

# South Downs Woodturners

January 2024

## Dear Member

It's been a long time since the last newsletter, so it's time I got a new one out. My apologies for the delay, due to other commitments, plus some problems with my near vision due to cataract surgery. Fortunately now all seems to be resolved.

We've had several meetings since I last put fingers to keyboard and you can find pictures and details on the front pages of the web site - thanks to Stewart for keeping things up-to-date.

Since I last wrote, we have welcomed two new members to the committee; David Watson and Greg Cottle. David is working on the programme with Gordon and will take over completely, whilst Greg is taking over running the competitions. Speaking of which, our next competition is coming up at the January meeting; more details below. It's a freestyle competition, so you can enter anything you like as long as it hasn't been a previous winner. It's always good to see what people have been making so do please bring something along.

At our last committee meeting, on January 11, we finalised the outline programme for 2024. There are still details to be organised but the full programme, as it stands, is attached to this newsletter. All subject to change but hopefully you'll agree with me that David and Gordon have done a great job.

All best wishes to all members

*Norman*

## NEXT CLUB MEETING

We have our next meeting soon, so put the date in your diary now:

**Freestyle Competition - Wednesday January 31<sup>st</sup> 2024 at 7:00 pm in Bramber Hall**

The main event will be the annual Freestyle competition - any item you like as long as it has turned elements. This is usually a fun event so please bring something along and let's fill the tables.

We also hope to have a sharpening station in operation along with the shop, the library and the toolbank. Plus the usual raffle and 'Tools and Turnings' - bring along anything you'd like others to see.

As a fill-in demo, I'll be showing how to make pens. I'll be mainly using the popular 7mm slimline kit, but also showing other things that can be made using 7mm pen tubing.

## WOODTURNING WIZADRY FROM DAVE SMITH!



Our Chairman, Dave Smith has become a follower of the late Dave Springett, whose books (Woodturning Wizardry, Woodturning Full Circle, Woodturning Magic, and, with Nick Agar, Woodturning Evolution) describe all sorts of ingenious and complex objects made from wood, including the ones pictured here made by Dave. This is very clever and detailed work which involves quite a lot of tool making as well as turning.

## ITEMS FOR SALE

Due to an imminent upgrade of his lathe, Dave Watson has two lathes for sale: a Record Power Coronet Herald and an Axminster Trade model AT350WL. He would prefer to sell to a club member if possible and is looking for £650 for the Record and £850 for the Axminster, which is fitted with a bed extension to allow 28" between centres. Dave says that anyone who is interested is more than welcome to spend a couple of hours using either of them.



Dave also offers a new Record Power DX1000 fine dust extractor, still in its original box. New price is £137 - any sensible offers?

If interested, you can contact Dave by e-mail or phone:  
davidwatson66@hotmail.com; 07766601622.

## BUYING BIG!



Members Dave Watson (L), Jubal Prevatt (C) and Mike Hall (R) recently made a trip to Grantland Timber Mill in Devon and bought some big stuff - some of it walnut blanks for Gordon Eaton's bowl demo later in the year. Dave says it was a great day out.

## THANKS FOR THE SNOWMEN



Special thanks to all members who made snowmen or Christmas trees. They were presented to Barcombe Playgroup, who say the children had great fun decorating them. Photos of a few of them alongside.

## Making Layered Bowls - by Mike Sims.

I have recently been making these layered bowls below. They can be attractive and are fun to experiment with in terms of the combinations of woods and the glues that can be used. Also, if you have spare off-cuts lying around your workshop, they can be put to good use!



I have made layered bowls in the past, but I was sometimes discouraged by the phenomenon known as 'glue creep'. This happens when the glue fails to maintain a smooth join between the layers on the inside or outside of a finished bowl, resulting in one being able to feel a step in the join.

I was prompted to try again having read an article by Mike Stafford in Issue 378 of Woodturning, where he maintained that Cascamite avoids glue creep. Conversations with Chris Grace suggested that other glues would also be suitable and that another factor, wood density, should be considered. So, I decided to investigate this further by making three bowls, each with layers of wood, using three different glues, to assess their performance in this respect.

Bowl	Max Dia/cm	Depth/cm	Rim Thickness/mm	Glue	Woods
A	14	9	7	Titebond Original	Maple/US Black Walnut/Maple
B	14	8.5	5	Cascamite Powder Resin	Euro Walnut/Maple/US Black Walnut
C	11	11	4	Gorilla 2-part Epoxy	Boxwood/Iroko/Elm

With the best of intentions, the experiment was not as controlled as I would have liked. The ideal experiment would have been to make bowls of the same shape and dimensions, with the same woods in the same number of layers, with the only difference being the glue used.

In my case 'design changes' dictated the final shape of each bowl so they were differently proportioned, and I did not have a huge supply of the same wood for all three bowls, so I had to compromise with different woods in each bowl. I limited the number of layers to three for all the bowls. One can have more, particularly if you incorporate decorative layers of veneer, but the more the layers, then the more protracted the gluing-up process. All woods were well seasoned. After talking to Chris Grace who suggested that layering woods of a similar density was advisable as this minimises one dense wood dominating when the bowl is hollowed and is 'settling down', the woods that I layered for any given bowl were no more than 5% difference in their density. The glue-up was done in the same environment for all bowls. I did this in early March 2023 and it was a

bit chilly in the workshop, so I did them all in the warmth of the house.

**Bowl A** exhibited some creep. The maple layer had a slight step above and below the walnut layer on the end-grain. It was given an outside shape one day, left on the lathe overnight, and hollowed the day after.

**Bowl B** had a very, very slight step on an end-grain join where the bottom walnut was higher than the maple in the middle. This bowl was made in one session.

**Bowl C** exhibited no symptoms of glue creep. It was smaller than A or B and was made in one session.

#### **Tips for making Layered Bowls**

Select complementary wood characteristics. I like contrasting colours.

Prepare each layer to have flat, parallel surfaces. If your surfaces are not flat, then you may see glue at the join. If your surfaces are not parallel, then your finished bowl may appear asymmetric. If you have a planer, then this is easy. I do not, so a lot of time was spent with a block plane and straight edge.

Orient the layers such that the grain direction is the same in all layers. This will ensure that, if end-grain is very visible in the chosen woods, then it will be in the same place for all the layers.

Choose similar density woods. When stress is relieved as the material is removed, and if the densities are similar, then distortion is likely to be similar. Do not choose extremes of density together.

Practice the glue-up without the glue. Make sure that you have everything to hand, and that you have enough hands to hold all the different items. Have your clamps ready; know the sequence in which the clamps are to be used and have them adjusted to the approximate size that needs to be clamped. Have the glue ready and to-hand.

Glue-up two layers at a time. Trying to glue-up three or more layers all at once is difficult – the layers slip and slide.

Hollow the bowl to the final thickness as you go. For some, this may be standard practice when turning a bowl but, it can be more important with a layered bowl. Firstly, hollow to a depth of 1 cm (say) and remove material to the final wall thickness that you want for the bowl (6 mm, say). You will not be coming back to this surface again, other than with sandpaper, so test the thickness with callipers. Finish the rim shape. If left until last, the bowl may have distorted, and this makes the shaping of the rim difficult. When you are happy with the finish of the inside, hollow out to a further 1 cm depth, removing material to your final wall thickness. When you are happy with the finish continue in this fashion until you are at the required depth for your bowl. The advantage of this method is that you get maximum support while hollowing a given 1 cm layer and if the thin bowl distorts, you don't have to make final light finishing cuts on the inside of a distorted shape.

**Postscript:** Having reviewed this piece with a few people, it was suggested that an alternative approach to this type of turning is to rough turn the piece with a generous wall thickness, then put it aside for several weeks. This will give the different woods time to 'adjust' before it is finished to its final shape and wall thickness. That will be my next experiment!

*Mike Sims*

**Editor's note:** In my experience no glue can really stop differential wood movement due to changes in moisture content and I think Mike's approach of rough turning then letting the piece adapt to its final environment is the most likely to succeed.

### A MYSTERY OBJECT



**D**ave Watson sent me this picture of a mystery object. Anyone like to suggest what its purpose is? I'll ask Dave to reveal all on January 31st at our next meeting

## A SLIGHTLY UNUSUAL COMMISSION - GORDON EATON

A lady for whom I had made some items in the past contacted me the other day attaching a picture of her son creating a copper bowl at a craft fair. He loved doing it and wants to do more. I didn't warn her but this is how one gets addicted to things like woodturning! She enquired whether I might have either or both of the bowl or mallet that I would sell her. I said I didn't but I could make both items for her so she then gave me the order.



Having found a rough-turned oak bowl, it was a simple matter of mounting it, re-turning it to round and shaping it up a bit. Bearing in mind its end use, I wanted to leave as wide a base also as thick a wall as possible for weight and stability. Finish shouldn't be too important (good job I hear you say!), so I just sanded to 320 grit and gave it a couple of coats of Danish oil.



I selected a piece of boxwood - hard, heavy and with nice tight grain, for the mallet head. This was turned to the desired shape, sanded and polished since boxwood does not take oil well. A mortice hole and recess were drilled on the bench press for the handle.

Wood species was not important for the handle - I selected a piece of meranti and turned a comfortable shape for a young hand to work with. Note the mortice is grooved to help accommodate plenty of glue. Sanded to 320 grit and polished, then glued in place!



Couldn't resist putting the lad's name on it!

Gordon Eaton

## UPCOMING EVENTS



Our own programme of events is at the end of this newsletter (Page 7), but we've also been notified of two other events:

Chestnut Products will hold their fifth Woodturning Weekender on 10 & 11 August 2024 at Springfields Event Centre, Spalding, Lincolnshire.

Demonstrators for the weekend are Mary Ashton, Andrew Hall, Chris Parker and Gary Rance. Companies attending (and selling) include Taylors Mirfield, Turners Retreat. The Tiny Turner, Simon Hope Woodturning, Martin Pidgen Timber, Woodart Products. Shenton Woodcraft, Chestnut Products – and more to come!

More details at <https://chestnutproducts.co.uk/woodturning-weekender/>



The AWGB will hold its 2024 International Woodturning Seminar, 4-6 October at Yarnfield Park Training and Conference Centre, Yarnfield, Staffordshire. There is a wide range of demonstrators from many countries.

More details at <https://chestnutproducts.co.uk/woodturning-weekender/>

### BE SAFE!

Woodturning is largely a fairly safe activity but it does have inherent dangers. This is especially true of turning off-centre work, natural edge pieces, any off-balance work or anywhere where tailstock support cannot be used. There is good safety advice on the AWGB website at <https://www.awgb.co.uk/woodturning-safety/>. As a summary:

1. **Always** wear safety visor or goggles and solid shoes
2. Secure long hair and sleeves and remove ties and jewellery
3. Ensure the lathe is set to a suitable speed for the job, and that the work piece is properly held before turning on the power
4. Always turn the work by hand first to ensure it doesn't foul the tool rest
5. Always ensure that the tool is on the rest before engaging the work
6. **STOP** the lathe if at any point you are unsure of what you are expected to do
7. Always use appropriate PPE when sanding or using spray paints

A very delayed newsletter but I hope you have found something of interest. We now have some very interesting meetings to come this year and I'm looking forward to the programme.

I can still use input from you - pictures of your work, or any description you might want to write about whatever you are doing. I have a couple of articles waiting for space but new pieces and photos of your work are always welcome. It's your newsletter and only as good as your input.

For now, on behalf of all of the committee, I wish you successful and enjoyable turning and we'll look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

*Norman Billingham*

## 2024 Programme - Dates for your Diaries

Below is the provisional programme of meetings for 2024. All subject to change, but hopefully accurate at the time of preparation.

- January 31st** Freestyle competition: Any item/items with turned elements.  
Member demonstration: our own Norman Billingham demonstrates aspects of pen turning.
- February 28th** Professional demonstration: a return visit to our club for the ever popular Kevin Hutson.  
Subject: Projects using various spalted timbers.
- March 27th** Member demonstration (for May competition).  
Subject: 'From Log to Bowl' - Gordon Eaton takes us on a journey from a bit of tree trunk to a finished bowl via rough turning etc.  
Chairman's challenge.
- April 24th** Club AGM, election of officers etc.  
Member demonstration: Barry Chidlow demonstrates the processes involved in making a child's chair. Inspired by Ray Jones. Plans & instructions by Baluster Plans & Design.
- May 29th** Competition: 'Bowl' - plain or fancy, show us your best bowl creations.  
Member demonstration by our own Anna Cates, turning a wonderful spoon.
- June 26th** Live IRD from renowned turner and author Colwin Way. One of the very best around - not to be missed! <https://www.colwinwaywoodturner.com>. Subject TBA.
- July 31st** Visiting demonstrator: a visit from hugely talented turner Stephen Madden aka 'The Wood Dude' - this will be a fun evening! Check out his website at [www.wooddude.co.uk](http://www.wooddude.co.uk). Subject TBA.
- August 28th** 'Hands on' Evening.  
Three lathes set up for member participation - bring some wood, tools, and eye protection and join in. 'Show and tell' Tools and Turnings table  
Chairman's challenge.
- September 25th** Demonstration: 'Something with a Lid' (for November competition).  
A welcome return from our former chairman and club founder Chris Grace. Expect the unexpected!
- October 30th** Member Demonstration.  
A first club demonstration from club member and experienced carpenter and woodturner Jubal Prevatte.  
Chairman's Challenge.
- November 27th** Competition: 'Something with a Lid' - enter your lidded creations following Chris's September demo.  
'Hands on' Evening. Three lathes set up for member participation - bring some wood, tools, and eye protection and join in!  
'Show and tell' Tools and Turnings table.
- December 18th** **Note : NOT last Weds.** Christmas social evening.  
Fun competitions; Mince pies etc. Decorate the Xmas tree.  
'Hands on' evening. Three lathes set up for member competitions - bring some wood, tools, eye protection and join in.

**A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our members!**