



Editor's Comments

Hello again! First an apology for in the last Newsletter giving the month of Mick Hanbury's demonstration as April instead of May. Second, another apology. Some of the black & white pictures in the last edition were of poorer quality than usual. This was because the one photocopier which delivers acceptable B & W results was out of action and I had to accept the next best machine. Minor hiccoughs, but annoying just the same!

The club has been very busy since the last Newsletter was published. We had a rather different Club evening in June, and also in June the return of the Middlesex Show, where we had a large marquee. July brought Brian Wooldridge to demonstrate in place of Brian Partridge, and also in July the Chilterns Show, which has become a regular fixture. Congratulations to all our exhibitors for maintaining a good stock of stuff to show and to sell at these shows. Now we are asking them yet again to rise to the occasion of the Chilterns Craft Show at the end of this month. This is close to the August Bank Holiday, and Ralph Pooley and his team will need extra help from exhibitors in setting up, stewarding, and clearing up at the end of the show, and don't forget, we would welcome non-exhibitors as extra stewards.

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The Middlesex Show

There was something for everyone at the Middlesex Show. We were glad that our marquee was one of the first to be seen by visitors entering the show ground. As you would expect there was a stream of curious people wandering around our displays, "just looking". Many returned later for the more serious business of choosing something to buy, and sales over the duration of the event were very encouraging. Things were a bit slow on the first day, because the good old English Summer presented us with the usual wind and rain, but were much better on the second day which was a bright, if somewhat windy day. We were very pleased to see some of our newer members displaying good quality work, and at the end of the show, everybody had achieved some sales. Our charity did well too, with direct sales and donations, plus a commission on all sales.

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Middlesex Show Contd.

The standards of work on show were high, sometimes very high, and it was noted the those members who modestly class themselves as beginners produced very creditable exhibits. There was a wide range of stuff on show, including jewellery, domestic items, and many gallery quality pieces. We were approached by the organisers of the show to provide two trophies to be awarded during the event. Ralph Pooley and Eddie Morgan rose to the occasion by presenting two beautiful items for the purpose. MWA has undertaken to provide two trophies for each future Middlesex Show. MWA has been granted many favours by the organisers of this and other shows which we attend, and we are very pleased to offer this service in return. In future, selected members may be asked to donate a suitable item as a trophy, to spread the load amongst us all.

The setting up and dismantling of the MWA display went very smoothly, thanks to good teamwork and good organisation by the team led by Ralph Pooley. They are to be congratulated!

Smoke gets in your Eyes

On 12th June we had a club evening with a difference. Eddie Morgan and Paul Nesbitt continued their instruction on aspects of wood turning, concluding what they had started during the preceding club evening. Meanwhile, tables

were set up and a basic pyrography class was conducted by well known expert, Bob Neill. Bob had set up a veritable battery of



Pyrography machines and their accessories, and had also provided basic practice blanks of birch ply. Instruction in setting up the machines, and in the basics of simple pyrography were given, and members were free to find out for themselves how it all worked. Bob was on hand to advise on both basic techniques, and for those who needed it, more advanced stuff. For those who wished to go further, Bob had on sale a variety of blanks, and also the pyrography machines. During the evening most members present had a go, and at least one pyrography machine was sold. It was a



asking Bob Neill if he would conduct an advanced

class relating more closely to turned objects.

It was good also to see some members shedding their inhibitions, and making shavings on the two lathes.

We hope to see more brave souls brushing up their turning skills on club evenings. There is no better way



of doing so than with the friendly guidance of a more expert member. One should not be worried if mistakes are made. Mistakes are the best ways of learning, provided that the reasons for the mistakes are understood. MWA would



like to know what topics should be included in future club evenings. Do tell us what you are interested in, and we will endeavour to lay it on for you, and we would like to know if any of you are willing to take an active part in Club evenings.

Also during the evening, the monthly display of members work took place. Some very good pieces were on show. Again as usual, the person doing the assessment and marking of the work had a tough time when grading the work, all of which was good or better. Each week, a spread sheet of cumulative scores is on display on the club notice board, so that competitors can see the "pecking order".

The Chilterns Show

The Chilterns Show is one of our best show venues as it attracts people from a wide area. There was a steady and at times considerable flow of visitors through our marquee on each day of the show. Nevertheless, we noticed that many were reluctant to purchase even our cheaper 'craft fair' items. This was probably a reflection of the mood of the nation in times of rising costs of essentials. In the end we, and the Shooting Star charity did well enough, and this was largely due to the majority of exhibitors who worked hard to promote not only their own exhibits, but also those of other exhibitors. This was particularly significant where exhibitors were not able to be present in person. It really is incumbent upon all exhibitors to promote other people's work as well as their own. This is what being a member of a club is all about. We are not just a loose association of small traders, each interested only in his own financial gain.

Having got that off my chest, I can report that as with other group endeavours, it was a great social occasion. We attracted interest in wood turning, and MWA from a number of people, some of whom we hope will follow up the information which we gave to them. Raising public awareness of our craft and of the Association are important aspects of our presence at shows and exhibitions. Live demonstrations are also very important, and we congratulate the stalwarts who kept the lathe running throughout the show.

As always, the excellent organisation and team work ensured a smooth setting up, stewarding and conclusion of the show. We thank all who pitched in to help the small team which makes it all happen. Finally, there are no photos from this and other recent shows, because one marquee looks just like any other marquee, and the conditions inside are not generally good enough for taking acceptable pictures. Ed.

Thin Walled Vases

Brian Partridge, who should have been with us in July was unable to come, so another Brian, namely Brian Wooldridge stepped in to fill the space. Brian is on



the Register of Professional Turners, and has demonstrated for us in the past. He specialises in thin walled natural edged vases, turned from green or semi-seasoned timber, and this was to be his main demonstration for this evening. Brian had on display some fine examples of finished vases, and an array of specialised tooling

Brian discussed the desirable characteristics of timber to be used for his vases. Generally speaking, the wood should be pale in colour, and close grained, with tightly attached bark. There should be no signs of rot, though light spalting is not a disadvantage. Preparation of the log which forms the blank began by marking the end which

will be the open end of the vase so that the bark is evenly distributed about the centre. Brian used a centring aid in the form of a clear plastic sheet marked in concentric circles. This piece of kit can easily be made rather than bought. It is useful to make them in various sizes. Centring the other end of the blank was not so critical. Mounted between centres, partial roughing of the exterior shape plus the making of a chucking spigot came next. Then a substantial four jaw chuck was put on the lathe, and the embryo vase firmly gripped. It is worth noting that to get the most secure grip, the spigot must be of the correct size for the chuck jaws.

With the blank safely mounted, Brian partly roughed out the rim of the exterior shape, leaving extra thickness where the stem of the vase would eventually be. Now he began the hollowing. First cuts were made with conventional gouges, aiming for a good finish from the tool. The golden rule is that since the wood distorts as soon as the waste is taken out, it is never possible to work back towards the mouth of the vase. It is possible however to sand as you go, finishing small steps while working inwards. Soon normal gouges were no longer usable, and decisions had to be made. It is possible to use various scrapers.

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Thin Walled Vases contd.

When shear scraping is possible, a good finish can be obtained, but faster and better results are had if cutting tools are used. There are



many tools on the market, almost all of which are based on either hook tools or the closely related ring tools. Brian had examples of several well known makes, all of which he demonstrated, with comments on his appraisal of each one. As expected, all performed well, but some were difficult to handle, and some more suitable for the job in hand than others. Much depended upon the state of the timber. Brian was unlucky in that the wood he had chosen contained some hidden defects. However, a combination of skill and the best tool soon produced an acceptable interior shape for the vase.

Now it was time for the exterior turning. Brian made it look easy to turn a shape to match the interior, using normal tools, callipers, and sensitive fingers. But it was not thin enough! Brian mounted a small lamp in a tail stock holder, the bulb within the vase, and switched it on. Immediately it could be seen how the thickness of the wall of the vase varied, as the light shone through the thin timber. Brian gently removed wood, aiming to get an even distribution of light through the wall of the vase. It was then that the

stem of the vase was turned to size. When he was satisfied with the stem, he turned as much of the foot as possible, but did not part it off.

The problem now was how to remove the remaining waste, and turn the foot to a thin walled section. Brian pointed out that if the foot was not thinned to broadly match the rest of the vase, cracking as it dried was inevitable. Thin timber tends to distort rather than crack. Brian produced a "dolly", made from scrap wood to a shape broadly matching the interior of the vase. This was mounted in the chuck, and together with a star shaped mat of foam plastic formed a driver and support for the vase. The tail stock centre was lightly engaged with the centre mark, and using a small gouge and light cuts, Brian was able to shape the foot, leaving only a small 'pin' of waste to be removed by hand.

For now the job was done. The vase would be allowed to dry out, and as it would be more or less distorted, Brian said that he would eventually finish it by hand methods.

During his demonstration, Brian maintained an interesting commentary on what he was doing, and answered many questions from the members. There was much to be learned from his excellent demonstration. Surprisingly, Brian had a little time to spare, but he had anticipated that and quickly showed us how he tackled the turning of a shallow bowl with the wood held propellor style in the lathe, so rounding off a valuable evenings work.

The September Club Evening

Members who are relatively new to wood turning might like to develop their skills by making popular 'craft fair' items. We have chosen four well tried items, and will have four small lathes available, with experienced turners in attendance. The items are: Light Pulls, Bottle Stoppers, Bud Vases, and Christmas Tree Decorations. None of these need any special equipment, other than normal lathe accessories. Materials provided, but you are encouraged to bring your own small size tools. We can help you with sharpening. The levels of skills involved can vary from very basic to surprisingly advanced. It will be up to you!

If there is any other small item you would like to try, please let us know at the August meeting and we will see if we can fit it in.

There will be the usual Bring & Buy, plus the Library and the Shop. We hope too that members will bring their best pieces to display and earn points towards the annual competition.

Club Diary

**29/31 August Gt Missenden
Craft Show**

**11th September Club
Workshop Evening**

9th October Greg Morton

**26 Oct/1/Nov Cow Byre
Gallery**

**13th November A.G.M.
(Plus)**

**11th December Christmas
Party**

