



Chair's Chatter

Summer Time?

It's wet and it's cold which can only mean one thing. It's the summer school holidays! At least July was not as bad as previous years and we managed to get a few decent days. The Kings Bromley Show day was a good example. Not too hot, not too wet and a good time had by all.

Last month I advertised the Forest of Mercia CIC and some of the courses they had on offer. Well I managed to get along to two of their basket making courses in the end and came home full of inspiration and motivation to do more. The courses were excellent and I highly recommend them. They were relaxed and informal and took place in a lovely setting. The Forest of Mercia CIC has moved from Chasewater and has a new HQ at Hilton Lane near Shareshill. It is an old sewage works that has been decommissioned. This may not sound very glamorous, but they have completely transformed the place and turned it into a lovely nature reserve and outdoor classroom. There is even a green oak shelter in the middle of a pond and wood carvings galore. The only trouble is that I forgot to take my camera so can only describe the location. You will just have to visit yourselves one day.

I've been given a strange challenge this month. A friend recently felled an old cherry tree in his garden. The poor old tree was diseased and a danger to neighbouring properties, so he reluctantly had to have it felled. Consequently I now have a good quantity of cherry in our back garden. In return, he has asked me to make him a pipe. But not just any ordinary smoking pipe; but a long neck Hobbit Pipe, as used in the Lord of the Rings films. Initially I thought that this would be a relatively simple task so stupidly said yes. However, I have since discovered that there is much more to pipe making than meets the eye.

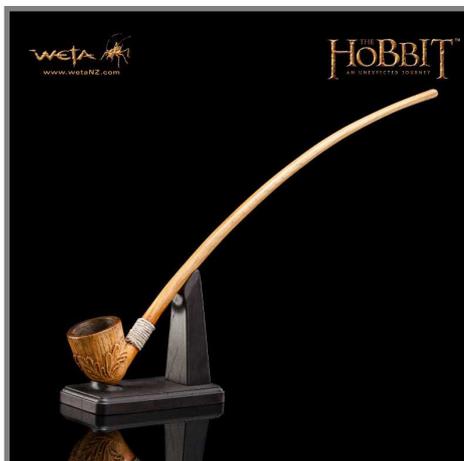
As usual, YouTube has proved to be a fountain of knowledge and a quick search on Google will provide full step by step instructions and drawings ... for hand carved pipe bowls! Pipes made on a lathe is a whole other ball game! So if you are reading this and have any knowledge of pipe making, then I would love to hear from you. In the meantime I will keep playing in the workshop with a few ideas and keep you posted. This could be fun!

Dawn

[Dawn later found this YouTube video

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

which is worth a look. Note the use of a metalworking lathe. Creating profiles by turning two handwheels simultaneously is not easy by comparison with normal woodturning methods - Hugh Field]





Editor's Scriblings

So, where did the last month go? It never ceases to amaze how time passes so quickly, especially as one gets older.

I've been thinking about the cost of using professional demonstrators for our club evenings recently. These costs continue to increase, and our dwindling attendance often means that the "door" fees often don't cover our costs. So, do I think our demonstrators charge too much? Well, no, and I'll explain why from first hand experience.

I think most of you are aware that I belong to two other woodturning clubs, Cannock Chase Turners and Derwent who meet in Swadlincote. A while ago ex MSWA member (and Newsletter Editor) and now Derwent secretary, Paul Bellamy did a demonstration on turning jewellery which at the time corresponded with some experiments I was carrying out using a range of reactive multi-media paint products, produced by French company Pebéo, to add colour to woodturned pendants; so I did a very brief demo/presentation during the tea break. More recently I had started experimenting with using the Pebéo products on bowls and using glazing resin to provide a more durable surface, which I also exhibited at Derwent. A couple of months ago Paul said he been approached by several members to ask if I would do a "proper" demonstration. Well, I have not done a demonstration of any description at a club previously, but before I realised what I had let myself in for I had agreed!

I was doubtful that I could fill an evening just with the use of the Pebéo range and one of the problems is that the paint goes on very thickly and dries slowly (36 hours as it happened!), to give time for the reaction to complete. Not good attributes for an evening demo! So I decided to make the evening a bit more like a "workshop", with audience participation, and to include other types of decoration and finishing techniques that I have used or am experimenting with. In the event I had more than enough material to fill the allotted time. The audience seemed to enjoy their evening and, though it surprises me to say, I really enjoyed it as well once the initial nervousness had passed.

One thing I did learn from the evening is to have even more respect for those who come to our club to demonstrate for us. I was amazed how long it took to prepare samples, produce "Blue Peter" items for the next stage when there is not going to be enough time to wait for the first stage to dry (and in case something goes wrong; actually it didn't!) and just to load the car, set up at the venue, pack it all away, and then sort things out the next morning. What appears to the audience as a 2½ hour evening can probably represent at least 4 or 5 times that when all is taken into account. We should, perhaps, bear this in mind when considering if increases in club membership fees are suggested; especially if average attendance at meetings continues to be low.

I didn't get a fee for the evening (apart from not having to pay "at the door"!), and I was happy to give something back to the Club in exchange for what I have received over the years.

Enough of my "scriblings". This month we had a YouTube video evening so there is less to write about, hence a smaller than usual edition of the Newsletter. I do hope you enjoy it.

Hugh Field





August Competition

Again only one entry in the Novice competition this month, but this time it was by Dawn. The subject was “A table or stool leg”. Dawns multi-axis turned Cabriolé (or Cadbury Oh Lay as she described it!) piece is shown to the right.



August display table

Dawn has already mentioned that she attended the Free Hedgerow Basket Making Courses to be held on Monday 24th and Tuesday 25th July at the Forest of Mercia Hilton Green site in Essington. These are the two baskets that she made during the course. The one on the left is made from woven bramble, the one on the right is in willow, in different colours. The lashing between the basket and the handle is apparently a traditional feature known as a “God’s Eye”.



The other item on display was a collaborative project between Ted Gill and his glass maker wife Linden. The piece, “Eternal Flame”, was made to be presented to an ex colleague and had only been completed on the day of our meeting (the epoxy adhesive securing the glass parts together and to the wood had not even yet fully cured!). The wooden part is made from 6 pieces of ash, turned and carved and the glass is in two pieces. An interesting piece of work for which I asked Ted to provide a photograph as my photography (in the absence of studio lighting and backdrop) on the evening could not do it justice.

Hugh Field



YouTube video evening

Philip Watts and I had chosen a selection of downloaded videos, ranging from how to and how not to fell trees and how to prepare and select green wood for turning; through safety considerations in the workshop and what happens when things go wrong; to turning a huge (4 metre diameter) bowl using a tractor as a lathe, contrasted with turning a set of nested bowls on a pole lathe. August is historically a poor month for attendance but the 14 who did attend seemed to enjoy the evening which made it worthwhile.

If anyone would like a list of the videos with links then please contact me at editor@mswa.co.uk

Hugh Field

My new lathe

Following on from Hugh's suggestion and his account of his lathe, members might be interested to know about my new acquisition. My first lathe was second, or third-hand, and eventually seized up and broke down irretrievably – when opened up, bits began to break off! So I looked for a replacement and treated myself to a brand new lathe in the Axminster Hobby series, Model AWVSL 1000. *(I was happy with the price at the time, by the way: the list price now seems to have risen by half as much again!)*

Like my old one, it has a variable speed obtained by moving a lever while the lathe is running; I'm too lazy to fiddle with belts. It claims to range from 500 to 2000 rpm. I have no means of verifying this, but basically, it does what I need it to do.

The headstock swivels, which in my case is essential for access when turning bowls. As the lathe is screwed to the worktop which is against the wall, I can't get round the end of it. The headstock can also be repositioned along the bed bars, like the tailstock, so my position at the lathe can be flexible – useful in the confined space of a converted coal-shed! My Supernova chuck fits it with no need for an adaptor, and as well as the large tool-rest supplied, I have a short one made to order by David Fields' grandson, Thomas. A face-plate and a 4-prong drive were also supplied.

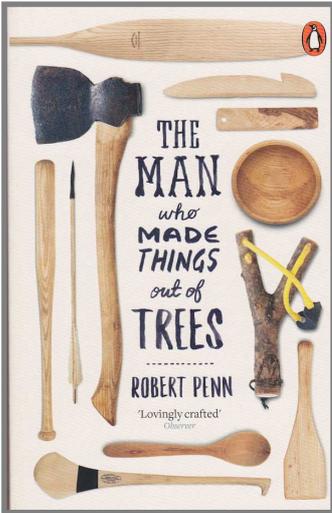


Jane Russell

Normal people believe that if it isn't broken, don't fix it. Engineers believe that if it isn't broken, it doesn't have enough features yet.



Book Review - "The man who made things out of trees" - Robert Penn



This book featured as BBC Radio Book of the Week in December 2015, but I only got round to reading it earlier this year.

The title is perhaps a little misleading as the author is not a craftsman and doesn't actually make any of items himself, he uses crafts people in Europe and America to produce as many items as possible from an ash tree that he has carefully selected; and don't expect this to be a detailed account of how the items are made. It would have benefited greatly from more illustrations of the items (the only ones are those shown on the cover) but these comments aside it is a most interesting book.

Much of the book covers the historical importance of the ash, it's physical structure and the care he takes in trying to find a "perfect" specimen. A fascinating subject in itself. Similarly there is much detail about the history behind the items he commissions, these include a desk, toboggan, tent pegs, a canoe paddle, tool handles, worktops and catapults, and many other items. He even commissions a bicycle frame! His particular tree was not suitable for making all the items, for example the baseball bat, as the prestige manufacturer he chooses only uses wood from a small area of forest in America.

From a woodturning aspect he chooses Robin Wood, well known pole lathe turner in Edale, who makes a set of nested bowls. A video of Robin featured in our download video evening this month and can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGUzC_IXT8c

None of the tree goes to waste, the offcuts are used as fuel, and the brash and some branch logs are left to rot, and therefore serve the needs of wildlife, before rotting down to return to the earth as humus, and so the cycle continues.

There are some irritating (to me!) errors, such as describing a machine that can shape, sand, and bore holes as "a CNC saw", however they did not detract from the enjoyment of reading this book. Robert Penn may not be a craftsman as such, but he is an excellent wordsmith.

For more information visit robpenn.net/books/the-man-who-made-things-out-of-wood/

Hugh Field



Forthcoming events

Club Meetings

1st September

David Atkinson - Boxes

6th October

Steve Heeley with a choice of projects.

Club Competitions

September - Challenge

Miniature table or stool

October - Novice

An egg & cup

Other events

Saturday 12th August 10:00am - 4:00pm

Axminster, Nuneaton

Andrew Hall (the hat man)

Free event

Friday/Saturday 8th & 9th September

Yandles Woodworking Show

If you're down that way, or fancy a long day out it's well worth going.

Hurst Works, Hurst, Martock, Somerset TA12 6JU

Free event

www.yandles.co.uk/

Thursday 19th to Sunday 22nd October

Midlands Model Engineering Exhibition

Warwickshire Exhibition Centre, Fosse Way, Nr Leamington Spa, CV31 1XN

No woodturning, but plenty of tools and other things that are useful in our hobby!

<http://www.midlandsmodeleengineering.co.uk/>

Hints and tips

This section is for any tips or advice you would like to pass on to other members. If you have discovered something you found useful that you think may benefit others, please pass it on.

Members sales items

This section is for listing any turning or woodworking tools or related items you have for sale.

Any submissions to editor@mswa.co.uk, please.



DVDs

The club has a selection of Woodturning DVD's for use by registered club members use only. You can borrow them for just £2 per month (some are free)! If any members have DVDs which are not on the list, but which they would like to donate to the Club, they would be most welcome.

See Ron Dixon who has agreed to manage the DVD library.



Abrasives and other items

Mirka Abranet 70 x 125mm Sheets:

5 x Mixed Grit Pack (120, 180, 240, 400 and 500) = £2.00 per pack

Mirka Abranet 50mm Sanding Discs:

7 x Mixed Grit pack (80, 120, 180, 240, 320, 400, 600) = £1.50 per pack

Rhinogrip 50mm Sanding Discs:

7 x Mixed Grit pack (80, 120, 180, 240, 320, 400, 600) = £0.90 per pack

Flexipad Sanding Pads (for above discs):

50mm Velcro Conical Spindle Pad with 6mm shaft = £8.82 each

J-Flex Sanding Paper:

5 x 1m lengths mixed grits 120, 180, 240, 320 & 400 = £9.50 per pack



Club information

Your club committee for 2017 is:-

Chairman – Dawn Hopley chairman@mswa.co.uk

Tel: 07860 501 379

Secretary – John McElroy secretary@mswa.co.uk

Treasurer – Phil Williams treasurer@mswa.co.uk

Assistant Treasurer - Tony Tripp

Events Secretary – Vacant events@mswa.co.uk

Newsletter editor – Hugh Field editor@mswa.co.uk

Tel: 0121 329 2911

Webmanager – Philip Watts webman@mswa.co.uk

Health and Safety Advisor

Hugh Field health.safety@mswa.co.uk

Please use phone numbers only if absolutely necessary.

Other important people responsible for:-

Refreshments: **David Neal, David Dawes & Ron Dixon**

Equipment: **Mark Pickering & John Meers**

Cameras: **John Meers, Ted Gill, Vance Lupton & Dawn Hopley**

Club shop: **Ron Dixon**