



Established 1989

January 2010

TURNINGS

Official newsletter of
Avon and Bristol Woodturners

(Honorary Life President - Max Carey)

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

Chairman's Report

From the few members I have been able to make contact with since my return from India, the **l**and of very hot days and cheap alcohol, I understand that I missed a very good demonstration last month from Frans Brown.

I was able to see some of you at the Christmas Social Event which was sadly very poorly attended, (see postscript below - Ed) but for those who were not present then you missed a fun evening, where friendships are bonded amongst members. My thanks to Lorraine for organising the event and making it a great success for those present. The evening was opened by a lively trio of musicians, Mo Mac 'n' Me playing traditional Irish tunes and there was much tapping feet or fingers in time to the music, fun and libation (with due diligence by those of us who had to drive home - Ed) were had by all. We were even treated to a demonstration of playing the Bones by Ian Guy proving that our members have many hidden talents. After consuming far too much of the excellent spread of food it was my pleasure to make presentations to members.

The first presentation of a **Certificate of Excellence** was made to **Robin Goodman** for his completion of the apprenticeship course at The Mill

The annual awards were as follows:

Novice of the year: **John Ruffle.**

Most Improved (The Derek Harris Trophy) : **Clive Green**

Clubman of Year: **George King**

Woodturner of Year: **George King**

For services rendered to the organising, the unquestionable support and hands-on at all and every event the club is involved in it was the committee's decision and my pleasure to present a certificate of **Life Membership** to **Malcolm (' Tich ') Renee.**

The two other awards up for grabs on that evening were the **Max Carey Trophy for Design & Innovation** and the **2009 Overall Monthly Theme Prize.** Unfortunately I was not able to present either of these as the deserving winner of both could not attend due to his wife being admitted into hospital that day for an operation on her ear. Poor woman, we know how she feels - we always said he talked too much! I do of course hope that she is now fully recovered and I look forward to the pleasure of presenting both the trophy and the gift token for Two Thousand Five Hundred, yes, **Two Thousand Five Hundred** pennies as soon as he is able to attend a club meeting. Well done **Doug Alderton.**

Please bring along your mistakes next month for the monthly theme and be ready to collect a free blank for entry into March's monthly theme. If you take a blank you must enter the next month's competition, so please join in and give Doug a run for his money.

Before I close off my first report of this new year may I on behalf of the committee extend our wishes to you all for a healthy and prosperous new year.

Martin Lawrence.

Post script. *The low attendance at the Christmas function meant that we had to send out 93 copies of Turnings to members. With postal charges rising all the time the committee considered that a cost on this scale placed an unnecessary burden on club finances and we have therefore taken the decision to dispense with the December edition of our newsletter*

**Deadline date for
February's edition
of Turnings
Friday, 12th Feb**

Club website www.avon-and-bristol-woodturners.org.uk

Club email: messages@avon-and-bristol-woodturners.org.uk

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

Email: woodturn89@googlemail.com
01179 - 607266

PRESCRIPTION SAFETY SPECTACLES

By Vernon Hughes

As a consequence of having had two cataract operations in 2009 I have become acutely conscious of the importance of eye protection when turning, having been less than totally disciplined in the past (like many others I suspect). The result of the operations is that I need spectacles only for reading and close work, which includes turning of course. After a month there is a post-operation eye test and you end up with a prescription for your reading glasses, and I duly ordered an inexpensive pair.

However, harking back by inspiration to H & S matters in the working environment long ago I remembered that for workers who normally wore spectacles but were employed on tasks requiring eye protection we used to go to the expense of purchasing prescription safety spectacles for them. Accordingly I asked the staff at my opticians whether they could obtain such specs for me. There was an intake of breath followed by a pause and then considerable rummaging through papers and catalogues, but the eventual answer was 'Yes' and the price would be about £30, which I accepted immediately! I think the sluggish response was due to their having to go away from their normal supplier to a specialist in safety spectacles.

I pass this information on for the benefit of anyone who is not aware that prescription safety spectacles can be obtained. My reason for opting for them is that it is so much more comfortable to use a single, all-purpose piece of eyewear when turning. My pair now has a special (dust-free) stowage place in the workshop to which I make a bee-line immediately on entry.

Trailer and lathe – new home urgently needed

Another request for help from members

We have still not had anyone coming forward to offer a home to our trailer-mounted demonstration lathe. The situation is now becoming critical as Tich, who has for so many years valiantly kept it in his garage now unsurprisingly wants to reclaim the space for his own use.

The plain fact is that if we do not soon find a home for this essential piece of equipment we will be faced with the considerable expense (around £2000) of buying a lockable container - an outlay that could well have an unwelcome impact on subscriptions.

If you yourself haven't anywhere suitable (and we recognise that space is always at a premium in most homes) perhaps you could trawl through your long list of friends and acquaintances and maybe "call in" that long-standing favour you might have done for them all those years ago.

To anyone thinking of offering help it is worth noting that the lathe would remain on the trailer and would be removed only on club demo evenings or for exhibitions. It must of course be kept under cover and be secure.

So if you think that you may be able to come up with a solution to this looming crisis do please contact Martin or indeed any member of the committee. They will be more than happy to hear from you!

SPECIAL CELEBRATION EVENT

WITH GUEST DEMONSTRATOR MARK BAKER
(EDITOR OF WOODTURNING)

TO MARK THE LAUNCH OF THE

MAX CAREY WOODTURNING TRUST

AT THE MILL ON
SUNDAY 21ST FEBRUARY 2010
10.00 - 4.30

Max's Charity Goes Live at The Mill

By Stuart Bradfield

The Max Carey Woodturning Trust went live on the 1st January 2010. To celebrate this there will be an official launch at the Mill on Sunday 21st February and a full day demonstration by Mark Baker, and all are welcome.

The Trust is a 'Not-for-Profit Charitable Company' with the object of 'advancing the education of the public in the subject of Woodturning'.

This will provide a facility to enable the art and craft of woodturning to be developed and encourage woodturners to gain and enhance their skills with a range of programmes. These will include the club's 'Apprenticeship Programme', the new 'Journeyman Scheme', Youth Training, AWGB's Demonstrator Training and Member Training Programmes. The recently formed 'Contemporary Wood Collective' group of mainly professional turners, led by Derek Edwards is using the Mill as their base.

Woodturning can be an expensive activity and as a charity we will be encouraging those who may not have the resources, to take up woodturning, to join the club and use the Mill. As the Trust develops, we will be looking for funding so that those in full time education or on low income can be given an opportunity to participate in woodturning. It is planned to give bursaries to enable talented woodturners to receive professional tuition to develop their potential.

Max has been a proficient woodturner for nearly 70 years, providing encouragement and advice to would-be turners over the decades. Always keen to develop new talent, he can provide the quiet and persuasive support and assistance to overcome almost any problem. His own natural ability together with creative and artistic flare has enabled him to tutor both new and experienced turners alike.

10 years ago Max's vision led him to create the 'Mill', a former joinery shop which had been unused for many years. The Mill has been used by the club providing a focal point for turners to meet, develop their skills and enjoy the pleasant social environment that he has created.

Max has always wanted to set up a charity and when it came up in discussion a year ago I offered to make the arrangements. The Max Carey Woodturning Trust has now been formed and this should ensure the facilities at the Mill are available for the benefit of future generations of woodturners.

The Trust has five trustees/directors: Max, his wife June, Mary Ashton, Tich Renee and myself. None of the directors receive any remuneration other than a small payment to Max for rent and utilities. Over the last year a lot of work has been done in readiness for the launch both to the Mill and to establish the charitable company.

When you are at the Mill regularly, it is easy to forget the work which has been undertaken. It's only when those who only come down to the Mill occasionally see the changes that you realise the developments which have taken place; complete electrical rewiring and new lighting (many thanks to Derek Edwards for leading on the work and his friend Barney for the electrical certification), additional heating, dust extraction equipment, roof insulation (Doug Alderton and Ken Dolling), new kitchen area and toilet facilities (Terry Stevens and Martin Lawrence), just to highlight a few of the ongoing improvements.

A whole range of health and safety issues have been addressed including directors achieving a H&S qualification (Tich) and becoming qualified First Aiders (Tich and Stuart). Risk assessments and members' safety briefings – still progressing (Mary and Stuart). Fire certification and self assessment (one of our new members, ex fire officer Brian Shields). All these things are necessary to ensure that we could get insurance cover for the workshop activities.

It has been a real team effort to get all this in place whilst still keeping the Mill operating. The numbers attending the Mill are constantly increasing and we regularly have 12 – 15 members on both Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Almost 50% of the club's members use the Mill on a regular basis. Currently 8 people are undertaking the 'Apprenticeship' programme and the long awaited 'Journeyman' scheme started in January with 3 members already signed up.

Club members have a unique facility at the Mill which is the envy of many other woodturning clubs, thanks to the foresight and generosity of Max.

WHATS THIS “F” IN TURNING?

The aims of our club are both practical and pastoral, by which I mean that we support each other in the quest to learn the techniques in order to develop and reach our potential in the enjoyment of wood turning and also at other times when in need of support.

It was unfortunate that only about ¼ of the membership attended the Christmas Award ceremony and Social because there was a most amazing collection of work on display, showing the imagination, versatility and skills of our members. This set my mind thinking on a subject, namely **form** and **function**, that has fascinated me since I entered the world of design early on in my engineering career. Here are my thoughts, which I give in the hope that they will set off the debate, get you thinking, and hopefully enable you to pass your thoughts on to us, via Turnings.

The first decisions we have to make when we start out to turn anything concerns its **Function** (ie, for what it is to be used) and **Form** (what shape). Max always instilled in me the importance of being able to visualise the **Finished** item at all times, or in my profession, being able to keep the end in sight at all times.

Form is limited only by our imagination, and is independent of the “customer” who is the consumer, whereas **Function** is determined by the customer. Herein lies the dilemma-since the function can severely limit form, and hence place constraints on our creativity and artistic licence.

In all sectors of industry, be it manufacturing or service, the prime aim is to satisfy the customer. In some cases, customers may not know what is wanted, and thus we have to educate them (some call this marketing, or branding!!), but they will certainly know what they don't want!

In our automobile sector, we unfortunately see the result of the “branding” and “marketing maniacs” arty farty tinkering all around us. My old Volvo 850 estate (Woodmobile) had functional bumpers, which looked chunky, and gave out the message “back off, or else!” They did what they were designed to do-absorb bumps. Hit hard enough, they would spring off, but were easily put back on again with about 6 screws! But no damage was caused to the structure or skin of the car, as I discovered. Now my latest 04 V70 has rounded plastic covered wrap-arounds which form part of the front and rear styling, and a slight scratch results in a hefty bill. Engineers developed plastics for use in certain areas as it was easier to mould, and often cheaper. Now it is used as a cost cutting material, with little consideration of the part's real function, and used as form.

When first learning, I used to get a bit frustrated because the form (shape) was limited by my incompetences, and of course, my mistakes. As I became a little more proficient in using the tools and learning their limitations in my hands I began to experiment (what John Ruff described as “pushing the boundaries”), and discovered the joys of playing with curves in this different medium. As Bert Marsh advocates, “if in doubt, chop it out”. However, my chops were invariably necessitated by my mistakes, whereas Bert's were from his extensive design knowledge, and he knew from where to take it! But it is so satisfying, and changing from one curve to another, and blending them is an art we all learn, from cradle to grave. This reinforced my belief that learning needs to be fun and for it to be fun the “student” should be able to experiment with the tools and end the lesson having not only met the “planned outcomes”, but also emerge with something tangible in the hands.

With customers' appetites thus whetted, and some concrete evidence of progress, the desire to return is high. However, that is another subject, as there are enough academics amongst us to take up that subject!

After all, there is nothing new in woodturning and forms. Most can already be seen in ancient Roman and Egyptian ceramics and galleries up and down the country. But if you do not agree, think about it, and make your views known to a wider audience via these pages.

We all appreciate the tactility of wood, and when we pick up a turned item, it is caressed with care and sensitivity. That raises the question as to why we do so, and why certain forms have existed for so long. Going back to basics, among the several dictionary definitions of the word “shape” is found:- “*well formed or proportioned, : of the right or PLEASING shape.*” This latter definition appeals to me, although it brings in an unknown-“PLEASING” - which to an engineer is subjective. Surely our motive for turning is to please - it matters not whom we please, though mostly it is ourselves! We decide subconsciously what is pleasing, judging when it “gives us pleasure”, so we have now moved away from the strict dimensional aspects to the aesthetics, (which to us engineers, is counter to our training, as we base decisions on facts - conformity to drawing, etc!) not to senses and emotions. But in turning we use all of our senses. As Julie tells us, we “listen” to wood, as it talks to us, (screeching like a baby when it is being “hurt” e.g. when we are taking off too much, have too much tool overhanging, wrong speed, etc). We use our eyes to check on the shape being created, our hands to feel the tool transmissions, and our sense of smell (tool getting hot?). But when it comes to curves, we tend to use our sensitive finger tips, and our cupped hands to feel the smoothness and curve transition, to warm up the wood, to both smooth and finish it, and when satisfied, when that indefinable pleasure is reached, we describe it to ourselves as “satisfying to hold”, taking pleasure in the **Fun** of creation, as it puts us in the right **Frame** of mind, and we reluctantly let go, put it down, and move on to the next curvaceous item. I hope the above gives you some idea as to why I like exploring curves, and why I enjoy my **F** in turning. Happy 2010 turning and don't forget, **you can always practise these curve transition techniques on items for Pick-a Peg to keep your hand in!**

Woodentop

Christmas Social and Awards Ceremony 2009



Above - John Ruffle receives the Novice of the Year award from chairman Martin Lawrence



Former club chairman Ian Guy demonstrates his prowess on the bones at last year's Christmas Social



John thanks everyone for their support and says he will try harder next year



Martin "says it with flowers" to Lorraine for all the hard work she put in to ensure that this year's Christmas Social was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who attended



Tich Renee, (above), the latest and well-deserved Life Member of ABWT



Robin Goodman (above) receives his Certificate of Excellence



George King - 2009's Clubman of the Year and Woodturner of the Year



Clive Green (left), winner of the 2009 Derek Harris "Most Improved Turner" award

NOTICE BOARD

ITEMS FOR SALE

How many of us have at one time or another been forced to reluctantly decline the offer of a huge chunk of wood because it wouldn't fit on the lathe? This can be very frustrating because all too often the final working size would have been within the machine's capabilities - it's just the initial roughing down that is the problem.

But help is at hand. Dick Mather, a former club member has for sale a lathe that he himself has designed for this very purpose. Mounted on heavy-duty castors which can be wedged when the machine is in use it has an impressive centres height of 18" (yes, eighteen inches) and Dick reckons that it is about 80% finished, with some work being needed to perhaps strengthen the toolrest. The present arrangement gives approximately 100 rpm but Dick thinks that the addition of a pulley or two might be beneficial to increase its versatility.

As can be seen in the photographs the lathe is built like a tank and because of this it will have to be a "buyer collects" sale.



And the asking price? - it could be yours for only £30

Also, for an additional £15 you could also be the proud owner of a compatible 9" three-jaw chuck which, says Dick, although it has seen better days it is still in good working order

If you would like any further details about this unique machine please contact Dick on 01225-891379 or mobile: 077620-99256 *

** Please note that in the event of a sale the vendor has promised to make a cash donation to the club's funds - Ed*

Training opportunities for 2010

Gloucestershire Assoc of Woodturners have invited us to join them for a day workshop by Mark Sanger on the 11th Feb. If you are interested contact Geof Gray at geofgray@googlemail.com for more details.

Mark Sanger and Mark Hancock are giving a one day tutorial on making hollow forms - this is part of the member training scheme organised by the AWGB and will be held at the Mill on the 27th March - if you are interested contact Martin Lawrence (martin@lawrence5.orangehome.co.uk) for an application form.

The Mill will also be hosting another Youth Training Weekend on 24th-25th April this is again part of the AWGB development programme this is for people aged 11 to 18. If someone has been to one of these days before they can still come again and get further tuition. Again contact Martin Lawrence (martin@lawrence5.orangehome.co.uk) for an application form.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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