



# "TURNINGS"

*Avon and Bristol Woodturners*

*Affiliated to the Association of Woodturners of  
Great Britain*

**MAY 2007**

## **INTRODUCTION** *(By Editor)*

Welcome to the new 'chief'! As you will read just below this, he has slipped readily into his new role, and I am sure you all join me in wishing him every success, and much satisfaction, in it!

## **Jottings from the Chairman's Workshop**

As you will all know this is my first attempt at the chairman's report; for me it is the most difficult part of being your Chairman (well to date anyway).

**AGM** - Thank you to all members who attended the AGM last month. AGM's can be difficult but this was not one of those occasions.

## ***Committee***

I would like to thank the member of last year's committee (Tich, Dave, Nigel, Lorraine, Ray, Brian, Vic, Neil & Simon B) for agreeing to stay on for another year and to welcome back onto the committee Julie & Simon K, and lastly to welcome John Wilson-Smith as our new member. John is to be our new Club Secretary, a very important job and one I am so glad he has agreed to undertake.

The other officers are as last year, with the exception of Simon Barnard and me. Simon is to be Vice-Chairman and I could not have asked for a more capable person to have at my right hand (thank you Simon).

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank Ken Willett for his time as Secretary and previously his time as a committee member.

Max, well what can one say about Max? Well actually, all I am going to say at this time is that he is a hard act to follow.

## ***Alan Batty Weekend***

My first Club function as Chairman was to host Alan Batty for a demonstration day on the Saturday and hands-on workshop day on the Sunday. I will not go into detail because Ray Mellett has written a report (thanks Ray). Unfortunately, we only had a low turnout on both days but the members who did attend had a field day, as Ray's report will highlight.

I had the pleasure of Alan and Jamie (his little Jack Russell dog) staying with me for the bank holiday weekend. Alan is to my mind the best spindle turner in the world, and he would take some betting at

almost any kind of turning. For me the highlight was on Monday. He asked me if I would mind him staying until about 1pm so that we could spend two or three hours in my workshop. A Master Class all to myself!! (Of course, thinking of the Club members, I said “no”, I wanted him out at 08.30 - “**I think not**”). He took me through the process of making a threaded box, not just any ordinary one, but a mushroom threaded box in 100 year old Boxwood. Well, as I write this, I am still trying to come to terms with what he did! What I do know is that I will be buying a set of thread cutters to try on the piece of 100 year old Boxwood he left for me. So you see being chairman does have its advantages, (thank you all for my appointment).

***Alan has said he will be happy to come back to the Club at a future date (but he will be staying with me, so hands off anyone who thinks they may get a free master class by putting him up! I claim “chairman’s privilege”).***

**Mill Report** - From the next issue Max (on hols) will write a Mill report, as he used to do years ago.

### ***Gloucestershire Association of Woodturners***

I had an invitation from Chris Eagles, the Chairman of GAW, to attend one of the club’s evening meetings, and I went to Cheltenham last night (Wednesday). The club meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. Chris kindly introduced me to the membership. The demonstrator was Greg Morton, and he went on to do one of his signature pieces - a bowl out of what can only be described as a large piece of Monkey Puzzle tree. The evening was a great success but for the fact that I had to sit next to Simon Barnard on one side and Tim McEvoy on the other - both member of GAW and our Club. It was like being at one of our Club nights. My thanks to Chris for the invitation!

### ***Specialist Help***

With just under 100 club members, from all walks of life and occupations, there must be a wealth of knowledge and expertise within the membership. The committee would like to tap into that knowledge and expertise please. For example, we are looking for help in promoting the Club - i.e. members with marketing and promotional skills. We also need help with our website. If you have any skills, knowledge or expertise in these or other fields that could help our Club please do talk to me! You may not value your talents as highly as we would, or you may think that we would not be interested in what you have to offer. Let us be the judges; and you may be surprised how helpful you could be!

### ***Thanks to the Backroom Team***

Within our Club a number of members who are not on the committee do a sterling job without much or any recognition. I intend to put that right. My first target is Roy Stewart. Since the death of Derek Harris Roy has printed our monthly newsletter “TURNINGS” and he also edits and produces the yearly programme. I am most grateful to Roy for this and so, on behalf of the Club, THANK YOU Roy!

### ***It’s Your Club***

Finally, please remember it is your Club; so please let me, or any member of the committee, know what you want the Club to do. **IT’S UP TO YOU!!**

OK. That will do for my first ‘Jottings from the Chairman’s Workshop’. Until next time.....

Best Regards.....Derek

**A COMMENT ON THE AGM** *(From Long-time Treasurer - Dave Ward)*

AGM attendance this year was pitifully low, and I must say that I am disappointed that by your absence so many of you fail to show your appreciation for the work carried out by your committee. Its members do not ask for, or seek, congratulations for something they do voluntarily, but attendance is a matter of courtesy and obligation; by attending you can demonstrate your recognition of the efforts made and give encouragement for the future. It is also an opportunity to play a small part in affirming the course of events over the coming year, and the makeup of the management team. Chairman had made it abundantly clear in advance that there was no risk of people being press-ganged into the management team; and voting at the various stages of the meeting costs no effort. This is your Club so why on earth do you not give it more support on that one occasion in the year when the formalities have to be observed?

**CHOOSING YOUR BANDSAW BLADE** *(Follow-on From Last Month by 'Woodentop')*

This piece is a natural follow-up to last month's piece and requires little amplification. I've learnt a lot from my "research", so I hope others will benefit! I know a picture is worth a thousand words, but if you look in the 'Axminster' catalogue, the tooth forms are all explained.

**BANDSAW BLADES SUMMARISED**

<b>TOOTH FORM</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>	<b>USE</b>
<b>*REGULAR</b>	Evenly spaced teeth. Zero degree tooth rake angle. Rectangular teeth. Tooth and gullet same size	Slower cutting, smoother finish.. Cutting curves <b>10 tpi</b> Ply, MDF, plastics, non-ferrous metals Wood (less than 2" thick) <b>14 tpi.</b> As above- Wood-less than 1"thick. Smoother finish
<b>*SKIP</b>	"Skips" every other tooth. Fewer teeth, large gullets. Zero degree tooth rake angle	Cleaner cut, but not as smooth. <b>3 tpi</b> -Deep cutting thick stock, esp. rip-rough finish <b>4 tpi</b> -General purpose-some cross cut <b>6 tpi</b> - General purpose, rip 2", cross 6"
<b>HOOK</b>	Larger teeth and rake angle, bigger gullet.	More aggressive re-sawing of thick planks and hardwoods. More suitable for use on bigger bandsaws
<b>VARIABLE</b>	Various rake angles available-size and spacing varies on same blades., giving different gullets to reduce vibration and noise, hence smoother cut.	General cuts, aggressive but smooth

Decide what you want to cut-remembering minimum 6-12 teeth in stock.

Determines **PITCH**

Decide on finish required and how aggressive you want to be  
form of **TOOTH**

Determines

Decide if mainly straight (Wider best) or curves (1/2" will cut a 5" dia blank)  
blade **WIDTH**

Determines

Bibliography:- a) Fine Woodworking (Taunton Press) -Jan2002. .Adapted from The Bandsaw Book (Taunton Press)-1999-Lonnie Bird. b) Catalogue-Axminster Tools (17<sup>th</sup> edition September 2007) p41\*-43.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE** *(By Simon Barnard on behalf of Your Committee)*

The Lister Tyndale Rally and Craft Show is fast approaching. It is to be held at Berkeley Castle (off A38 midway between M5 J14 & 13) on June 15/16/17. We need volunteers both to erect / strike, and particularly to man, the stand. (Thurs 14 June to erect & 5pm Sun 17<sup>th</sup> to strike).

Also we need items for sale and display - same format as Westonbirt. (Label items with Price or NFS and AWGB No.). Items to be delivered to the site from 2pm on the Thursday.

Could all those interested in helping / displaying please contact Derek Edwards who will advise on what is required.

**'SIMON & SIMON' HIT THE HEADLINES** *(By Editor)*

Congratulations to 'The Club's Simons' - Keen and Barnard for their excellent pieces in 'Woodturning' (June issue) and May's 'Revolutions' respectively; and what with Chairman and Vice Chairman being tutored individually by Batty and Irons (respectively crops up again) we are living through a limelight phase. Long may it continue even if it cannot be quite that good every day of the week!

**Demonstration by Alan Batty at The Mill, Saturday, May 5<sup>th</sup> 2007**  
*Or*  
**ONE MAN AND HIS DOG**

How does one summarise a lifetime's worth of skills and competences into a single day? That was the task faced by Alan Batty when he agreed to demonstrate for us, despite having given up demonstrating now. We were very privileged to have the benefit of his wisdom. It was a pity there were not more, but 15 were keen to learn, and to benefit. As always it was warmer outside in the sun than inside, but we survived.

Despite there being some well known and very prominent turners amongst the audience, they elected to "go back to basics", to cover all the basic cuts and variations, tools and their sharpening, and even to that much maligned tool, the skew; and they elected to be shown how to make a cabriole stool leg, and turn the "perfect sphere" as the snooker balls were made (took 18 months to make one!) Alan was a very pragmatic turner, with great power of observation, so he promised us he would not only tell us what, but why, since it was essential to understand what was happening and why it was happening.

Whilst it is impossible to cover all aspects in this newsletter, this report is a very brief summary of the main points he made, and from which we can all benefit. The Cabriole leg and the Sphere may be the subject of another report later.

Alan started off as an apprentice and had to sharpen tools, which he hated, but by doing it he gained the eye and the techniques which stood him in good stead for the rest of his career. For the professional, time is money, so each cut has to be maximised, and thus the bed soon becomes covered in shavings. Grovelling amongst these to find the next tool wasted time, and cost him money, so he evolved a system of marking the tool handles so that he could easily find and identify the correct tool for the next operation. So simple, yet so effective!

Alan recommended that all new tools should be dressed with 600 grit wet & dry, Tool blade corners should be dressed, to soften them, then stropped, and wiped with protective oil (Japanese Samurais sword oil) The corner acts as the focus, and so makes contact with the tool rest (or is it a hand rest?) making it the fulcrum. All tools should be kept clean and sharp.

**THE SKEW** - For the serious turner, there is not a "one fits all" skew, since the cutting angle is determined by the wood to be turned, and the task undertaken. His recommendations were 25 degrees for softwoods, 40 general, and 55 for Hardwoods. (For recognition purposes, 40 degrees is when the length of the bevel is approximately 1 ½ times the thickness of the chisel) Blending the corner made with the bevel and the tool edge will prevent marking the wood when the skew could come into contact at that point.

### **CUTS with the Skew**

Use the long point of the Skew to make the cut. For the right handed (rh) turner, start with the skew at the 11 o'clock position. Sight along the ground edge of the skew, and hence start the cut to the left of the mark so that the cut ends up on the line.

### **Vertical Slice Cut**

Hold at 12 o'clock, then roll to 1 o'clock for other side of cut. Start with handle low, then lift and twist.

### **Square Cut**

Put bead cut either side of the line. Start at 12, then 11 then 1 then 12 then 11, then 1 etc.-gives V cut to waste cut of line. Anything over 4" use a bowl gouge. (If used underhanded there is a tendency to twist it to its nasty dig in position).

### **Cuts with Parting Tool**

Goes where others won't! Start by making cut 1 1/2 thickness of tool to avoid binding. Use "single angle only" grind. An 1/8<sup>th</sup> is useful for getting into those awkward places and for those tight 1/2beads. Another ground down one side only is always useful.

**Cuts with The 'Sorby' Spindle Master** - Basically a piece of round tool steel, with a few inches from the front ground off flat half way to the diameter, and the front sharpened at 30 degrees in a semi-circular shape when viewed from above, which ensures that when presented to the work in the vertical position it slices into the wood, with the left hand merely guiding the tool like a billiard cue. When used vertically, square on, it can get into those awkward places to clean up.

### **Cuts with the Roughing Out Gouge**

These (gouges) used to be of constant wall thickness, so when sharpening it was easy to keep the sharpened edge square in the vertical and horizontal axes. Now they come with unequal wall thickness, & higher wings, so the tendency is for the front bottom cutting edge to move back towards the handle when sharpening. This cutting edge should be square to the tool.. Again Alan prefers his to have a wing height about 10-15degrees below the horizontal semi circle, and sharpened to about 35 degrees for softwoods, 55 degrees for hardwoods

He always started to rough out by keeping the heavier weighted end at the headstock end of the lathe.

### **Coves and Hollows with Spindle Gouges**

Use like you would use a spoon-feed into wood on edge, with little finger to left, finger to right, and arc it. The older ones were very shallow, so could be "dropped in"

He reminded us that the English gave measurements from inside to outside (or centres of walls) whereas the Americans gave theirs as a true outside to outside (i.e.OD).

### **Beads**

There is a choice of 5 tools. Which, when and why?

**Scraping-tools** - These were preferred -1/16" to 1 1/2". Was preferred method for African Blackwood and Ivory (AB & I)

**Point tool-1/4"**-again for AB &I used for tiny details.

**French Bedan** - bevel on top, slightly tapered walls, to give clearance when going into boxes to avoid the sides, edges dressed to remove sharpness, front sharpened slightly circular, but offset, so need a RH and LH tool. Ideal for removing that whiskered edge grain in box bottoms, and used correctly, could give mirror glass finish. Cut only with tip once you have rolled the corner.

**Three point tool** - Use long point vertically at first.

**Negative Rake Scraper** - Has a slight grind on top face; used properly can give a superb finish, but must be used carefully.

### **Using Bowl Gouges**

For complete control, the tool must always rub wherever on the bowl surface, so must be sharpened accordingly. A 30 degree bevel would only rub for a limited distance down the inside wall of the bowl, so would be unsuitable. So go to 45° for most cases. But if the depth is greater than the radius, it will need about 60°. Hence the 45-50 degree is a good compromise. (If you just draw a few bowl shapes on paper, then imagine the line your gouge would want to take, and can achieve, you will see the explanation more easily).

To avoid the "square corners", enter the bowl surface by rubbing first, slowly turn until the cut commences, then lower the handle so that cut rides up higher during the transverse, ending up with the handle horizontal to ensure the tool rubs at all positions. Alan likened it to a bobsleigh entering a tight corner - it not only tries to turn, but to do so rides up the wall at the same time as turning, coming out of the corner on the same bottom of the track as it started off!. For thin-wall bowl turning another approach was to turn the rim to the correct dimension and shape, and finish it, because it will distort later, and then you will not be able to go back to it! Then take out another wall section, and repeat until you have a series of steps down the wall to the bottom. He regarded the initial removal of the centre of the bowl more of an environmental exercise than turning, since it allowed the wood to "season" quicker when left for a while.!

### **Some more of Alan's Advice:**

- Tools are expensive. Look after them, and they will look after you. Dress them, remove any sharp corners, keep sharp and clean.
- The oblong sectioned skew is preferred to the oval - the sighting line of the bevel is distorted, and it is not so rigid.
- Remove the sharp edges, and relieve the bevel corners slightly at the long pointed edge of the skew.

- Ensure tool rest is true, with a smooth top to permit the tool to traverse without catching, and profiled to allow tool handle to be taken low without changing fulcrum. (Many are badly designed.)
- When cutting blanks, to ensure square ends, offer to band saw, make a slight cut, turn over so cut is uppermost, then cut along saw mark.
- Before attempting any operation on the lathe, just ensure that you are standing comfortably, legs apart, knees bent so you can change the weight from one foot to the other as you move the tool, and can not only begin the cut, but can also finish it in comfort.
- Use twin lobed drive in preference to the four pronged one – it is hard to see where you align the point, and they only work on a square end. Steb centres preferred.
- When tapping blank onto centre drive, use a metal hammer. It will change note when blank is “home” - a wooden mallet will absorb this tell-tale sound.
- Ensure bearings in revolving centres are not worn - any movement can set up a lot of vibration and other troubles.
- Spiral grooves are often caused by uneven bevel rubbing. Bevel must run centrally; too near the tip or heel can cause the gouge to cut deeper/dig, or rise if the heel is causing the spiral action. They can also be caused by vibration set up by worn revolving tail stocks as mentioned above.
- When presenting any tool to the work always try to ensure it will achieve a slicing action
- Always let the grindstone come to rest before switching it back on – not doing so can cause a lot of damage!.
- Practice hand grinding - it will save a lot of time later on. Use the platform to set the angle.
- When using tools, the forefinger should point down the tool such that the tool is an extension of your arm.
- Avoid short handled tools. As a rough guide, Alan suggested for every one inch the tool tip is over the rest into the work, 7” of handle is needed for stability and control.

“Snifter”

**SPACEFILLER** *(By Editor)*

It has taken a long time to get round to it but I located a good source of peat free potting compost recently and made my first-ever purchase. Having always wondered what it is that can possibly take the place of that traditional product of the bogs it was very satisfying to see that it is made from **composted timber residues** plus recycled composted green material with added organic nutrients. It has a good appearance and handles well, so I hope to avoid peat altogether henceforward. For newer members who sometimes ask if their shavings and dust can be used in the garden the answer is ‘yes’ but it should **not** be dug in un-composted because all sorts of moulds develop to sour the soil. Simon and John (and I) use it as a mulch, and this seems to be perfectly satisfactory because nature deals with it in its own clean way if it stays on top. I also use wood waste products as winter fuel to good effect. Simon K has shown us how to compress the stuff into tubes to make logs and I bought the ‘Halford’s’ jack to make my own compressor à la Simon. Pending construction the material goes into other types of container. Incidentally, Simon showed us a compressor design using threaded bar for corner posts. I found some ‘Dexion’ type angle bar in my metal store and it will be ideal for the corner posts. Simon approves and thinks it will be a better option.

**FOOTNOTE** *(By Editor)* I have had to squeeze up and alter contributors’ layouts a little to keep within Roy’s preferred maximum of six sides and to preserve an effective layout in the issue as a whole. I believe this has been achieved without affecting emphasis or impact. That was certainly my intention!

**Special thanks to ‘Snifter’** for the thoroughness of his report on the Alan Batty experience!! His analytical focus on the ‘how and why’ gives great potential value to the careful reader. Cut it out and put it in your scrapbook of ‘Hints & Tips’! Do you remember the store the late Chris Lindup used to put on his ‘Scrapbook’? He swore by it!

<p>Website: <a href="http://www.avon-and-bristol-woodturners.org.uk">www.avon-and-bristol-woodturners.org.uk</a>  Email: <a href="mailto:messages@avon-and-bristol-woodturners.org.uk">messages@avon-and-bristol-woodturners.org.uk</a></p>
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