary demonstrated the turning of a spinning top.

Again, an emphasis on sharp tools was made and we were asked to observe how little dust was made as he turned. Wood chosen was maple (or sycamore). An interesting alternative was Corian (example seen in image below)

Useful advice came thick and fast including details of the various techniques and tools such as the Elf used to decorate the base of the top. Colour was simply added through ordinary marker pens.

Gary finished with a short talk about sharpening. Early in his career, he explained, the tools had to be sharpened by hand and in many instances now he still prefers to use this technique as it offers greater control over the shaping of the tool. For us mortals however a reliance on proprietary systems such as the Sorby do give consistent edges

Checkout his website to see the range of products, plans and services as well as a little more about the man himself.

[Gary Rance](#)



A range of items on display.

At the end Gary reminded members that he offers training at his well equipped workshop - typical prices are £85 per person for a group of four. Contact him if you are interested. [gary@garyrance.co.uk](mailto:gary@garyrance.co.uk)

# For Sale and Wanted

## For Sale

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### Lathe and other equipment

Mick Sabine [mick.sabine@me.com](mailto:mick.sabine@me.com) has a number of items for sale

Axminster 950 Lathe £240 ono

Axminster 4 Jaw Chuck £40 ono

- Chuck accessories
- Screw chuck adapter £6 ono,
  - Face plate adapter £6 ono
  - Record 4 inch face plate £4 ono



Record RDE2 dust collector with hose nearly new - £70 ono

AC 400 air cleaner manual control only - £50 ono

Record scroll saw (blue) - £30

Location- HP16 OHD-

Great Missenden

Contact number - 07930

396005

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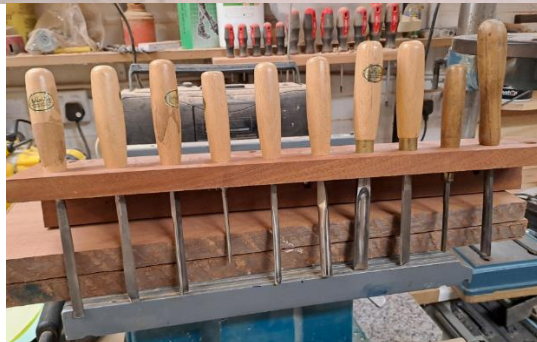


## Evolution Jaws, tool rests and carving tools for sale

In April last year, Dave Deakin in Potters Bar visited the club night with his son and sold some wood he had spare. He now offers a number of as-new jaws within the Evolution range. A quick check on the web will show these are high quality and very expensive jaws but he is willing to negotiate what I think are some very generous discounts. As an example the set of colossus jaws are being sold by Axminster for £89.00 but Dave is looking for upwards of £50.

The rest of the items with indicative prices are – Jaw mounts (£25), A jaws (£28), C Jaws (£30), Piranah Jaws (£54), 30cm expansion Pin Jaws (£55), 115 Soft Jaws (£20), Face Plate rings (£17), 3" Face plate (£6) Woodscrew chuck (£20) He also is selling a full set of Ashley Iles carving chisels (to be negotiated). Photos below.

If you are interested please contact him e-mail - [dave.deako16@gmail.com](mailto:dave.deako16@gmail.com)  
or Telephone - 01707 653391



## Lathe for sale

Chris Squires has a Union Jubilee lathe for sale. See photos below. If you are interested in this please email him directly on [stanleysquires@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:stanleysquires@yahoo.co.uk)



Posters for your workshop

**I TURN  
WOOD  
INTO THINGS  
WHAT'S YOUR  
SUPERPOWER?**



**DON'T  
WORRY  
I HUGGED IT  
FIRST**



# Poetry Corner

## A LABOUR BUDGET 30TH OCTOBER 2024

Here it is at last, the tale of woe  
A pain in our pocket, another go slow  
Cleverly leaked in advance of the terms  
Softening the blow for all and earth's worms  
Allowing huge spending at the cost of impending  
Reduced newcomers investment and a straight jacket ending  
Nevertheless it had to be  
As expected, prolonged misery  
Time will tell how effective it is  
Is it fair to all parties, will it be hit or miss  
Or will it make life tolerable and bring back some fizz

Martin Sexton