



West Midlands Woodturners

Wood Turning and Wood Art

February 2025 Newsletter

Programme of meetings 2025

Date	Event
February 16th	Demo: Richard Findley
March 16th	Hands-On: Spindle turning including Coves/Beads and Off-centre
April 27th	Demo: Rick Dobney
May 18th	Hands-On: Hollow Forms
June 22nd	Demo: Ian Ethell
July 20th	Hands-On: Bowls
August 17th	Demo: Steven Kearvell to replace Paul Hannaby
September 21st	Hands-On: Texture and Colour
October 19th	Demo: Steve Gordon
November 16th	Hands-On: Gadgets and Gizmos and AGM
December 21st	Demo: Rob Till



Congratulations to Rob Marlow who won the Basic section of the 2024 Chairman's Challenge. He was presented with his trophy at the January meeting and now moves up to the Intermediate category.

Demonstration Days: Start at 9.15 and conclude about 4.30pm

Hands-on days start at 9.30 and conclude around 4pm.

Venue: Kingsbury Sports and Community Centre, unless otherwise stated

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

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WMWT Committee

Contents

Chairman	Keith Lanchester	Chair@wmwoodturners.org.uk
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Chairman's Challenge 2025

	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced/Artistic
January	Mushroom	Acorn	Fruit
February	Ring Stand	Pill Box	Earring stand
March	Basic pen	Pen or similar item	2 Part Pen
April	Trinket pot	Box with lid	Box with Decorated Lid
May	Door Wedge	Ball and Cup Toy	Decorated Egg in Cup
June	Mouse	Penguin	Novelty Toy
July	Weed Pot	Open Neck Vase	Hollow Form min 150mm high
August	Tealight Holder	Candlestick	Identical Pair of Candlesticks
September	Bowl 100-150mm diameter	Bowl with decorated Rim	Square Edged Bowl
October	Platter	Platter with Colour	Platter with Texture and/or Piercing
November	Mallet	Rolling pin	Salt and Pepper Mill
December		No challenge	

Chairman's Comments:

Our January meeting was a Hands-On day with the theme of Pen making and from the finished items I was shown during the day was a huge success. Mary has written more about the day later in the newsletter so I won't steal her thunder here! We had several visitors to the club on the day and I hope they enjoyed the day enough to return and join the club.

The proceeds of the raffle at the meeting along with a contribution from the sale of pen kits is being donated to Diabetes UK in memory of Bob Rimmer who passed away late last year so thank you to everyone who bought a ticket or pen kit. I am pleased to say we are donating £100 to his family's chosen charity.

February's meeting is the long awaited demo by Richard Findley and from experiences of previous visits promises to be a day to remember. Don't forget your mug and sandwiches and settle back for a good day's demo!

Finally John's organisation for the Daventry show seems to be progressing well so if he asks for your help please try and support him and your club.

Keith.

Outside events

At the moment, the club will have a stall at the New Hall Mill Open Days on 8th June and 25th August. Volunteers are welcome!

Venues are being explored for a third event.

Daventry Wood Works will be held on the 9th and 10th May.

Richard Findley's demonstration 16th February

He is planning to turn a spindle with a hand-cut barley twist, a box with a hand-cut screw thread and an apple and/or an egg if there is time.

Chairman's Challenge - a reminder

Club members are encouraged to enter the Chairman's Challenge each month. It is a good way of improving your skills by addressing the challenges and getting some feedback.

Whichever category you choose to enter early in the year, you have to stay in for the rest of the year. The winner of the Basic group (based on their best nine scores) will move to the Intermediate group the following year. The winner of the Intermediate group will move to the Advanced/Artistic group. New members are encouraged to join the group that they think the most appropriate for their current skill level.

Mary and Peter are happy to talk to new members about any aspect of the Chairman's Challenge.

First Aider Training: message from Chris Jones

We are currently organising refresher training for the first aiders.

If you are one of the qualified first aiders and haven't already done so, please can you let Chris Jones know if you want to attend the course, which is likely to take place towards the end of March/beginning of April.

We are happy to grow the team of first aiders, so if you want to benefit from this free training in a useful life skill please let Chris know.

Thanks, Chris.

Forthcoming Chairman's Challenges

Month

Basic

Intermediate

Advanced/Artistic

February

Ring stand



Pill Box



Earring Stand



Basic pen



Pen or similar item



Two part pen



March

Results of Chairman's Challenge January 2025

Basic group: Mushroom (3 entries)

1st place: Steve Hough



2nd place: Helen Huxley



3rd place: John Outhwaite



Intermediate group: Acorn (3 entries)

1st place: Colin Reid



2nd place: Dave Hobbs



3rd place: Rob Marlow

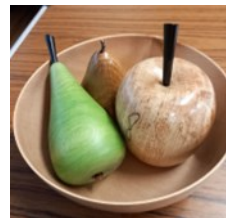


Advanced/Artistic group: Fruit (4 entries)

1st place: Chris Chambers



2nd place: Chris Jones



3rd place: Peter Hockley



JANUARY 2025 DISPLAY TABLE



John Outhwaite



John Outhwaite



John Outhwaite



John Outhwaite



John Outhwaite



Peter Hockley



Peter Hockley - eucalyptus
bowl seen from side



Peter Hockley—(same
bowl seen from
above; warped since
turning)

DECEMBER DISPLAY TABLE



Graham Hunt



Graham Hunt



Graham Hunt



Mike Brewer



Mike Brewer

January Hands-On day on Pen-Making

This was a busy and productive day with a range of activities taking place and all four lathes continually in use. Many members, including a number of visitors, made a pen and were very pleased with themselves! Some more experienced turners hadn't made a pen before so had a go. Here is a selection:



Elsewhere in the hall, newbies were being guided and bowls were being made:



A shy member!



The Chairman's Challenge for March focuses on pens of various kinds and therefore I am including a basic summary of the process involved in making a standard slimline pen. The principles are the same for most styles/kits.

To complete a pen you will need a pen kit (some stockists' details at the end of this guide) and a pen blank, which can be wood or acrylic or a home-made blank from resin with insertions. There are many possibilities.

Cut the pen blank to appropriate sizes, into 2 pieces for a pen with two barrels or left as one piece for a single barrel kit. Size (length and diameter) is determined by the size of the brass barrels provided in the kit plus about 2 mm at either end to allow for squaring off (if necessary) and trimming. Make a pencil mark across the adjoining cut ends to allow for grain alignment.

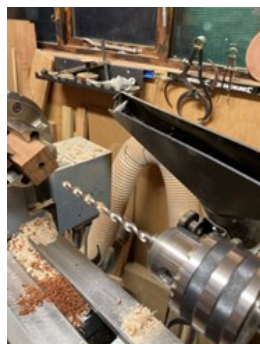


Graham was particularly pleased with the shine on his acrylic pen!



Drill a hole through the blank to the same diameter as the barrel, usually 7mm for a slimline kit but this will vary according to the pen kit.

This can be done on the lathe with the blank held in the headstock end and a drill held in a Jacobs Chuck in the tailstock end. Pen jaws are useful for this as they are best for ensuring that the drill does not wander but other methods of holding can be used, including a drill press where the blank is held securely in a jig, either commercial or homemade. Drilling needs to be done at a slow speed, withdrawing the drill frequently to remove shavings. Acrylic blanks heat up quickly and can fuse into the drill! (Bitter experience!)



Once the holes are drilled, the barrels in the kit need to be glued into the blanks using an appropriate glue. Some use CA, others Araldite, others an epoxy adhesive. They need to dry before they can be turned.

If the barrels are sunk into the blank a little, then a barrel trimmer is needed to trim the inside of the blank until it is flush with the end of the barrel. Be careful not to trim the barrel itself as the kit parts will not fit. The surplus at the end of the blank will be turned away later.



Using a mandrel: These are commercially available with morse tapers for each end. There are various types but all follow a similar pattern. They are mounted between centres and the blanks are threaded onto the mandrel separated by the bushings. Each pen kit needs the appropriate bushings to secure the pen on the mandrel and to provide a guide to the appropriate diameter to turn the blank down to. The bushings required will be indicated in the information about the pen kit and they are kit-specific—making additional money! They are then tightened onto the mandrel.



Using a light pull drive: as a cheaper alternative, a blank with the glued-in barrel can be mounted onto a light pull drive in the headstock end with the appropriate bushing on the end of it and a bushing on the end of a coned live centre in the tailstock end. Only one blank can be turned at a time using this method so it is more suitable for single barrel pens but it can be used for two barrel pens turning one piece at a time if care is taken to match the profiles. Obviously it is a cheaper method than buying a mandrel, especially if you don't make many pens!



Turn the blanks to round using a spindle roughing gouge or gouge of your choice until the bulk of the excess material has been removed. Then use a spindle gouge/skew to turn the blank to the desired shape. For a slim-line pen, some prefer to have straight narrow sections either side of the centre band; others prefer a more bulbous shape. The pen can be shaped/decorated according to taste.



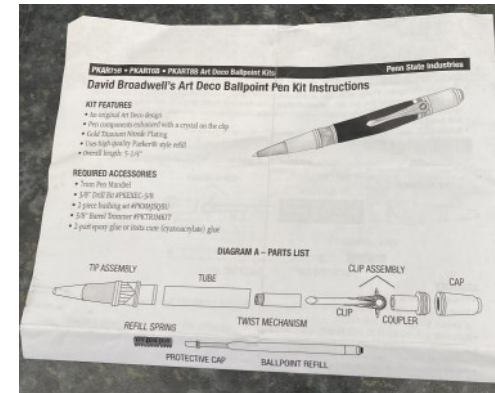
Make sure that the ends of the blanks are turned down to ALMOST the same diameter as the bushings. Allow for sanding to bring the ends to the exact diameter of the bushings. Do not go below the bushings as the brass barrel will then show through. If it is proud of the bushings, then the blank will stand above the fittings in a ridge.

The blank(s) can then be sanded through the grits; up to 600 is ideal for wood but it depends on your judgement!

Acrylic blanks need polishing to a much greater degree to achieve shine. They will remain rough/ opaque at lower grits. Sand to 600 then use small micromesh pads which should be wet/damp to reduce heat. These go up 12,000 grit. Remember to use in order of grit by colour—don't lose the chart that comes with the pack!

Wood: Apply a finish of sanding sealer followed by a microcrystalline wax (which resists fingerprints) - or whatever is your choice of finish. CA glue can be used and gives a great finish if applied correctly but it is quite tricky to apply and is the subject for a separate article! Acrylic: after the final micromesh grit, apply burnishing cream which can be followed by a coat of wax.

Assembly: remember to align the grain pattern. Stockists of kits usually supply (online) instructions for assembly, specific to kit—although the basic principles are the same.



The kits are VERY difficult/impossible to disassemble if they go wrong so check carefully. There are commercially available assembly presses (at £40!) but these are not necessary.



The pen can be assembled using a bench vice or on the lathe using home made "plugs" that fit into the headstock/tailstock. Pictures of the ones that Keith uses are below. His first set were made of yew, then he made a set out of plastic. One of the three plastic ones has a blind hole drilled into it just over the length of the Christmas decoration finial. This also works really well for twist pens as it stops the nib from kinking during insertion.



Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Chris Jones for the Chairman's Challenge pictures , Keith for the Chairman's comments and the club members for their enthusiastic engagement with pen-turning! Thanks also to Dave Hobbs, Cliff etc for the ongoing supply of refreshments.

There are hundreds of different pen kits for sale and obviously hundreds (more?) different choices of wood and acrylic blanks, as well as unlimited imagination. The same principles/processes can be used for a wide range of other project kits that are available, such as letter openers, stitch unpickers, perfume atomisers, key rings, Christmas ornaments, bookmarks and many more So..... Happy project-turning!

Stockists of pen kits, project kits and accessories:

West Country machinery 4 wood

Axminster

EBay (esp bulk)

Amazon (esp bulk)

Turners retreat

cscrafts.co.uk

Philscarlett.co.uk - new supplier? With online guides

prokraft.co.uk - pens but also lots of other hardware

Ukpenblanks.co.uk

The turners workshop

Charnwood pen turning kit via Yandles

Rutlands.com

Charnwood.net