



*Mid-Staffs Woodturners  
Association*

*Affiliated Branch of*  
**Association of  
Woodturners**  
*of Great Britain*

Volume 1  
Issue No. 8

October  
2018

**Wood 'n' things**  
*News Letter*

Chair  
*Dawn Hopley*

Editor  
*Phil Williams*



*Challenge Trophy Winner  
for a Paperweight  
goes to.....*

# Editors Workbench

Don't the months fly by, especially when you are enjoying yourself. No time for me this month in the workshop, so I will look forward to seeing the entries into our competition.

I did enjoy our last demonstration from the "Tiny Turner" (Emma Cook) and thanks to our Jane Russell for composing the write-up.

Just a short reminder, it is that time of year when we think of renewing our MSWA membership. It has been nice to see the number of members is steadily increasing. We look forward to the trend continuing well into 2019.

*Phil Williams*

## Meeting Calendar

### *November*

#### **Fri 2<sup>nd</sup> - Demonstration by Robert Till - A Large Bird Box**

Robert Till first became interested in woodturning as a 12 year old school boy when being taught by my favourite wood shop teacher Mr Champion. It has always been a hobby which I have thoroughly enjoyed, and now that I am able to do it full time it has become a lifestyle. At the age of 49, I was lucky enough to be taught by Steve Heeley for 5 years and I still find every lesson enlightening. He is a professional woodturner and remains my mentor and friend. I love every aspect of this wonderful craft from hollow-forms, bowls, spindle turning to production work.



## December

### Fri 7<sup>th</sup> - Demonstration by Dave Atkinson - A Surprise

Dave has several interest in life from fishing, to playing his accordion and wood turning. He demonstration in December is still a mystery, but if I find out before you, I promise, it will be in the next NewsLetter.



## Forth Coming Competitions

### November

#### *Challenge Cup - A Christmas Lantern*



Doesn't it come around quickly. Here we are approaching Christmas, so our theme is a Christmas Lantern and below are a few examples to give you inspiration.



### December

#### *Novice Cup - A Christmas Decoration*

Below are a few examples to help you in our Novice Cup competition.



# At Our Last Meeting

## Tiny but Perfect

*(September Meeting)*

A rather small but enthusiastic group of members welcomed Emma Cook, the Tiny Turner, all the way from Yorkshire. Emma frequently combines turning with carving, being lucky enough to be trained by Michael Painter, and had brought some impressive items to display. However, tonight she concentrated on spindle turning, producing a beautiful Christmas bauble incorporating a glass ball full of coloured lights.



As the glass ball is rather larger than the average bauble, the turning does not have to be scarily thin: the top has to be wide enough to take the neck of the ball, and the bottom finial needs to be in proportion to this, so both are fairly chunky. Emma remarked that this made it robust enough to survive if knocked off the tree by a cat! There is a plastic version available but the neck is much wider, so the turning has to be wider too, which

makes it rather clumsy. She had brought some packs with her which members could buy, including a length of the organdie ribbon she uses as a hanger.

Tonight Emma used sycamore, but she has made these decorations in zebrano, padauk and other exotic woods to great effect. The blank was about 9" long – just short enough to turn unsupported, and long enough to provide the material for both top and bottom of the ornament. Emma used only four tools: the spindle roughing gouge, bowl gouge, spindle gouge and beading/parting tool.



Emma has adapted her turning technique to overcome the limitations of her height, not only raising her elbows and even standing on tiptoe, but grinding her tools to facilitate access to the wood. For example, she uses a large spindle roughing gouge which has a bevel close to 90°.

Emma had brought her grinder with her, and demonstrated the importance of sharp tools; we could hear the difference when after a quick sharpen her roughing gouge began to cut instead of chewing the wood. At the end of the evening she gave us a demon-

stration of the way she sharpens her tools. She turned the blank between two step centres to rough it down, gradually increasing the speed. The last few passes were made very slowly with a light touch to remove tool-marks.

Next Emma used the parting tool to cut a spigot at the headstock end, raising the tool bar to ensure that the bevel would be rubbing, otherwise the cut would be very aggressive and the tool would blunt more quickly. Having mounted the blank in the chuck, she brought up the tailstock to give extra temporary support, not engaging the step teeth, just the point. Emma used the quarter-inch bowl gouge to do most of the shaping. It is her go-to tool, mainly because of its strength but also because with its short bevel she finds it easier to sharpen.

The finial was turned in sections a couple of inches at a time, then sanded and finished as she went along, since the end of the work would be too weak to return to. Emma first shaped a tapered end and established the diameter of a disk shape above the thin part of the finial. She reminded us to watch the top profile of the work as you are turning, and also drew attention to how much the tool swings round when spindle turning. When the step centre began to be in the way, she removed the tail-stock and turned a point at the end, then used the spindle gouge to shape the detail between this and the disk. She often makes this up as she goes along, though when making a batch of items it is simpler and quicker to follow the same profile each time.



Having achieved a good finish with the tool, Emma began sanding with 240 grit, and finished using a paste called Yorkshire Grit, which she has found very effective. It is a gentle abrasive, said to be the equivalent of 6,000 grit, and forms a good base for a wax finish.

Moving on to the next section, Emma turned the other side of the disk, then a ball shape, a cove and a second disc shape, sanding and finishing as before. The third section was to be immediately under the glass ball, and was shaped accordingly. When parting off, Emma undercut the surface, and before gluing the finial to the ball she carved away a little more of the end to make it suit the curve of the ball.



Now to turn the top of the ornament. Emma put a Jacob's chuck in the tail-stock and used a 3mm drill bit to make a pilot hole, then enlarged it to 4mm. This was to take the wire, which has tiny LED lights incorporated at intervals. These often have bits sticking out which may mean the hole has to be made bigger. It is important that the

wire moves freely through the wood, as you may want to change the lights, which come in a range of different colours. She then enlarged the beginning of the hole using the parting tool, until it took the neck of the bauble comfortably. It was important not to

have this too tight or the glass could shatter as the wood shrank. The depth of this part of the hole was 7mm, and Emma was careful to bear this in mind when shaping the outside; also to remember that there was a 4mm hole running through the whole section, so the thinnest parts could not be too thin. She undercut the hole to ease the fit to the curve of the ball. At the base of the section Emma turned a disk to balance those on the finial, then an ogee curve. She assembled the ornament loosely to check the proportions and decide at what point to part off.

**TIP!** When trying the fit of the bauble, Emma warned us to avoid getting shavings inside the ball, as they would cling with static and be impossible to remove!

Emma parted the piece off at an angle so as to curve the end into a rounded shape as far as possible – remembering the 4mm hole running through. She finished the shaping off the lathe using a carving tool. You could use a sharp knife or just abrasive.

Next, the assembly. First, Emma made sure the hole was clear, running the drill-bit through it by hand to clear any debris. She cut a length of organdie ribbon and tied the ends together in a double overhand knot, which should be sufficient to stop it slipping through. She tied the string which had been attached to the bauble through the ribbon loop to make it easier to push and pull through. Then holding the ribbon to one side, she began to feed the wire through the top section of turning, then into the glass ball, where it folded itself up and the 20 LED lights were naturally distributed around the sphere.

Finally the wood had to be glued to the glass. For this, a flexible glue was essential: emphatically not superglue which is brittle and also has a white residue. Emma uses Evostick Serious Glue. It has a re-adjustable period of 3 minutes, and sets in under 10 minutes, though the instructions say 2 hours. Emma applied glue round the neck of the bauble, pushed it in and looked through the glass to check for air pockets. When the joint was firm, she put a blob of glue on the dished part of the finial and began to fit it, moving it around to get it straight. The baubles are not perfect spheres, so the fit will never be absolutely straight when viewed from every angle, so it is a case of turning it till you are satisfied you have the best fit possible, and finally to line up the grain.

Emma finished the evening with a quick tutorial on sharpening tools by hand, without using a jig. She was taught this way and says it helps you to understand the process, even if you are going to use a jig.

Bowl Gouge: resting the gouge on the platform she simply rolled it over from one side to the other, holding the end of the handle in her finger-tips, not holding it as you would to turn. Sharpening it by hand meant that she could have a short bevel on one side and a long on the other if she wished: to grind it long, simply push the tool on its side further



up the wheel.

**Roughing Gouge:** the principle is the same, but because the width is greater, it needs to travel across the wheel in order to grind both sides.

**Beading/Parting Tool:** Emma ground the sides first, then positioned the tool head on to the wheel to deal with the end edge.

**Spindle Gouge:** This was the most difficult to sharpen without a jig to swing it round: Emma used a looping action up and down the wheel so that the tool followed a U-shaped path. She finished it using a diamond hone.

**Skew Chisel:** Emma never grinds this on the wheel, only using the diamond hone.

Emma's skill, knowledge, clear explanations and her bubbly personality made this a most enjoyable and instructive evening, for which we thank her.

*Jane Russell*

## Competition Results

### Challenge Trophy - A Paperweight

Further to our August demonstration from Dawn Hopley, the Challenge Trophy competition results were as follows:-

In 3rd place was A (John McElroy), 2nd place was C (Phil Deeney) and in 1st place is B (Hugh Field).

**A**



**B**



**C**



Congratulations to all who took part and to our winner Hugh Field.

*Phil Williams*

## MSWA Contacts

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### Come & Join Us

We usually meeting on the first Friday of the month between 7:00pm and 10:00pm. Visit our website [www.mswa.co.uk](http://www.mswa.co.uk) and click on the Meeting Calendar to confirm the dates.

### We Meet At:-

Etchinghill Village Hall  
East Butts Road  
Etching Hill  
Rugeley  
WS15 2LU

### How to Join

MSWA encourage new members to develop their skills of wood turning. To obtain a Membership Application Form, visit our website and click on the Contact Us in the menu bar and download an application form.

### Advertisement



Mike Taylor likes working with Alder Wood. If you would like to try this hardwood or have tuition on Pole Lathe Turning then contact Mike on 07871 994959 and mention MSWA.

### Past Chairpersons

Ken Allen	1990-1997	Peter Worrall	1997-2005	John Smith	2005-2010
Dawn Hopley	2010-2012	John Smith	2012-2013	Philip Watts	2013-2016

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