



Editor's Comments

Recent events have made it very difficult for me to produce full Newsletter, for which I offer my apologies. In particular have just not had enough time to produce the usual crop of pictures. Those of you who have computers and digital cameras will know just how much time is needed to convert the raw images from the camera into images suitable for reproduction. I very much hope to be back to normal for the next edition.

For this issue, I have prepared an update of essential Club News. It is intended in the future, from time to time, to update members on Association business. In this way we hope that you, the members, will feel able to comment on the running of the Association, and able to have your say, and indeed to take part in it. Do feel free to talk to any member of the Committee about any aspect of the Association and its activities. Your comments will be listened to and appreciated.

Gordon Cookson has got his teeth into the matter of Allergic Reactions to the various oils we use for finishing our work. Such is the importance of this topic that I have decided to reproduce it in full, in the hope that members will consider keeping it for future reference.

Finally, may I thank all my colleagues and friends in MWA for their support and sympathy following the death of my wife Pat in June. You have all helped me enormously to come to terms with the shock of her unexpected passing. It is when events like that happen that true friends are revealed.

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Club News

The Club Notice Board

The latest additions to the Library are posted on the Club Notice board. From time to time, the AWGB publishes Branch Links. Branch Links will also be posted on the Notice board. Members are reminded that the Notice board is for their use also. If members have anything which they wish to bring to the attention of other members, they should ask the Newsletter Editor to provide the Velcro dots for fastening their notice to the board. The use of drawing pins is frowned upon, and Bluetac is strictly forbidden!

Club News Contd

The Club Charity

I am pleased to say that at the Chilterns Show, held a Great Missenden, the Shooting Star Trust, which is the charity adopted by MWA for 2006, raised £154, bringing the total raised including the show at the Chiltern Open Air Museum to £189. We hope to add to this amount when we hold the October Exhibition at the Cow Byre In Ruislip. Small items which would sell at not more than £2.50 are needed for this stand. Why not use up some of those small off cuts you have been hoarding, and make some attractive stuff for the Charity?

The Chilterns Show.

MWA members mounted a splendid display of the most excellent craftsmanship. Compared with some of the commercial offerings, club members' work is way ahead in terms of quality and attractiveness. It was no surprise that sales amounted to about £1400 for the two days of the show. At other shows we have put on, it has taken a week to raise a similar amount! Congratulations are due to all the exhibitors, and in particular to those who organised and mounted the exhibition and presented the almost continuous demonstrations during the two days of the show. On both days of the show, the numbers of people visiting the MWA marquee were significantly greater than those visiting other marquees. We expect to be invited to this show again next year, and the organiser of The Chilterns Show has offered us the chance to take part in two shows at the same venue in the Summer and in the Autumn. This is a great compliment to our members, which reflects the high standards of both the work and its presentation.

Making the most of Special Timber

When you have a special piece of timber, either because of its age, provenance, rarity, grain, or figure, have you considered putting 1/4" slices on top of either a plain piece of similar timber or a contrasting one? The pattern could be an abstract one if only small pieces of special timber are available. The turning of the special wood side should then be minimal to avoid wasting it. This makes the most of the special wood, and means that more people can enjoy a piece of history or whatever.

I got this great idea from David Burton at the Chiltern Craft Show at Stonor Park over the August Bank Holiday 2005. He uses it very effectively, using pieces of HMS Victory oak and copper on his decorative platters, galleried trays, coasters, small tables and stools, and also as a trim on bowls. I liked one of his smaller platters so much that I bought it! (see picture)

David also uses smaller pieces of Victory wood and copper to make paper knives and even smaller pieces to make bottle stoppers and corkscrews. He gives a signed certificate of provenance with each piece sold.

David's work can be seen at The Victory Oak Collection, Lees Yard, off Bull Street, Holt, North Norfolk NR25 6HS. 01263 711174 or on www.victoryoak.co.uk

Other means of making the most of valuable timbers are bowl saving tools or the Stewart /Sorby Slicer. Decorative trim rings, jewellery items, and small finials and knobs may be made from the centre waste from bowls. Other ideas are to make rings from waste around the narrow bases of footed bowls, or around the long narrow necks of vases, and of course to minimise waste by careful cutting out in the first place.

Gordon Cookson

<p>Lathe for sale Myford Mystro. Reversing motor. 5 Speeds. 11 inch Swing x 40 inches between centres. 2 MT Spindle & Tailstock. Three tool rests. Various chucks, incl. bowl turning chuck. All on strong wooden bench £650 ONO. Also HSS turning tools, Sorby & Coronet. price £5 - £10 Some are new. Phone Les Perrin. 0208 384 9943 (Ruislip) e-mail lperrin@hotmail.com</p>
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Oil Finishes and Allergies Gordon Cookson writes:

Having read articles on oil finishes in both “Traditional Woodworking”, March 2006, and “Woodturning” No 149, May 2005 referring to the safety of wooden articles coming into contact with food or (as toys) young children, I was concerned that there was little or no mention of allergy problems.

Allergies may not be common problems, but it can be very dangerous for susceptible people. Therefore I wrote to Peter Simmons, Information Manager at “Allergy U.K.” for advice. With my letter I sent copies of the article in “Woodturning covering proprietary oils in common use in the U.K., and copies of the safety sheets provided by the manufacturers mentioned in the article. I also mentioned that some culinary oils, notably olive, sesame, walnut, sunflower, and vegetable oils containing sunflower are often used as wood finishes. (The legal requirement for allergy warnings on culinary oils started in the U.K. in November 2005.)

The question which I asked was “Which culinary and proprietary oils can safely be used on wooden items which come into contact with food, and via toys, young children?”

An expert reply came in the form of an article, to be attributed to John Collard, Consultant Nurse, Allergy U.K.

John Collard writes:

As always in allergy, there is no ‘once and for all’ answer to the question, ‘Which products are safe?’ It is possible to say which oils are *most likely to cause problems*, and which *are more likely to be safe*, but there will always be some people who react to uncommon allergens, however safe we try to make things. However, it’s nice to know that someone is trying to make an effort to understand the subject. As a general principle, the best one can achieve is to use products less likely to cause problems, to know what you are using, and to be honest about labelling and providing information.

Although we normally associate the development of nut allergy with eating nuts, there is evidence that nut proteins absorbed through the skin can stimulate the production of IgE antibodies (IgE is the antibody involved in anaphylactic or serious allergic reactions). therefore there are two risks in using nut oils on wooden objects: ingestion of the oil if the product is licked or chewed, or if oil is transferred on the hands, and absorption through the skin. It is therefore worth taking the problem seriously.

Although the highest risk of allergic reactions is thought to be from solid food rather than oils, there is now evidence that some of the proteins responsible for allergic reactions found in solid food are also detectable in oil, and therefore oils can cause severe allergic reactions as well.

The following oils (list 1) are those generally considered to be the highest risk. They are not in any particular order.

Peanut (also known as Groundnut or Arachis)		
Brazil nut	Almond	
Walnut	Cashew	Sesame
Pine nuts	Pistachio	Macadamia

Lupin is considered by some to be an increasing risk.

The oils listed below (list 2) are generally considered to be ‘safer’ but as mentioned above, some people will be allergic to them.

Olive	Sunflower	Safflower
Linseed	Canola	Borage
Corn	Grapeseed	Soya
Coconut	Castor	Starflower
Tung Oil		

Therefore a sensible approach would be to avoid List 1, and label which of list 2 has been used. This should make products safer by avoiding the main risks, and allow those with more unusual allergies to identify potential risks.

Contd .overleaf

Does heating oil make it any safer?

It is generally the protein component of the oil that triggers the allergic response, and proteins are known to be denatured (altered physically) by heat. For example, egg protein - albumin - which is clear in a raw egg changes structure and becomes white and more solid when the egg is boiled for a few minutes. Although the proteins involved in allergy to a range of nuts have been shown to be quite similar, this does not mean that all nut proteins will be inactivated by the same level of heat for the same time. There are other variables involved. Also it has been shown that some nut oil proteins are significantly 'heat resistant', e.g. brazil nut oil. For these reasons heating any nut oil to around 100 deg and holding at this temperature for 5-10 minutes could be expected to significantly reduce the allergic properties of the oil, but will **not** make it completely safe. I have no idea how this would affect the properties of the oil in terms of applying it to the wood as a finish.

There are difficulties in recommending particular brands of oil to use. The ingredients of all product can change from time to time, and we can be lulled into a false sense of security if we do not carefully read product labels whenever buying a new supply. Products sold into different markets can also have differing ingredients although the product name is the same.

Having looked at the ingredients list and safety data information for a range of products, it is clear that they fall into several groups.

Some products consist of a range of 'resins and solvents' or a blend of oils which are not specifically identified. These should probably be avoided because of the number of ingredients and the likelihood of changes to the 'recipe' in response to price and supply variations.

Some products contain nut oils mixed with other ingredients; these should be avoided, as should products labelled as containing 'vegetable oil' without defining which oil is present.

The products chosen should have just one or two ingredients which are clearly defined and are not from the high risk list (list 1). Tung oils from the Aleurites species are probably a good choice, but others from the safer list (list 2) are equally valid. The addition of a small amount of citrus oil is probably acceptable.

As mentioned above, the most important factors are the avoidance of the highest risk oils, and the ability to provide information about what has been used. On behalf of allergic people everywhere, thank you for making the effort.

Diary of Events

14th September John Davis

12th October TBA

9th November AGM and another activity TBA

14th December Christmas Evening.

Lathe for Sale. Record CL2, on makers stand. with accessories. Little used. 36 inches between centres, 3/4 HP motor **See the Club Notice Board for photos. Tel 01895 253231 £250**

Don't Moan - Do Something About It!

That was Pat Spargo's motto, as I learned at her inspiring funeral. I am trying to live my life by it, and it is amazing how much more I am getting done, compared to before, and I feel better too! Do try it! Rodger Foden, our excellent demonstrator in July certainly does, and look how skilful at turning he has become.

A tribute from Gordon Cookson.