



## Editor's Comments

This issue features details of the MWA Seminar and also of the Exhibition in the Cow Byre Gallery in Ruislip. A huge amount of work goes on behind the scenes in order to make these events a success, and the past, and I cannot remember a busier period for the Committee in many years. Many photographs of these events were taken, and on the Gallery page I have presented some of the pictures which most interested me. If there is no picture of your entry, please do not assume that it was not up to scratch. It is simply a matter of how much I was able to photograph in the time available, and how much space I have in the newsletter. I hope to find space for more pictures in future editions. I have not put makers' names to items from the Seminar, because there just was not enough time for record keeping.

Looking ahead now to the August meeting, which is billed as a 'Hands On' evening. There will be a bring and buy as usual, but also we have decided to ask members to bring some of their work to display in an "Instant Gallery". This has been prompted by the excellent "Instant Gallery" at the MWA Seminar. We were impressed by the quality and quantity of work displayed there, and believe that we should repeat the exercise so that all members of MWA have a chance of seeing what fellow members can do. All levels of expertise will be welcome.

*Alan*

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## The Middlesex Woodturners Association Seminar

By a practising turner.

.....and a great time was had by all.

Your correspondent arrived at about 9 am to find the village hall set up and almost ready to go. Crowds of people, some sitting, some chatting, milling, or making final preparations. All waiting for Jimmy Clewes. In the corner the Instant gallery tables were loaded with all sorts of fine work, and the pieces I had brought seemed suddenly inadequate. Nevertheless I placed them on the end, in one of the few available spaces, and thought that perhaps they are actually quite good. Do we all go through this doubt or is it just me? Fortunately I got a few compliments on them and became comfortable with exposing my work. I must say that I thought the Gallery exceptional. Large pieces, small ones, flat ones, long ones, chalices, boxes, bowls, platters, and a huge vase by Robert Bishop that was later used honourably for the drawing of the raffle. Alan had shrewdly left that for the last tea break to give us the chance to buy more tickets. The prizes were certainly worth a gamble.

Jimmy Clewes' all singing and dancing demonstration must be one of the finest available. His grasp of technique and design skills; his implementation of these; his ability to express himself in the piece he is making; all this is only outdone by his ease of talking, teaching and explaining, (contd ov

## Seminar Contd

and by his quick witted answers to the many questions and the good humoured barracking of the bolder of our brothers and sisters, a few of which may have gone too far. (A bit of jealousy here mayhap). Jimmy took it all in good part, even at times giving off an air of vulnerable humility, particularly with regard to the question of free equipment, that I am sure endeared him to all. Not to be too flattering I did find a rough patch on one of his demo pieces, but I had to look pretty hard.

Hints and tips abounded. New techniques, chisel grinds, the shocking information that Jimmy gets through a gouge in three or four months - ouch! - how much work does he actually do! - curves from perfect rectangles and in combination to form complex shapes but remain in balance, colouring with dies, and raising the grain with meths, to the delight and fear of us all, as we watched the flames lick the air, and imagined our workshops reduced to rubble. Nonchalantly using a gouge as a skew with a pull cut at a frightening angle to produce a lovely finish; grinding micro-bevels on gouges to reach the parts other chisels cannot reach, and then grinding it off to a single bevel - no wonder he gets through gouges so fast.

I liked the way he talked about what he was doing. Sometimes muttering to himself - 'it won't work - it won't work - it might' ! - and then going ahead. This honesty and brave curiosity leads to movement through the creative process towards innovation and improvement.

The word practising in the subtitle above may be a bit presumptuous. It seems to have two meanings. I'm practising to get better, to become an expert. Jimmy Clewes is practising in the way a doctor has a practice. It seems to me that he doesn't need to get any better. I suspect however that he doesn't think that, and he experiments with finishes, tools and suchlike to produce new effects.

I find a dual effect from watching the experts of our demonstrations.

On the one hand, I am inspired by the ease, the quality and the speed of their work. On the other, I am laid into despair at my ignorance and lack of skill. This latter thought I manage to dismiss in the reality of my short experience, but when the box lid won't fit or the base cracks when I put it on a spigot, to finish the bottom, my frustration and disappointment are only balanced by my determination to get it right and to get better.

Jimmy's' three demo pieces were exceptional. His 'Japanese' box a delight with beautiful lines. I regret that I did not get a picture of the completed box, but the one showing the base on the chuck speaks for itself. This box he signed and donated to the raffle, and the lucky winner gets to finish it. I'd almost be frightened!

I can't recommend the Seminar enough. If you missed it, go next year. If you didn't - well I'm sure you enjoyed it, were stimulated and inspired by it, and got home tired and satisfied. Particular thanks to Adrian Needham whose practice on the camera achieved new heights, allowing us sight of how the tools were worked as if we were standing next to the lathe. And of course, well done the organisers, the heavy mob and helpers, and the caterers, whose sustenance kept us all going through a long but fascinating day.

Will Mailes

(Pictures on the Gallery 1

### Library Update

New Books. B4 52 Toys & Puzzles. John A Nelson  
B6 Trees of Britain & Europe. Paul Sterry & Bob Press  
B8 Trees & Shrubs of Britain. Readers Digest  
B10 All Screwed Up. John Berkeley  
B12 Woodturning Masterclass. Tony Boase

Gordon thanks Ken Horn, Mary Morgan & Adrian Needham for their donations of books for the Library, and magazines for sale in aid of Library funds.

# Making a Flute



could have caused cracking, but fortunately this did not happen. Don did use a Silicone spray to lubricate the drill, which helped the process.

It is always a pleasure when a member presents a demonstration to the Association. We are used to seeing most of the usual items being turned by our demonstrators, but this time was a "first". Don Muray makes wooden flutes. We first saw one of his flutes at a MWA Seminar, and he presented one again at the most recent Seminar. Obviously he could not hope to make and finish a flute in the short space of one club evening, so he had pre-prepared his material so that he could demonstrate the most critical parts of the job. Close grained woods are best for musical instrument making. Flutes were at one time commonly made from Boxwood, Fruit woods, and African Blackwood. These hard timbers are not the easiest to work, so Don used a milder wood for his demonstration. It might have been Walnut.

A flute is made in two parts, a short head and a longer body. The are both bored parallel to about 16 mm diameter, and it is the boring that is the difficult part of flute making. The square for the body was marked out with the spacing of the finger holes, and these were drilled freehand with an electric hand drill, the depth of the holes being marked on the drills with adhesive tape. The diameters of the holes vary, and to get clean holes lip & spur drills should be used. The hole in the head across which the flautist blows was made in the same fashion.

For boring, the blanks were held in the four jaw chuck, and checked for true running. A series of drills was used, the longest being specially extended to reach the full length of the body of the flute. The first drill was a Forstner pattern bit, as this type drills a straight hole and does not follow the grain. After that the hole was progressively deepened by drills of increasing length. Specialist drill are not readily available for this, but Don was able to use long "beam" drills after starting with the Forstner bit. The drilling was not easy. Small bites had to be made, and then the bit cleared of shavings, but despite this there was considerable heating within the blank. In some timbers this

At last the bore was complete. Both parts of the flute were drilled in similar fashion, but it should be noted that for the head, a larger drill is first used, to make the socket for the tenon on the body, followed by the 16 mm drills. It was found that inevitably the drills had followed the grain a little, but the blank was dimensioned to allow for that. Subsequent turning was between centres. We were surprised by how little wall thickness was left once the work had been brought to diameter. Fancy mouldings were worked where needed, and the characteristic shape of the head joint made. Don did not sand the parts, having produced a good enough finish direct from the tools, but of course much finishing work remained to be done. To drive the work, a plug was made on a piece of wood in the chuck which tightly fitted the bores of the parts. Don did have a problem with this driver, as he had inadvertently left some wax on the end of one blank which lubricated the plug. He could not just increase pressure from the tailstock, because of the thinness of the walls of the flute. However, with much perseverance the turning was completed..

The parts fitted together well. Don had listed a bottle of wine as one of his requirements for the job. It was the cork he wanted, but no doubt the wine went down well too. The wine bottle cork was used to close the upper joint of the flute to the correct depth to enable the flute to sound its notes. Despite the short time available, Don had produced a complete flute, which could be played. Will Mailes had played a flute, and he managed to get a simple tune out of it!

Of course, the flute still needed to be refined and "voiced", but Don had done very well to compress the long process of flute making into the short time available. We felt that he needed "to wet his whistle" after all that work, and presented him with a few bottles of wine as a "thank you" present. for his demonstration of an unusual branch of wood turning.

## Thought for the Month

George Bernard Shaw once said "If I give you my apple, and you give me your apple, we each st have one apple. If I give you my idea, and you give me your idea, we each have two ideas."

# The Cow Byre Exhibition in June 2005

We were very pleased to find that more members brought their work at the Cow Byre than had done so in previous years. This included several newer recruits to MWA, and in fact it was necessary to find space for an additional table to display all the items we had. There were enough stewards on most of the days, and each day was for us a good social occasion. Wood turners are nice people to be with, and we didn't just talk 'shop' all the time! Of course, we had a "tea swindle" set up before we did anything else. Almost one hundred tea bags and a small jar of instant coffee were used up during the two weeks we were there! It was hot too. The thermometer in the Cow byre registered 92 degrees F on one day, and into the high 80s for almost all other days.

We had the benefit of experienced people on set up day, and as the room layout had been largely pre planned, setting up was completed by lunch time, and we were open for business in the afternoon. Not all the work was for sale. We had a fair number of items put on display just to show the public what we are capable of, but not for sale. The rest of the work was on offer at prices ranging from £1.50 up to about £300, so there was something for everybody. As the Borough of Hillingdon was charging us rent plus commission on sales and VAT on top of that, it needed a surprising volume of sales to reach the break even point and move into profit. Exhibitors were, of course charged commission on their sales to satisfy this demand.

We did not reach 'break even point' financially until the eighth day. We had not realised that "Wimbledon" began in our second week. The number of visitors to the exhibition dropped by 50%, more on some days, and sales fell off accordingly. It was noticeable also that people were not spending as freely as they had at past exhibitions, so we knew that overall the show would not be as profitable as we had hoped.. But the accounting is now done, and we are pleased that we did in the end show a profit.

## Diary Dates

**11th August Club Night. Bring & Buy, and Instant Gallery (not a competition!)**

**8th September Jason Breach,** Jason is one of the turners employed as demonstrators by the Axminster Power Tool Company.

**October 13th. Simon Hope.** Simon sells less common Australian timbers.

**10th November. Annual General Meeting,** and another activity to be announced.

There was much interesting turnery on show, all of high quality, but I will comment upon only a few of the pieces. Built up work by John Hodges attracted much attention, and it is surprising how difficult it is to try to explain to a non-turning person how it was done. Harry Lintott had two fine vases in spalted beech amongst his usual good display, and there were some fine bowls and other work by Ralph Pooley. Gary Rance showed a superb pair of matched candlesticks and snuffers, and much other work of professional standard, while Stuart King produced more of his dainty wooden flowers and rustic pots and boxes. Making the pots and boxes must have been a hazardous business, because all of them had been well scorched by a blowtorch as part of the finishing process. The effect is remarkable and unique. (And difficult to photograph!) I was particularly pleased to see the work of beginning turners on show. On the gallery page I have placed a first selection of interesting pictures, and I hope to publish some more in due course.

That the show was a success is a reflection of the support I had from my fellow turners and from my wife Pat and also from June Brown who between them looked after the cash and sales records for most of the time. Turning demonstrations were carried out by Ralph Pooley, Luke Rance whose design of spinning top will become a classic, Brian Wooldridge, Stuart King, and myself. Quite often people wish to buy the item which they have seen produced, and it is always pleasant to give small items to the children. Proceeds from the sale of many of the demonstration pieces were placed in the Charity Box, and not added to the total sales.

I offer my thanks to all who made the Exhibition a success. We shall do it again next year if all goes well, hopefully later in the year, nearer to Christmas!  
Alan.

## A Tip from Bert Marsh

When shear scraping the insides of pieces, start at the centre, and arc upwards and outwards to produce a smoother finish. Bert favours a grind to produce a thinner edge on a scraper i.e. a more acute sharpening angle, and then he removes the burr with an oilstone or a flat metal surface. This produces a sharper edge without the damage often caused by the burr on the top of the scraper. Unfortunately, such an edge needs more frequent sharpening,