

# Turn Around

THE NEWSLETTER OF



**OCTOBER 2004**

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## **Secretary's Ramblings**

Well here is the latest edition of what is turning into a bi-monthly newsletter, it is not the editing which is a problem but writing the articles to fill it up and hopefully make it interesting to everyone. I could do it monthly if more members would send me articles, letters etc to include in it. My thanks go to everyone who has contributed items for this edition. Including the photo supplement there is over 20 pages and more than 4500 words so hopefully everyone will find something to interest them.

It has been a busy couple of months for the club with more to come, the big event was the Hand Made Show in September. This went very well and we had about 40 enquires from different people who were interested in joining us. Several of them came along to the October meeting including some much needed juniors and ladies and hopefully more will come along over the next few months. I would like to welcome them all and hope that they find us to their liking and will join the club in the New Year.

Over the next month the club will be doing a demonstration for Adult Education and a craft fair, details elsewhere in the newsletter, so I will let you know how these go in the next news letter. As detailed in this newsletter we have had to move to a new building for the next three months. Unfortunately it is not as good as our current one but it is only temporary. It does have one advantage though, there is an internal chicken run in part of it and I did hear that one of the committee members was going to bring a microwave oven along to the next meeting, so hot chicken sandwiches for lunch anyone!

STOP PRESS, unfortunately I have just tried to print the photo supplement and my printer has refused to do it, although it will print the newsletter OK. It has come up with a memory error, a bit like its owner, I know what is wrong but it will take a couple of days to fix. So instead of holding up sending this out I will send the photo supplement to everyone with the AGM paperwork, printer permitting.

## **September Meeting**

We had a full day's demonstration from professional turner Bill Care on the use of the Skew chisel and spindle turning. Bill started off by looking at the different types of skew chisels and how to use them, I think most of us picked up some hints and tips on how to use this very versatile tool. He then showed us how to make an onion box, an article on this has appeared in one of the woodturning magazines but the method he showed us was slightly different and easier to do. Following on from this he then showed us how to make a wine bottle stopper, a Scottish porridge stirring stick called a spurtle or thible, a mushroom and a goblet. All in it was an excellent day and the feedback I have received from members has all been positive with several of them saying it was the best demonstration the club has ever had. Photos of the day are in the picture supplement.

## **October Meeting**

We had two different events going on, firstly we had Terry and his wife from Chestnut products along to give a demonstration of their finishing products. Using some wooden cylinders on the lathe he showed us how to seal and polish them to a very high standard. He covered most of the products that woodturners would use either by actual demonstration or verbally. This was very informative and sorted out some of the problems I have been having along with those of other members.

We also had Bill & Cilla from Cambridge blanks along with another very good selection of native timbers. Once again a number of us were tempted into parting with some money for some excellent bargains.

Having the two things going on has proved to be a bit awkward so we are planning it differently for next year.

After the demonstration was over some of the members used the equipment to do some turning. Adam, one of the new junior members, turned a very nice box and Tony turned a bowl from a large blank of Wellingtonia. Photos in the supplement.

## **We Have Moved**

No not out of Sacrewell but just to a different building. The stone barn we usually use is currently decked out for Halloween and after that will become Santa's grotto, we will be able to move back in February. We have moved to the bygone store which is down the hill from the usual barn. You can still park in the usual place or the main car park. To get to the new location carry on past the barn and down the hill, past the emus etc. and the store is the first building on the right at the bottom of the hill. We will try and make sure there are signs to show you the way.

## **Forthcoming Meetings**

For the meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> November John Taylor, that's me, will be demonstrating the clubs bowl saver, which is available for members to borrow, and also how to make some Christmas decorations including the infamous Christmas trees, this will be followed by a workshop. This will be a very good demonstration and well worth seeing, I hope, no biased reporting here!

The December meeting is the clubs AGM and the agenda etc. will be sent out in early November. If you have anything you would like discussed or any motions you want to be put to the members please let me have them by the Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November at the latest. If you can not get them to me by then they can be covered under any other business. Depending on how long the AGM goes on for this will be followed by a workshop or just a social chit chat depending on what the members want. Following on from my demonstration at the November meeting there will be a competition for Christmas decorations, as suggested by Neville. There will be two classes one for Christmas trees and the other for any other decoration, there will be a small prize for each winner. The judging will be done by myself and the criteria for the winning pieces will be simply which ones I like best.

## **Sacrewell Farm**

Next year could be very interesting as they are hoping to replace the Hen House which is the old low building opposite the stone barn with a new larger facility. They are also hoping to refurbish the big black barn as well, these works shouldn't affect us apart from having to be careful walking around. They hope to start work early in the New Year and as soon as more details are available we will let you know.

## **Craft Fair**

The club will be attending a craft fair at St Peters Church in Oundle on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2004 from 10am till 3.30pm. This is an opportunity for the club to publicise itself and also for members to try and sell any work they want to. We will also be taking a small lathe with us to do some demonstrating.

We have enough volunteers to staff the stall but if you have any turned items of good merchantable quality, I think that is the expression the organiser used, you want to sell please let me have them at the November meeting marked with your name and the price you want for them. If you can not make the meeting but have some items for sale please contact me on the number below and we can arrange for delivery or collection. The club will be taking 10% of any sales to cover expenses etc. If you need some labels to mark your items I will bring some along with me to the November meeting.

## Adult Education

The club is doing two woodturning demonstrations for Peterborough Adult Education at The Ken Stimpson School in Werrington. The first is on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November and the other one is on the 8<sup>th</sup> February. Each event runs from 7pm till 9pm and is intended to get people interested in woodturning as a hobby. The secondary reason is to hopefully get more pupils for the courses Mike Wickham is running, details further on in this newsletter, and if there is enough interest to run additional courses. A report on the first demonstration should be in the next newsletter.

## Learning to Turn

Every woodturner has to start somewhere and the question I have been asked quite a lot recently is what is the best way to go about it. Well that depends on you and your bank account. There are several different options which come to mind and I have outlined these below.

### Teach Yourself

This is probably the most popular way as a lot of people starting turning do not realise they can get training or because of costs involved in taking lessons. Not taking lessons can actually work out more expensive in the short term as you might buy unsuitable tools or lathes and waste a lot of wood producing sawdust with no real end product. On the other hand you might take to it like a duck to water and learn by yourself very quickly. If you are going down this route, as I did, then I would recommend you get a good book and video to help you. The one I recommend is Woodturning: A Foundation Course by Keith Rowley, there are of course many others just as good as this one. Belonging to a club also helps as you can talk to other more experienced turners and get some free hands on tuition at club meetings and workshops.

### Take Lessons From A Professional

This is also a popular route and is not as expensive as you might think, a full day can cost as little as £75, included in this is use of a lathe, tools, wood and refreshments. On a course you should learn basic safety precautions, how to use and sharpen the basic tools etc. A course with a professional turner can be taken at anytime, they are not just for beginners, and cover just about anything you want to learn. A list of turners who give lessons is available in the AWGB handbook or on their web site at <http://www.woodturners.co.uk/> also on the RPT web site at <http://www.rpturners.co.uk/> adverts can also be found in Woodturning and other magazines.

One of our members, Graham Booth, is a professional turner and details of his courses can be found on his web site at <http://www.oldsoke.co.uk> You can contact him by email to [course@oldsoke.co.uk](mailto:course@oldsoke.co.uk) or at a club meeting you can also ring him on 01733 331203 for further details etc.

## Evening Classes

This is becoming more popular as more colleges are putting them on. Peterborough Adult Education has just started a series of evening classes run by one of our members Mike Wickham. Details of the courses can be found on their web site at <http://www.pcae.co.uk/> or in their prospectus which should be available from libraries or you can contact Mike on 01733 573184 for details on the course. The next set of courses starts on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2005 from 19:00 to 21:00 and runs for ten weeks at a cost of £5.76 per hour, places are limited so if you are interested get in touch early.

Whichever route or combination of routes you decide on, and preferably before buying a lathe, tools etc, first decide what you want to turn be it bowls, spindle turning, miniatures etc. or even a bit of everything. This will help you decide what sort of lathe and tools to buy and what tuition you might want, this is just one area where belonging to a club can help you.

For most of us turning is a hobby and as such should be fun though there are times when it isn't, like last Thursday but that is another story. When they come along I find it best to turn the lathe off and go and have a cup of tea, nothing stronger if you are going back to the lathe though, and do something else for a while before going back to it. Usually it then goes better, although not last Thursday, but once I had spent some time sharpening my tools it suddenly got better, there's a lesson there somewhere!

## A Skew Whiff Tale

A very good club site on the Internet is that of the Peninsula Woodturners Guild Inc. Victoria, Australia at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~pwguild/> One of the, tongue in cheek, articles there that I thought needed a wider audience is reproduced below with their permission.

Is this how the Skew started?

To arrive at the sequence of events that led to the development and use of the skew chisel, one must go back in time to the days when men were first learning primitive woodcraft skills, mainly by trial and error methods. Having learned these, they soon found that a round pillar was far better to bump into than a rough hewn square one, so they applied their minds to this problem. The obvious solution was to use much smaller younger round trees but the conservationists quickly put a stop to that, so back to the drawing board.

The more skilled artisans began to experiment with short sections of timber and found that by shaping a square, then cutting the corners off, then cutting the corners off the corners etc. etc. they could arrive at a point where they had created a fairly well rounded short pillar. A spin off from this of course was the invention of the wheel and, because the processes involved in making wheels and pillars were at best labour intensive, minds were applied to the problem and mouths to bottles.

The end result of course was a crop of first class headaches and, as you have probably guessed, the lathe was born. The woodturners very quickly realized that they were on to a good thing, so, closing their ranks, they formed a Guild and for many years they prospered sharing their skills only with other members. Secrets, even the best kept ones, will out and, as a result of industrial espionage or just plain snooping, trade secrets were laid bare to all comers. Amateur turners grew in numbers and developed skills in the craft that were equal to if not exceeding those of the professionals. This was bad enough, but imagine the impact on the industry when amateur turners began to give away work instead of selling it.!

The Guild members got together to discuss ways and means of overcoming the problems being caused by the amateur, and after much discussion it was decided that the best way to combat the threat to their livelihood was to invent a new tool which would be so hard to use that the amateurs would become discouraged and things would return to normal in the trade. After much consideration they took a flat bar of steel, fashioned a tang on one end and then, because it was too long, cut a few inches off the other end. Owing to the fact that they were not very proficient in working steel the end they cut off was far from square, but they ground a cutting edge on it anyway and fitted a long handle.

The next problem was a name. One said it was a chisel, but another objected on the grounds that the cutting edge was not square and, furthermore it was positively askew, which everyone knew was also askance, awry, aslant and definitely oblique. Much argument ensued and things became rather heated until the President remarked that, even if it was askew, it was still a chisel and maybe they could call it just that. This suggestion became a motion, was put to the vote and passed. So it was that the tool became known as a skew chisel.

Volunteers were called for to test the new tool and two doughty members stepped forward. In very short order one slashed his wrists and the other disembowelled himself, dying for the cause a few minutes later. The tool was, it seemed, a far greater success than had been hoped for. A delegation took the prototype, wiped the blade clean, and carried it off to the toolmakers. They requested that several thousand copies be made and released world wide after suitable media coverage had whetted the appetites of all the amateurs. The toolmakers accepted the order with grateful smiles, and emptying out their scrap barrels, went to work producing large numbers of the new tool from all the off cuts they had been hoarding for years. This set a precedent which is still followed today. It is a well established practice in the trade to use up any large stock of otherwise useless off cuts simply by putting a cutting edge on one end and a handle on the other the resulting object is then promoted as the latest wonder tool and sold to unwary wood turners world wide.

The dreaded skew was duly released onto the market. The amateurs snapped them up, and shortly thereafter throughout the length and breadth of all the lands of the earth a large number of freshly turned graves began to appear. In a world subject to wars, plagues and pestilence, this in itself was no great cause for comment. There was however cause for speculation as it became apparent that a large proportion of headstones were designed in an unusual manner. Instead of the popular Norman or Gothic arch atop the stone, or fluted column dripping vines and angels, these headstones were almost austere in their simplicity. They were some three or four feet in height on one side and the top sloped down eight or ten inches to the other. This gave them the appearance of a parallelogram with one end buried in the ground. The only inscription upon the face was the dear departed's name and age at the time of death.

There was one minor difference to be seen, some sloped to the left and some to the right. At first this was thought to have political significance and, in some cases, widows and children were subjected to the usual discrimination from an ignorant minority. Nothing was further from the truth as the variation only indicated the direction that the skew was being traversed along the tool rest at the time of death.

The guild members agreed that the results of their plan exceeded all their wildest expectations. They closed their ranks and went about their business certain in their own minds that a return to the prosperous days of old was just around the corner. The one thing that they had not allowed for was human nature.

History has shown us that the human race, when faced with great adversity rises to ever greater heights and the amateurs responded to the occasion. They took up the challenge of the dreaded skew, and slowly learning from the mistakes of others finally mastered the skills required to survive. Whilst doing this they discovered that the skew really was a wonder tool. It produced a finish far superior to that achieved by any other tool and it soon became apparent that any turner who could not master the art was at a great disadvantage when it came to reducing costs.

The Guild members suddenly found that they were trapped in a snare of their own making. This trap was twofold, as, whilst the amateurs were mastering the skew, the professionals had discovered another interesting fact about woodturning. Put simply it was that far more money could be made from teaching others the art and craft than by continued hard work in the trade. In a manual craft or skill one needs to be able to demonstrate the use of all tools pertaining to the said craft. This meant that the Guild members now had to master the art of using the very weapon with which they had tried to decimate the ranks of the amateurs. During the period that it took for the Guild members to master this dread tool their numbers fell at an alarming rate. To avoid the very real possibility of the Guild being wiped from the face of the earth the members opened their doors to all comers.

So it was that the situation where both amateur and professional can share in an ancient craft first began, and as we all know, still exists to the present day. This happy state of affairs was brought about by the introduction into the craft of the not so humble skew chisel.

Murray White

## 3D Drawing

My thanks go to Chris Cooper for the following, only of use if you have Internet access, sorry.

I've been looking on the net for a program I had many years ago and during my search I found a very basic version of it at the site below.

[http://www.fi.uu.nl/toepassingen/00182/toepassing\\_wisweb.en.html](http://www.fi.uu.nl/toepassingen/00182/toepassing_wisweb.en.html)

Draw your lines in the white grid area as a cross section and a 3D version appears above. The 3D image can be moved so you can see every angle.

It's not brilliant but it's a good starter for an idea of what something might look like.

## Hand Made Show

This event was held at Sacrewell over the weekend of the 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> November, there were over 2000 visitors during the three days which was good for the first time. The club had a stand with four lathes, most of which were in constant use, a display area and a sales table. The stand drew a lot of interest from the public and we had a lot of enquires from people about the club, we also sold a number of items. Following this we had about 15 prospective new members turn up to the October meeting including some juniors and ladies.

For our first show we did very well but there were a number of minor problems which we have learnt from and will correct next time. Our thanks go to all the members who turned up to help on the stand or just to support us.

## For Sale

A couple of members have items for sale.

Brian Shortland has a Record DML24 lathe for sale for £80, he can be contacted on 01733 240022.

Graham Booth has the following for sale & can be contacted on 01733 331203 or at graham@oldsoke.co.uk

Axminster Pen Maker's Lathe     £75  
Includes 3 jaw chuck, faceplate, live and drive centres  
3.5" swing / 8" between centres; weighs only 4.5kg 1300; 2000; 3000 rpm

Record CL4, variable speed with CLB bowl extension; Extra tool rests. £799

Graduate short bed lathe, variable speed with tool rests, face plates,  
3 jaw scroll chuck plus Nova chuck, £975

## Other Events

Following requests from members below is a list of events that might be of interest to people, if you have an event you want to advertise please let me know.

DATE	EVENT
4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> November	Toolfix show
13 <sup>th</sup> November	For those who missed it Robert Sorby will be doing a demo at J. Carr in Boston
27 <sup>th</sup> November	Ray Keys will be doing a master class at Turners Retreat, entry by ticket only @ £4 each
28 <sup>th</sup> November	MAC Timbers wood sale & demo
10 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> December	Turners Retreat two day Christmas Special, With Allan Batty, Bob Bell & Roger Foden demonstrating. free admission
25 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> February	Alexandra Palace Show

## And Finally

It has been said by some that woodturning can be a dangerous hobby, which I don't believe especially if you apply good old common sense to it. But compared to other hobbies and trades the dangers are very small. Below is a tale I was sent by a friend who found it on the Internet. It is supposed to be true and the person involved is now fully recovered and back to work none the worse for his ordeal.

Dear Sir,

I am writing in response to your request for additional information in Block 3 of the accident report form. I put "poor planning" as the cause of my accident. You asked for a fuller explanation and I trust the following details will be sufficient.

I am a bricklayer by trade. On the day of the accident, I was working alone on the roof of a new six-story building. When I completed my work, I found that I had some bricks left over which, when weighed later were found to be slightly in excess of 500lbs. Rather than carry the bricks down by hand, I decided to lower them in a barrel by using a pulley, which was attached to the side of the building on the sixth floor. Securing the rope at ground I went up to the roof, swung the barrel out and loaded the bricks into it. Then I went down and untied

the rope, holding it tightly to ensure a slow descent of the bricks. You will note in Block 11 of the accident report form that I weigh 135lbs.

Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rapid rate up the side of the building. In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel, which was now proceeding downward at an equally impressive speed. This explained the fractured skull, minor abrasions and the broken collar bone, as listed in section 3 of the accident report form. Slowed only slightly, I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley. Fortunately by this time I had regained my presence of mind and was able to hold tightly to the rope, in spite of beginning to experience pain. At approximately the same time, however, the barrel of bricks hit the ground and the bottom fell out of the barrel. Now devoid of the weight of the bricks, that barrel weighed approximately 50 lbs. I refer you again to my weight. As you can imagine, I began a rapid descent, down the side of the building. In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles, broken tooth and several lacerations of my legs and lower body.

Here my luck began to change slightly. The encounter with the barrel seemed to slow me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell into the pile of bricks and fortunately only three vertebrae were cracked. I am sorry to report, however, as I lay there on the pile of bricks, in pain, unable to move, I again lost my composure and presence of mind and let go of the rope and I lay there watching the empty barrel begin its journey back down onto me. This explains the two broken legs.

I hope this answers your inquiry.



### **LEARN TO TURN**

In addition to full day and multi day courses I also offer half day and evening courses tailored to the needs of the individual... from £35 + all my courses are 'one to one' ensuring maximum attention. I'm also offering a £5 discount on day courses for current members of the AWGB.

Two for the price of one offer... if 2 members want to cover the same subject/technique... exclusive to VT!

Xmas Presents: vouchers for tuition are also available for the person who has everything!!

I sell selected Chestnut products discounted for VT members and people taking a course.

For further details or to book a course contact Graham Booth on 01733 331203

# Your Club Needs You

The committee is currently putting together the meeting schedule for next year and we need volunteers to do a turn. This could be anything to do with woodturning, you could do a demonstration on the lathe or an illustrated talk about a technique you use. Or a demonstration on how to use some of the new tools around, like the three point tool.

Please come forward and volunteer because without input from the members we could have some very boring meetings next year. If you are unsure how to prepare for and give a demo let me know as help is available. It is really not that hard or frightening and everyone there is on your side, I have been turning for less than two years so if I can do it anyone can. Please fill in the form below and return it to me, preferably by the November meeting or you can send me the details by email to [secretary@villageturners.org.uk](mailto:secretary@villageturners.org.uk) or by phone on 01733 333010.

Name

Type of demonstration

Dates you are not available

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The other thing we would like to know is what would you like to see at club meetings? This includes a particular demonstrator you would like to see, a technique demonstrated, how to use & sharpen a special tool or anything else. Just write it below and return to me in the normal ways or send in your answer by email.