



FEBRUARY 2010

# 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

## Editor's jottings

**A**t the time of writing the weather forecasters are warning us of the possibility of yet more snow. Let's hope they're wrong for there have been enough cold winds and icy conditions to deter me and I suspect many of us from venturing into our workshops. That's one of my excuses for not having gone into mass production in support of the monthly competitions. But such a feeble plea requires some reinforcement and in my case it is that woodturning is not my only hobby/interest so a deal of time management has to be applied. I'd guess that it's the same for all of us, especially those of us lucky enough to have retired. That said though, I have a deep sense of guilt when I see the efforts that some members regularly make while I almost always turn up at our meetings empty-handed. I often ask myself, why did I join the club? and back comes the same answer - to learn about woodturning and hopefully

gain something by mixing with like-minded people. But a club like ours (as with any type of club, as it happens) cannot survive on purely PASSIVE membership for without ACTIVE participation by everyone it would quickly be-



Ray demonstrating the meaning of ACTIVE participation

come sterile and eventually wither on the vine. So this month I will try and turn over a new leaf, bringing not only my pathetic attempts but also the even more pathetic failures for all to see and hopefully learn from! **I hope too that contributions to Turnings will continue to flood in - it is, after all YOUR journal** Ed

**Deadline date for March edition of Turnings is Friday, 12th March**

# Chairman's Report

**T**he year has really moved on very quickly for me and with spring just around the corner it of course means that very shortly club fees will again be due. I am quite sure our treasurer will not turn away anyone who wishes to pay a month early.

Our membership continues to grow as does the kudos of the club, **however I feel I must point out that over the past twelve months I have read at least two articles in widely publicised magazines, where club members are lucky enough to get into print but unfortunately they refer to our club as Bristol & Avon Woodturners. Please continue to promote our club but please, please, please get the name right. We are Avon & Bristol Woodturners and not he other way around.**

Next month is the AGM when traditionally for some reason not many attend. This year we aim for the AGM meeting to last for a short period of time and the rest of the evening is to be taken up by our Vice Chairman Simon Keen giving a demonstration of different texturing techniques, so I hope to see at least the usual numbers in attendance as at other monthly meetings.

Whilst on the theme of the AGM, have you considered joining the committee, we always need new faces and a fresh input so the club can continue to grow and promote woodturning? It is very true to say that the more you put in to the club the more you will personally get out of it. It does not have to take up a lot of your time - the committee only meets once very two months, so please volunteer and become a part of what I believe to be one of the most pro-active woodturning clubs in the country.

Those who will be attending the official launching of The Max Carey Trust on Sunday 21st February are in for a good day with a demonstration from the editor of Woodturnings, Mark Baker and also in attendance will be representatives of the AWGB, The Worshipful Company of Turners plus some of the top names on the demonstration circuit.

A date for your diary is the 1st May when Roly Munro himself will be at Axminster show rooms demonstrating his hollowing tools. Entry is free should you wish to attend.

I hope lots of you take a provided blank away with you from this months meeting and I look forward to seeing your entries in next month's competition. You can make anything you wish from the provided blank - the only limitation is your imagination.

Before I close I would like to extend my thanks to George King for stepping forward and providing a home for the club trailer and contents. Many thanks George for taking this task on and of course my thanks go out to Tich for the 9 or so years that he has been guardian of the trailer and ensured its attendance at all club events.

Martin Lawrence.

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## **Ball Turning**

By Clive Brown

**F**ollowing the visit of Jason Breach to our Club on the 21st January I decided to have a go at turning some balls - rude not to really, following his excellent demo. I don't have a matched pair of ring centres and in all honesty they probably will not be on any immediate shopping list. But what I did have to start the process off was a Steb Centre and a revolving live centre. So the Steb Centre went into the headstock and the revolving live centre into the

tailstock. It did the job perfectly. I started to turn my first ball. You do need to leave a little extra stock on the headstock end so you can turn near to the ball whilst leaving enough wood to allow the Steb centre to drive. Personally I cut the stubs off with a fine saw.

Then I made up some wooden cups from scraps. After a couple of modifications, mainly removing more of the shoulders and reducing the diameter they were fine, though more of the shoulder could be removed on the tailstock one, (see picture). The headstock



cup was held in the O'Donnell jaws. The tailstock cup I made to fit into the cone on the end of an Axminster Hollow Live Revolving Centre (HLRC), (that I did have). I cut the hole in the back of the tailstock cup at an angle to match the end of the HLRC. This I found helped to keep the cup accurately and easily centred when moving the ball about.

Then I tried it. A little bit of modification was required on the recesses in the cups so that the ball sat nicely and I rounded off the edges slightly as over-tightening can cause the ball to get marked. It worked, no real problems. I completed the ball and made a second. The first from oak, the second from iroko.

With practice when sanding the balls it is possible to move the ball about within the cups without switching off the lathe! It's not compulsory! Living life on the edge! With the tailstock remaining clamped but the barrel not locked up, simply grip the ball with your left hand, at the same time you slightly slacken the pressure by a half turn or so, the ball is released and stops spinning. You then move it and nip it back up by adjusting the tailstock barrel. My contribution to H&S. Be careful not to have loose sleeves, rings or other bits that may get caught up. Now that has eased any conscience I may have had.

I admit the first ball turned out under its intended size, the second was closer. At the time of writing I have made just the two; it was good to try something different and to see how I could adapt what I had to hand to do the job.

And lastly, whenever I write an article I must emphasise that I am not trying to teach anyone "how to suck eggs", I'm learning and hope to learn from others. Bit if I succeed in inspiring someone else to "have a go" then the job's done.

Likewise, if you can make any suggestions for improvements etc then please share them with all of us.

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### **Thanks for that Clive**

*One of the penalties of being an editor is applied when he receives requests for the inclusion of excellent articles like this one submitted by Clive. Why? Because, inspired by Jason Breach's very informative demo evening I too "had a go" at turning balls and was so pleased with the results that I thought it would be a good idea to write of my methods for all to see (and learn from!). Then, out of the ether, Clive's email arrives, detailing almost exactly the modus operandus that I (very cleverly, so I thought) had used. But Clive had written his first and what's more he had attached an excellent photograph so really there was no contest. The only major difference between Clive's and my approach was that there is no way that I'd risk getting my valuable digits anywhere near a piece of rotating machinery, even if the wood is stationary, but that's me!*

*Choosing my words carefully, I hope that the "fruits of our labours" will be on display for all to see and marvel at/condemn at the February meeting. Ed*

*Clive has another thought-provoking article elsewhere in these pages - Ed*

# The Mill – a new boy’s view

By “The Dibbler”

I have been making rocking horses and I decided that as far as was possible I would make everything. This of course necessitated my turning the legs for the stands.

To this end I purchased an Axminster lathe (AWVSL 1000) and a set of basic tools.

I achieved a reasonable standard with legs that matched (not easy for a raw beginner). I decided I should try and become more proficient in turning and fully use my lathe. After much searching on the net I found Don White. Being a Cornishman and always eager to return there I decided that Don was the man for me.

It was totally the right decision for a number of reasons. I stayed with Don and Carol who spoilt me with huge breakfasts and good company. Don has a superbly equipped workshop where for two days I was shown much as to turning, sanding, polishing, safety, dust extraction etc etc. I came home proudly bringing the pieces that I (with lots of Don’s help) had made.

Don, a founder-member of our club suggested that I not only join our club but that I should also ensure that I used the facilities and support I would find at the Mill.

I attended one club meeting where I met Stuart Bradfield who then introduced me to Max.

The following week off to the Mill I went. There I found Stuart and another whose name I did not then know but who was ready to take my money for the day. I was asked my name. “Malcolm” says I. “I won’t forget that name because it’s the same as mine but I only respond to the name of Tich”. So now I had met the two who give such unstinted and valuable help to all those who attend the Mill, be it to undertake the Apprenticeship course or simply to make use of the fantastic facilities.

Since that first visit I have never ceased to be amazed and grateful for their continual and generous help on any problem. And lunch break is always a fun time with much varied conversation, usually prefaced by Tich saying ...”It’s time to stop..stop turning and Malcolm, turn off your light”.

I have now covered a number of the training projects, one of the early ones being to turn two different dibbers. Alas, I misread the word and thought they were “dibblers”. I think therefore that for all time my Club name will be “Malcolm the Dibbler” or perhaps just “Dibbler”.

Unfortunately I am unable at present to do any turning as I have suffered a broken ankle but I long for the day when I can return to the Mill, finish my apprenticeship course and progress to the Journeyman course. But more than just woodturning, I do so enjoy the company of my fellow turners. To Max and June in particular, but no less to Tich, Stuart and everyone else involved, thank you for making this all possible.



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*Sorry to learn of your injury, Malcolm - I trust it wasn't turning-related. Hope to see you back with us very soon. I will preserve your anonymity pending your return to the fold. Ed*

Club website	<a href="http://www.avon-and-bristol-woodturners.org.uk">www.avon-and-bristol-woodturners.org.uk</a>		
Club email:	<a href="mailto:messages@avon-and-bristol-woodturners.org.uk">messages@avon-and-bristol-woodturners.org.uk</a>		
Turnings Editor:	<b>Mike Openshaw</b> 41 Tyler Close	Hanham	Bristol BS15 9NG
Email:	☎ 01179 - 607266 <a href="mailto:woodturn89@googlemail.com">woodturn89@googlemail.com</a>		

**A plea from the Editor** Your contributions are the lifeblood of Turnings - true, I could always write more but you don't want to hear only one person's point of view as it might be ever-so-slightly biased. But in order to ensure that I don't miss or mislay your contributions can I ask that you send your pieces to the “Woodturn 89” email address (see above) which was set up for this purpose and not to my personal email. Many thanks.

## 2009 Christmas Social - Re Chairman's Report January Turnings

I was saddened to read that the Christmas social event was poorly attended, (Chairman's Report Turnings January 2010). I believe I can shine a little light on the possible reasons why that may have been so.

Whilst at The Mill following January's club night one of our members stated that they did not know anything about the social event. A short discussion then took place and a couple of others around the table stated likewise. For my own self I knew there was something taking place, I believe it was mentioned at a club night but I did not know any details. Now I'm big enough and ugly enough to have asked but I didn't, so I accept that I must shoulder some of the responsibility. But in my opinion the event was not sold, pushed or advertised enough, call it what you will.

I wonder how many of the ninety-three who did not attend are of the same mind. For my part I feel that had it been pushed a little more I would have made the fifty-mile alcohol-free round trip to attend.

That makes me think - were wives, girlfriends or lovers invited? Also, the fact that it happens every Christmas does not necessarily mean that everyone knows about it.

In my experience these events need to be pushed - a little cajoling of members often works wonders.

Purely my own thoughts.

Clive Brown

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*Having been able to so far attend only the one social I am unable to make comparisons with previous events. However, I was rather surprised at the low attendance, bearing in mind the undoubted enthusiasm of so many members to come to the monthly meetings and this was reflected in comments made to me during the evening by a number of people who had enjoyed previous socials. I have trawled through back numbers of Turnings and to my surprise there are no references to the 2009 event so I have to shoulder some of the blame. But, that said, I was aware of the party and I did go. What is more I did enjoy the evening and will make sure I'm there next time - if indeed there is a next time, for it must be remembered that these events are organised for all our benefits by just a few of our members and, as I said in my introduction it is only ACTIVE participation that will keep the club going. Ed*

## ABWT The South West Model Engineering, Model Making and Hobbies Exhibition (SWMEE) 17th-18th April, at the Shepton Mallet Showground.

Once again, we are supporting this exhibition as part of our policy to continuously publicise the existence, and activities of our club, and hence the art and practices of Woodturning.

It is proposed to have a static stand, which will exhibit the work of our Club members, and provide an opportunity to sell to the general public. There will also be live demonstrations of various turning techniques. Unlike last year we will not be taking our piece de resistance - the Pick a Peg stand, as it left us very short of items for Westonbirt and was not really cost effective

HOWEVER, without YOUR support, participation will not be possible, so this is advance notice that we require volunteers to man the demonstration and sales stand, to supply articles for both exhibition and sale, to transport kit to and from, and help plan the event. The whole show is a fantastic event, well organised, with so many various hobbies and crafts and hobbies on show, held in a most friendly atmosphere, so :-

- Please let me know if you can help, which days, and preferences, and
- Get practising and making items for Pick a Peg

Ray Mellett

Contact me on :-[ray.mellett@lineone.net](mailto:ray.mellett@lineone.net)

Phone 0117 3306 193 (Home) or 07971 431 789 Mobile)

More details can be found on [www.swmee.co.uk/info.asp](http://www.swmee.co.uk/info.asp)

# Memories of the previous meeting on 21st February 2010



**Monthly competition first prize to Robin Goodman**

**Monthly competition second prize to George King**



*"There must be a join somewhere". Lorraine and prospective member Charles Morton examine George's Yard of Ale*

**Not everyone can win - but the high standard of the entries submitted for January's monthly competition made the judges' task a very difficult one**



Last month's demonstrator, Jason Breach presented a revealing and interesting programme of turning skills which subsequently inspired at least two club members to try their hands at turning wooden balls.



# CAD – a tutorial with George

*by Mike Openshaw*

**S**ome members might recall that, in the wake of the July “Members’ Evening” George generously offered a morning’s free tuition on CAD (Computer Aided Design) to anyone interested.

**Having seen exactly what can be done (especially as it was with a program that I have owned since 2002 but never used) I put my name forward at once as did fellow member Mike Edwards.**

So it was that sharp at 0830 on a snow-free January morning we duly arrived at George’s rural retreat where, after a welcome cup of coffee we dived straight into the matter in hand.

George’s first problem was to find out how much we knew – how long does it take to say “nothing?” so that hurdle was easily negotiated.

Our tutor then launched into the basics, explaining, for example, the difference between “paper space” and “model space” and how each should be used. We then looked at drawing basic straight lines before moving on to more elaborate curved figures. These of course included arcs and ellipses but also, and perhaps more interesting and useful to wood turners, the sophisticated “splines” and even more exotic “Bezier” curves (named after the Frenchman who developed the mathematical algorithm for the Renault car company). The reason why these are so important to us is because the curves we are always striving to produce in our work are rarely regular, eg circular or elliptical. As Ray so eloquently pointed out in his article in last month’s Turnings we are forever seeking to create forms that have curves which blend one into the other in a pleasing way with a subtlety that is very elusive except to very experienced and skilled turners.

So, when laying out a design on paper the traditional “ruler and compasses” draughting techniques limit us to drawing a plan view only of a vase, whereas the profile, the bit we’re really keen to get right, has to be sketched freehand, perhaps helped by using squared paper. If we are conscientious we can then draw it in boldly using French Curves or a flexible rule but even then the shape can be “not quite right” so we have another go, repeating the process as many times as necessary until either we’re satisfied or, (and more likely), we’re fed up.

CAD, and in particular the spline and Bezier functions eliminate these traditional problems by allowing you to experiment to your heart’s content without having to put pencil to paper until you are happy with your design.

And once you are pretty well satisfied you can then go one important step further by converting your standard two-views plan and elevation into a three-dimensional image which can be coloured and textured to a close approximation of your finished article. Moreover this image can be rotated in any direction – something we all do when examining a turned item - so that if, for example, you notice that a particular shape doesn’t work when viewed from a certain angle you can then go back and modify it. By the time you get to the lathe there should be little or no uncertainty as to whether or not your design will emerge as planned.

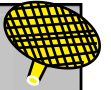
All of this and more was demonstrated to us by George but he also made us have a go ourselves – not so scary as using a skew for the first time but almost as unnerving because my mind immediately went blank as I tried to draw a simple rectangle then add a semicircular “conservatory” to one end. But, as George said when he came to my rescue, “it is simply a matter of practice, practice and still more practice” (I heard echoes from the distant past of my music teacher’s voice and couldn’t help making a mental note that some of us need more practice than others!). But he’s quite right – most of us (hopefully ALL of us) are competent car drivers but there was a time when we would have been struggling to master all the complex moves needed to control what is potentially a lethal piece of machinery. A CAD program is most certainly not potentially lethal but it definitely is a very useful tool and for anyone interested in design it opens a gateway to a new world.

Have I mastered it yet? Of course not but I do feel that I am making progress, progress along a path along which, without George’s generous help I know I would not now have been moving. It’s a long road through a sometimes Kafka-esque landscape but for me at least that is part of its attractiveness. Does that say something about me, I wonder?

**So, once again George, thank you very much for your kindness and hospitality. I hope one day to produce a work of art that will justify the time you spent with Mike and me.**



# NOTICE BOARD



A hot tip from Ray which I forgot to include in last month's edition - apologies once again Ray.

I came across a PROOPS catalogue, and a few comparisons indicated 1/3 cheaper than in Axminster catalogue (polishing mops, spigots grinding wheel dresser, countersink drills, etc.) [www.proopsbrothers.com](http://www.proopsbrothers.com)

*We're always on the lookout for ways in which to save money so if anyone finds a bargain then please share it with all of us via these pages. Ed*

## Repairs and Servicing

Turnings has received an email from a Mr Leon Baker, formerly a Royal Navy Weapons Engineer and who is now a self-employed engineer, working with his father. Leon wonders whether any club members would like their machinery serviced or repaired. For further details contact Leon on 07738089931 or by email on : [leon6115@googlemail.com](mailto:leon6115@googlemail.com)

## FOR SALE

**1 Viceroy cast iron floor mounted lathe 40" bed 10" turning between centres outboard 18" bowls**

**1 Startright huge industrial vac cleaner capacity to store waste almost 1 cubic metre (4" vac pipe )**

**1 box of accessories for the lathe which include one Axminster chuck with 3 jaw options and one heavy screw chuck. Price all £150**

If you are interested please contact me on 01278 452424 home phone, mobile 07941220076 or e mail me on this contact [mike.dando@sharpinterpack.co.uk](mailto:mike.dando@sharpinterpack.co.uk)

## A date for your diary

**The next club meeting is on Thursday, 18th March when our demonstrator will be Keith Lanchester.**

Reading the notes from an AWGB - sponsored Demonstrators' Training Day that took place in December 2009 at West Midlands Woodturners we note that one of the most important tips Keith says he picked up was always to have a "Plan B" ready in case your demo goes wrong.

## ABWT Welcomes new members

Turnings is delighted to welcome new members Andrew Motley, Ian Burke and Daniel Lincoln to the club. It also gives us great pleasure to welcome back a past member, Chris Pratt who has decided to rejoin the club after an absence of some time.

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We are also very sorry to announce that Alan George, one of our long-standing members has decided to resign his membership of ABWT. Alan would like to thank everyone for their companionship and help over the years and we, in our turn wish Alan well for the future and hope that he will drop in and see us from time to time.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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