



Mid-Staffs Woodturners Association

Affiliated Branch of
Association of
Woodturners
of Great Britain

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September
2018

Wood 'n' things

News Letter

Chair
Dawn Hopley

Editor
Phil Williams



*Novice Trophy Winner
of a Candlestick or Tea Light Holder
goes to.....*

Editors Workbench

Another months goes quickly by and It is with great sadness that I inform you of the sudden death of Gerald Adderley. He will be greatly missed by all and our heart felt sympathies goes out to his family.

On 1st September we attended the Whittington Country Show. The sun shone and it was well attended. Our thanks to Paul Bellamy for sharing his gazebo and to Dawn Hopley, Jane Russell, John McElroy and Geoff Payne (apologies if I have missed anybody out) for their help to set up and man this fantastic MSWA exhibit/display, which attracted a great deal of interest (see photo below). It was also nice to see our Mike Taylor and his lovely wife July, with their own stand, doing a great job of demonstrating Pole Woodturning.



Phil Williams

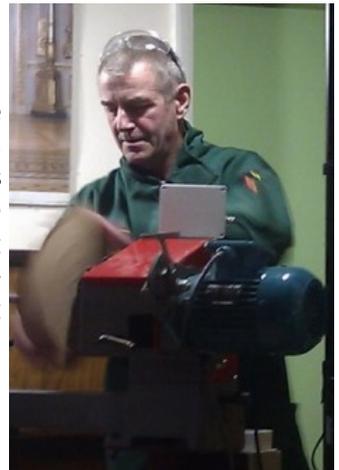
Meeting Calendar

September (was October)

Fri 28th - Demonstration by Paul Bellamy - Sharpening Techniques

Please be aware that our October meeting has been moved forward to Friday 28th September.

In May 2012, Paul Bellamy nervously took to the stage for the first time at his home club. Paul has demonstrated at other clubs and events, but this was his début at Mid Staffs. Now visiting us for the umpteenth time, Paul will demonstrate sharpening techniques (something I am personally looking forward too as I am trying to setup a new sharpening gadget).



November

Fri 2nd - 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 wood-turner and remains my mentor and friend. I love every aspect of this wonderful craft from hollow-forms, bowls, spindle turning to production work.



Forth Coming Competitions

Late September

Novice Trophy - An Apple or Pear

Having gathered in the harvest in September each year, this months competition is topical and is an Apple or Pear.

Several examples are shown below and getting the right proportion is always a challenge.



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.



At Our Last Meeting

Dawn Hopley - Casting & Turning Resin Blanks

(August Meeting)

Casting and turning resin seems to be all the rage these days. Visitors to Makers Central and YouTube viewers will all be familiar with names such as Nick Zametti, Heath Knuckles and Andy Phillip who are all making international waves with their products. After viewing a few of the videos online, Dawn Hopley, our current Club Chair, decided to investigate this alien material and give it a try. Here is a brief summary of her research and findings.

I started my adventure on YouTube of course. I found some really helpful videos by American turner Zac Higgins. His videos include which resins to use and what you can use as moulds. You can view them yourself by following this link: <https://youtu.be/pQ63Fky5ca4>

In short, there are 3 main types of casting resin as follows:-

Polyester Resin – This is the cheapest resin at around £12 for 1kg

Although Polyester Resin is the most widely used and cheapest option, all of the websites and videos advised not to use this because of the terrible lingering smell and toxic fumes. Some turners do use it quite successfully, but often say that it is brittle and can be difficult to turn.

- Most widely used type, especially boat building and Fibreglass construction
- Fairly Cheap
- Easy to colour – Opaque!
- Adheres well
- Fumes – Terrible Smell and Hazardous!
- Good ventilation essential!
- Breathing Apparatus Recommended!
- Best used outdoors!
- Slow setting!
- Described as Brittle and “Chippy”
- Most people recommend **“Don’t Use It!”**



Epoxy Resin – More expensive at £20 for 1kg

This is the resin that most of us are familiar with in the form of Epoxy Resin glues. This can be used quite successfully to fill small holes or gaps in wood and it is widely available.

- Widely available
- Less problems with fumes and odour
- Odourless Versions Available
- Water Clear & Easy to colour
- UV Stable

- Non Toxic and Food Safe ... when cured!
- More Expensive than Polyester
- Needs Warmth to Cure
- Slow Setting!
- Also described as Brittle and “Chippy” ???



Polyurethane Resin – The most expensive at around £30 for 1kg

This is the resin that appears to be most widely recommended by professional woodturners, but especially a brand called Alumilite. Although everyone recommended that a pressure pot system should be used for best results, they all said that it was OK to use if you didn't mind a few small air bubbles included. For further details visit their website as follows: <https://www.alumilite.com>

- Available in Clear or Opaque Black & White
- Non Toxic and Food Safe ... when cured!
- Easy to colour
- UV Stable
- Fast Setting – Turnable in 45-60 mins
- Recommended by most Professional Woodturners
- Most Expensive!
- Moisture Sensitive - Prone to “Foaming”!
- Temperature Sensitive!
- 3 Month Shelf Life!
- Bubbles! Best used in a Pressure Pod!



Armed with all of the above information, I decided to invest in some Alumilite and give it a try. The only UK stockist I could find was a company called Metal Clay (<http://www.metalclay.co.uk>). So I duly purchased a 1kg pack of Alumilite Clear for £33.45. And so the foam parties began!

I soon discovered that Alumilite is not only very expensive, but very fickle and unpredictable. It is very moisture sensitive indeed, and the tiniest amount can cause something called “Foaming”. Even just leaving the garage door open on a hot and humid day caused nightmares. After contacting the manufacturers for advice, they recommended that I needed to invest in a pressure pot to get any good results. As this was going to cost anything from £150 to £600, I soon realised that this had been a complete waste of £30 and that I needed a Plan B.

Plan B, was to revert to good old Epoxy Resins. Although they take longer to set (anything from 24hours up to a few days), they are much cheaper and can be used without the need for an expensive pressure pot. Especially if you opt for a “Low Viscosity” version, which is much thinner and more fluid, so allows the air bubbles to escape before it sets. I found a fantastic company online called MB Fibreglass (mbfg.co.uk), who stock a complete range of all casting resins and equipment. They advised a 1kg kit for £25 including delivery.

Thankfully, these cheaper Epoxy resins saved the day. Although they do take longer to

set, this gives time for any bubbles to escape. I certainly could not tell the difference from the Alumitlite when it came to turning. I did not find epoxy to be too brittle or “chippy” as suggested, but quite a pleasure to turn and easy to finish.

During my demo, one of our new club members Andy recommended a local company called Easy Composites based in Stoke on Trent (<http://www.easycomposites.co.uk>). Their website is very impressive indeed, with good information and instructional videos. They are also extremely helpful on the telephone by all accounts, so if you are tempted to give resin turning a go, then I would pay them a visit.

I have only cast a few pen blanks to date with some lovely results. Although it does appear to be expensive and fiddly, it can work out a lot cheaper than buying the readymade pen blanks. You can also be far more creative and individual with colouring and additives such as photos, glitter or other materials. However, I soon realised that although they look very nice, they are not exactly environmentally friendly. The shavings are basically small plastic chippings which have to go into the general waste bin which is destined for landfill. You cannot compost or use them as garden mulch like normal shavings. With all of the recent publicity about plastics polluting the environment, floating in our waterways and entering the food chain, I actually started to feel rather guilty about adding to the problem.



Conclusions:

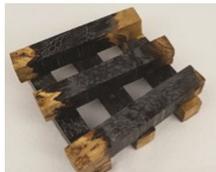
After my little trials, these are my personal conclusions

Stick with Low Viscosity EPOXY resins. Unless you are a professional turner and are being sponsored heavily by a well-known manufacturer and given materials free of charge!

Think about your health and the environment. There is no doubting that resin does enhance woodturning and produce some impressive results, but at what cost to the environment? Personally I think I'll stick to natural materials in the future.

Finally, I would also like to mention a lady called Pam Harris and her company Highland Boxes. She produces some amazing work in resin, but mainly manufactures pen blanks. They are not cheap, but are simply stunning and produce amazing results. So if you want

to save yourself the hassle of sticky fingers, foaming, bubbles or other fun and games with casting your own, then her page is well worth a visit ... <https://highlandboxes.com>. You can also view her many videos on Youtube ... <https://youtu.be/qCqIC9QdoKM>



Oak wood and honeycomb alumin...
£10.00



Pine cone pen blanks
£8.00



Extra long resin pen blanks
£11.00



Oak wood and honeycomb alumin...
£10.00



Oak burr and resin pen blanks
£8.00



Oak burr and resin pen blanks
£8.00

Dawn Hopley

Competition Results

Novice Trophy - A Candlestick or Tea Light Holder

Further to our July demonstration from Steve Heeley, the Novice Trophy competition results were as follows:-

In 2nd place was A (John Meers) and in 1st place is B (Phil Deeney).

A



B



Our congratulations to all entries and to our winner Phil Deeney.

Phil Williams

MSWA Contacts

Chairperson - Dawn Hopley
E-mail: chairman@mswa.co.uk
Tel: 07860 501379

Secretary - Will Rose
E-mail: secretary@mswa.co.uk
Tel: 01543 490309

Treasurer - Phil Williams
E-mail: treasurer@mswa.co.uk
Tel: 07753 416955

Membership - Vance Lupton

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 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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