

June 2009



# TURNINGS

Official newsletter of  
**Avon and Bristol Woodturners**

(Honorary Life President - Max Carey)

Established 1989

Affiliated to the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain

Contributions to "Turnings" are accepted in good faith but the inclusion of individuals' views and comments does not imply endorsement by Avon and Bristol Woodturners

## Comment

by the Editor

One of the haunting fears of the editor of a newsletter such as ours is a dearth of contributors, for although it is quite possible to fill the pages with plagiarised material from umpteen sources it is really the views, fears, likes, dislikes, gripes and hobby-horses of members which breathe life into its pages. Fortunately Turnings does not (in my experience anyway) appear to have suffered from that problem and this month is no exception, with some excellent articles that I am sure will amuse, inform and even more important perhaps stimulate debate among you, the readers. For example, Max raises a few points in his Musings. Do you agree with his observations? Do you have matters of concern of your own that you'd like to have "aired", either in these pages or at the EGM in July? Ray enters the debate about "Show and Tell" with some ideas of his own about ways in which members might be persuaded to participate more fully in these club-sponsored activities. I'm sure

that both Max and Ray would be the first to admit, as did our new chairman in his first Chairman's Report (May edition of Turnings, pp11) that they don't hold a monopoly on ideas for improving the club. Ray is in the habit of quoting from his business experiences and whilst this may seem to be a little bizarre because we are not of course here to make a profit (are we?) many of the tricks employed in commercial businesses are aimed at making them run more efficiently. Since Utopia would be to find a single item which, without any modification could be your company's only product yet would have universal appeal. To encourage sales people (that means everyone) to "think outside the box" (a terrible expression) they often ask them the famous "brick" question - ie, how many uses can you find for an ordinary household brick? It doesn't matter that the majority of answers will be just plain stupid, eg, door-stop, weapon, window-box etc. What is important is that candidates are made to brainstorm in the hope that at least one new practical and profit-

able idea might emerge. By the way, if you can think of no more than 75 uses then you're only just above mediocre! The point of this digression is that with a membership of over one hundred we ought, with a bit of creative thinking, really to be brimming with new ideas - unless of course we all feel that Avon and Bristol Woodturners is already perfect.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Musings from the Mill

by The Gaffer

## Outgoing Editor

Thanks Vernon for a job well done and greatly appreciated adding your unique style to each edition. It would appear that Mike Openshaw has smoothly stepped into the harness and I offer him my thanks and any assistance he may need.

## Busy times

A set of Parell Beads, a Bhordan Stick, a flash, an involuted gate post, an acorn with an oak tree inside plus eighteen double-tier earring stands, Shepton Mallet hobbies show weekend, YT weekend and

## In this issue

### Comment by the Editor

**Musings from the Mill** by the Gaffer

**Turning a bowl** - Mary Ashton offers invaluable advice to both newcomers and experienced turners

**In support of the Vic Marc** - by Mary Ashton

**Some thoughts on Show and Tell** Ray Mellett airs his views on a number of issues

**Mark Sanger at the Mill** - Mike Openshaw reports on Mark's approach to turning Hollow forms

**An audience with King George**

Doug Alderton reflects on a day spent with George King

### Chairman's Report

**Lend a hand** - a plea from Ed

**Constitution amendments** - have your say

**Notice Board** page 14

**DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO JULY'S ISSUE OF "TURNINGS" Monday 6th July 2009**

8 Mill Day sessions & Bark Maker says there aren't enough hours in the day. Total of 84 hours, mostly on club work for me.

### **Apprentice Manuals**

There are several apprentice training course manuals out on loan. To enable us to keep costs to a minimum would you please return them if you have no further use for them.

### **About the Mill**

The current Mill staff comprise myself, Stuart Bradfield (Main Committee Member), Tich (Senior Tutor), Ray Mellett (Mill Maintenance Manager), Doug Alderton, Terry Stevens & Mary Ashton (Tutor) and Alan Noakes (Tutor).

Sub-Committee meetings are held on the Tuesday lunch break prior to the main committee meeting.

The Mill's daily timetable is as follows:

8 – 9am	Setting up, organising the day's work, coffee and discussion.
9 – 12 noon	Morning session.
12 – 1pm	Lunch break
1 – 4pm	Afternoon session
4 pm	Close.

### **Some good news**

Alan Noakes is recovering nicely and has been awarded Honorary Membership of our club.

I was surprised and delighted to see Dennis May down here again. He's managed to arrange respite care for Rene and it will be a pleasure to have him back for a precious few hours a week and the break will probably do him good.

### **A matter for discussion**

As your president I am concerned about a number of problems that have arisen over past months. I have heard that an EGM has been mooted (*to take place at our July meeting, Ed*) to revise our constitution. As this is a matter of great importance to all members will you please make every effort to attend and make your views known. The main committee, for the trial period, that Derek Edwards put in place in order to reduce the number of committee members and meetings on alternate months, with dictates via email, thus cutting the workload.

Please give consideration to the following bullet points:

- Emails have uses - if all committee members have this facility they are directives!
- Committee meetings ending at 11.30 pm – no agenda in advance
- No chairman for a month – first time ever
- Decline in competitions and “Show-and-Tell” not addressed.

I could list several more issues but I know Mike is inundated with copy this month

(*much appreciated Max, Ed.*) so I will end by expressing the hope that all members will be allowed to have free and open discussion in due course.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **TURNING A BOWL**

*by Mary Ashton*

These notes are designed to be used as a reminder after attending a demonstration or as class notes when following instruction. They do not cover every point in detail. Note: Safe practices are dealt with during demonstration or as part of class work.

My preference is for newcomers to woodturning to gain experience with spindle turning first. If you are able to roll a bead it makes cutting the inside of a bowl much easier.

### **DESIGN**

Consider prior to mounting work. A rough sketch will sometimes do, a full size drawing is best. Continuous flowing curves will look good. If using beads or other detail make these crisp to show that they are really meant to be and not just a result of a mistake.

When turning the outer bowl frequently stand back to check the profile. First bowls should be kept to a simple single curve profile. It is easy to turn an amazing and complicated outer but not so easy to follow the shape on the inside to match.

### **CHUCKING TECHNIQUES**

**Face plate:** Make sure surface is flat and that screws are tight.

**Screw chuck:** Either to fit in chuck jaws or thread directly on to lathe.

**Faceplate ring:** To fit dovetail jaws

Consider **TIMBER MOVEMENT** prior to mounting blank as well as utilising the **BEST GRAIN**.

### **TOOL TECHNIQUE & GRIND**

A BOWL GOUGE is used to rough out and create the shape of a bowl. A spindle or ‘detail’ gouge maybe used for fine detail such as beads (bowl gouge is too cumbersome for intricate detail).

As with most techniques various turners will grind their tools differently. Some prefer the ‘Irish’ or ‘Sweptback’ grind. In preference and for those starting out I would choose the ‘Traditional’ grind with an angle of approximately 55 degrees and wings not swept back too far.

· Toolrest should be just below centre and adjusted to prevent too much leverage as waste is removed

· Bowl gouge with ‘Traditional grind’ used with pushing action working

down the grain; on outer face of bowl work from the small to large diameter, on inner face of bowl work from large to smaller diameter.

· Prior to cutting you should feel the bevel rub and then lift the handle to produce the cut and ease back as necessary to keep in bevel rubbing mode

· Use gouge slightly pointing and rolled over in direction of travel. Using this method a small amount of the tool, just below the centre point will be in contact with timber at about 45 degrees producing a fine, smooth shaving

· Make sure only the part of tool in contact with the revolving timber is that directly supported on the tool rest or tool will ‘dig in’

**NOTE:** Do *NOT* use a spindle roughing gouge to rough down a bowl blank. This will take too large a cut and can be very dangerous.

Firstly balance the timber which usually involves roughing down the outer diameter - *if the blank is very heavy or unbalanced use the tailstock to add additional support*. Very fine/delicate cuts are required at a low speed to deal with the two passes of end grain on every revolution. If the blank is cut from near the bark and therefore has a corner missing or is uneven for another reason I suggest truing up diagonally down the outer face first.

### **RE-CHUCKING METHODS**

Before shaping bowl consider how you are going to re-chuck to turn inside face.

Depending on bowl design I tend to use an internal recess for a dovetail chuck but you must cut this deep enough and allow a minimum of 10mm foot around the recess to prevent ‘break out’.

External dovetail or gripper jaws may be used - beware that if the diameter of these is very small they may break off due to weakness in grain direction. External mounting may suit bowls with a foot.

To preserve all timber an additional piece of timber may be attached with hot melt glue or PVA and brown paper, possibly a disk to fit gripper jaws.

**Jam chucks** can be very effective especially if working on a low budget, are good practice and very satisfying to make.

Chuck recesses should be removed from gallery/competition work.

### **SCRAPING**

Some believe the best finish should be achieved from the cutting tool and that it is a sin to use scrapers. I think that if you can achieve a better finish and reduce sanding (and therefore potentially dangerous dust inhalation) then scraping is fine. Some timbers will definitely look worse after scraping so it is worth experimenting

and if necessary sand straight after cutting.

Scraping involves NOT rubbing the bevel, therefore the toolrest will require lifting. Scraping tools have a more acute angle than cutting tools (approximately 80 degrees). The tool is presented in 'trailing' mode with the cutting edge pointing slightly downwards. Ensure cutting edge is level with centre line of work, adjust rest as necessary.

'Shear scraping' can be achieved by using the bottom wing of the bowl gouge presented at 45 degrees, handle high and 'pull'-cutting. Round scrapers can be used also in 'trailing' mode either flat (make sure tool stays FLAT on rest or it will dig in!) or at 45 degrees to the work.

I prefer to use an oval skew chisel on the outer surface of a bowl again in 'trailing' mode and at 45 degrees to the work (only suitable if there are no inner curves!)

### CHUCK RECESS

Mark out diameter of chuck jaws early on irrespective of whether using external or internal gripping. Also mark foot position if gripping internally.

It is easier to cut recess after shaping outer bowl as the speed can be increased and a smoother cut achieved.

A smooth recess may be achieved by using a spindle gouge and rolling it right over on its side to create the dovetail shape (rest needs to be high for this).

I usually teach beginners to use a parting tool and skew to create the dovetail as controlling the spindle gouge can be quite tricky.

### SANDING

Once content with shape and you have the finest finish off the tool it is time to sand.

*It is important to protect yourself and others who may be in the room from dust exposure.*

At the very least wear a suitable mask and if possible use air filtration or an extraction system. **Many timbers are potentially very toxic.**

Small strips of good quality cloth-backed abrasive are best, folded in half to protect fingers from heat build-up.

**SAFE SANDING** position is the bottom quarter between 6 and 9 o'clock in 'trailing' mode with work dragging away from you (this may be different on some lathes with left hand thread or if turning in reverse) The roughest, start-

ing grit depends on how good your finish from the tool is, normally about 120 grit. Stop lathe after using roughest grit to check quality of finish and make sure all defects are removed before moving onto finer grits, say 180, 240, 320, 400 grits.

It is good practice to stop lathe after each grit and remove dust from work preventing any loose grains marking the work.

Close grained timbers will benefit from finer grits and very high quality finishes can be achieved by sanding down to very fine grits. Some like to wet-sand which helps to prevent dust inhalation. Sanding sealer can also help to seal 'fluffy' textured grains prior to sanding **make sure you do not use dust extraction if using flammable sealers prior to sanding as fire may break out after you have left the workshop!**

Some prefer to power sand which is essential if you are turning square bowls or timber has defects.

### FINISHING

Once shaping and sanding are complete choose your finishing product and apply as specified. Only use safety cloth or tissue to avoid the risk of threads coming loose and drawing your fingers into the lathe. There are many types of finishes available including oils, waxes, spirit based products and cellulose based products most of which are extremely flammable (**cloths may spontaneously combust and must be disposed of safely**).

### REVERSE CHUCKING

Remount bowl using chosen method making sure work runs as true as possible.

### TRUING & CUTTING INNER BOWL

Firstly true upper face either by cutting with a bowl gouge or shear-scraping with bottom wing of bowl gouge (more suitable for relatively flat surface).

If using the cutting method begin with bevel rubbing (rest just below centre) on outer edge of bowl and work towards the centre in a slightly arcing mode finishing with tool rolled well over on its side pointing toward centre of bowl, handle raised.

I prefer the over-hand hold with wrist resting on toolrest for added support but beware of sharp freshly cut rim (allow gouge to slide through fingers to avoid cutting your hand on outer rim or round rim prior to smoothing the surface).

It is good to shape rim to finished design at an early stage before removing waste from inner bowl. If done after completing inner bowl the edge may not be supported causing loud chattering noises from tool or possibly more severe damage on a very thin bowl.

Next begin removing centre waste in steps beginning about 20 mm from centre and gradually extending cuts nearer to bowl edge on each traverse. Remember the nearer

the cut is to bowl centre the slower the timber is rotating so speed of cut needs to be slowed on approach to centre.

**This method makes every cut relatively easy. Some beginners tend to cut too steeply down the edge of the bowl starting each cut on the outside edge resulting in excessive tool swinging and making each cut hard work.**

### CUTTING METHOD

When cutting the inside of a bowl the cut is started with the handle low and bevel rubbing, lifting handle slightly to cut, pointing and rolling over to the direction of travel more progressively as the cut approaches the centre (arcing at the same time). If the toolrest is in the correct position the cut should finish with the handle high and ending with the tool well rolled over on centre.

The deeper you cut into the bowl the higher you need to 'arc' the tool to keep the bevel in contact behind the cutting edge.

One problem that may arise is starting the cut off the rim once some of the waste is removed. The tool can skid back and damage the rim if not presented correctly. To resolve this either present tool rolled well over on its side, flute towards centre of bowl, rubbing the bevel, thumb at the ready to push tool into the cut or use a parting tool to start the cut allowing you to rub bevel below the surface and reduce the likelihood of skidding back.

Aim to produce a similar curve to the outside face and even wall thickness. Make sure you do not cut too deep – consider recess depth on outer face. Check with figure-of-8 callipers frequently whilst shaping. Achieve the best possible finish from the cutting tool and then scrape if necessary.

**All these methods are difficult to explain without the aid of diagrams and photographs so I suggest adding your own diagrams or acquiring a copy of Keith Rowley's book 'WOODTURNING A Foundation Course' which has excellent images explaining most of these methods.**

### SCRAPING INNER BOWL

Use a round or half round scraping tool with the rest raised so that the cutting edge of tool is at centre height and tool is presented in 'trailing' mode. Again make sure tool is flat on the rest to avoid a 'dig in'.

As mentioned before some timbers will not scrape well i.e. timbers that have grain running in opposing directions such as Sapele, Ropala Lacewood or 'fluffy' grained timbers such as Spalted

Beech. With timbers such as these aim for a fine finish from tool and then go straight to sanding.

Ripping of the grain is most likely to occur near the rim.

### SANDING INNER BOWL

Reduce speed and use fresh abrasive (worn abrasive produces more heat and can cause small cracks to appear in timber as well as not cutting so efficiently). Keep fingers tucked in and sand in safe sanding position between 6 and 9 o'clock. During sanding rings tend to appear in the centre of the bowl. These can be removed by working with the grain (lathe stationary) in between grits. Remember to wipe after each grit to remove abrasive debris and check quality of finish. **When satisfied that sanding is complete it is good to check in different lights for defects and improve if necessary before applying finishing product as this will show up any unsightly defects.**

Remove from lathe. If removal of recess is required remount using button jaws and cut back as necessary, sand and finish to match the rest of bowl.

Project complete!

\*\*\*\*\*

### In Support of The Vicmarc Lathe

By Mary Ashton

I feel I should comment on the Vicmarc lathe after my demo last clubnight.

After my demonstration a lot of members made what I felt were rather unfair comments about the 'Vicmarc' lathe.

Prior to my demo I made every effort to check that my bowl blank would fit over the bedbars asking both Derek and Tich to check the height above centre.

Having only used this make of lathe once before at Westonbirt I thought it was excellent, smooth running, quiet, vibration free, well engineered and easy to use.

On reflection I realise that I chose a piece of timber that would push the lathe to its limits and that this was not a good idea in a demonstration situation (especially my first!) where the lathe may or may not have been secured as firmly as it could have been. I do recall Tich and Martin commenting on whether it should be attached better to the base? (not wishing to point fingers as I am sure they both usually do a brilliant job). I believe this may have been the reason I could not run the lathe at a faster speed and therefore reduce vibration. Whatever the reason I still think the lathe is a good quality machine proba-

bly more suited to small items of spindle turning than bowl work. I only wish at an early stage that I had resorted to the smaller bowl blank I had brought along.

Maybe onlookers felt they should make me feel better about my turning skills by blaming the lathe. I appreciate all the supportive comments I received after the event but felt all blame should not rest entirely on the Vicmarc. It has to be said that this was not my best performance at the lathe. Fortunately those that know me realise that and I hope I might be given another chance.

\*\*\*\*\*

*The following piece was submitted by Ray several days before I received Mary's articles* Ed

### Show and Tell

#### Show

#### How

#### Ow

#### O

by Ray Mellett

Having thought long and hard about Vicky's letter on this subject whilst I was in Munich, I was most disappointed that at the last meeting, it was yet again not even mentioned.

Despite having been a member for a few years now, my journey from other forms of woodworking into your world of turning, with its rather unique and peculiar lingo, has only just started. As soon as Max knew I was an Engineer (you turners seem to have a thing about our Engineering culture) he asked me to become Mill Manager, and take on the responsibility for maintaining the machines at the mill. Due to the number of attendees at the Tuesday and Wednesday sessions most machines were in constant use, and a lot took a hammering as we all learnt to master some of the techniques, and to turn by ear rather than eye. I was thus kept busy, with little time for turning, and as such regarded my skill levels well below that required for the Show and Tell. The recent anniversary of my first operation also signified my return to the fold after being somewhat incapacitated. So, I did not contribute. I admit I was wrong not to do so, because there is not a day that goes by that I don't learn something. My engineering training meant I keep a notebook, and note odd things, observations, techniques, hints, learning experiences, "areas for improvements" (cock ups!) etc, and I remember Alan Noakes, my "mentor" once asked me "What have you learnt today?" to which I replied "I have not enough pages or time to list it all!" He smiled agreeably. Vicky is correct when she stated the ethos of the Mill is sharing and caring. In that atmosphere we can share our "sillies", our OOPPZZs" (especially when taking off that final few thousandths of an inch from the

inside of the bowl), and our successes. Max ran a "journeyman" series, sharing our skills on our own particular forte. Vicky did her boxes, I did the use of the Morse Taper tools and jigs in wood, etc. (again I took those along, but apart from being photographed by Vernon, they were never discussed). However, only a few of us can participate, so what better than to disseminate these learning opportunities to our other less fortunate non attendees than at our monthly meeting. I learnt from Dennis that I must have a pretty bottom (on my bowl!), to turn "adversary to advantage". Its always a pleasure to see him (we look forward to seeing you more often now, Dennis). From Alan I learnt the flexibility and multiple uses (correct, and incorrect) of the skew, to hold the tool firmly, to align it before boldly thrusting, to get into the correct position and never to get into a situation where I could not finish what I'd started! Even John Ruffle and I questioned the wisdom of making a rolling pin for SWMBO as a Christmas present!

So, on my return from Munich, I was determined to correct this state. I experimented with making a dice from a piece of Newel post, having been told by a German turner that it "was not that difficult once I'd mastered the principles" as he exhibited hundreds of them! I used up some scrap pieces of branches in the "firewood" bag at the mill to make a bird feeder, and turned another off cut into a little hedgehog, to prove that even recycled wood can be recycled again if we use our imagination. ("Imagination knows no bounds – an open mind and the ability to challenge the status quo are the essentials of innovation")

So I plucked up courage and placed them on the table, but, alas, after clearing up, they were still there! Apart from George's "What's the wood?", that was it. It's not as if we did not have time, as Mary's excellent demonstration had finished a little bit early. Or am I missing something?

Like Vicky, I am surprised there is not more time devoted to it, because, following my last month's theme on talks, demonstrations, etc., it provides a platform to improve one's presentation skills and gain that **confidence to talk about the "how to's"** and the "learning outcomes" as the educationalists call it. I am also surprised that there have been so few comments on her original letter, (written in India whilst on a teaching assignment, and published in the March Turnings.) My enthusiasm has suffered a minor set back, but if we are to

progress, and encourage the spread of the woodturner's art, and members' participation in our meetings (make them more "interactive") then we must give precedence to this form of education for those club members present in their principles and practices, and this is the simplest vehicle for so doing. "Educate a wise man, and he will be yet wiser". Above all, its free! Whatzfkofit?

*There's much food for thought there Ray and I hope members will be moved to respond in next month's edition - Ed*

## Mark Sanger at the Mill

by Mike Openshaw

**Those of us who braved the wet weather and attended Mark's demo day were treated to a fine display of skill and innovation from this accomplished young turner.**



Mark Sanger outlines his approach to wood-turning to an appreciative audience at the Mill on 27th May

Some insight into Mark's character can be gleaned from a comment he made to



me at the end of the day; "I'll come better prepared next time". This despite the fact that he'd brought more than enough well illustrated and informative

14-page handouts, flip chart illustrations, wood blanks, which in the best Blue Peter tradition he had



Photos by Doug Alderton

"prepared earlier," and a number of finished and part-finished hollow forms for us to examine and handle. So, apart from serving hot chestnuts I don't really know what more he could have done.

Mark explained that since his creations, which are turned from unseasoned (ie wet) wood (which of course introduces problems of its own) are designed to be purely decorative as opposed to functional he can give free rein to his imagination without having

the bottom of the skills ladder and I list some of them below. I should add that Mark was at pains to emphasise that he does not claim to have all the answers but the methods he uses and the recommendations he makes are based on practical experience and they all work for him!

1. When selecting a log ensure annular rings are concentric, otherwise uneven shrinkage will cause serious distortion
2. Start hollowing with saw-tooth cutter in preference to Forstner bit (1500 rpm).
3. Wall thickness of hollow forms to be not less than 8% of vessel diameter
4. Dovetail chuck not recommended as wood tends to break off
5. Always use tailstock centre when turning profile
6. To avoid cracking drill out pith (10 mm drill) then fill hole with CA glue.
7. To season part-completed form seal in plastic bag. Remove bag daily and replace inside out to allow moisture to evaporate. Repeat for 1 to 1 1/2 months.
8. Finishing - sand down to 400 grit then dampen to raise fibres. When dry run lathe in reverse (if you can!) and sand again using 600 grit to burnish raised fibres.
9. Cellulose sanding sealer diluted 50/50 to give better penetration into wood.
10. Buff at 1500 to 2000 rpm - kitchen (paper) towel suitable.
11. Finish with "Renaissance" petroleum-based (non-acidic) wax.

*And finally...*

"Taste", as someone once said sagely, "is a matter of taste." Nevertheless when it comes to shape and form there are some that work and many more that look "wrong". Why that should be so is a matter for philosophical debate and therefore has no place in this article (though, on reflection might it not be a topic for one of our future monthly meetings?). Mark explained that he bases his shapes on the "thirds" principle whereby various critical dimensions are related by a factor of three, eg, base diameter = 1/3 maximum piece diameter; height to widest part = 2/3 overall height of piece etc. Rules are there to be broken so we shouldn't slavishly follow them like religious zealots but it's helpful to have them, if only as guides. After all, is not that what our MP's have been doing for years?

**This was only Mark Sanger's second public demonstration and I for one think he acquitted himself very well indeed and I hope that we'll be seeing him again in the not-too-distant future.**

to worry about the restraints imposed by practical necessity. This is best illustrated by the delicate and totally "unpractical" finial adorning the lid of one of Mark's finished forms (see photograph below left). Both my engineering background and personal inclinations conspire against acceptance of the concept of creating objects which have no "practical" use but, having seen Mark's work I am now not only more confident about working with wet wood and especially how to avoid distortion and cracking during seasoning, but I am also strangely attracted to the idea of having a go myself. So the apple tree that a friend kindly gave me and which has been sitting patiently for the past few months awaiting its fate is destined soon to become the focus of my attention. It is unlikely, however that I will be standing before an assembly of club members whilst I'm doing so. I did make a few notes and primarily for those members who, like me are still near

## **An Audience with ‘King’ George**

*by Doug Alderton*

‘King’ George, alias George King, woodturner of the ancient Kingdom of Earthcott, hidden somewhere in the backwoods of South Gloucestershire. Club member George is well known for his contributions each month to the ‘Bring and Tell’ session on our club nights. I for one have been very impressed with the design and finish that he achieves on his woodturning items. Some might call him ‘The Quiet Man’ on first impressions and I thought it might be a good idea to try to get to know him a little better. The opportunity came when on the ‘grapevine’ I heard that George had a large quantity of yew just waiting for any cash-strapped club member to collect for free. Apparently his tree surgeon friend had dumped it on his drive and he needed to get rid of it quickly. While collecting some of the yew I asked George if we could have a day together sometime. To my delight he was quite keen on the idea so it was duly arranged for 10am on a Sunday morning. Peter Oram, membership secretary and a well-known money-extractor for club subs likes to take part in these adventures so with George’s permission I roped him in to make a jolly threesome.

The day arrived and after negotiating a road closure I managed to find ‘The Elms’ the house that George built, well almost. Farmer’s son George had moved into a modest country house near to the farm where he was born. He practically re-built the house, knocking out walls, adding extensions, conservatory, outhouses for workshops, sheds for chickens, and let us not forget, the garden landscaping. That’s when it all started to go wrong, the King was on car park duty and had just successfully directed Pete to his allotted space. Thinking I knew where I was going to be parked I manoeuvred over a part of George’s prized lawn to wait for directions. I certainly got directions, ‘Get off the lawn, I’ve just removed the curb blocks to stop my son’s birthday party hot rods from ploughing it up’. A quiet man he wasn’t. Little did he know that I nearly demolished one of his gate posts on entering, fortunately he hadn’t finished building the dungeons and he couldn’t throw me to the lions as he didn’t keep any so I think I got off lightly. That wasn’t all, as we were entering George’s home I pointed out to Pete the door bell, a real ship’s bell. I couldn’t resist ringing the bell, another misdemeanour, ‘Now you have woken the kids’. Along the adjacent road people were scurrying, summoned to the local church by George’s door bell. That’s when I started to think that I was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

First on the agenda was a coffee and an excellent eccles cake baked by George. Too hot in the conservatory so we sat under the gazebo to enjoy the morning sun. We were joined by George Jr. who had been studying in his bedroom for exams. The garden was more like a theme park. Complete with a bridged pond stocked with Koi carp surrounded by a flower patch, an aviary which housed fourteen nesting cockatiels and a large vegetable plot. In the conservatory is a cactus garden, thriving tomato plants, a grape vine and access to a full length view of the aviary which extends around two of the sides. George keeps the birds for pleasure and would only sell any spare young birds to people whom he knew have aviaries with adequate room for flight. He can tell from the number or eggs that are laid that the birds are in a happy environment. I tried to get him to cook me an egg sandwich but although he takes the eggs from the nesting boxes to prevent lots of little ones he doesn’t eat the eggs. I estimate you would need to use about six eggs to get a good mouth watering greasy sandwich.

I was just about to dose off when George announced that there was work to do and off he went followed by agile Pete leaving me half awake trying to get my head together. Through the house, out through the back door, past the robins' nest on top of the cupboard on the right and into the garden. No sign of the working maniacs and then a shout from above, 'I'm in the



workshop!' Looking up I could see George waving a spindle gouge out of a small window of a tree house built into a white blossoming cherry tree.

He has a sense of humor George so, not to be beaten I took the ladder away. The only escape was down the 'greasy' pole and since there was little choice both he and Pete obliged with dignity, though it was a pity that the family wasn't able to see the spectacle. George Jr. had resumed his studies and the reigning Queen, June, had been dispatched to take Jack the younger Prince down to the 'Mill' to attend the AWGB woodturners youth training weekend. Looking around there seemed to be wood and logs everywhere, at the back of the house, down the side of the house, in a disused hen pen, and on the drive with little room for anything else. In the photograph you see the complete root ball of an English walnut tree and in the pile of logs behind is the



remainder of the twenty foot high truck. Note also one of George's large turned bird boxes attached to the wall of the building and (inset) a table lamp. This tree was bought as a standing tree, less top growth, from one of the local villagers. The tree had to be felled and manoeuvred



over an eight foot high hedge and transported to George's premises about four miles away. George used a low-loader and crane from the farm to transport the timber. It took George a good part of a week to dig the root ball out of the ground and complete the transportation. This just shows how dedicated he is to woodturning. Not all of his logs are used for woodturning as he burns a lot on his wood burning stoves.

George had asked Pete and me to bring our tools as his were with Jack down at the 'Mill'. He took us to his real, well appointed, workshop and showed us his Vic-

marc 175 lathe installed in a small room at the rear of the main workshop. Note the wine rack, top middle, in the photograph, contents reserved for the Knights of Earthcott, certainly not for peasants such as Pete and me. We had a good discussion on tool grinds and bevel angles and as always we agreed to differ on the 'perfect' grind. We thought that George was going to give us a demonstration of his expert woodturning skills but he had other plans, I think he wanted to see what he could learn(!) from two bumbling would-be-woodturners more used to keeping the home fires burning. To be fair to Pete we have made tremendous progress over the last few months - we are now actually learning to shape our firewood we profusely produce. The exercise for the day was to turn a Xmas cracker to George's design - we tried to run for cover but the door was locked. Pete and I, most of the time, are very polite and well-mannered in that we always let the other have a go at turning first. So with the excuse that I couldn't find my glasses I persuaded Pete to show us a thing or two. As the Xmas cracker was in two halves and there was no chance in hell that we could each complete a cracker in the five

hours allotted we decided to share the project, half a cracker each. Some cracker this was to be. With George's CAD - produced method of work and his 3D pictorial view it looked simple enough. Take a piece of ash, round-up, cut a piece off for the tube insert, bore

out both ends, produce 45 degree chamfers in base of bores for cracker banger, part into two pieces, make V grooves, fit banger retaining wedges and fit tube insert, simple really. However, we were a little rusty on using the skew chisel in smoothing out the surface of the 280mm length of ash so to George's dismay we decided that a wavy surface would be an acceptable textured finish. Progress was made, each of us taking a share in the tasks, that is



George's Xmas Cracker.

until we parted off the cracker into two halves and then World War Three was about to start. Fortunately it was time for a break and George suggested having a bit of lunch. Quick as a flash we both agreed and smiles were on our faces again. When faced with the choice of comfort-eating or nerve racking woodturning demonstrating in front of a superior being, no contest really - the food won hands down. He's a fair old cook our George, steaming hot goulash and long grain white rice was the meal of the day with fresh bread rolls and a good pot of coffee. As we proceeded to the dining room wherever we looked in every room, nook, shelf or showcase George's turned work was on display. He has only been turning eighteen months or so and I was amazed at the quantity and variety of items he has turned in such a short time. It would take me at least five years to turn the same number of items and that does not include all of those he has sold at various venues and on commissions.

A stroll in the garden brought us to his recently purchased twelve hens clucking away in the hen house and to their pen, built by none other than George. I always thought that where you have hens there is always a cockerel. Wrong again, apparently hens will produce eggs without being serviced by a cockerel and yet George was looking into buying a cockerel. A cockerel is only necessary if you want the eggs to be fertilised so you can rear chicks, therefore the question arises, why buy a cockerel as George doesn't want to rear chicks and it would be an extra mouth to feed? Stupid me! The answer is, to keep the hens happy and put a smile on their faces. I also noticed that the nesting boxes built into the side of the hen house were closed off to the hens. Seemed strange to me but the explanation was that you needed to train the birds to perch for sleeping and use the boxes for egg laying, otherwise you would get two or three birds trying to get into one nest box. Now that I know all about the birds I'm waiting anxiously for someone to tell me about the bees.

Lunch over and it was back to work, I mean pleasure! Where were we? Cracker in two halves, I am not sure who made the first mistake but neither of us would own up. First mistake, recess for insert tube bored out over size such that the insert wobbled about like a jelly on a stick. Not a problem - use plenty of gap filling glue but remember to build up dam walls at both ends, necessary to prevent glue from running out. Our engineering problem-

solving expertise is second-to-none in the field of woodturning. Next mistake was that one of the V grooves was cut at a slightly reduced angle - more like 30 degrees instead of the 45 degrees required but it was cut to the correct width for the groove. This meant that the groove depth was greatly increased leaving the cracker wall thickness at that point a little weak, in fact if this project was ever finished and you tried to pull the cracker it would have been a dud as it would have parted at the V cut with the rest of the cracker intact. I said to



“..we are now learning to shape our firewood..”

Pete, ‘let's keep going, we are doing fine, it can only get better’. How wrong I was, with the

two halves near to completion it was time to mate the pieces together. Now at this point master turner George, bless his soul, emphasised that the attached tube insert in one half must be a good tight sliding fit in its recess in the other half otherwise the cracker would not hold together. I don't know how it happened, but, as if by magic a spindle gouge appeared in my hand with Pete's hands firmly in his pockets, (I get caught every time). Well, you will have guessed what happened next, we have all done it sometime or other - just taken another shaving off and it was a shaving too far. Funnily enough, that's exactly what happened on this occasion, in engineering terms a cracker with a loose fit. To avoid embarrassment Pete and I decided to keep half a cracker each, that way, not having the other half no one would know of our mistakes as they would be unable to fit the cracker together. That was the end of our turning session and on reflection Pete and I had a cracking(!) time, quite an amusing session and a lot of helpful advice from George. One of George's specialities is his turned floor vases, some up to eighteen inches high and he would like to turn larger and deeper vases. To be able to achieve this he has a slight problem in that the end wall adjacent to the tailstock on the lathe prevents him from using longer hollowing tools so he intends to demolish the wall at some time in the future. Never a dull moment with George.

Pete asked George if he would show him the Computer Aided Design (CAD) software he uses to produce his drawings of his designs and he willingly obliged. Off to his office we did go and he booted up his computer and opened his program of the deluxe version of TurboCAD 15. Although Pete did have a different CAD software package installed on his computer he was not too familiar with the 3D part of CAD. We spent a good half hour with George going through a few basics and showing how a 3D model was built up from a design and how 2D drawings were extracted from the 3D model. Very interesting session but only long enough to grasp a few basic operations and features of the software. George is keen to help any member of the club with CAD training and to this end he is offering one free half day of training to any club member sufficiently interested in CAD. The training would have to be to suit George's timetable and would take place at his home. Any club member interested should contact George directly either on our club night or by telephone on 01454 413029. What a nice man.

Just as we were about to leave the Queen arrived home, hands full of shopping, with Prince Jack. Jack had successfully finished the AWGB youth training course and proudly showed us the turnings he had produced over the weekend - a seven inch diameter nicely finished sycamore bowl and a meat tenderiser made of beech. Also he had partly produced another bowl using green/wet wood. He had told the instructors that he had made a Xmas cracker at home under his father's direction and they asked him to take it down for him to show other trainees. So he was standing in front of Pete and me with this near perfect cracker in his hand. I smiled across at Pete and we were both on the same wavelength, hurriedly hiding our unfinished half crackers from this young woodturner of the future.

Some day Pete and I, through dedication, hard work, sweat and toil will proudly lift our heads high and take our place in the gallery of great woodturners known for their excellence in mastering their craft. In the meantime we will keep hacking away shaping more firewood and keep the home fires burning. The funny thing is that my dear wife, bless her soul, is getting to like some of the rubbish I produce but it seems to disappear when we have visitors. If she forgets to hide my works of art, the visitors do not return. I wonder why?

On leaving we thanked George for a great day, for lunch and his generous hospitality. It was good fun and that is what it was all about, sharing time with a club member and enjoying the moment. Pete and I, to our dismay, never did get our Knighthoods.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Website: [www.avon-and-bristol-woodturners.org.uk](http://www.avon-and-bristol-woodturners.org.uk)*

*Email: [messages@avon-and-bristol-woodturners.org.uk](mailto:messages@avon-and-bristol-woodturners.org.uk)*

*Editor: Mike Openshaw 41 Tyler Close Hanham Bristol BS15 9NG*

*Tel: 01179 607266*

*Email: [woodturn89@gmail.com](mailto:woodturn89@gmail.com)*

**Avon and Bristol Woodturners gratefully acknowledge the generous support of Magnox North (Oldbury Power Station) for the printing of "Turnings"**

## **Chairman's Report**

I am pleased to report that the vacancy on the committee for the Events Manager has now been filled by Ray Mellett, so welcome Ray, we look forward to your contributions.

Congratulations to Mike Openshaw for his first edition of the new look Turnings. We look forward to your future plans, as I know the last one was a rush job before you went off walking the Isle of Wight. Even so a very comprehensive edition, it's your fault you set the bar that high.

*(Thanks Martin for those kind words. Ed)*

\*\*\*\*\*

While I am on the theme of our newsletter, contributions are welcome from any of our members, and as you can see from last month's newsletter it does not always have to be about woodturning. So come on, get writing about your experiences, difficulties and successes in the noble art of woodturning. I know we have many a talented writer amongst our membership as can be seen by the takeover bid by Avon & Bristol of the latest edition of Revolutions from the AWGB which contained articles written by Doug Alderton, Ian Guy, Stuart Bradfield and yours truly. But please be mindful of our editor and submit articles to him typed up, and emailed to him in plenty of time for the edition.

Since our last meeting we have had a full day demonstration at The Mill from **Mark Sanger**, who gave an excellent presentation which I am sure all who attended learnt something and left with a thought in mind to attempt some of the skills he demonstrated. A superb and informative handout was provided by Mark that many of us will

retain and refer to for future guidance. I am sure we will invite him back at a future date. Also Gloucester Woodturners were given a master class of turning when **Tich Renee** was the visiting demonstrator at their May monthly meeting. I went along to support and learn from Tich, who gave a faultless demonstration of his miniature bird boxes and whilst standing at the back I could see many a nod of approval from the 70-plus strong audience. Well done Tich, so sad for Gloucester, never mind we will out-do them again this year at Westonbirt. (Westonbirt! WHO SAID PICK-A-PEG?)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Avon & Bristol** have again taken woodturning out to the community with a display of items from various members in a shop window in St Mary's precinct, Thornbury. I went along to have a look and was most impressed, utilising the club's gallery the display was very professional and is attracting a lot of attention from passers-by. Whilst I was taking a photograph the manageress from Holland & Barrett opposite came out and made a point of saying how nice it was to look out from her shop and not see an empty display window. As a result of this initiative the public have seen still more of our work and hopefully some members have made sales. **Special thanks must go to George King for organising this for us.** Should you wish to go and have a look the display is running until the 24th June.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Good news from our casualty department!** Members Malita Clarke and Brian Oram are recovering quicker than the doctors predicted. Melita's broken bone in her shoulder has healed though the need for physiotherapy is still required. She hopes to be picking up a chisel

again very soon, and if all goes to plan will be able to drive and make it to our next meeting. Brian's foot is healing at a fast rate and he hopes to be able to venture out from the house within the next month. We wish you both a speedy recovery.

\*\*\*\*\*

Before I close, just a reminder that next month's meeting will start with the announced **EGM** to vote on the rewritten constitution (copy attached).

And finally, please take time to read the notice board at the end of this issue for announcements about the **Woodturner of the Year** competition.

*Martin Lawrence.*

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Health and Safety** *(by Ed)*

Glad to hear that Malita and Pete are on the mend. Come back to us soon, you two.

We all know that as long as simple precautions are observed lathe-work is not really a hazardous occupation. Having said that, accidents are by definition unexpected and can therefore occur when we least expect them. For example, carrying the Vicmarc lathe into the hall for our monthly meetings and demos (and back out again afterwards!) is easy provided enough people are around to help, but one person struggling on his own is quite another matter. On the basis that "**many hands make light work**" can I therefore make a plea to those members who are able to arrive a little earlier than usual (ie, a little before 7 pm) on club nights to volunteer their services?

It would also be appreciated if members could help with the chairs before and after our meetings.

*Many thanks.*

**Constitution**  
*(Revised 8th June 2009)*

1. The club shall be known as AVON & BRISTOL WOODTURNERS
2. The club shall be an affiliated branch of the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain (AWGB), and ALL club members are required to be individual members of that association.
3. Branch rules as laid down from time to time by the Executive Committee of the AWGB shall apply in full to this branch of the AWGB.
4. The Club Committee shall produce any other rules it feels necessary for the running of the club, **and amended by the Committee if and when required.**
5. Membership shall be open to any member of the AWGB on payment of the subscription set by the committee and approved by the AGM.
6. The Committee shall have the power to suspend any member or members who act in such a manner as to disrupt meetings, events or act in such a manner as to bring the Club into disrepute.
7. All members may attend all meetings and all activities. **Seminars, workshops, and some demonstrations may involve an extra payment at the discretion of the Committee.**
8. **The Committee have the power to make any person a Life Member or an Honorary Member.**
9. **10 Honorary members have the same access to facilities and events organised by the Club, but they have no voting rights at any meeting.**
11. Potential members may attend two monthly club meetings without charge.
12. All members may attend the AGM and be eligible to vote. All members may offer themselves for election to any office **but must do so by writing to the Secretary at least SEVEN days prior to the date of the AGM.**
13. A committee elected at the AGM shall manage the affairs of the club.
14. **The Committee shall comprise a maximum of twelve members, with the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer and Membership Secretary as ex-officio members. In addition the following shall be recognised committee positions (a) Mill Representative (b) Events Manager. The committee shall elect the Club Chairman from amongst its members at the first Committee meeting after the AGM each year. The other Club Officers are elected by the club members at the AGM or by the Committee. A maximum of five co-opted members may be enrolled to assist in any task and may attend committee meetings.**
15. Tenure of Committee members. Each member shall be elected for a minimum of three and a maximum of four years. The Committee shall organise its affairs so that approximately one third of its members shall retire each year. Retiring members may offer themselves for re-election.
16. Within this rotation process, at no time may (1) both the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, nor (2) both the Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer retire at the same time. In the event that this is dictated by the three year rule the two members concerned shall, by the toss of a coin, decide which one shall continue to serve for a fourth year.
17. Co-opted members shall stand for re-election at the next AGM.
18. The Club Year shall end 31<sup>st</sup> of March.
19. The Committee shall meet as necessary and shall be empowered to appoint sub committees and a maximum of 5 co-opted members, **as deemed necessary by the Committee. Co-opted members shall not be eligible to vote.**

20. A Committee quorum shall be SIX with a minimum of TWO Club Officers and four other committee members.
21. Cheques drawn on the club account shall require two signatures from any of the three nominated Committee members.
22. The AGM shall be convened within SIX weeks either side of the end of the club year.
23. All members shall be notified in writing of an AGM at least SIX weeks in advance of the meeting.
24. Motions for the AGM signed by the proposer, seconder and at least FOUR other full club members are to be received in writing by the Hon. Secretary Five weeks prior to the date of the meeting.
25. Nominations for officers or committee members duly proposed and seconded shall be notified in writing and must be received by the Hon. Secretary no later than SEVEN days prior to the meeting.
26. An EGM may be called by resolution of the committee or by written request of FIVE members, and shall be notified to all members of the branch at least THREE weeks prior to the date of the EGM.
27. Motions to change the Club Constitution shall be submitted to an AGM or EGM if FIVE or more members support the motion. All members will be notified in writing THREE weeks prior to the meeting.
28. Motions will be accepted on a majority vote by eligible members present.
29. A quorum at an AGM or EGM shall be a minimum of ten percent of the branch membership.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT ANY COMMENTS PLEASE USE THE TEAR-OFF SLIP PRINTED BELOW AND PASS TO ANY COMMITTEE MEMBER **PRIOR** TO THE MEETING

---

REGARDING THE AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION OF AVON AND BRISTOL WOODTURNERS DATED 8TH JUNE 2009 I WISH TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

Signature.....Date.....

Name (block capitals please).....





# NOTICES

## WOODTURNER OF THE YEAR COMPETITION.

All members can enter this competition, and this year are allowed to submit up to THREE pieces for judging, each of the pieces must implement a different discipline of turning. Pieces must be brought to the October meeting when they will be judged, the winner will be announced at the Christmas Social in December.

## THORNBURY MODEL ENGINEERING SHOW

A reminder that any member wishing to display their work must submit a description and value of the piece(s) to Simon Keen before 10<sup>th</sup> July 2009, this ensures your work is covered on the insurance.

## WESTONBIRT

Help is required to set up our display and to man the shop, demonstrate on the lathes and of course items required for Pick s Peg. If you can help please let Ray Mellett know in advance.

## **NEW ITEM:** “Ask a Question”

If you have a question about anything to do with woodturning in general, then submit it to our editor, and your committee will endeavour to have an answer in the next issue of Turnings.

## NEXT MONTH'S THEME

“Inverted Turning”.

## Turnings has received notification of an “Open House” event being staged by The Toolpost, details below.

Would anyone who plans to go please let the editor know as he has a couple of small items that he has promised to return to Toolpost “as and when” and this seems to be a good opportunity. If you can help I will be most grateful (and so will Pete Hemsley of Toolpost!)

### ITEMS FOR SALE

A friend of one of our club members is clearing his deceased father's workshop and has the following items for sale: (1) A small Powerline bandsaw (2) An almost new Nu-Tool drill press  
 He is not looking for a lot of money for them but is keen that they go to a good home.  
 If anyone is interested would they please telephone John Crews on 01934 418252

# MEMBERS' COMMENTS

If you have any comments, criticisms or ideas about ways in which you believe your club can be improved please write them in the space below and hand this form to any committee member. You can remain anonymous if you wish.

To A & B W T Committee

Date:.....

From:.....(optional)

Please use this space for your comments - thank you

