



Editor's Comments

In this edition of the Newsletter I welcome Bill Mailes' Ally Pally report. I hope that you enjoy, as I do, his refreshing style, and his sharp observation of people. Also I have had to make minimal editorial input to it, and I like that! I will always welcome pieces suitable for the Newsletter. Remember, if I can read it, I can edit it, and if they have photographic or line illustrations, they can usually be processed as well. Talk to me about it if you would like to have a go.

My wife and I were privileged to be invited to the wedding of Gordon Cookson and Claire Gaffen. We can report that they are now well and truly wed!. The ceremony was a little unconventional, and the reception for about 100 guests was excellent, with great speeches from both Gordon and his supporters. Please join with me in congratulating them both.

The MWA Seminar is almost upon us. If you haven't got your ticket yet, the Treasurer is waiting for you.

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Les Thorne at MWA

We welcomed Les Thorne at our March meeting. He gave an excellent demonstration in several parts. First he conducted a teaching exercise on the skew chisel, something which many of us, if we are honest, would admit that we need more practice with. He covered all the common operations, and completed the demonstration by turning a piece from roughing down to the finished article using only the skew. And it hardly needed sanding either. Les is a good teacher and also an entertainer, aided and abetted by good natured banter with his fellow professionals at the back of the room

Next the heavy stuff. Taking a log of 'bark on'

green wood, recently felled and almost still growing, he surprised us all by unwrapping the cling film, and revealing that he had pre sawn the log into several sections. He explained that he had removed the centre plank from one part of the log so as to remove the pith. The wood around the pith always gives rise to problems, being especially prone to star shakes. This centre plank was quarter cut, and if cut again to remove the centre section, would give two very stable narrower pieces for smaller projects. The remainder of the log comprised one 12" diameter section, and two 'D' shaped sections Taking the full section first, Les demonstrated all the tips and wrinkles needed as he made a wet turned /over

Les Thorne at MWA Contd.

thin walled bowl, with a bark edge. As he worked, he noted many teaching points, not least of which was that despite the wood being very wet, no moisture was flung from its edge as it was turned, because its grain was in line with the axis of the lathe. Unusually, he did much of the work between centres, using the largest four pronged driver that most of us had ever seen, and reverting to a chuck later in the process. The bowl was finished in record time, using very few different tools, and again needing hardly any sanding - a tribute to his skill. By keeping its section very thin everywhere, including the foot, splitting as it dried would be avoided.

The remainder of the log comprised one 12" diameter section, and two 'D' shaped sections. Taking the full section first, Les demonstrated all the tips and wrinkles needed as he made a wet turned thin walled bowl, with a bark edge. As he worked, he noted many teaching points, not least of which was that despite the wood being very wet, no moisture was flung from its edge as it was turned, because its grain was in line with the axis of the lathe. Unusually, he did much of the work between centres, using the largest four pronged driver that most of us had ever seen, and reverting to a chuck later in the process. The bowl was finished in record time, using very few different tools, and again needing hardly any sanding - a tribute to his skill. By keeping its section very thin everywhere, including the foot, splitting as it dried would be avoided.

The two 'D' sections became two different shallow forms, with the wood mounted 'propellor style'. This time, there was a real shower of rain over the front rows of the audience as moisture was thrown from the end grain of the wood. Your reporter anticipated this, and removed himself from the firing line, but others were not so lucky. Rain coats and brollies were needed!

The final forms depended upon how they were mounted in the lathe. Mounting initially with the bark side outwards led to the production of an oval shallow bowl with a bark edge, but mounting initially with the flat face outwards enabled a small bowl with a wide rectangular 'bark on' rim to be made. The first piece was a relatively easy one, the biggest problem being to keep the bark on by taking controlled cuts with a sharp small gouge. Spindle gouges are often better than bowl gouges or scrapers here because of their more acute sharpening angle. As before, keeping it thin was essential to avoid splitting. The second piece required a higher level of skill and know how. Les emphasised all the crucial problems in its making, and to showed clearly how to overcome them. His teaching ability was well to the fore here.

This is a good place to remind members that the shavings and spray from wet wood causes severe rusting and discolouration of lathe parts and tools. Wiping down after work, plus an application of a de-watering lubricant (WD40) is always a good idea after turning wet wood..

With all thin walled pieces, rippling of the surfaces as the wood became thinner is always a problem, often caused by excessive bevel rubbing. Les showed how to deal with this, using sharp tools and showing how to support the thin wood, but for us, the real need is for lots of practice until we get the knack.

Despite his very full programme, Les proved to be an excellent timekeeper, and his very full demonstration was finished on time. It was an excellent evening, with lots of good solid teaching, leavened throughout by his sense of humour and extrovert personality. Thanks to the good work of Adrian with the video camera, we saw much in detail via the club's new data projector.

Tsunami Appeal

The February programme was disrupted by the the redecoration of the Athletics Club premises, but its rearrangement gave us the opportunity of making a special contribution to the Tsunami Appeal. The activities included high speed turning by our professionals, who made items to be donated to AWGB for its fund raising activities, plus bargain price wood sales, and a much larger than usual raffle, supported generously by the members. There was also the auction of a Mark Hanbury platter, given to us by him at an earlier demonstration. Altogether we raised £175 from these activities, which the committee has increased to a £200 donation to AWGB to add to their fund raising for the Lions Tsunami Appeal. This was a worth while effort by all concerned. We thank our professional turners, Mike Cripps who donated the timber that was sold, and in particular members who donated raffle items, then dipped into their own pockets in attempts to win them back. Details of the progress of the AWGB fund appear in another article. The committee wonder if the members would support an annual event of this nature. There is no shortage of good causes

Ally Pally - Show Report

Seething with people fascinated with demonstrations of turning, sharpening window protection, decorating, carving, routing, planing and all sorts; at times you couldn't get through the crowd. At other times (early & late), you could walk around in relative freedom.

Stuart Mortimer with his down to earth rough-seeming turning, that produces wonderful latticed vessels from wet wood in a finish from the tool, lightly sanded that we'd all die for. Les Thorne cutting into natural edge bowls with the ease and nonchalance of a master like Elli Avisera, whose friendliness and willingness to teach are a delight, particularly with regard to his remarkable abilities. His shavings fly like streamers and hang on the six foot high Perspex screen like a celebration.

Paul Howard and Patrick Brewster manning the AWGB demonstration lathe with cool friendly professionalism and an air of playing. I learned to chase a 20tpi thread from Paul Howard, and have repeated the operation since. A tribute to his teaching skills I must say.

Alan Spargo, quiet confidence and skill behind the glass screen; Mike Collas making tiny pieces on a big lathe with self deprecating precision and Stuart King making chess kings while talking and teaching. Also Eddie Morgan, whose considerable skills were displayed in making a wet turned thin walled vase with a natural "bark" edge. No easy thing to do.



Many of the 'demo' pieces were given for sale on the tsunami fund table. Proceeds to the 'Lions' school

building, in Sri Lanka I think, needed rebuilding. We made £370 on the Friday and as much again on Saturday & Sunday. Well done everybody who gave a piece or two, or three, or more.

To my regret I did not get to watch many of the demonstrations. When I could get off the stand, which was quite often on Friday & Saturday, with the number of us on the stand, I was shopping. The variety of things to buy is frankly incredible. Prices were sometimes very low, and there was always the chance of getting an ex-demo machine at a good discount. I did pretty well with a Camvac dust extractor, and lots of small tools.

The AWGB stand was stunning, with many pieces of fine work well displayed, including a lovely segmented dish by Dennis Keeling, which gave us all a shock when it went missing. Fortunately, thanks to the efficiency of the MWA members, Dennis was called and found to have taken it home himself. We all breathed a sigh of relief. Incidentally, he won third prize in the open competition for turned items competition at the show with the actual segmented piece that he showed us in his recent presentation to MWA.

A good show with several new members gained for the AWGB and some for us in MWA too. Thoroughly enjoyable for me, meeting lots of people and talking about our passion. How Bad! I hope I'll be there next year.

Bill Mailes



Photos: Bill Mailes

New Library Books

- B81 Woodturning. A fresh Approach
by Robert Chapman.
- B83 Turning Boxes by Richard Raffan.
- B85 Contemporary Turned Wood
by Liers, Peters & Wallace.
- B87 Masterful Woodturning
by S. Gary Roberts.
- B89 Woodturning Music Boxes
by James A. Jacobson.
- B91 Wooden Toys
by Nina & Ian Wilkie.
- B93 Good Wood Guide
by Albert Jackson & David Day.
- B95 Woodworker Book of Turning
- B97 Encyclopaedia of Wood
by Aidan Walker.
- B99 Making Board, Peg & Dice Games
by Jeff & Jennie Loader.
- B2 Wooden Toys, by Roger Horwood.

Gordon wishes to thank Ken Horn, Jim Thomas & Jim Maquire for donating books to the Library.

Flower Power

During the December 'Hands On' evening, Stuart King made small Christmas trees from green timber in the style of those made in the Black Forest region of Germany. We had already seen this on a Video recording of some of Stuart's journeys in search of traditional crafts.

What we had not seen was the use of the same technique for making wooden representations of flowers. After making a few Christmas trees, Stuart chose some smaller diameter 'green' branch wood, and produced the attractive "flowers" seen in the photographs. First the basic flower bud shape was turned, using a skew chisel. Next the "petals" of the flower were formed, using the cunningly



reshaped short point of the skew to turn back the wood fibres in the same manner as he had produced the "foliage" of the Christmas trees. This can be seen happening in the photograph.



After parting off, the flowers were drilled to take stems made from willow of the type used for basketry. These flowers were left uncoloured, but Stuart often uses food colourings to give the flowers a more interesting appearance. For my money, they are just as charming left as they are. *Alan*

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Stuck Chuck!

Like all prudent people, you screw the chuck on firmly, especially if it is gripping a heavy blank. Some time later, you need to remove it to put in a drive centre, and the chuck won't unscrew! What to do now? Many if not most people will put the chuck key in its socket, and heave on it. If that doesn't work, they belt the key with a mallet. WRONG!! I have seen chuck keys simply shear off, or worse, the socket for the key split open like a flower, (I've welded up a few!) and the chuck is still stuck on the spindle.

There is a right way to tackle a stuck chuck. Make sure that the spindle is locked or restrained by the correct size of spanner if you need one. Don't use an adjustable wrench! Open the jaws and place across the face of the chuck, between the jaws, a stout metal bar like tyre lever or the shank of a large spanner. Close the jaws firmly on the bar, then try the mallet, gently at first, increasing the strength of the blow until the chuck yields. Resist the temptation to use a hammer - it can damage the bearings.

To reduce the chance of this happening again, the spindle threads and nose should be clean and lightly lubricated, and you could use a soft washer on the spindle thread to prevent the chuck from jamming against the shoulder of the spindle. Suitable materials are red fibre, polythene, thin leather, and surprisingly, a washer made from the siliconeised backing sheet for self adhesive labels. These prevent metal to metal contact, which together with grit, is likely to cause jamming, and they seem to allow a good enough grip on the threads for most work. Many larger blanks should in any case be more safely held on a faceplate. Alan.

Diary Dates

May 12th. John Berkley Making Puzzles
May 15th. MWA Seminar at Gt. Kingshill
June 9th. Don Murray. Making a flute
June 12th to 25th. MWA Exhibition in the
Cow Byre in Ruislip.
July 14th. Mark Baker returns to MWA .
August 11th. Club Night & Hands On evening.

Last Minute Announcements.

The Treasurer asks members if possible to offer correct money on paying for entry to meetings. This would shorten the queue!
Chiltern Show. MWA has been offered a place at the Chiltern Show on July 16th/17th. at Gt. Missenden, Bucks. We have expressed an interest and will need support . Details later.

