



May 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

Avon & Bristol Woodturners

Annual General Meeting 15th April 2010
Chairman's Annual Report

It is hard to believe that a year has passed since I was elected Chairman, so much has happened in the last twelve months, it is now time to reflect on the past year and plan for the future.

The club continues to grow in numbers with a rise of approximately 10% , which is good news for all as this means the every day cost increases incurred by the club are offset by the income from new members. So the good news is that membership fees do not have to be increased and can remain the same for the present time.

Over the past year the club has once again represented woodturning to a wider community, attending and displaying at The South West Model Engineering and Hobbies show at Shepton Mallet. Thornbury Model Engineering show and Exhibitree at Westonbirt. Although the credit crunch paid its part and the income was lower than previous years, as a club we still made a profit and although this is very important I feel members getting together setting up and being around the public showing a relaxed but professional attitude forges friendships and bonds those members closer together which in turn can only benefit the club.

The Mill has grown from strength to strength and successfully achieved many of its aims, lots of work behind the scenes enabled The Mill to officially launch The Max Carey Woodturning Trust in February with attendance from the Worshipful Company of Turners and the AWGB along with many members from an assortment of clubs entertained by an all day demonstration by Mark Baker. The Mill has also been the venue for other all day demonstrations by Bert Marsh and Mark Sanger, AWGB training courses for Youth and Member Training and holding continued training for the youths at a club-organised course to continue their progression in the craft.

The monthly club meetings see a growing number of members attending, and the introduction of quarterly hands- on nights has brought lots of positive feedback and has therefore been introduced through the whole of the next year's calendar.

Deadline for the June edition of Turnings - Tuesday, 8th June

The club apprenticeship training run at The Mill continues to grow with the following members attaining the award of a certificate of excellence upon completion of the course, so congratulations to John Ruffle, Robin Goodman and Alan Stone.

A further achievement to be recognised is that of Mary Ashton being accepted as a Registered Professional Turner. Congratulations Mary, I have no doubt you will grow from strength to strength and we will see you on the demonstrator's circuit in the months ahead.

The club's annual awards ceremony at our Christmas social evening saw the following members receive rightful recognition for the following categories: Woodturner & Clubman of the year to George King; Most Improved Turner (The Derek Harris Trophy) to Clive Green; Novice of the Year to John Ruffle; and Doug Alderton was the first recipient of the Max Carey Trophy for Design and Innovation.

The next award to be presented is not an automatic annual award but is given to a member for outstanding contributions of time and effort to the benefit of the club, and I was honoured and happy on this occasion to make the award of Life Member to Malcolm 'Tich' Renee. A thousand times "thank you" would only just scratch at the surface of what you have done for this club.

Looking back the club has much to be proud of, the name Avon & Bristol Woodturners is still recognised as a very pro-active club promoting woodturning to the community as a whole and with the help of you the members I trust we can continue into the future to grow and develop.

Before closing I wish to extend my thanks to the committee for their support and advice over the past twelve months. I would also ask that you the members recognise the amount of work that they do to ensure the club continues to function for the benefit of all. I would like personally to express grateful thanks to our club Hon. Secretary, John Wilson-Smith as he steps down from this post after many years on the committee. The smooth running of any club cannot happen without the strength of a good secretary to hold everything together, thank you John, your contribution has made the club all the better and your calm approach and advice will be missed. Also taking a step back from the committee is Ray Mellett who has amazed us all after his battles with the surgeon's knife yet still finds the time to assist in the running of the club. Thank you Ray, your humour at committee meetings will be greatly missed.

Of course these resignations cause problems for the club but fortunately John Ruffle has stepped forward for the role of Hon Secretary. **However, volunteers are required for the role of Events Organiser and Hon Treasurer**, as Dave Ward has also expressed a wish to step down by this time next year.

For the club to continue these vacancies need to be filled, so please give this matter some serious consideration. Remember, no matter how skilled the Captain, the ship will still run aground without a crew to assist. This is the position I find myself in as I look to the next year as our Chairman if so elected, **but whoever is at the helm the problem has to be resolved if the club is to continue, so please step forward, accept the Queen's Shilling and keep our ship afloat.**

Thank you for an enjoyable year.

Martin Lawrence.

“Art in Action”

The dates for the above exhibition this year are 15 -18 July 2010.

To paraphrase from their publicity material :-

Art in Action is a festival of fine art and master craftsmanship where artists take visitors on a creative journey demonstrating what they do. There will be over 150 artists, craftsmen and ladies, specialising in a wide range of activities from Art (painting, drawing, sculpture) ceramics, metalwork & jewellery (gold and silver) through to our favourites towards the end of the alphabet viz:- woodwork and woodturning. Among the turners last year were Stuart Mortimer, Tobias Kaye and Dennis Hales and the woodworkers included:- Robert Ingham (fine boxes and cabinets), Nick Over (traditional furniture) and the list goes on!

It is a splendid day out and well worth the drive to Waterperry Gardens near Wheatley, a few miles east south east of Oxford. In all honesty one day is hardly enough. There is something for everyone including the children.

Further details at www.artinaction.org.uk or pick up a leaflet on club night.

Roy Stewart.

In answer to Stringfellow's Rant.

It is clear that he is writing from 'a committee member' point of view and in fairness to other committee members he shouldn't hide behind a pseudonym. However, having said that he is no doubt expressing the frustration of other committee members. Committees, since time immemorial, have never had the support that they feel they need and have always had to cut their suit(s) to suit their cloth. Our club has grown in numbers and is now almost bursting at the seams. It is inevitable that the membership will range from the enthusiastic to the mildly interested. The bigger the club the larger the mildly interested group will be. The job of the committee is to enthuse the also-ran's, not to lecture them. Also it is worth remembering that our News Letter now goes out to a worldwide audience.

Roy Stewart

An appeal by Brian Oram for your help.....

Exotic Woods

My elder daughter has just had a holiday in Tasmania and as a result I am now the proud owner of the following bits of timber :-

A large blank of 'Black Heart Sassafras', four pieces of one of ordinary sassafras, ie it doesn't have the same colouring and three other pieces of Blackwood, Myrtle, Celery Top Pine.

I am also going to get some 'Huon Pine' in due course. I can find out very little about these woods and their characteristics. So far as the Huon Pine is concerned I know that it was used to build sailing ships for the Royal Navy because of its special qualities but I don't know what these were. In fact my daughter was visiting a friend doing an archaeological dig on a ship building site. Any information or easy-to-access sources would be appreciated.

Brian Oram

A personal message from Ken Crittle

After 15 years-plus belonging to Avon and Bristol club the long journey to and from Bristol has persuaded me that the time has come to give it up.

Thanks to Avon and Bristol club and past and present members for a varied experience and I hope that all the new members get as much out of it as I have belonging to a most successful club.

Regards,

Ken

Shepton Mallet Model Engineering Exhibition

Despite my many fruitless reminders at the Club meetings, we ran a stand at the show comprising 3 sales tables, a lathe demonstration and the Gallery, but no Pick-a Peg, which was really successful in terms of sales and publicity, and for those few of us demonstrating, more experience at talking and doing at the same time. Yet again, despite the disappointing level of support from the members, it met all the success criteria set last year. The "diligent dozen", including Pete, his wife, Debbie, who did a magnificent job, and to them all my personal thanks are expressed. (We have a membership of over 100!) Again we broke another record in sales takings, over £500 and I am grateful for the few who brought their wares. It was small but deserved compensation for those few who worked so hard to transport, set up, man, strip and return all the kit. The Gallery generated a lot of compliments and interest, and we were kept busy all the time with enquiries. Despite only having one lathe this year, the demonstrators, who did hourly stints, all generated much detailed interest and the rapport between onlooker and demonstrator was of a high level. That we are blessed with such hitherto hidden talent is a credit to the club. Despite my time being severely limited in the organising and planning prior to the event, and the odd items having been left behind, the five of us managed to transform the large open corner site by innovating to overcome the difficulties, and it was all set up between 10.30 and mid afternoon. By doing hourly stints in each area, we managed to engage with the visitors and focus on them. The backgrounds and stories told really were amazing, and the scale and scope of the questions was large, ranging from tool construction, management and usage, lathes, finishes, techniques, timbers,



Bryan entertains an admiring crowd with a mixture of woodturning and verbal skills



Onlookers admire the variety of members' works on display

courses, to our apprenticeship and journeyman scheme. Again, Jenny Starbuck in her wheel chair, complete with a Dalek "Exterminate" warning system, visited us and we spent ages discussing the advantages of having a facility like the Mill whilst she has to work with limited facilities on a sort of "distance learning" technique at her club. She expressed a desire to do a "hands-on" at the Mill on the Thursday prior to her programmed demonstration at the club in the evening which I had arranged (see next year's programme - details later). For me, the spirit and culture of the whole event was summed up by just one small incident that made it all so worthwhile. Last year, at the start of my stint on the lathe, a family appeared with a young boy. On asking what he was interested in, he replied that it was gardening, as his Mum had just given him a piece of garden for him to look after as his own. So I asked him to wait and I would make him a dibber, which I did. Pleased as punch, he goes off with this - another satisfied customer, thinks I. This year, Clive faced the same dilemma when faced with a family of 3 young sisters. HE'D MADE TWO MUSHROOMS AND THE LOOK ON THE THIRD GIRL'S FACE WAS ONE OF DISAPPOINTMENT. I told him my story so he decided to make her a dibber, having first asked to see her hands so he could make it her size. With that I left him to his project, but no sooner had I started to go around the back of the gallery than I heard Clive shouting for me. He said a young lad was asking for me, and he turned out to be the one for whom I'd made the dibber last year. He had so enjoyed his gardening that he came to personally thank me for the dibber. What a nice polite young lad - a possible member in a few decades time.

Ray Mellett

A Simple Variation on a Jam Chuck

From The Dibbler

This variation enables the item to be held and removed more easily.

Material required:-

1. Almost any wood will do the job. For eggs I used an off cut of Tulipwood. 75 mm H x 75 mm W x 85 mm L. but for fruit you may want bigger timber (the principle is the same for any item)
2. 1 Large Jubilee clip (I obtained mine from Pan Tools)

Turn to approx 70 mm diameter. True up the end, and create a suitable tenon.

Mount the wood in the chuck, and then:-

1. With a 50 mm Forstner bit reduce the lathe speed to approx 500 and create a hole approx 35-40mm deep.
2. Follow this with a 20mm bit drilling in a further 10mm.
3. Finally with a 10mm bit drill a hole right thru the chuck. This last hole enables you to remove the finished item from the chuck with ease.

The area drilled, and depth cut can then be enlarged dependent on the item to be held. Finally reduce the diameter where the Jubilee clip will fit so that it will have a "key".

I have marked on the wood the positions of the chuck jaws so that it can always be replaced in the same position.



NOTE: It is VERY important to remember when using a Jubilee clip that its protrusion could really hurt when turning. I have now painted mine RED to make it that much more visible

Remove from the Chuck and on the open end saw 8 cuts to the depth of the 50mm hole. Ideally these would be a double cut to ease the "grip".

With the chuck mounted, and the item to be turned inserted in the chuck the tailstock will assist in centring before tightening the Jubilee clip.

The two following articles were submitted (in good time!) last month by Max but for some unaccountable reason were missed from April's edition. With profuse and profound apologies to Max they are reproduced here in full. The first refers to the official inauguration on 21st February of the Max Carey Woodturning Trust and Max continues with an interesting series of confessions about his favourite tools - Ed

A message from Max:

Dear fellow club members,

Thanks for your support and hard work, marking a "red letter" day in our club's history – 21st birthday, 10th anniversary of the Mill and, especially, the launch of the Trust, thus ensuring the future and firmly establishing our facility on the woodturning map.

We were honoured by the presence of Peter Ellis who proposed the toast and unveiled the Trust's plaque, of Ray Key, out AWGB President, Reg Hawthorn, Chairman of AWGB, Peter Bradwick, Nick Agar, Jason Breach and last but by no means least, of Mark Baker who treated us all to a

superb all-day demonstration. We very much missed being able to welcome Barry Surplice and were extremely sorry to hear that Bert Marsh was unable to attend because of ill health. We wish Bert a full and speedy recovery.

The day was very well organised, and fronted by my successor, Stuart Bradfield, after a year's un-stinting work setting up the Trust and charity foundations. We must count ourselves extremely fortunate to have such a capable director, ensuring the future of the Mill.

Our current staff, Tich, Ray, Mary, Alan N., Clive, Doug, Alan S, all "in-house" trained and now very competent.

Another big "thank-you" to Tich – the buffet lunch was great. And Doug's resume was so professionally presented.

All in all a truly remarkable and memorable day.

Max.

Max's favourite tool.

Let us disregard the array of electrical tools now available at extremely low prices (and where would today's chippies be without them? I ask.)

So, narrowing it down to hand-tools, I suppose, for the hedge-carpenter it would be a hatchet – it cuts wood to length, splits it to required size and the back end is used as a hammer. What more does he need?

But this is not quite what the instigator of this subject meant!

Any tool has to feel right in the hand and of course, hold its edge. Looking good helps but the patina of use and age brings in romance and preference. Yes, we unwittingly become very attached, to some more than others but which one is the favourite, that is the question?

A Norris smoothing plane, circa 1890 I inherited as a third generation owner and which has been in constant use, has to be considered.

A lovely old Firmer cabinet-maker's socket-handled, (complete with leather washer) 5/8" chisel which I've retrained as a skew is another which has also been in continuous use and which I would have difficulty in replacing

There was a time when my Diston saws would be considered. Ok, the saw takes 1/2 hour to sharpen and set but it took a lovely edge though. But have you seen the price of triangular files lately? It's now cheaper to buy "throw-away" saws!

But after due consideration it has to be a claw-hammer – a 50-years-old Eastwing which belonged to my grandfather, Seth who bequeathed it to me in his will some 40 years ago. It has to be the most exacting tool in the box.

The 5/8" skew though is a tool I also would not part with as this is probably my second favourite. What's yours?

Max

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Make Your Own Hollowing Tools

Clive Brown

I had been meaning for some time to make my own hollowing tools and had spoken with some other club members about it. My mind was made up when I attended the one day hollowing course at The Mill in April with Mark Sanger and Mark Hancock where the deficiencies of one of my shop bought hollowing tools was pointed out to me, (in a very polite and helpful way! Thanks Mark). The ease and low cost of production was explained to me along with the benefit of making a tool that also better fits your needs.



So, I looked on the internet for some info and signed on to e bay where I purchased some Stainless Steel (SS) bar, whoops! Why stainless? I thought it would be better and I suppose it is, but after break-

ing two taps I realised it's a bit harder to work with than your ordinary steels. The engineers amongst you will now get into a huddle and have deep meaningful discussions on what I have just written. Anyway the next attempts were made with ordinary bright mild steel.

From left to right in the picture they are 10mm SS, 10mm SS, 12mm SS, 1/2" Mild Steel and 5/8" MS. Bending was done cold, I used a strong tube over the end of the bar as a lever with the other end of the bar in the forming hole of an anvil which is in the yard at The Mill. Crude I know but it's a step up on just clouting it with a hammer! You need to make sure that the two bends are kept in the same plain. I drilled and tapped all the bars for 4mm screws. On reflection maybe I should have used 5 or 6mm, though I have doubled up on some and 6 mm on the smaller bar would not have left very much if anything for the thread. OK, what really swayed me was that I already had the 4mm taps, 3 of them luckily for me! One piece of advice was to superglue the tips in place but I opted to drill and tap. The advantages of this (I believe) is that I am able to use square HSS tips in a round hole, being square when ground to produce a cutting edge things are more quickly achieved and also the screws sit onto a flat surface giving a more positive lock down. The fourth tool in the photo is shown with a square tip fitted. I needed to round the edges slightly so that it fitted through the 6.55mm diameter hole. I used 6.55mm because I had the drill to hand and it gave clearance for 1/4" diameter bar. The two straight bars are drilled through on both ends at different angles, I was able to this because I opted to buy a shop handle that has various sized collets to take different sized bars up to 5/8". Many of you will think that was a bit of a cop out. Fair enough, but I would have had to make 5 handles and without some additional design features would not have been able to use both ends of the straight bars. The tips are all home made except for the three on the top left which can be used on my bars. I'm trying out three different types of screws, socket head, pan head and grub screws.

All the bits and pieces I sourced on e bay save for the mild steel bar and some extra HSS for cutting tips that I bought at The Model Engineering Show at Shepton Mallet. If I hadn't bought the Stainless Steel bar the tools with a tip or two could be made for well less than £10, less than a fiver for the bar and a couple of pounds for the HSS for the tool tips. Compare that with the cost from the big names and you should be asking yourself how can it be justified? With the money saved you could buy yourself some more wood - I have done once or twice but try to avoid getting into bad habits.

This is not a new idea of mine. It's all been done before and I don't mind betting better in many cases! And I bet some of you are saying mine are better then that or I could do better. That's fine by me but to the others of you I say, have a go. There's a lot of knowledge out there to help you if you get stuck and the pleasure in using something you have made yourself, not to mention the cost is very rewarding.

There is a nice article on the internet if you search Laymar Crafts Woodturning, Hollow Form and Other Tool Bits.

Chairman's report May 2010

By Simon Keen In loco parentis

Cracker Barrel Philosophy.

The club's AGM is over and by the time you read this the national election will be over too, so we will know who is running what.

It was Don White, one of the turners who started the AWGB who convinced me I should attend the first meeting of what was to become the Avon and Bristol Woodturners. If you look up my AWGB number you will see it is 180 so over the years I have seen changes to the club and its personnel. I have also heard the same repeated discussions.

For as long as I can remember we have been fine tuning the competition rules and projects, I have heard all the same reasons why people don't take part. For some they simply do not have the time, years ago it was "the same people always win". For some they feel that the project is far and away beyond their skill/design level. Is it? If you are one of those I would suggest that you may like to drive down to Portishead and ask for help and I am sure it would be forthcoming. While you are driving down there, think "I have mastered the hand-eye-and-foot coordination of driving this car, I mastered the spatial awareness needed for parking; I studied the design features of the car before I bought it. If I can do all those things then I should be able to take part in a competition that will stretch me and make me a better turner.

At the AGM there was discussion about the news letter. This is the most important communication tool the club has. It keeps members who cannot attend meetings up to date with what is going on, it tells of what will be happening in the future. If a member wishes to express his or her views then this is the forum, the committee should worry only when everyone in the club expresses a view different from theirs. It is the sharing of ideas and discussion that generate inspiration.

If you find the idea of writing an article for the clubs news letter daunting think of it as writing a letter to a friend/club member, for example:

Dear Ed

I wonder how many other club members had the chance to visit the exhibitions of woodturning by George King, Martin Lawrence and Simon Keen on the Severn Vale Art Trail.....

Or

Dear Ed

I visited the Yandles show at the week end I saw a new tool on display and it reminded me of one my father had 60 years ago

Or

You could send in a photograph

Dear Ed

I saw this at a show - can anyone tell me who turned it?

Or

I am thinking of upgrading a piece of machinery, can anyone help?

Use the news letter - it is as important to the club as your own lathe.

Now on to something of equal importance - The Bristol Engineering and Hobbies Exhibition. This year the dates are 20th, 21st and 22nd of August at the Thornbury Leisure Centre. The club has always put on an exhibition of outstanding work so please submit to me details of any work you would like to exhibit/sell. The organisers have to print the placement cards and arrange insurance for all work on display.

The details should include (a) the wood(s), (b) what it is, (c) the price/value. I transfer this information to a pro-forma, a copy of which goes to SMEE and I keep a copy. **The first week in July is the cut off point.**

NOTICE BOARD

Improve your turning skills!

We are delighted to announce that Nick Agar will be demonstrating at the Mill on Saturday, 24th July and this will be followed on Sunday, 25th July by all-day "hands-on" instruction by Nick. If you feel that your turning needs a bit of ironing out this is your opportunity to do it. Full details can be obtained from Martin or any committee member.

Next month's meeting will be on Thursday, 17th June

Our invited guest is Rod Page. Rod specialises in making pieces from what he describes as "interesting timbers". These comprise hollow forms and bowls, vases and table lamps. Further details can be found on Rod's website: www.rodpage-woodturner.co.uk

Editor's jottings.

Following on from Simon's comments, we now have two new governments, one based in London and the other, more important to us as club members, here in Bristol. Our new committee was elected at what might be described as a "lively" AGM in which strongly-held views were aired and debated and, with an attendance of around 55 members, (in percentage terms about the same as for the General Election), the decisions taken were about as meaningful as the national vote. It will be interesting to see whether members have any comments about that.

Exhibitions

I attended the Shepton Mallet model Engineers' show in April, sadly for only one day, and considering that it was primarily an engineering-based show the interest shown in our woodturning was very remarkable. But it must be said that this interest was very much stimulated by those members who stood at the lathe all day showing the visitors what can be done, proving that actions speak louder than words. Not all of us would have the confidence, let alone the skill, to stand before a bunch of strangers but that said, there must be many more than three or four members who would be happy to demonstrate their techniques to the wider public. And there is no better way of enthusing the as-yet unconverted than by demonstrating. For my part, I possess neither the skill nor the confidence (yet) which is my feeble excuse, but I'm sure that there are many who have no such inhibitions. **So, to you in particular I make this appeal - do put your name forward for these events - the next one is in August when we will be appearing once again at the Bristol model Engineering and Hobbies Exhibition in Thornbury Leisure Centre.** And, to people like me my message is, keep practising and by so doing you too will one day be able to pass on your skills to others.

Finally, can I thank our contributors to this month's edition for it is YOU who make Turnings what it is and should be. Collectively we possess an enormous wealth of knowledge and abilities so don't keep them to yourselves - please share them with us, your fellow (and fellowess) members.

Mike