

## Editor's Comments

So much seems to have happened since I published the last newsletter that I am not sure that I can remember everything! Perhaps the thing which is uppermost in my mind at the moment is the AWGB Seminar, held at Loughborough University. It was, as always, a feast for the enthusiastic wood turner, and a stunningly successful social occasion too. I was particularly pleased to find MWA so well represented this year. There were enough of us to enable us to have a table to ourselves at the closing Banquet. In addition two MWA members, Mike Dennis and Adrian Needham were in the team which organised it all. Members of Middlesex Woodturners Association, when it was formed all those years ago, were also amongst those who brought the AWGB into being, and it is good to see that the connection is still in place.

When you read this, somebody else will be taking charge of this month's meeting. Pat and I will be in Los Angeles on an extended break with my Sister in Law who lives there, and also my Brother in Law's relatives, Quite a get together! We're back again in October.

*Alan*

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## Boiling Wood.

A little known experimental method of seasoning hardwoods is to boil them! The main purpose in seasoning is to remove the sap which fills the cells of unseasoned wood. For relatively small lumps of hardwood it suffices to simmer them for a couple of hours or so in just boiling water in a large pot. For more thorough sap removal you could pour away the first boilings and fill up for a second boil. After boiling you will have a water saturated piece of wood, which must be allowed to cool, then dried out slowly, perhaps by burying it in a box within a thick layer of wood shavings. Look in any book on timber drying for other methods, such as wrapping in layers of newspaper. Check for dryness by weighing the piece from time to time, and take it out of the shavings etc. towards the end of the process. You will not get a really dry specimen, but it should be possible to get from felling to turning within a matter of weeks.

# The Chilterns Show

The Chilterns Show is a new venue for us, which we hope will replace the now defunct Middlesex Show at which MWA always did so well. As far as we were concerned, the organisation of the Chilterns Show was all rather last minute, and we did not even know the exact venue until the day before we had to set up. We are most grateful to MWA President Stuart King for initially putting us forward for the show, and for ironing out the endless difficulties which we had in getting the information we needed.

The members of MWA rose to the occasion! Despite having only recently completed our Cow Byre Exhibition, they turned out again to put on an excellent and plentiful display. There was plenty of energetic help with the setting up, and no shortage of stewards during the weekend. At the end of the show I have not seen clearing up done so quickly! Thank you all.

It was particularly gratifying to see some of our newer members taking a full part in our exhibition. Thanks to them, the number of exhibitors had risen for the first time in several years, lightening the load on the old staggers, and adding a refreshing new look to the work on show. We had many visitors to our marquee throughout both days of the show. Sales of work were brisk, and we grossed more in two days than we had in a week at the Cow Byre. On this occasion we had not needed to charge any

commission on sales, and exhibitors were well pleased by the return for their efforts. For those whose sales were disappointing, it should be remembered that the public is fickle, and that the same display on a different occasion would have shown a different pattern of sales. It was noticeable that items which had sold well at the Cow Byre just did not move at the Chilterns Show.

Conditions for photography within the tent were poor. This did not deter one visitor who stood in the middle of the tent with his video camera and did a slow 360 degree rotation, and then left. That was the extent of his interest! We suppose that he did this in every tent to prove to he had "done" the show. Apart from our display, the rest of the show contained the usual variety of stands seen at most county shows, plus specialist areas such as the traditional wood crafts area of which we were a part. Pole lathes, old country wood crafts, wood carving of stunning quality, toy making, and of course wood turning were among the things to be seen in our area. Altogether the show will be well worth a visit in its own right next year.

We are looking forward to next year's Chilterns Show, and hope to be invited once again as part of the traditional crafts display. With that in mind, the date has been included in the diary for 2006.

## Gift Aid

If you turn items and donate the proceeds to charity, you can benefit registered charities by nearly an extra 28p in the pound by making Gift Aid declarations. You have to be a UK tax payer (Aren't we all? Ed) and pay more tax annually than the size of the gift the charity will recover. If you are not a taxpayer, perhaps a friend or relative would make the declaration and payment on your behalf. For older tax payers, Gift Aid declarations can often reduce restrictions on the amount claimed in age related tax concessions. Tell your Tax Inspector about them, and both you and the charities can benefit.

Donations to many charities since April 2000 can be covered by a retrospective declaration, and could benefit the charity even more. You can often download the Gift Aid form from the internet site of the charity concerned, otherwise, write or telephone.

These comments stem from a chat with MWA member Jack Surrige, who makes beautifully finished pens which he sells to aid the Macmillan nurses. If you need a good looking pen, ask Jack!

## Gardening and Gift Aid

If you are pruning garden foliage, consider whether your local florist will buy it from you,, especially if it is known that you will gift aid the proceeds to a charity. Evergreen foliage, especially Ivy and Holly are often in demand at Christmas time. Gordon Cookson.

## Mark Baker at MWA

We welcomed Mark Baker as our demonstrator in July. Since we last saw him, Mark has left the editorship of Woodturning to become the Managing Director of Hegner UK. Hegner are well known for their scroll saws, their excellent conventional wood turning lathe, and the superb VB 36 lathe. Hegner have increased their range of wood turning related items to include the Kel McNaughton Centre Saver. Hegner also now market Multistar high quality products and wood finishing materials.

Mark's first project was a vessel with closely spaced fins. He used a stable and well dried piece of timber for this, and surprised us by the ease with which he used a standard thin parting tool to cut the deep fins, all by eye, to follow the internal shape. He explained that the grind of the tool was important, using the curvature of the grinding wheel to form the top face of the tool. He had borrowed this feature from the metal turning fraternity, who often grind this way to lead the metal shavings out of the cut. It works for wood too. While he worked, Mark gave a constant stream of advice on the tools and methods he was using. Surprisingly, he used power sanding, and dusted all of us in the front row, but he used the incident to underline the need for dust control in the workshop. For finishing, mark used black aerosol spray paint. Again the overspray could have been a great nuisance to those nearby, especially if anyone suffered from

breathing problems. The finished vessel displayed a most interesting moiré effect when looked at through the fins. Some wag said that he had made a cylinder for a motorcycle engine!

After the coffee break, there was not a great deal of time left, but Mark worked quickly. He showed how standard tools can be used to produce a vase with a narrow opening, followed by grinding it to an angle with a sanding disc, and decorating the outside. Again power sanding and spraying with black lacquer were used, with more dusting for the front row, but a presentable object was finished and handed over as a raffle prize within the time limit.

Mark Baker's demonstrations are not just about making less common objects. They are also about extracting the maximum number of teaching points from the exercise. We are glad to know that Mark will continue to demonstrate to clubs. He brought a selection of products for sale, and also copies of his book on wood for turning, at a discount price. We thank him also for donating a signed copy to the Club Library. Close up viewing was provided by our resident cameraman, who is getting quite good at it now, and a very satisfactory evening was had by all. We have no photographs. Black objects make fine studio photographs, but are difficult to capture as snapshots in an averagely lit room.

### Diary Dates

**8th September. Jason Breach.** Jason is one of the two resident turners at Axminster Power Tool Company.

**13th October Simon Hope.** Turning Outback Timber and Wood Sale.

**10th November. Annual General Meeting,** plus a presentation to be arranged.

**8th December. Christmas Club Night.** Activities to be arranged, but will include Mince Pies!

# Freeze Drying Green Wood

Not really freeze drying but close. It works anyway.

Rough out the piece you want to dry to 1/2 - 1 inch thick(1.25-2.54 cms), wrap it in cling film and freeze it for two days. Unwrap it, defrost it,( though this may not be necessary), weigh it and put it in the fridge. After 10 or 30 days it will stop losing weight and be suitably dry.

I did the above with two pieces of freshly cut Olive Ash. Freezing two bowls, about 16 cms & 23 cms diameter. The piece I read on the internet\* said 10 days to dry, but the large bowl took 30 days. The small one I left out of the fridge by accident on the 12<sup>th</sup> day. On one edge of particularly complex grain it had distorted by compression, but not enough to matter. It continued to dry out of the fridge for 5-6 days, until it stopped losing weight.

I had considerable trouble turning these two bowls as I had rough turned them both into the end grain. Consequently when turning the bottoms I got several bad catches and in fact gave up temporarily with the large one, until I get a heavy duty square ended scraper, or some training. The small one I managed to finish.

Statistics were:

Large bowl – 1160 grams	Dried to 936 grams	about 20% loss
Small bowl – 394 grams	Dried to 290 grams	about 26% loss

I have heard that wet wood holds about 40% moisture. If this is true, then these pieces are not dry enough for furniture, but certainly seem so for turning. Neither has warped or cracked perceptibly since.

The only thing is - I don't understand how this works. the original article said that the refrigerant in the fridge is what dries the wood, but of course, the refrigerant is not inside the fridge. Not that I understand why it would anyway. Anyone out there good at physics?

\*Go to [www.woodturns.com](http://www.woodturns.com) Scroll down to recent message board posts, and click 'turning green bowls'. Scroll down the answers.

Thanks to "Endgrain"

Will Mailes.

## Footnote to 'Freeze Drying Wood'

It makes a change from boiling or microwaving. As Will says, the refrigerant is not actually in the fridge compartment, so cannot be the direct agent for the effect. A possible explanation might be: 1) Freezing the wood causes the cells containing sap to burst. 2) The sap diffuses into the wood on thawing. 3) Fridges always condense water vapour, hence the formation of "frost" and the drying of the air inside the fridge. 3) Anything which is left uncovered in the dry air inside a fridge will consequently dry out relatively quickly. Alan

## MINI-GALLERY



MWA Tent at the Chilterns Exhibitor

It was difficult to get good photos inside the tent because of very poor lighting conditions



Thin walled vases at the Cow Byre



Oriental boxes at the Cow Byre





