



WOODBITS  
NEWSLETTER  
Issue 237  
February 2026

## SHAVINGS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

### Welcome to the February 2026 newsletter!

Spring is just around the corner, and as I sit in my office gazing out at a brilliantly clear blue sky – the first we've seen in many months – it's hard not to feel cheerful. I can't wait to get back into the workshop more regularly now that the weather is on the up.

Our February meeting was a real highlight, with a fantastic turnout of 63 people. I was also delighted to hear that 75 of you renewed your membership in January – a new record for our club at this time of year. Here's to building on this momentum together!

Looking ahead, we're in for a real treat at our March meeting with a rare demonstration from Stuart King, a legendary turner who really needs no introduction. I'm sure the room at Adeyfield will be packed, so if you want a good parking spot, make sure you arrive early!

Our March competitions are set: beginners can try their hand at making a tealight holder, while the advanced category will be all about textured bowls. The response for last month's competition was fantastic, especially from beginners – keep up the great work, everyone!

With the storeroom at Adeyfield cleared, our sales table is looking a bit bare. If you're having a spring clean in your own workshop, why not consider donating items you no longer need? It's a great way to help out our newer members and keep things moving. Please bring any donations along in March – your generosity is always appreciated.

AV Upgrade news – our Audio-Visual upgrade at Adeyfield is making great progress. The storeroom is now ready and waiting for the new equipment, which we're expecting to arrive in early March.

Finally, this edition marks the first newsletter edited by Nikki James, who has kindly taken the reins from Allen Kaye after many years of dedicated service. A big thank you to everyone who contributed articles, to Allen for his hard work, and to Nikki for getting stuck in with her very first issue.

I'm really looking forward to our next meeting and hope you are too. See you all on 10th March!

Adam Blackie

Chairman

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# Club News

## January Competition

### BEGINNERS

Chairman's choice: David Baldwin



1<sup>st</sup> Keith Sutton



2<sup>nd</sup> Colin Nenman



3<sup>rd</sup> Alison Bigsby

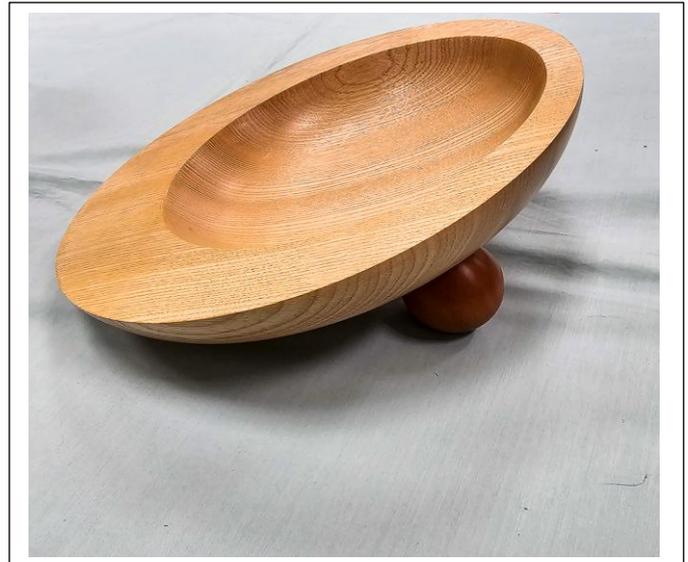
## ADVANCED

### Professional Choice:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Tony Taylor
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvey Alison
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Pete Pocock



1<sup>st</sup> Keith Goddard



2<sup>nd</sup> Tony Taylor  
1<sup>st</sup> Professional Choice



3<sup>rd</sup> Keith Hart

**OPEN**

**Professional Choice:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> James Blackie
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter Kemp
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Tony Taylor

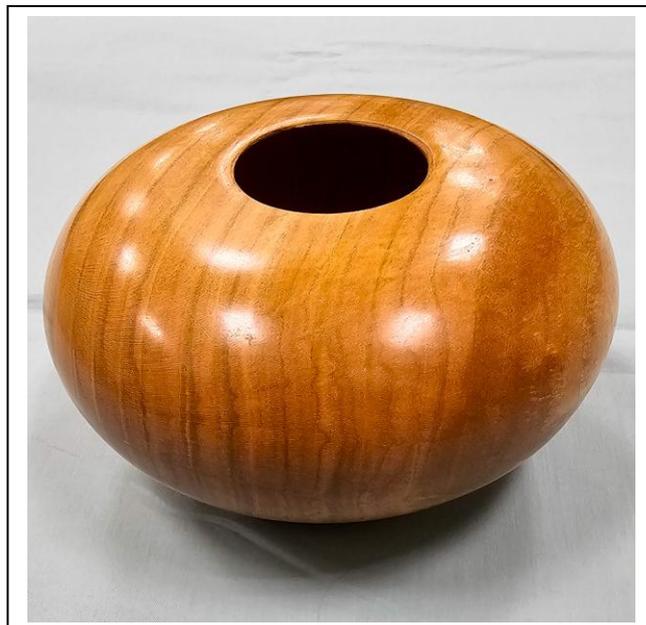


1<sup>st</sup> Peter Kemp  
2<sup>nd</sup> Professional Choice



2<sup>nd</sup> James Blackie  
1<sup>st</sup> Professional Choice

3<sup>rd</sup> Steve Hart



## Meetings Calendar

### 2026

March	10 <sup>th</sup>	Stuart King
April	14 <sup>th</sup>	AGM+
May	12	Nathaniel Griffiths
June	9	Club Night
July	14	Liz Pearson
August	11	Geoff Harris (Pole Lathe)
September	8	Club Night
October	13	Steven Kearvell
November	10	Richard Peers
December	14	Club Night

## Competition Subjects

### 2026

	<b>Beginners</b>	<b>Advanced</b>
March	Tea light holder	Textured bowl
Apr	Pair of Napkin Rings	Two or More Woods
May	Needle Case	Pagoda Box
Jun	Hedgehog or other Creature	Bangle
Jul	Honey Drizzler	Natural Edged Bowl
Aug	Ball and Cup	Hollow Form
Sep	Apple and Pear	Something Decorated
Oct	Platter	Bowl on Feet
Nov	Xmas Decoration	Wall Plaque
Dec	20 to 30cm Long Spurtle	Textured Platter
Jan	Paper Weight	Offset Goblet
Feb	Ring Finger	Wool Bowl
Mar	12 to 15cm Dia. Bowl	Natural Edged Vase
May	Needle Case	Pagoda Box

# Training Update - Dave Washer

You may recall from the January Newsletter that we had a date set in the Training Diary for the **Introduction to Multi-Axis Turning** on 21<sup>st</sup> March. Unfortunately, this date has been postponed due to a booking issue at Queens Park Arts Centre however I have managed to secure a new date in May for this course, the course is now fully subscribed. It may be the case this is something you would like to try, if so please give me a shout and with a few more interested members I'll be happy to set up another course.

I have also been asked to organise a Bowl Hollowing course, this is to be held at Queens Park Centre, Aylesbury probably June or July 2026. We have 4 members wishing to attend so far and if this is something you would like to try, please do get in touch either by email, [training@herts&bedswoodturners.co.uk](mailto:training@herts&bedswoodturners.co.uk) or my Mobile **07546 612450**,

Following the success of 4 members becoming AWGB Tutors last year. I'm happy to organise a further AWGB Tutor Assessment course this year so if you would like to advance your teaching skills, please do contact me and I'll put your name on the list. A short on-line course before the assessment is required and more details can be viewed by following this link [https://www.awgb.co.uk/instructor training](https://www.awgb.co.uk/instructor%20training)

You may also be interested in the excellent training opportunity to 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!

**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.**

Please do get in touch if you have any Training or Specialist Technique's you would like to try as I'm sure we can find a member willing to teach or support.

Kind regards

Dave Washer

## **Adeyfield Audio Visual Upgrade - Progress Update.**

At the start of January, six enthusiastic club members got together to clear out the old storeroom. Then, in early February, thanks to the generosity of Paul Boyes, we were able to use his workshop in Markyate to build brand new shelving, which we've now installed in the fresh space. This means all our new equipment for the upgrade will be safely stored away, helping us keep everything neat and tidy—something we're really looking forward to!

We're also excited to let you know that we've now placed an order for the video wiring and power supplies for the hall. If all goes to plan, everything should arrive by mid-March, and after that we'll be building a lighting and camera gantry, trialling the new camera and image switching kit, followed by some hands-on training sessions towards the end of March.

If you're curious to find out more, or fancy lending a hand with this upgrade, please feel free to get in touch with me or any of the committee—we'd be delighted to hear from you!



Picture - The newly installed shelving and secure cupboard. Made by Paul Boyes – pictured - to match the existing shelving on the other side of the room.

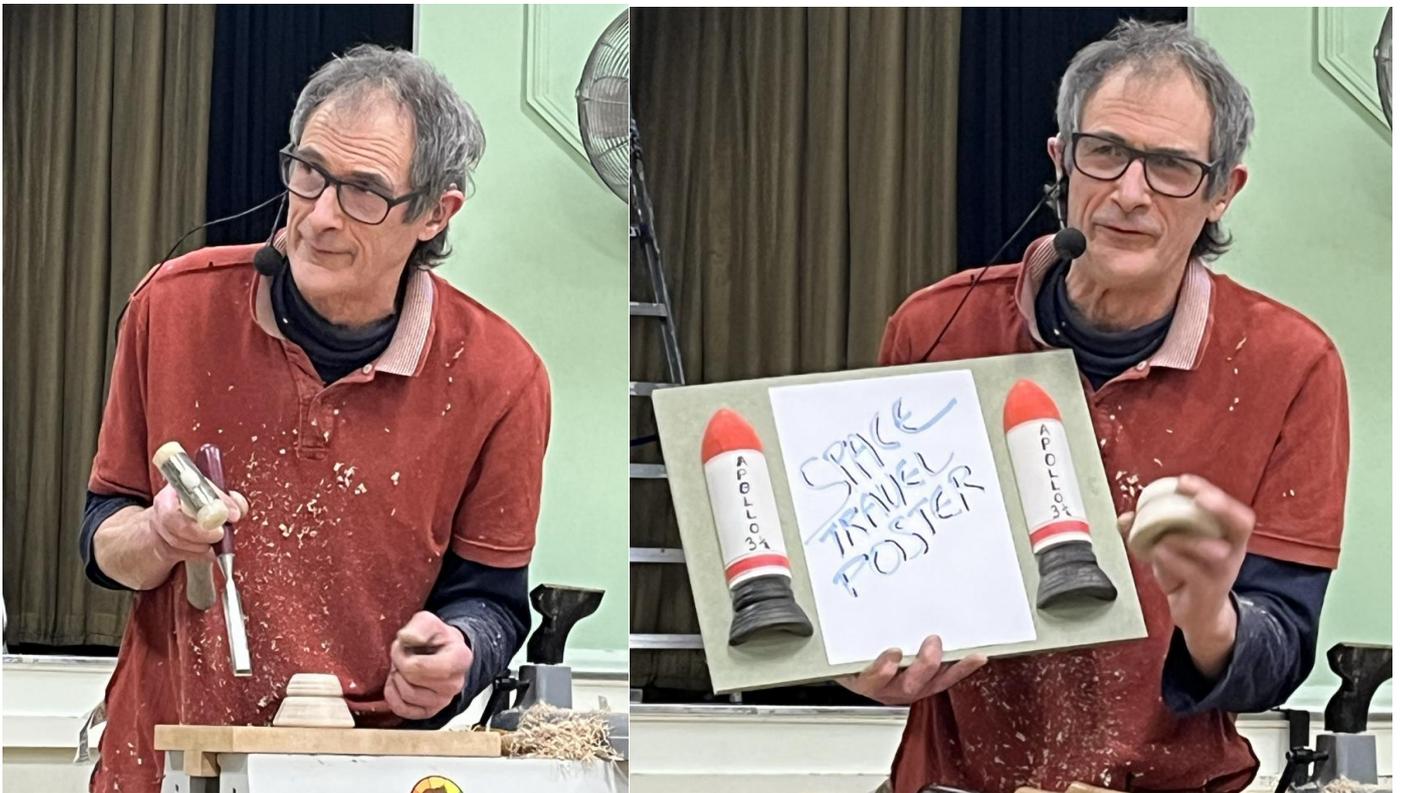
Adam Blackie – now suffering workshop envy having visited Paul's excellent shop.

February 2026

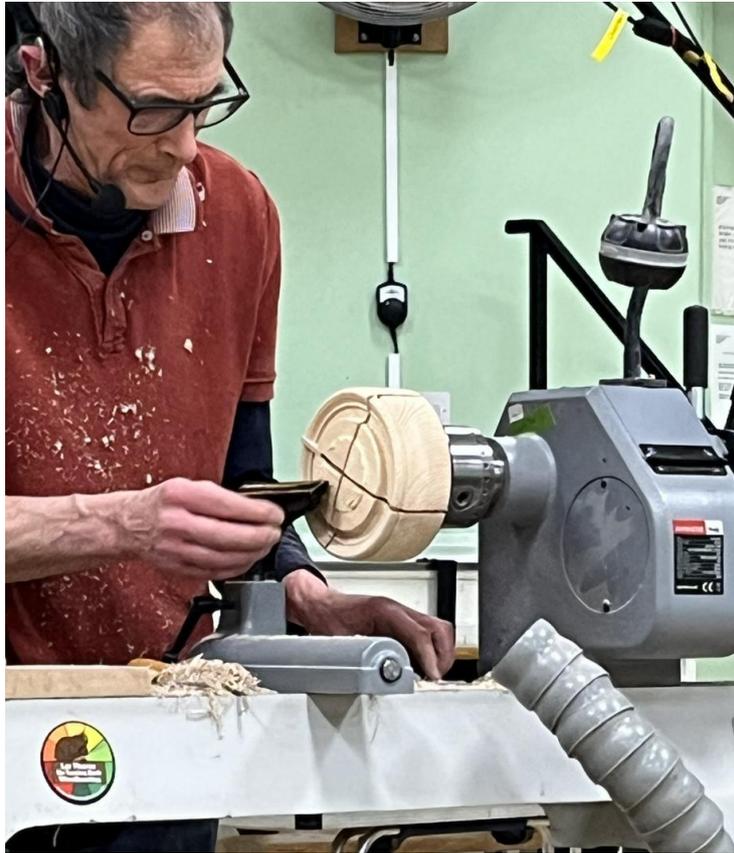
## February demonstration- Mike Wood

Our demonstrator in February was Mike Wood, professional production turner. In his spare time, Mike's passion is making intricate wooden toys, and the challenge that he has set himself is to make all components of the toys on a lathe.

Mike started his demonstration by introducing the concept of split turning which initially requires two or more pieces of wood glued together with a sheet of paper between the joints. He then told us that he would make a rocket engine for displaying on a flat surface, and using wood prepared for split turning he created a circular section which he hollowed out with a curved centre and ribbed sides, to create the shape of the end section of a rocket. What he was trying to achieve became apparent when he took what he had made off the lathe then split it in two along the line of the joint, to create two identical pieces with a flat surface which could be mounted for display.



Mike went on to show us the intricacies of his passion and demonstrated how he makes the neck of a tiny toy guitar on a lathe. Mike uses wooden chuck jaws that he makes and mounts onto an old Axminster Precision chuck, he then turns the wooden jaws to create a template into which he can mount the wooden pieces to create the necessary complex shapes. After shaping one side the wooden piece was removed, the jaws re-shaped as required and the piece re-mounted so that the reverse side can be turned.



The toys that Mike makes are intricate, and it is incredibly impressive to know that they are made entirely on a lathe, rather than being shaped with a jig saw. I was impressed with how he can visualize what he is trying to achieve with each tiny component turned using innovative techniques, then fitted together to create a very impressive detailed wooden toy. Each toy he makes is a labor of love, and I'm unsure if giving them to the grandkids would be wise!

Mike introduced new concepts and techniques in woodturning that I had not seen or heard of before and I now realise that the possibilities of what can be achieved on a lathe are far greater than I had previously thought – not everything has to end up round!

On a practical note, Mike used a moveable rechargeable light with a flexible neck and magnetic base that can be put anywhere on the lathe. He told me that the light is made by Gloforce – this is exactly what I need and I shall be getting one.

Patrick Stileman

## Ship's wheel woodturning project – Patrick Stileman

A retired builder friend of mine is in the process of making an aluminium-framed, jet-powered speed boat for his son-in-law who lives on a river estuary in Suffolk (yes, really!).

He picked up the metal frame of a ship's wheel from eBay and asked me if I could make a wooden hub for the wheel's centre and wooden handles for it, which naturally I said I'd be delighted to see what I could do. He bought me a block of Imbuia wood for the centre and teak for the handles.



My friend also asked if it would be possible to get the central hub engraved with the family crest. Imbuia is quite a dark wood, so I suggested inlaying a disc of pale-coloured box wood to engrave the crest on. Something I love about the club is the talent and resources available within the membership, and I asked James Blackie if he could assist with the engraving by using his laser pecker engraver. He duly came out to my workshop and did this for me (thanks James!).

I finished all the pieces with acrylic lacquer to ensure that they are waterproof.

It was really nice to make something for a specific purpose, and I was very happy with the end result. I'm now looking forward to having a spin in the boat.

Patrick Stileman



## Notes on making Salt and Pepper Grinders – Tony Taylor

Salt and pepper grinders are very well received as gifts and are kept and used for many years. They can also sell profitably. The demonstrations of making the grinders by Colwin Way of Axminster on Youtube are excellent, but rather complex. Here I have tried to simplify the process as much as possible.

The choice of mechanism comes first. The cheaper versions have the adjusting screw nut at the top, which somewhat restricts design. The more expensive so-called crush/grind mechanism is recommended because it lasts for years and, having the adjustment concealed at the bottom, allows for a wide range of designs. If you are interested in trying your hand at S & P G's, I suggest that you consider making several sets as they become much easier with experience. It is then worthwhile to buy some tools which greatly facilitate the job. For the crush/grind system, Axminster provide a very useful instruction sheet, which you can access from their website.

To keep this as simple as possible we assume you have access to a Woodcut Mill Drill, in which case you just need Forstner bits of diameters 22, 25 and 35mm. Ideally, the Forstner bits should be of the saw tooth variety for end-grain. You should also get the Robert Sorby tool to scrape the slots for the springy retaining clips – though you could make this quite easily.



The basic extras needed for making salt or pepper grinders

You will need to start with two 65 mm squares of dry wood of a length to suit the length of the mechanism chosen. Mechanism lengths range from 123 to 470 mm. I find the 195 to be most suitable. Buy the mechanism first and sketch a plan of the work based on it as the suppliers are not very clear as to exactly what the quoted length refers to. The one designated 195 is actually 200 mm overall. For this the stock should be about 255 mm long. Choose a nice piece of wood, such as spalted Sycamore, Beech, Oak or Cherry. Yew and Laburnum are both very attractive, but theoretically potentially toxic. Round the piece between centres to 60 mm diameter. Trim the ends.

The following description assumes the availability of a chuck with gripper jaws large enough to hold the piece directly, as this avoids the need to cut and remove chucking tenons. With the top end secured in the chuck and the piece running true, drill more than halfway through with the 25 mm Forstner, clearing the drill as necessary whilst holding on to the chuck. Mount the Woodcut Mill Drill in the tail stock and drill with it to the depth indicated by the mark on the stem. (If you do not have this cutter, then drill the base with 38 mm Forstner 53 mm deep then with the 45 mm drill 19 mm deep). You should then use the special Sorby tool to scrape a slot at the bottom of the 38 mm hole, to receive the springy tags designed to retain the mechanism. If you prefer to avoid this, then at final assembly the mechanism can be glued in place with epoxy after clipping off the tags. Sand and finish the end and the 45 mm bore.

Mark the dividing line between top and bottom, allowing 185 mm for the bottom section and part off with a thin parting tool. With the top section still in the chuck, you can

trim the end and form a spigot 35 mm diameter and 6 mm deep. Drill 40 mm deep with the 22 mm drill and use the Sorby scraper to cut a slot for the spring clip, much as for the bottom. Again, you could instead choose to glue the part in place with epoxy at final assembly.

Now remove the top section from the chuck and mount the bottom section, bottom first, in the chuck. Drill 10 mm deep with the 35 mm drill, then drill with the 25 mm bit to complete the central hole. Remove from the chuck and replace the top section, put the two pieces together and mount with a cone plug with live centre to fit the bottom in the tailstock. Now shape the form of the lower section and as much of the upper as is accessible. Sand and finish the lower section and set aside. Now make a jam chuck to receive the spigot on the upper part or grip the spigot in a chuck to finish the top. I like to distinguish the salt and pepper mills by setting a white and black disc respectively in the top. Drill a 25 mm hole 5 mm deep and glue a disc of ivory substitute or of ebony in place. Finish turning the shape, sand and finish. The choice of finish rather depends on the wood and your preference. Sanding sealer followed by denibbing with orange Nyweb and buffing with microcrystalline wax is simple and effective and mellows with age. If you prefer to preserve the pristine colour of the wood use two coats of lacquer. Auto lacquer gives a very long-lasting finish.

The final stage is to insert the mechanism parts. If you have cut slots to receive the anchoring tags, then it is best to turn waste pieces of wood to press the parts in on the lathe with the tailstock screw. Otherwise, glue them in place with two-part epoxy.



There are lots of ideas for designs on Youtube. Also, the club library now has the Woodcut Mill Drill and other accessories so do have a go.

# For Sale and Wanted

## Another satisfied customer



For the past couple of months, we've had a Record Power Model 0 (Coronet) lathe sitting on our sales table, just waiting for someone to give it a loving home. When I spoke to Stephen Hills about it, he told me the lathe had never actually been used, but it had always been kept safe and dry since the day it was made—so it was in cracking condition. These lathes were made in Sheffield in the 1980's and early 1990's.

As luck would have it, a friend of mine has just finished building his very first workshop. It's absolutely massive and crying out for some proper equipment. I mentioned our lathe to him, and straight away he was keen. I spent an hour or so giving it a good polish and clearing off a bit of light surface rust, and to my delight, it ran beautifully—like it was brand new.

Honestly, you'd be hard-pressed to find a modern lathe that could spring back to life so well after 40 odd years tucked away.

So, into the car boot it went, and before long we had it set up in Matthew's shiny new workshop. He couldn't be happier with his new toy, and it was brilliant to see him making his first shavings. To top it all off, the club now has an extra £250 in the kitty—happy days!

All in all, it was a cracking project and a lovely way to spend the day, with a great result for our sales table. And who knows we might gain a new club member soon.

Big thanks to Stephen Hills—and anyone else who helped track down this brilliant little lathe.

Adam Blackie February 2026



## **Club Tool Library**

Dear All

As a newby to the Herts and Beds woodturners, it was some 60 years since I had done any woodworking and turning always had my interest.

My first meeting was at a monthly meet in Hemel Hempstead in September 2025 with the suggestion I attend the Thursday session every other Thursday. Within a few visits, I was hooked and would wait to see how my capabilities developed.

To my great surprise I was advised that as a member, I could borrow a Lathe and tools from the club - that's very generous and I took up the offer. The borrowed lathe and tools allowed me to practice simple tasks and carry out small projects at home

Whilst regulars to the Thursday turners are keen and eager, it has become an event for every Thursday.

It would now be an advantage to have a plan of action to educate those who are used to the machines and progress their skills and in doing so be acknowledged as competent users of all the machines such as the band saw, the belt sander for sharpening tools etc etc

I have now purchased my own lathe and await the arrival of tools and accessories

Safe and Happy turning to you all

Paul Ruck