



# WOODBITS NEWSLETTER Issue 231 August 2025

## SHAVINGS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to the August 2025 newsletter – I hope you are finding time to enjoy your turning. I left the August meeting early, so missed the demonstration by Greg Moreton, but I have heard good feedback and look forward to seeing the report in this newsletter.

Our next meeting will be a club night, and we would welcome any ideas you might have for activities on the night.

Looking forward, the committee is considering ways to improve the Audio-Visual set-up at the club, but unfortunately there is some way to go before we have sufficient funds for the project, so we have launched an appeal. Please read the details inside. Any contribution will be welcomed.

The competition subjects this month are an Apple for Beginners and a Box with Finial for Advanced – both can be challenging. The recent competition entries have been well received so please do make the effort to bring your work along – and remember we also run a non-competitive display table, so you can also simply bring whatever you made this month. .

A reminder that the Harpenden AOTC event was cancelled and has been rescheduled for the 30th /31st August. So please come along and see us at Harpenden and do bring refreshments!

That's all for this month. See you on the 9 th September.

Adam Blackie

Chairman

# CONTENTS

SHAVINGS FROM THE CHAIRMAN .....	1
Club News .....	3
Aug Competition .....	3
Meetings Calendar .....	6
Competition Subjects.....	6
Linked charity.....	6
Presentation of Memorial Bowl - A Tribute to Peter Flynn .....	7
Appeal for Donations: AV Upgrade.....	8
Mike Fitz – in profile .....	9
Demonstration - Review by Tony Taylor.....	13
An experiment with wood finishes – Adam Blackie .....	15
North Herts Cat Protection .....	17
For Sale and Wanted.....	18
Various machines, tools and accessories.....	18
Woodturning Lathe with accessories and Tormek Grinder .....	19
Machine for Sale. ....	21
Poetry Corner.....	22

Chairman and Treasurer: Adam Blackie [treasurer@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk)

Club Secretary : Patrick Stileman [secretary@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk](mailto:secretary@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk)

Newsletter Editor: Allen Kaye [hertsandbedsnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:hertsandbedsnewsletter@gmail.com)

# Club News

## Aug Competition

### Beginners



1<sup>st</sup> Patrick Stileman



2<sup>nd</sup> Mike Pearson

Your project could have been here – what about next month??

## Advanced



1<sup>st</sup> Peter Hoare



2<sup>nd</sup> Peter Kemp



3<sup>rd</sup> Tony Taylor



Open



1<sup>st</sup> Harvey Alison



2<sup>nd</sup> Tony Taylor



3<sup>rd</sup> Peter Hoare

## Meetings Calendar

### 2025

Sept	9 <sup>th</sup>	Club Night
October	14 <sup>th</sup>	Kade Bolger, Canadian.
November	11 <sup>th</sup>	Chris Fisher
December	9 <sup>th</sup>	Club / Fun night
Jan 26	13 <sup>th</sup>	Gary Rance
February	10 <sup>th</sup>	Mike Wood
March	1010	Stuart King
April	14 <sup>th</sup>	AGM+

## Competition Subjects

### 2025

	<b>Beginners</b>	<b>Advanced</b>
Sept	An Apple	Box with finial
Oct	Spinning top	Pair of goblets
Nov	Kitchen Roll holder	Mug
Dec	Dice shaker	Winged bowl

## Linked charity

At the AGM a suggestion was made that the club adopts a charity to support. The committee is supportive of this in principle and is now seeking views of the wider membership.

In particular we would like to know if you agree with the principle of having a linked charity, and if so whether you have recommendations for specific charities, and how we could actually support them.

If you have any thoughts or suggestions, please email these to me:

[secretary@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk](mailto:secretary@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk)

We shall discuss this further at the next committee meeting.

Many thanks  
Patrick Stileman

## Presentation of Memorial Bowl - A Tribute to Peter Flynn



A bowl crafted by Mike Fitz was presented to Mark and Jane Flynn (above) as a memorial, fashioned from wood sourced from their father Peter's workshop.

At the June club night meeting, Peter's tools were sold, resulting in a £200 donation to the club's funds. The bowl itself, made from Imbuya—also known as Brazilian Walnut—serves as a tribute to Peter, who passed away 21 years ago.

Adam Blackie

# Appeal for Donations: AV Upgrade

Dear Members,

**This is an appeal for your support.**

The Committee want to provide the best experience for our members and visitors. One of our current goals is to upgrade our Audio-Visual (AV) equipment. This upgrade is essential for enhancing our demonstrations, especially now the club has grown.

As many of you know, the Christmas Fundraising event at Apsley Paper Mill has been cancelled this year. This and the (now delayed) AOTC at Harpenden have been crucial in raising funds for our activities and meetings.

Without the funds from our usual fundraising events, we are now in a challenging position with this project, so we are asking for donations to help us achieve this upgrade. Every contribution, no matter how small, will make a significant difference and bring us closer to our goal.

## **How to Donate:**

1. Online Donation: Visit our Just Giving page at <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/herts-and-beds-woodturners> and follow the instructions to make a secure online donation.

2. Bank Transfer: You can transfer your donation directly to our bank account:

Herts & Beds Woodturners

Bank - Lloyds

Sort - 30-92-77

Account - 01458241

Reference – Your Initial and Surname +AV

3. Cash Please drop a little extra into the welcome table collection at the start of any meeting. Your support has always been the backbone of our club, and we are incredibly grateful for any assistance you can provide for this project.

Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

On behalf of the Committee,

Adam Blackie

Chairman

Herts and Beds Woodturners



# Mike Fitz – in profile

*Taken with permission with minor edits from an article published in **Woodturning No 175**.*

Mike Fitz tells Stuart King how he made the transition from a sawmill employee to a watch stand expert. His working life as a woodturner has been one of changing circumstances leading to a number of enforced changes of direction due, in the main, to market forces and meeting the 'right people' at the right time.

This is a story from which lessons and inspiration can be drawn by anyone entering the commercial woodturning world. There is inspiration here too for all woodturners to do a bit of lateral thinking to solve problems or to make a tool to do a special job; One that cannot be found in the commercial catalogues.

Mike started work at a Hertfordshire sawmill which had a small turnery workshop attached producing general woodenware with an emphasis on walnut tableware - items such as bowls, breadboards, toast racks, peppermills, serviette rings, cruet sets and table lamps. Most of the old turners were self employed and used to make many of their own tools, particularly profiled scrapers from worn-out files and HSS planer blades. The firm also subcontracted work to an old turner, a Mr Bailey working at Shoreham.

Mike was regularly detailed to deliver wood and collect completed work from Mr Bailey. "I loved to watch this old craftsman turn, he was magic and was my inspiration to go into woodturning, Mike explains. "I became self-employed in the early 1970s, taking the place of the old ones that had retired or died. I soon realised the need to speed things up. Turning hundreds of a particular item on a piece-work - paid by results - basis soon sorts out your production turning techniques if you are to survive in the trade.

Watch stands are the biggest seller of all and are still popular today - most families have an old heirloom watch,

The watch stands kept the ship afloat and it was difficult to keep up with the orders.



A watch stand



So busy was Mike that he needed to mechanise to speed the process wherever possible. This led to devising some innovative apparatus like a ring turning jig that enables a ring – a component of a watch stand to be rough turned in seconds. Also he developed a special cup spring chuck in which to hold them for final sanding. Tooling is quite modest, mostly re profiled chisels and handmade tools ground from HSS planer blades and similar – see left.

"In my spare time I started to turn small boxes as a hobby and at this time I met the woodcarver John Fox, well known for carving animals. Meeting John changed my woodturning life. He introduced me to the gallery` scene and to producers of silver castings and enamel discs suitable to insert into wooden boxes".  
ones

Mike started selling to many of the London galleries, as he says, his boxes 'took off. An aunt took some of his work into the premiere gallery **Halcyon Days** in Hanover Square. The gallery was run by a very intelligent businesswoman called Susan Benjamin.



Mike working on a particularly delicate lidded box



..more boxes

Some other examples of Mike's work





## Herts and Beds GROUP VISIT to Wizardry in Wood

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

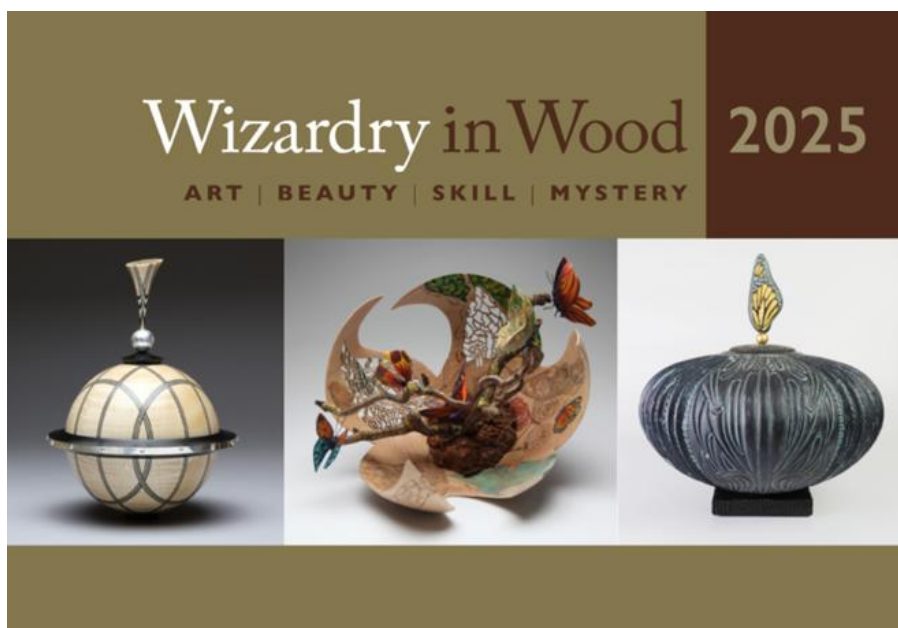
We are delighted to be organising a group visit on Wednesday, 29th October to the prestigious Wizardry in Wood Exhibition organised bi-annually by the Worshipful Company of Turners

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

Held in the beautiful and interesting surroundings of Plasterers' 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.plasterershall.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

July 2025

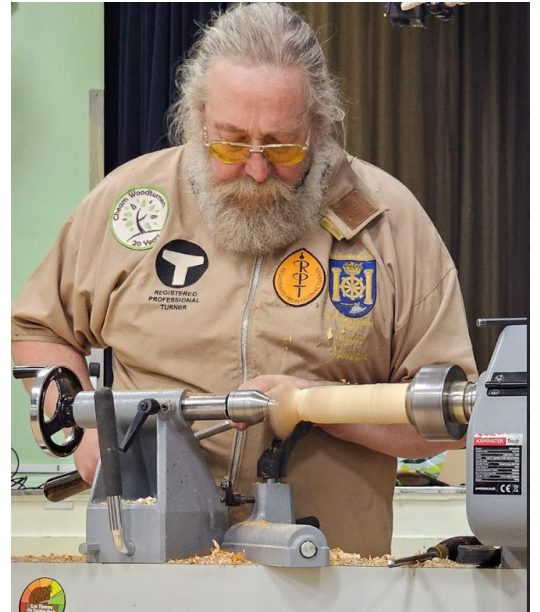
# Demonstration by Gregory Moreton - Review by Tony Taylor

We were pleased to welcome back Greg to give us the benefit of his many years as a skilled professional turner. He managed to fit in the making of three pieces – a winged bowl, a sphere and a vase.

The winged bowl started as a Yew log about 12 cm diameter and 20 cm long, which had been prepared by having a flat surface sawn lengthwise and then planed. It was mounted on a screw chuck on the flat face – the opposite side to become the bottom of the bowl. The wings were turned in stages, from outside inwards up to the base of the bowl – the diameter of which left a margin at the sides.

The bowl was shaped to appear buried in the board. For safety always keep the hand to the right of the rest. The bowl can be sanded with the lathe running, but the wings must be done by hand. The depth of the bowl was noted and the piece reversed on to a wooden chuck, hollowed to take the bowl and with wings secured by drilling close to each end, and fixing with coach bolts.

Thin leather pads were placed between work and chuck. After hollowing carefully to depth to leave an even wall thickness of about 5 mm the bowl was power sanded. Greg showed how he cuts his own sanding discs using a cutter ground from a hole saw.



The piece was finished by taking off the lathe, sawing off the wing tips to remove the drill holes and sanding the wings by hand. The next item was a sphere about 10 cm diameter turned without the use of any kind of jig. The square section about 15 cm in length was mounted between centres and rounded. A central section was marked of length equal to the diameter and a centre line added. The end parts were turned down to about 15 mm diameter with a parting tool. Next, a good approximation to a sphere was turned with a spindle gouge – something which clearly requires skill and practice. The mounting ends were parted off leaving a little proud and the ball mounted between pressure cups.





The final shape is achieved by turning away the 'shadow' with successive repositioning of the ball. Greg pointed out that it is best not to just alternate between axes at right angles, as is often recommended, but to use intermediate settings. Final shaping is with 60 grit abrasive followed by the usual finishes.

Greg finished by taking a 7cm diameter Yew log about 25 cm long and mounting between centres and making a chucking tenon at one end.

With it secured in the chuck and with the tailstock in place he used a bowl gouge with simple grind to start shaping the vase. The tailstock end can be left with a natural shape.

The centre was drilled out with a spindle gouge and then the top hollowed out carefully. The stem of the vase was thinned down in stages from top to bottom, finally shaping a foot and parting off.

All three items demand skill and practice for success, but Greg gave very clear explanations and advice, and no doubt inspired many of us to try our hands at something new to us.

Members were very impressed by an action-packed demo.

Tony



# An experiment with wood finishes – Adam Blackie

There is something quietly satisfying about the simple act of opening a bottle of beer—a ritual that, when paired with a thoughtfully crafted opener, elevates the entire experience. As someone who delights in opening an occasional bottle, I have found myself increasingly drawn to the subtleties that distinguish a truly enjoyable bottle opener from the simply functional.

After observing potential customers interact with the openers at craft fairs, I have begun to explore both form and function. Specifically, I am evaluating how the finished product feels in the user's hand, recognising that the quality of the finish plays a significant role in their choices. So here are three examples of different finishes applied to three items made from the same piece of Walnut, all sanded to 240grit:

No. 1 is treated with a 50:50 mixture of BriWax clear polish and boiled linseed oil, stored in a large jam jar for application on very dry hardwood items. Teak and Sapele respond well to this mix.

It results in a softer texture and highlights the grain and surface features. It produces a matte finish, which allows for straightforward reapplication as needed.

No. 2 uses Chestnut Sanding sealer followed by Diamond Coat Pen Polish, producing a durable, high-gloss finish that resists fingermarks and rarely needs refinishing. Though less glossy and slightly more plastic-feeling than number three, it is easy to apply and dries instantly.

No. 3 is finished with spirit sanding sealer, which dries in a few minutes and raises the grain for a quick re-sanding with 240 grit. Some friction polish, made by Mike Fitz, applies quickly from a stick and has a high gloss finish. It stays soft briefly until cured, provides a silky texture that highlights the grain, and holds up well to handling.



I prefer the feel of No. 1 and it's the quickest to finish, but No. 3 looks best and is certainly the slowest to finish. But what do I know?

Adam

# A Turner or Throwne chair – Gordon Cookson

I recently saw this quite special turned chair in the Lady Lever Gallery in Port Sunlight and thought members might find it interesting.



Stuart King explained that these chairs have a long history and can be seen illustrated in early manuscripts but these are rare survivors today.

More likely seen today are fine 16th/17th examples but a great tribute to the pole lathe turners and the intricate examples were a great way to show off their skill. These 'turned' or 'throwne' chairs appear often in Dutch interior paintings.

The link below has some great examples

<https://uk.pinterest.com/pin/570198002834411001/visual-search/?surfaceType=flashlight>

Gordon

# North Herts Cat Protection

When Chris, Keith, Phil and I were at the Letchworth Fair we were approached by Marc from this organisation asking for support in their fundraising campaign.

In his words from an email sent to me after the event he said:

*'We were wondering if you would consider donating any small rejected items that you make for us to sell that you may not wish to sell yourselves.'*

*At the end of the event, we were donated some very cute hedgehogs made with pinecones and some mushrooms which had some split wood at the top. These were exactly the sort of thing we were looking for and have gone down very well with people purchasing them. In fact at one event someone purchased 4 in one go and commented they would use them as a sensory tool for a child*

*Marc'*

**North Hertfordshire Branch Fundraising Team Leader**

01438 228877

[enquiries@northherts.cats.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@northherts.cats.org.uk)

If Cats are your thing and want to help, please can you contact Marc directly.



# For Sale and Wanted

## Various machines, tools and accessories

Following on from last month – Justin explained that only two of the larger items have been sold so far and they are posting on other open sites. Also some of the ‘table top’ items were sold at the club and he has updated the list on their google site – link below

[Michael's woodturning paraphernalia - Google Photos](#)

To date, they have raised £594 for Prostate Cancer UK and £200 to H&B Woodturners, which they feel Michael would be happy about.

- ~~1. Tormek 2000 grinding wheel; Tormek accessories - £150~~
2. Dewalt DW60 dust extractor - £75
3. BVC TH4 dust extractor - £75
4. Hegner multicut-2s scroll saw; stand - £50
5. Myford wood lathe and base; various chucks/accessories - £200
- ~~6. Milford 10" double ended grinder (floor standing) - £50~~
7. Startrite 352 bandsaw (floor standing) with spare blades - £200
8. Ajax pillar drill B-16L - £50
9. Sealey pillar drill GDM200A/12F (new/boxed) - £250
10. Powerline 2 speed bandsaw mk2 with spare blade - £50
11. DeWalt Power Shop DW125 radial arm saw - £200
12. Emco MH26 Planer / Thicknesser - £150
13. Myford wood lathe in parts (not tested) - £Offers

**If you are interested in any of the items above or those on the google site please contact Mike's son in law as below:**

**Justin Newnam: [justin@newnam.co.uk](mailto:justin@newnam.co.uk) Phone: 07710 752011**

-----ooooooooO0000oooooooo-----



## Woodturning Lathe with accessories and Tormek Grinder

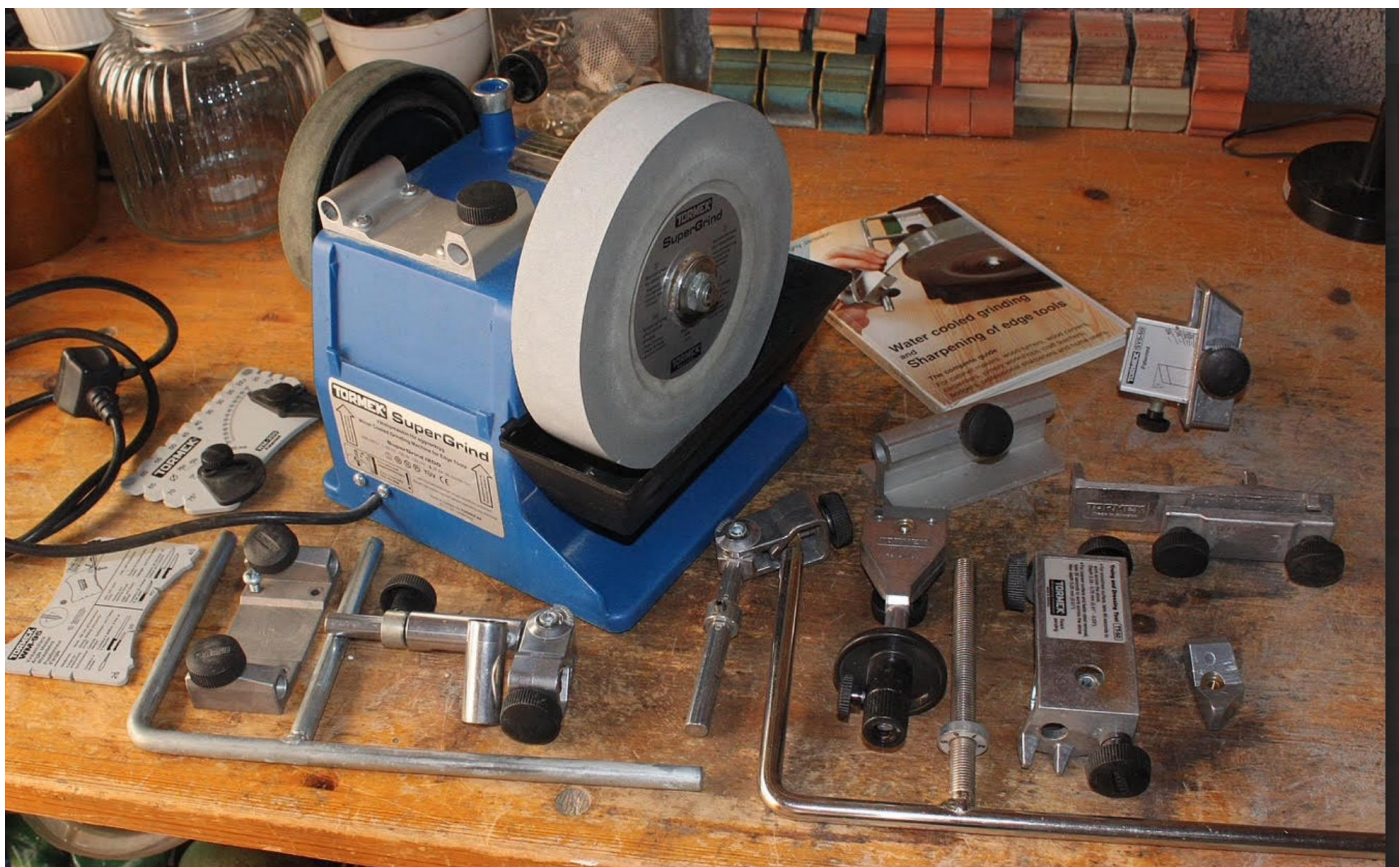
David Millen is selling the following

- Record Power CL4 Lathe plus extras £450.00
- Tormek £175.00

Photos follow below and on next page – if you are interested please contact Harvey Alison at [harvey@kimbleturning.co.uk](mailto:harvey@kimbleturning.co.uk)







-----000000000000000000000000-----

## Machine for Sale.

The following item has been offered to the club by the daughter of a deceased turner.  
Contact Adam Blackie for more details. – [treasurer@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@hertsandbedswoodturners.co.uk)

Record Power RDSE2 50 Litre dust extractor In used and very good working condition, missing the hoses  
(which are standard stuff available online)

Location St Albans.

Current equivalent - <https://www.bedfordsaw.co.uk/record-power-rsde2-fine-filter-50-litre-extractor>  
Suggested price £75.



-----000000000000000000000000-----

# Poetry Corner

## DISMAY AT THE ALPHABET CHANGES OF LATE IN OUR SPOKEN WORD

Ever more frequently heard on the air  
Traditional utterance into despair  
Two letters lost in speech, but how do they spell  
Only the hearing gives the tell

Unsubtle slip into alphabet's tip  
Grieved for past sounds no more on the lip  
Repeat, these two letters no longer pronounced  
Our language's preservers largely trounced

Never mind our P's and Q's  
Lost by today's changing ruse  
Bannished T's and G's, not there to please  
Glottal stop's back, missing all ease

But AI reminds us how we sounded before  
Now the alphabet scores but twenty four  
Return our sing song sound of easy flow  
Like one man and his dog went to sow

Shakespeare must be sorely graved  
The new current method will seem depraved

Martin Sexton. Aug 2025