



West Midlands Woodturners

Wood Turning and Wood Art

April 2023 Newsletter

Programme of meetings 2023

21 May	Hands On	Box turning and threaded lids; BRING AND BUY SALE
25 June	Demo	Mick Hanbury
16 July	Hands On	Work holding and jam chucks
20 Aug	Demo	Martin Saban-Smith
17 Oct	Hands On	Christmas ornaments
15 Oct	Demo	Margaret Garrard
19 Nov	AGM and Hands On	Colour and stains
17 Dec	Demo	Rob Till



NB Mick Hanbury and Martin Saban Smith have swapped dates

From those previously listed.

Demonstration Days: Start at 9.15 and conclude about 4.30pm

Venue: Kingsbury Sports and Community Centre, unless otherwise stated

West Midlands Woodturners is a "not for profit" company limited by guarantee.

Registered in England and Wales. Registration No: 9419165

WMWT Committee

Chairman	Keith Lanchester	Chair@wmwoodturners.org.uk
Vice Chair	Vacant	Vice@wmwoodturners.org.uk
Directors	John Hooper Chris Jones Rob Huxley	director@wmwoodturners.org.uk
Secretary Deputy Secretary	Joe Rollings Peter Flint	Secretary@wmwoodturners.org.uk
Treasurer	Chris Jones	Treasurer@wmwoodturners.org.uk
Deputy Treasurer	vacant	
Programme and Events Manager	Cliff Lane	Events@wmwoodturners.org.uk
Equipment Man- ager	Malcolm Ed- wards	Equipment@wmwoodturners.org.uk
Membership Sec- retary	David Campbell	Member- ship@wmwoodturners.org.uk
Newsletter Editor	Mary Dunne	Editor@wmwoodturners.org.uk

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Chairman's Comments:

What a fantastic demo from Les Thorne earlier in the month! He certainly kept us all awake with his detailed explanations and quick wit! I for one can't wait until we can get him back at a future date.

Friday and Saturday of next week sees the club return to the Woodworks show at Daventry (organised by Tudor Rose WT) after a break of three years. Make sure to come along and support both WMWT and TRWT if you can.

Then the Sunday of the following week is our May Hands On day with the theme of Boxes and Threaded lids and also our Bring & Buy sale so sort out your unwanted turning tools and equipment for the table.

Finally a quick plug, Sunday 14th May is the first open day for New Hall Mill this year so if you are in the area why not pop down and see a restored water mill in action along with attractions in the meadow or afternoon tea from the tea room. And a date for your diary, WMWT will be displaying there on June 18th (Fathers Day).

Keith

Outside Events 2023

12th—13th May Woodworks@Daventry

18th June New Hall Mill

6th August New Hall Mill

28th August New Hall Mill (Bank Holiday Monday)

IMPORTANT REMINDER AND REPEATED REQUEST

PICK-A-PEG

The club urgently needs items for the Pick-A-Peg which features at outside events such as at New Hall Mill and raises funds for the club. Small items are required, such as mice, hedgehogs, bud vases, door wedges, mushrooms, napkin rings. The club has sufficient light pulls at present! It would help greatly if everyone could turn one or two items and donate them to the club. Good lathe practice!



DEPUTY TREASURER

Chris Jones gave a reminder that his term of office finishes in October and that the club cannot function without a treasurer. He advises that it does not involve a great deal of work and it would be very beneficial if someone volunteered now as deputy treasurer so that they can learn what needs to be done as they work alongside Chris. Please contact Chris for details.

Woodworks at Daventry Friday 12th and Saturday 13th May 2023

Phil updated the April meeting about arrangements for Daventry which are as reported in the April newsletter. He informed us that “an embarrassment of riches” has been provided by members for the club stall. The best will be picked for the judging of the stall and then the other pieces will be displayed during the two days.

There was a reminder that if you are planning / hoping to use the lathe during the event and especially if you are participating in the competitions, then don't forget to bring your tools and any timber you might need.

Members who intend to attend were reminded to take their club badges with them.

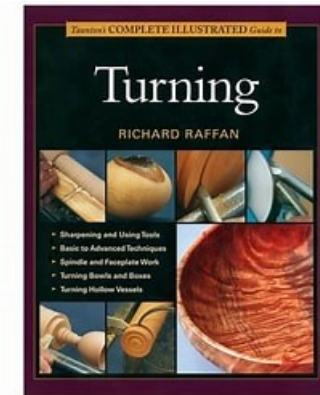
For the competitions at Daventry, Keith and Joe will be making the candlesticks, Phil the platter and Malcolm the darning mushroom. Club members will have their fingers crossed for them. We have a history of doing very well at Daventry. Les Thorne, April's demonstrator, made a (jokey) jibe at Keith's expense, pointing out that Joe will have the harder task in going second to produce a matching candlestick!

Phil can be contacted with any questions via phil@stsvnsn.co.uk

All club members are welcome to attend the event.

BRING AND BUY

DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR ITEMS FOR THE BRING AND BUY STALL AT MAY'S MEETING (May 23rd). START LOOKING IN YOUR TOOL STORES/ WORKSHOPS/GARAGES/WORK SPACES FOR ANY TOOLS/ WOOD/BOOKS ETC YOU KNOW THAT YOU WON'T USE ANY MORE BUT SOMEONE ELSE MIGHT. IF ANY ITEM IS TOO LARGE, YOU COULD BRING PHOTOGRAPHS INSTEAD. ANY DONATIONS TO THE CLUB WILL BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED BY THE TREASURER.



WMWT Chairman's Challenge 2023

Month

Novice

Intermediate

Advanced (artistic)

May

Bowl (approx. 100mm in diameter)

Bowl (150mm with incised decoration)

Bowl (with decoration)



June

Spinning top

Ring stand

Toy with moving parts



Results of Chairman's Challenge April 2023

Novice Group: a hedgehog (2 entries)

1st place: Sarah Norell



2nd place: Peter Flint



3rd place: xxx



Intermediate group: a cat (1 entry)

1st place: Chris Chambers



2nd place: xxx



3rd place: xxx



Advanced group: a children's toy (3 entries)

1st place: Kris Cietak



2nd place: Graham Hunt



3rd place: Keith Lanchester



APRIL DISPLAY TABLE



Peter Hockley



Malcolm Edwards



Malcolm Edwards



Dave Hobbs



Dave Hobbs



Darren Smith



Sarah Norell



Sarah Norell

APRIL DISPLAY TABLE



Malcolm Thorpe



Dave Nash

Report on Les Thorne's demonstration



Les is a Registered Professional Turner and Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Turners. He has spent the whole of his life involved in the timber industry in a range of capacities. He is internationally sought after as a presenter and the club was very appreciative of his demonstration. This started on a cheery note with Les declaring that he wanted to show us how he could turn a “completely useless hollowy boxy formy thing with an equally pointless finial with a point” - which he used to describe the three items shown above. This set the tone for his demonstration which was peppered with “funnies”, a number of them at Keith’s expense—whom he knew. Keith took it all in good part and was quick to parry.

Les commented that he had experimented with colouring for a while in line with a big increase in decorated turnings but was currently concentrating more on tooling techniques, on which he wanted to focus for the demonstration. He pointed out that colouring/decoration can’t be used as a cover-up for poor tooling, although he often saw examples to which this applied. He advised that the better you get at tooling, the more satisfying are the outcomes and process.

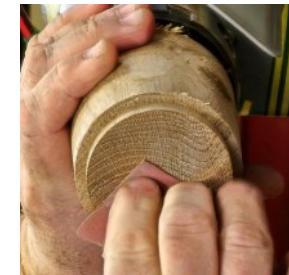
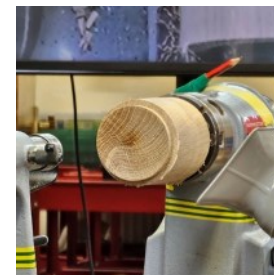
Project 1

For his first project, he wanted to focus on the use of (home-made) jam chucks to make the “useless pointy thing” on the right of the picture opposite. He was using French hard oak which leaves a shiny mark when sawn.

He had a constant emphasis on safety and risk assessment, saying that he turns some very large pieces of wood and doesn’t always know who has glued them together. He turned the blank to round, emphasising body movement and engaging the bevel then lifting until you find the “sweet spot” that begins cutting. He demonstrated both hand-over and hand-under grips and said that it is a matter of personal preference. He uses the centre of the spindle roughing gouge to round the blank, so that the wings stay sharp and can be used for planning cuts later. He commented that you should look for faults in the timber and then increase the speed: “speed’s our friend until the wood falls off!”

He emphasised that a spindle roughing gouge should never be used on end grain as it is a relatively weak tool. He urged us to think about the efficient order of tooling, saying that he often amends this order when he makes repeat pieces as he sees more efficient ways to complete the process.

He then demonstrated his signature 10mm multi-purpose tool with a double edge, using it to create a spigot, not by pushing into the wood but by locating the bevel and lifting in a peeling cut. He led into the cut with an angle of 1 or 2 degrees to stop it running off centre, to ensure that the spigot sits securely in the chuck. He reminded us that the chuck should be securely tightened at all three holes and that a dovetail for chuck-fitting must be accurately cut.



Next he tried up the end grain for the plug that would be inserted into the bottom of the project, using his 1/2" signature spindle gouge, pointing out that a skew could be used but oak is tricky.

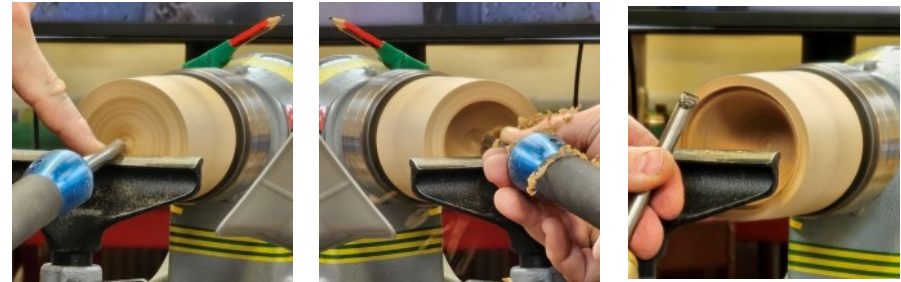
He spent some time demonstrating cuts using the bevel securely and how to cut correctly in the direction of the bevel. He explained that if you just push a gouge into the wood off the bevel, the wood will throw out the tool—it needs to be placed, like a needle on a record.

He reduced the plug in diameter and flattened the bottom, demonstrating both a push cut, which burnishes the wood more, and a pull cut which was okay, but don't mix the two. He decorated the bottom of the plug with four rings amidst some banter about odds and evens. He used to use a 1/16th" parting tool for parting off but finds it difficult to get the sweet spot so now he uses a 1/8th". When parting off the plug, he made a slight chamfer over the edge to create clearance.



Next he turned his attention to hollowing techniques—to drill or not to drill? He explored alternative methods of drilling:

- using a drill in a Jacobs chuck (which takes longer to set up) and you should make a vee cut in the centre where the drill will enter for it to "bite" on;
- using a spindle gouge being careful not to drill too deep. With the spindle gouge, he emphasised how important the entry angle was: between 10.30 and 11 o'clock— drill the hole and "throw hand away". He showed how opening the flute to 11.30 o'clock would cause a dig-in; the wrong position on the tool rest is the same as not using the tool rest at all. The more open the flute, the less support there is for the cutting edge so as you are drilling and hollowing, close the flute as you go: 10.30 to 11 to 10.30.



If you go deeper, the spindle gouge will overhang the tool rest and start to "sing" as the last part of the tool is not hardened. You might need to use a bigger tool such as a bowl gouge.

- using a hollowing tool

He discussed the use of carbide cutters, recommending the Simon Hope 6mm and 8mm ones. He doesn't shape with carbide cutters, apart from on acrylic. These tools are set at 45 degrees and are designed to lie flat on the tool rest at that angle. They remove material more slowly and scrape rather than cut but are easy to use and produce a good finish. They are useful for egg cups and small boxes. A long, smooth cut is easier with a bigger tool with less tendency to leave ridges. He discussed the small tear drop scraper to smooth the ridges and a negative rake scraper which is less "grabby".



Once the body of the piece had been hollowed, he made a reference mark on the bottom and prepared a recess to take the plug completed earlier. He cleaned up the “fluffy” edge before making a jam chuck so that he could finish shaping the outside and the neck of the piece.



Les talked about getting the balance between turning the outside and the inside—the outside needs to be turned whilst the weight is still there but some of the inside needs to be removed so that the required shape can be used—so he alternates.

In turning the neck of the piece, he discussed the effective way to cut coves, approaching the wood with the flute at 3 o'clock and as the gouge comes round opening up to 12 o'clock then dropping the handle. He



pointed out that the handle is lifted to cut and therefore it makes sense to drop the handle when you want to finish cutting so that the gouge doesn't run up the other side of the cove causing a catch. He recommended going slightly over halfway in creating the cove in order to get a smooth bottom. He reminded us of Keith Rowe's mantra: “Maintain contact with the bevel

at the biting point”. He pointed out that the principles are the same with the (often dreaded) skew—maintain contact with the bevel. The tool rest will need to be higher. As he was shaping the outside of the piece, he reminded us that as the narrower part was reached, the piece was revolving more slowly and therefore two cuts would be needed to remove the same amount of waste. He drilled a hole in the neck of the piece to take the tenon of the finial that he would make next. He refined the neck of the piece, supporting it as it was thin because of the hole.



He then demonstrated effective ways of sanding, holding the paper flat against the piece to avoid rounding over and using a ball shape with abrasive velcroed on for the inside curves. He urged us to think about how orbital sanders work—and therefore keep the paper moving.

He next talked about thread cutters which he admitted he found tricky to use. He used them to cut a decorative series of grooves on part of the outside inserting the 2 outside teeth into the grooves just cut as he moved down the piece. He explained that this is harder on a curved surface and you need to use a slight rocking motion. The same effect could be obtained using a hacksaw blade. Then he deburred with shavings and sanded to 400 grit.

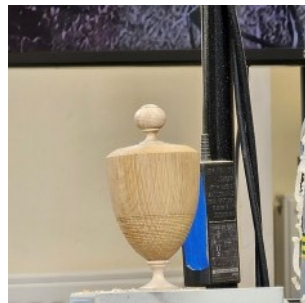


Finally he made a small (“utterly pointless pointed”) finial with a thin spigot which would be inserted into the hole he had made in the neck of the piece. He used a small spindle gouge to shape it and the spigot meant that he stayed away from the chuck. He made some comments in praise of holly as the “best densest” wood—it takes stain well and he recommended drying it on end (as all wood should be, he said) to keep it white.



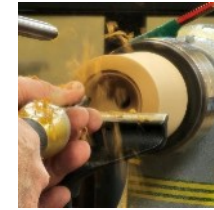
Piece 2—with a double-ended finial.

For this and for piece three, I will just outline Les’s key points.



This piece allowed Les to reiterate some of the key points made in relation to piece 1 whilst including additional points of technique. He made it from three smaller pieces of wood, thereby saving wood. After turning it to round, he examined it for flaws which determined which end he would use for the tenon. This time he used a twist drill to start the hollowing process

but then switched to a spindle gouge.



To demonstrate its use, he continued the hollowing using a swan neck hollowing tool in order to introduce an undercut under the rim. He pointed out that the cutter should be in line with the shaft, a detail that is often not adhered to so that people find the tool difficult to use. He sometimes uses a side handle for extra stability, particularly on larger pieces. He emphasised using the centre of the tool rest for maximum support. In hollowing, he ensured that he left sufficient thickness in the bottom of the main body to accommodate the spigot on the base piece which acted as a stand.

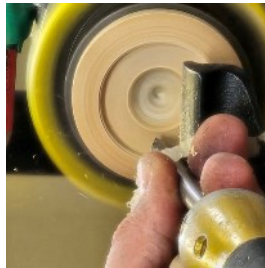
After hollowing, he continued to shape the outside, maintaining a smooth curve that narrowed towards the bottom of the piece. He demonstrated a different way of texturing the piece by cutting two parallel grooves with a skew chisel (his signature multitool!) on the long point then using a spindle gouge, set at an angle and spiralling a narrow groove between the two grooves. This produced the “chattering” necessary for the texturing (and is a cheaper way of producing texture than using a decorating elf (for example)!



He made the base for the piece using a contrasting piece of wood using a small spindle gouge for the detail.



In making the double-ended finial, he shaped the more delicate pointed finial first in order to keep the most weight in the finial piece for when he shaped the knob-style one. He made a jam chuck to accommodate the double-ended finial, using masking tape to secure the disc in between the two ends of the finial.



He discussed finial shapes pointing out that they should complement, not overpower, the main body of the piece. He discussed colour implications in terms of contrast and use of small pieces of more exotic timber. In cutting the slender finial, he used his finger under the tool rest for support. He added some points about sharpening, recommending a CBN wheel in conjunction with a Tormek jig on the grinder and explaining that using a narrower wheel reduces "dishing".

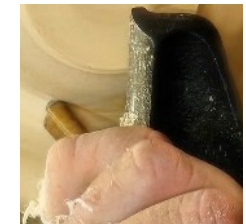
Piece 3

For this piece, Les demonstrated turning a shallow, bowl-shaped box with a lid and a further finial. He made it very speedily between tea-break and close of meeting.



Les used this piece as an example of starting the blank on a screw chuck.

He shaped the bottom part first. After truing the surface, he marked the position of the spigot then shaped the outside and underside as much as possible before reversing into the chuck and shaping the upper half and hollowing the centre in a dish shape. A small recess was made around the hollow to accommodate the lid/finial. This recess was used to hold the piece in the jaws using paper as protective padding. The underside was then finished into a round so that it balanced at an angle although Les pointed out that it could be flattened to stand straight.





He pointed out that he parted the lid/finial at the drive end (headstock) because this would stop when the piece parted whereas if he parted at the tailstock, the piece would still be driving. This is a useful tip when making anything that has to be finished to a point.

The tools that Les used during the day:



Judging by the members' response during, and at the end of, the day, this demonstration was thoroughly enjoyed, both for the skills shared and for the entertaining commentary!
And Mary and Sarah were delighted to be given two of the finished pieces!
Many thanks, Les.

Message from Cliff:

"I have invited Steve Heeley to join us for the Hands-On on the 16th July and he has accepted. We will give more details nearer the date but it is envisaged that members who wish to will have the opportunity to spend around 30 minutes with Steve to receive help and guidance with any woodturning problems that they have. The sort of problems that most of us have but never admit to are turning beads and coves, planing with the skew, turning a bead with a skew, design elements etc. Steve is an excellent woodturner and teacher so this is a great opportunity.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed to the newsletter, particularly Chris Chambers for the photographs, Keith for his Chairman's Report, Phil Stevenson for the Daventry information and Brian Goodall for distributing it.

