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Editor's Comments

The successful running of MWA depends upon the dedication and hard work of all the members of the Committee. For many years now, Ralph Pooley has researched and organised the programme for each year. He is who recruits the expert turners whom we enjoy at many of our meetings, and decides when we are to have a workshop evening. He produces the programme a year in advance, and stays in contact with all the experts until their agreed evening arrives. Ralph's efforts do not stop there. He is the team leader for the sub committee responsible for the many shows and exhibitions which MWA now takes part in during the year. After all that, Ralph takes a fair share of the many other tasks which fall to the committee.

In recognition of Ralph's dedication to MWA, the Committee have awarded him Life Membership of the Association, an honour well deserved. The award was made during a Dinner arranged recently by the Committee in celebration of Ralph's 80th birthday. Long may Ralph continue to contribute to the success of the Association.

Alan

Hillingdon Arts Exhibition

This year, we were invited to have a stand at the Hillingdon Arts Exhibition in the Great Barn in Ruislip. The venue is impressive, and MWA had the whole of one end of the Barn available to it. Ralph and his team mounted a wonderful display of work by our members. The lighting, though adequate, could have been better. Part of the problem was the dark brown interior of the Barn. Publicity for the event had not been good, and only a moderate number of people attended, which was a shame because the overall display of art work represented much effort on behalf of the organising committee. The exhibition of wood turning attracted some attention. Some sales were made, but perhaps not enough to justify the work put in to mount the display.

contd.

Hillingdon Arts Show contd.

The picture may give an idea of the venue, which showed off our work quite well. If we are invited again, we shall endeavour to take charge of our own sales. Hopefully the publicity will be much better, because the overall high quality of the exhibition deserved a much greater exposure to the public than it had on this occasion.



Alternative Materials

Sarah Thirwell was our guest in July. It was quite a change to see a bright and confident young lady



standing behind the lathe. She was not at all bothered by having to confront a room full of often elderly men! Sarah is well acquainted with lathes and turning methods. What is different about her work is that she uses alternative materials,

some of which are outside the experience of most turners. The first part of her demonstration was spent with a table full of finished examples of her work. Each piece incorporated not only wood, but also unlikely materials such as paper, leather or fabric.



Sarah makes up unusual blanks by gluing layers of paper or other materials together, and compressing them in a book press.

When dried out the resulting lumps were sawn into useful looking blanks. Sarah also used plastics sheets of different colours cemented together. She buys in bulk scrap coloured and clear Perspex off cuts, which she cements with "Tensol" cement. This cement is solvent based, and care must be taken to avoid inhaling the vapour. Sarah also uses other plastics material, such as reclaimed coffee beakers, which she buys from the recycler. Despite their scrap origins, these plastics are very expensive, which added to the high labour cost of producing

the finished articles, makes them expensive to buy.

To use these unusual materials, Sarah sandwiches them between chunks of wood, often of plywood, and turns a variety of decorative shapes such as vases, bottles and so on. These are not hollowed out, but merely drilled to accept a glass flower tube. The examples which she passed around were very colourful and decorative, but also very heavy, being of solid material.



The turning skills she demonstrated were fairly basic, but what surprised some old hands was the amount of use Sarah made of her very large spindle roughing gouge. It seemed to be her maid of all work! Another surprise was that her many of us would turn Perspex for instance solely with scrapers, Sarah used her tools in proper cutting mode. This demonstrated her true skill, as using cutting mode is often a sure recipe for digging in and tearing of the surface of most plastics. However, when turning leather and paper, the virtues of the large radius gouge were evident. Needless to say, the tools needed to be razor sharp when turning soft materials.

For a quick demonstration, Sarah made a bracelet from laminated Perspex.

For this she had prepared a blank, screwed at its corners



Sarah Thirwell contd

to a wooden faceplate, in turn screwed to a metal faceplate in place of the chuck. Basically she trepanned out the centre of the blank, using a standard parting tool. Again, she used the tool in cutting mode, rather than scraping mode, and your scribe was waiting for the inevitable dig-in. It never came, such was Sarah's skill with the tool. The inside of the resulting hole was sanded and finally polished with Carnuba wax, after which Sarah trepanned out a ring which was to become the bangle. Normally, She would use nylon chuck jaws to hold the ring by its bore, but made do by wrapping rubber bands around standard steel jaws. After that, the outside was turned to a smooth shape, and sanded and polished as before. It was a quick demonstration



of just how easy it is to create an attractive object out of scrap material.



Sarah was prepared to answer our questions, and we all appreciated her bright unaffected confidence as much as we appreciated the attractive shapes of many of her products. She also had also prepared some kits of materials at a modest price for those who wished to try out fabrication from materials other than wood. Altogether this was an evening with a difference!



Recent Shows

In the Summer, MWA finds itself manning a succession of shows. Two of them, the Chilterns County Show, and Live Crafts at Gt. Missenden are at the same venue, and very similar. At each show, we had, thanks to the generosity of the organisers, a large marquee, and were able to display the work of some 15 to 20 of our members. These were very high quality displays, with work ranging from "gallery" items down to humble light pulls. Something for everyone!. There was much interest shown by the public, and business was brisk on both occasions. It helped especially at the Live Crafts event that MWA had been mentioned in the show flyers which had been distributed widely. There was the usual table, on which all items had been donated, with all proceeds of sales directed to the Shooting Star Children's Hospice. As always, the team led by Ralph Pooley organised and set up each show, and a team of demonstrators ensured that there was always someone making the shavings fly during 'opening hours'. The new Perspex display stands continued to enhance the presentation. An innovation at both the shows was a competition table on which members were invited to display selected items. Members of the public were invited to vote for their favourite pieces. At the close of each show, the votes were counted, and a lucky winner chosen. This proved to be quite popular, and will be a feature of future shows. The two shows were very successful, with several thousands of pounds worth of members' work was sold, and a useful amount raised for the charity. The Gallery section of the Newsletter displays photos of items selected from both shows.

For Your Diary
October 14th Tony Halcrow
November 11th AGM Plus!
December 9th Christmas Party

GALLERY



Competition Table at Chilterns Show



See these pictures in full colour
on www.middxturners.org