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August 2016

# TURNINGS

Official newsletter of

**Avon and Bristol Woodturners**

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

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Don't forget you can read all the Club History to date in one place on our website at:

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

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We now print Turnings



## From the Editor

**L**ast month we weren't sure what would be the fate of the printed version of this, your newsletter, but now, as you can see, Winterbourne Computer Services, aka Neil Topsham, husband of one of our club members, has come to our rescue. Thanks must also go to Harry for brokering the deal. The only major difference is that we are limited to eight pages, of which the back page will (normally) be devoted to commercial advertising (not club members' ads which will continue as previously).

So now, with a limit on space I will need to be less long-winded than usual - not an easy task for me but I will try.

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August is arguably the club's most important month for it presents us with at least two separate opportunities to show off our achievements, demonstrate our skills and not least, earn some much-needed cash. The Model Engineering show at Thornbury and the Westonbirt Treefest are major events which attract thousands of visitors, some of whom will have loose purse-strings, and although we definitely are not a commercial organisation the club needs extra revenue in order to both cover the costs associated with (particularly) Westonbirt, St Teresa's room hire and other fixed outgoings. Subscriptions alone are not enough and that is why so much is made of Pick-a-Peg which, under the expert and enthusiastic guidance of Lorraine regularly attracts these purse-carrying visitors who are prepared to part with relatively small amounts of money in the hope of getting something for it. Small amounts they may be, but cumulatively they contribute the most to our annual income. But Pick-a-Peg can work only when there are prizes on offer so if you are one of those who has not yet made any pieces for this vital and worthy cause, do have a look at the club's stand at the Westonbirt show and see for yourself the wide range of simple-to-make items that so attract our visitors.

But it's not only about money - most of us are "in it" for the pleasure that making things gives us and this is always illustrated by those members who "man" the demo lathe. It also has the effect of inspiring visitors who, although they might not take up woodturning there and then, they may, in the future feel like having a go. One thing is certain - very many of our visitors have been observed watching with open-mouthed amazement when, before their eyes a lump of "firewood" is transformed into a bowl or a vase. We live in a world full of amazing technological achievements but it is comforting to see that such transformations still have the power to impress. And maybe, just maybe, we might also gain a new recruit or two - as our current Vice Chairman can confirm!

Mike

## Last month's competition results.

With thanks to Dave Smith who stood in for Marilyn and Bryan at the competition table and also took the photographs.

**Advanced:-**      *First* - Harry Childs                      *Runner-up* - George King      (three entries)

**Intermediate**      *First* - Richard Greenwood



# Last month's demonstrator - Richard Lane

By Joe Page

At last month's meeting one of our very own members (Richard Lane) who is a semi retired teacher, was brave enough to stand up in front of us. He introduced himself with a Powerpoint presentation, which reminded me of being at school, especially when he handed everyone a pack which included some grids, ruler and pencil!



He started his talk about health and safety and I thought the evening was going to be a little like some of the wood I've turned - a little dry and not very inspiring. However, as the evening progressed that



*Richard places great emphasis on the health and safety of both demonstrators and audiences*

first impression evaporated as it became clear that his was a very well structured presentation, starting with some important information for new and inexperienced turners about allergies and how to reduce our risks as well as how to create risk assessments to keep everyone safe when turning. He also gave a very valuable quote - **'fail to plan, plan to fail'**.

It then became apparent that the packs we were given were for us to get actively involved in the learning process by doing some work ourselves - a very rare, perhaps unique experience for most club members. Richard then asked everyone to draw on one of the grids a bowl design, which meant we had to test our free hand skills in doing so. He then requested that we repeat the process on a further two more grids to demonstrate how the same proportions could be used on different shaped blanks.

As Richard explained, it's much cheaper to design on paper than on an expensive blank from a stockiest. He then gave us a brief: Design a small gift for a young couple in a modern house, a gift that could be used and not just put in a cupboard and brought out only when you go to visit them! After giving us some time to do this

Richard was then going to pick one design and then, after the break, proceed to turn this into the "real thing".

The chosen design consisted of a lidded pot with a finial. Richard asked a member of the audience to make a choice from the selection of wood he had brought along and sycamore was chosen for the base, walnut for the top and a finial from box. The shape of the finial was to be based on a triangle.

Unfortunately lack of time prevented Richard from completing the pot but he promised to finish it at home and bring it back to the August meeting. It had been requested from the floor that he use a very light green wash on the walnut top, with the remainder being left to his discretion.

During the evening he also mentioned that instead of using paper you could use CAD (Computer Aided Design) for example 2D design, Google Sketchup and other designing programs that are available. This is a very good idea because all it needs is a click to delete something that doesn't look right and it can be easily changed and repeated. At the end of the evening it was clear that Richard's knowledge and experience lay with design and despite my initial misgivings the evening turned out to be very informative and inspiring.

I am sure that everyone who was present will be very excited to see the finished design, not least because in a small way each one of us had a hand in the design.

It was a very innovative and well thought-out presentation, all the more so because it was Richard's first attempt at what many consider to be too daunting a task to tackle.

Thank you, Richard, for an absorbing and educational evening.

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# Getting to know your committee members

By Harry Childs

Name:

Alan Griffiths

Current Committee member position:

Vice-Chair of the committee and also providing support with the audio-visual equipment on club nights

Outline of what this role involves:

Deputising for the Chairman as needed, attending and contributing to committee meetings, supporting the club and committee where possible.

When did you join A & B Wood turners?

I formally joined ABWT in 2004 - after taking advantage of the 2 free guest nights!

How did you find out about the club?

I first came across ABWT a number of years ago at a Treefest event. Subsequently, I saw the club stand at the Thornbury show and picked up the information leaflet.

What do you think are the main benefits of belonging to the club?

As a novice woodturner there are numerous benefits for me. Initially it was the opportunity to meet with experienced turners and begin to understand that, once all the safety issues have been satisfied, there really are no constraints to what can be achieved with imagination and practice.

Another major benefit is the chance to see some excellent (and maybe one or two not so excellent!) demonstrators, observing the techniques they use and, occasionally, how they recover from a "mistake".

Perhaps the last main benefit is the social side of the club and the opportunities to join other members on visits to specialist suppliers and participating in events such as the Thornbury and Westonbirt shows.

All in all, the over-riding benefit is that it's usually fun and I enjoy it!

When did you first become involved with woodturning?

It depends what you mean by "involved" – I turned my first piece when I was a lad of 14 or 15 as part of my GCE 'O' Level woodwork course at school. While this sowed the seed of enthusiasm for the craft, and a lifelong promise to myself that one day I would have a 'proper' woodwork shop with a lathe, it was not until retirement many years later that I had enough time to make it happen. So, apart from enviously watching turners at various shows and exhibitions I did not get actively involved until a couple of years ago when I joined ABWT.

How did you become involved?

Once I had retired I started to put together the workshop I had long promised myself (as I described in my brief article for 'Turnings' earlier) and a key piece of kit was to be my lathe. I had been reading various turning and woodworking magazines/websites when I came across an advert for a 5-day turning course at the Axminster training centre, so I duly signed up and spent a most enjoyable and instructive week with them. I left Axminster with several training pieces and a decision on which lathe I wanted – the rest, as they say, is history.

What was the first item you produced?

My very first effort on a lathe was as a schoolboy in my woodwork class and I made small dish in sapele (I think!). I believe that it still exists somewhere in the loft at my mother's house but it was to be some 40 years before I got my hands on a lathe again.



Who, or what would you say influences what you now produce?

I have now completed the Apprentice course at the Max Carey Woodturning Trust (The Mill) and I've just made my first piece on the Journeyman course, so at this stage of my turning career I am strongly influenced by the course curriculum and learning new skills each week. I like small boxes and I've made a couple of simple pieces from the books by Chris Stott. I also very much like the work of Jason Breach and my aspiration is to ultimately be capable of achieving something approaching his skill level.

What is the favourite piece you have ever produced?

I think it was Richard who said during his design demonstration recently at the club something to the effect that you need to consider the environment and lifestyle of the people who you are making a piece for. So my favourite (so far) is a small 3-legged stool that I made at Axminster for my 2-year-old granddaughter. It is not so much the piece itself, but rather her obvious pleasure when I gave it to her and the fact that it is in regular use either by her or one of her soft toys.

What advice would you give to somebody just starting woodturning?

As a novice I'm not sure that I am qualified yet to be offering advice, however I can share what has been useful to me.

- First, take a suitable training course. This should make sure that you know how to work safely and understand the basics of tool control. It may also give you the chance to try out some different lathes if you haven't yet decided on the make/model you want to buy.
- Next, join a club to get exposure to a variety of ideas and shared experiences.
- Practice; don't think that every time you stand at your lathe you have to "make something". The quality of your beads and coves can only improve with repetition, and you can produce some very pretty firewood!
- Enjoy yourself.

What would you say to new members just joining the club?

Get involved. There are 80+ club members and they only have to learn one new name (yours!) and while you're unlikely to get to know everyone by name you will quickly build up a circle of like-minded new friends if you actively participate in club activities. Enter the monthly competitions; they are a great way of stretching your design imagination and turning skills. The name of the game for me is improving my ability over time, not to win every month. Most of all, have fun and enjoy the company and activities of other turners of all skill levels and abilities – remembering that even the best and most skilled club members had at some point switched on a lathe for the very first time.

Please give a brief outline of your employment background.

I trained as a metallurgist specialising in steel-making and quality assurance. This also involved the practical aspects of industrial water treatment – you use a lot of water to make a tonne of steel! As the steel industry declined I joined a multinational water treatment company, initially in customer technical support and latterly in quality management systems (QMS). This involved maintaining certification of the company to various quality standards and to the industry standards of our customer base (such as automotive, food & drugs, pharma etc.). Over the 35 years I was with the company my role expanded from managing the UK QMS eventually to cover EMEA – Europe, Middle East and Africa, which led to my wife once describing my job as a professional air passenger (but always in Economy Class!)

Any other information you would like to add.

Someone once told me that woodturning is addictive – and they were absolutely right! So be careful, you have been warned!

*Chairman's Note*

*Alan does a great job with the audio visual equipment each club night. He could do with some more help. If you could offer such help please get in contact with him – you do not need to have any specialist skills in audio visual equipment. Please help if you can.*

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## 'Olive Ash'.

From December 2001

*Collection of tips to help grinding and sharpening (PART ONE). (Yes I know that we've already had PART TWO. RS)*

1) "Musts" in grinding skews and gouges.

The ground bevel must be either flat or concave (hollow ground).

If the bevel is in the slightest way convex then it will not allow the cutting edge to cut with full support of the bevel. It won't cut effectively.

Hollow ground chisels work very well, which is just as well as that is the shape that the grinding wheel achieves naturally by just resting the chisel against the wheel. The bevel is described as hollow ground as it is concave and the diameter of the hollowness matches the diameter of the grinding wheel.

2. What angle for the bevel?

On gouges and skews the angle is not critical. The size of the angle gives the cutting edge different characteristics - a more acute angle gives an edge that will give a "sharper" cut but the downside is that it will not hold its edge for as long. It will need regrinding more frequently.

A less acute angle gives a longer lasting edge but does not offer quite the same degree of sharpness as a more acute angle.

Thinner angle:

-sharper

-edge wears sooner

good for final cuts

allows less access to corners

Thicker angle:

-less sharp

-edge lasts longer

-good for heavier work

*It is worth experimenting with different grinding angles to see what difference they make. Provided the bevel is as it should be (described in the previous section) then the edge should cut, whatever the angle.*

***There's lots more to follow but I think that's enough for this month. I hope readers will not succumb to over-excitement whilst waiting for the next thrilling instalment (RS)***

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***And now for some*** This And That.

Readers may think that Olive 'goes on a bit', but it must be remembered that the club, along with the popularity of our hobby was beginning to grow when 'Olive' wrote this piece in 2001. ('*She was writing for a lot of new blood, mine for instance*'). Also there wasn't so much information available as there is now and some of it was often contradictory. I remember examining the tools of one of our top turners thinking I would get a few tips. The bevels were many faceted and didn't match up to the ideal set out above. Some bevels were convex. But what I did learn, was that it was the skill of the man or woman behind the tool and not the tool itself nor the way it was sharpened that mattered most. Some of our long-standing members will remember the demo given by Mike Darlow, the master of the skew. His pitch, "If the bevel is rubbing the edge isn't cutting" caused quite a bit of discussion, if not controversy. What I think was finally agreed was that 'rubbing the bevel' was an essential part of the process which reduced the risk of 'YOU' stabbing the skew/gouge into the wood whilst it was rotating at 1000 rpm or more.

During his talk/demo last month Richard Lane whetted our appetites on the work of Joey Richardson. But time ran out before he was able to give us the necessary links. Joey enchanted us some years ago with her pierced floral turnings. I saw her recently at 'Art in Action' in the QEST (The Queen Elizabeth Scholarship Trust) tent. For those who remember her she is still her 'bubbly enthusiastic self'. Alas she lives near the coast in NE Lincolnshire so the chances of her paying us a return visit are slim. But we can visit her on her website:- [www.joeyrichardson.com](http://www.joeyrichardson.com)

And finally, to night's meeting will be our last chance to impress our 'Pick a Peg' Queen with our efforts for this year. I wonder what we are going to do next year to release all our 'Creative energy'.

That's it for this month

Roy Stewart

# Members' Mill open day, Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2016

By Ian Burke.

Photos by Ian Burke

Following requests from several members at the AGM for a Saturday open day at the Mill so that they could see the facilities and also experience a little of the available training that the Mill provided offered.

After consultation with the six interested members and Stuart it was finally decided to meet, with the other tutors, at the Mill on Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> July at 9.30 am.

Of the six there were three, Michael McCrea Steele, Bryan Chapman and Vic Atkins who had limited or no experience, Rod Tester and Geoff Buckeridge who had previously done some woodturning and finally Malcolm Flintoff who had previous experience as a tutor and agreed to help Stuart, Harry, Brian and myself for the morning session, thus allowing one-to-one tuition.



After an introduction by Stuart regarding safety in the workshop, and allocation of timber blanks and lathes, Michael, Bryan and Vic, guided by Brian, Malcolm and myself, spent the morning working through the first few exercises from the Mill Apprenticeship Programme as designed by Simon Keen. Rod and Geoff each elected to make a bowl and were supervised by Stuart and Harry.

After a break for lunch when Malcolm left, Rod and Geoff went on to complete their bowls, Bryan carried on with the initial turning exercises while the others turned the dibber from the apprenticeship programme which expanded on the techniques they had learned during the morning session.



At the debriefing at the end of the afternoon all of us agreed that it had been a worthwhile day and moreover each participant was able to return home with something to show for his efforts.

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# NOTICE BOARD

## **For Sale. - APTC dust extractor**

It is in full working order and has a fine filter bag inside the upper coarse bag that was initially supplied.

It also has a flexible reinforced hose of approximately 2 metres in length.

The unit is mounted on castors for easy movement.

Wood dust is the most insidious of the hazards that we woodturners have to deal with so if you do not already possess a dust extractor this effective piece of equipment may be what you need.

**I think that £50.00 is a fair price but I am open to sensible offers!**

Please contact me either at a club meeting or via the following email address:

***abwtsecretary@hotmail.com***

Thank you.

Ian Burke

