

South Downs Woodturners

March 2023

Dear Member

It's been a bit of a while since the last newsletter, so here is our first one of 2023 - better late than never I hope. We've had three meetings since I last put fingers to keyboard. The final meeting of 2022 was a social evening with no formal programme. It was well attended and I think enjoyed. I certainly found it good to have the time to chat to people over a glass and a mince pie and to get to know some of you a bit better. There were some lovely Christmas decorations on the tree and the snowmen were much appreciated - more of that later. It's always nice if the Club can do something to help others, and we now have a request for bowls and/or goblets for a children's nursery - see page 2. It would be good if we can match our snowmen offering.

January saw our first meeting of 2023 and the freestyle competition, which drew a big entry from the more experienced turners, but the novices were a bit under-represented (see page 4). We also had our first attempt at an interactive remote demonstration (IRD). More about that in Tony's report on page 3 but special thanks to Stewart Furini for doing the demo from his home workshop. There were a few minor glitches at both ends, which should be easy to sort out, but the important thing is that the broadband in the hall is fast enough to allow IRDs. We'll be following this up on May 31st with one from professional turner Chris Parker 'The Bald Woodturner'. Chris will demonstrate texturing and colouring techniques as the inspiration for our July competition 'Embellishment of Turned Pieces' - one to put in your diaries now. As well as the large audience in Beeding, a couple of members watched the demo from home and I got some favourable comments.

The February meeting was also a good occasion (report on page 5). We welcomed Chris Grace, one of the founder members of the club, who gave us a very good demonstration of how to do off-centre turning of a natural edge bud vase. All in all a good start to the year.

We have a good programme coming up, so lots to look forward to, and more details below. Note in particular that April is the AGM. Since this will be the start of what we hope will be the first full 'normal' year since Covid, and in our new location, it will also be the start of the first normal subscription year, and Bob is looking forward to taking your money. The AGM is also the time when we elect officers for the club, so please let us know if you'd like to join the committee and help with running things. It's important that we have some new blood at regular intervals. Having been Chairman for five years I've told the committee that I plan to stand down at the AGM, so there will be at least one vacancy to be filled. It's been enjoyable being Chairman but I think it's time for a change.

All best to all members

Norman

NEXT CLUB MEETING

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

Wednesday March 22nd 2023 at 7:00 pm in Bramber Hall

This meeting will be the Chestnut Products 'Roadshow' and Demo. Terry Smart will demonstrate many different finishes and finishing products. There will also be a display of products available for members to purchase at discounted rates. Terry visited us several years ago and is always informative and entertaining.

Plus the usual raffle and "Tools and Turnings" - bring along anything you'd like to show off.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This is the formal notification that the AGM will be on:

Wednesday April 26th 2023 at 7:00 pm in Bramber Hall

Formal papers will be circulated close to the meeting.

SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE IN APRIL

Our next subscription year begins with the AGM in April but Bob will be happy to take your money at the door from the March meeting. Alternatively, you may prefer to pay by BACS. The bank details are:

Sort code 20-98-74

Account no. 53099792

Account name South Downs Woodturners

Please be sure to add your name to the payment so that we can identify it. The subscription rate is unchanged at £35 for an adult member and £17.50 for members under 18 years old. If you have joined the club recently then your subscription will be valid until April 2024 - Bob will be able to confirm at the door.

If you no longer wish to be a member, please let either Peter Pullin or me know and we'll remove your details from our database and mailing list, as required by law. If you have not renewed or joined by the June meeting, we'll assume that you have resigned or are not interested and we'll also remove your details from our database and mailing list.

APRIL MEETING

The April meeting will be on:

Wednesday April 26th 2023 at 7:00 pm in Bramber Hall

The main event is the **Club AGM, Chairman's report, election of officers etc.** This will be followed by judging of the competition:

Vase or vases - any type or style including bud vases

Member fill-in demo: Norman Billingham - **Fun with magnets**

Plus the usual raffle and 'Tools and Turnings' - bring along anything you'd like to show off.

What happened to the snowmen?



Claire sent me photos of some of the snowmen decorated by children in her group. For child protection reasons I can't use ones which show the children, but Claire says they had a lot of fun playing with them and then decorating them. All very worthwhile, so thanks to all of you who turned them - well done!

The group would also very much like some bowls or goblets which the children can use for play and to decorate - any size or shape, just a smooth finish and non-toxic wood. All donations gratefully received.

RECENT MEETINGS - JANUARY

As well as the competition, the January meeting was a first for South Downs Woodturners, an online remote demo by Stewart Furini, which was enjoyed by members despite a few technical gremlins during the first half. Stewart showed how he makes his classic textured and coloured platter in sycamore

Stewart showed how the blank could be mounted on a screw chuck or a faceplate; on this occasion he mounted it on a chuck expanding into a shallow hole drilled with a 70mm sawtooth bit. He used a push cut or a pull cut to shape the underside of the platter with a bowl gouge with a fingernail grind. Brace the handle of the gouge against your hip and move your body to produce the curve, not your hands and arms. Stewart decided on an ogee type shape, so it has a concave and a convex section.



Either a tenon or a recess is then formed to fit your chuck, depending on the size and proportions of the platter. A scraper was used to refine the curve. Once Stewart was happy with the shape he sanded it then applied polish and reversed it for shaping the top side.

Once reversed onto the chuck the top side of the platter was trued off and shaped as required with a bowl gouge.

A Proxxon type grinder was used for texture. Stewart emphasised the need to keep your hands well away from the cutter.

Hold the grinder whilst plugging it in, in case it's been inadvertently switched on, and when rotating the platter use the lathe handwheel rather than touching the blank - keep your hands well away from the cutter at all times.

Try to be even and consistent with the cuts even if it's an abstract texture. You could use a fluting jig and router for more consistent, or symmetrical effects if that's what you are going for. Cuts were made radially and then around the platter to break up the texture. Clean up furry parts of the texture with a brass brush, use a bristle type brush in a power drill or burnish with shavings.

To separate the centre, bowl portion, of the platter and the decorative rim Stewart used a beading tool. This is presented slightly trailing. Acrylic sanding sealer was followed by two coats of ebonising spray (both Chestnut products) applied to the textured part. The ebonising spray will dry shinier on sanded wood. Stewart followed this with Jo Sonja gold paint applied with a foam brush to pick out the high points of the textured part. Its worth spending more on a quality paint as there is more pigment in these and a little goes a long way. You could apply with a brush or a piece of tissue for different effects.



The centre of bowl was then turned out. There is a danger of the gouge skipping outwards when first entering the bowl, so enter the wood with bevel at the angle of entry and register it on the edge of the inner bevel for the final cut. Try to get a consistent smooth curve, sand through the grits, then seal and polish, or a finish of your choice.



For reversing the platter to turn off the tenon and finish the foot, options are a Longworth chuck (pictured) a chuck with button jaws or a plywood faceplate with router mat and using the revolving centre. Whichever method, delicate cuts are needed. Turn away/finish the foot and polish. **PPE. Faceshield when turning (there is always a danger of the blank jumping out!). Vapour rated mask for spraying. Dust extractor and face-mask when sanding.**

Anthony Trigg

JANUARY COMPETITION

January 25th was our annual Freestyle competition. There was a very good range of entries all work of very high quality. As usual, judging was by popular vote. The final results were:



Beginners

- 1st Colin Moss
- 2nd John Dove
- 3rd Steve Turner



Intermediate

- 1st Colin Dowle
- 2nd Graham Willsher
- 3rd Anthony Trigg



Advanced

- 1st Jim Young
- 2nd Anna Cates
- 3rd Robert Brady

Congratulations to all for their excellent work.

Thanks to Barry Chidlow for the photos

RECENT MEETINGS - FEBRUARY

For the February meeting we were pleased to welcome one of our founder members, Chris Grace, who demonstrated how to make an off-centre, live-edged, hooded bud vase.



A simple jig to stabilise the piece whilst bandsawing away waste

Chris' original design was to have feet, but when turning a trial piece Chris liked the look of it without; this led to a brief discussion on whether to design and then turn or to let the wood talk to you and design whilst turning.

Chris pointed out that the large off-centre distance he was planning would result in unacceptable out-of-balance loads, so the bulk of the waste was first removed on a bandsaw to reduce the off-balance. To stop round pieces grabbing and rolling when bandsawing, a scrap of ply with a straight edge was screwed to the end grain. Use a sled when crosscutting round logs.

To help counterbalance the off-centre weight Chris has a rather ingenious bar, with weighting washers, fitted to the rear of his chuck. The workpiece is held with the bulk of the weight 180° out to the bar, the washers allow for balance adjustment. Either way always turn the lathe speed to zero before switching it on and slowly increase the speed.

Turning is started on the outside of the piece with the gouge flute closed; touch the heel to the work then slightly open to start the cut. With the off-centre part, air is being turned for a fair amount of the time, so rushing into a cut is likely to cause a catch. Masking tape applied to the toolrest helps as a reminder of where the edges or wing of the piece are. Keep your fingers behind the toolrest at all times. Chris sometimes finds



The work mounted ready for turning. The red disc shields the turner from the rotating counterbalance behind it.

an S-shaped tool rest useful as it can more easily follow the contours of the piece and provides less overhang. The hood or wing of the vase is turned first, shaped down towards the base, and a chucking spigot



Off-centre turning needs a steady hand!



Very carefully turning the top - fingers well behind the tool rest!



Drilling with a carbide-tipped Forstner

turned on the base.

The piece was then reversed for more turning, and drilling. Chris prefers to use tungsten carbide tipped bits, As usual, reduce lathe speed and regularly clear the drill bit. If any further turning towards the base is required it can be done now. The piece was then reversed again, and the Forstner bit fitted to the headstock and used as a drive in the base of the hole that was just drilled. The tailstock was brought up with a revolving centre, the tenon turned off and the base finished.

Chris finished his demo by showing how a variety of carving tools, both hand and machine types, can be used to embellish the piece. As an option feet can be carved by slightly hollowing the base, three shallow arches cut around the base will leave three feet to be carved or shaped as appropriate.



Using a carbide burr in a Foredom tool to embellish the top

For more of Chris' work (including Brian and Geronimo) see:
<http://www.notjustround.com/index.html>

Thanks to Barry Chidlow for the photos



The final result

Anthony Trigg

Gordon Eaton reports an interesting new contact

I came across an advert for quantities of 'exotic hardwoods' the other day. Despite having more than enough wood to see me out, I couldn't resist inquiring! The man is Steve Earis and he is based in Slough, or Burnham to be more precise.

Since a round trip would cost me at least thirty quid in diesel, I wanted to be sure it would be worthwhile so, after exchanging messages for a couple of days, I was still intrigued and arranged to go up and meet him. Steve is a carpenter and the exotic timber sales are a sideline for him. More than just a sideline – a passion! He is a walking encyclopaedia on wood species, sub-species, CITES regulations, Latin names etc. He initially showed me a load of timber in the garage at his house and I selected a couple of bits to buy. We then drove to his main store – actually two full size containers stacked to the roof with every kind of timber imaginable!

I spent an enjoyable few hours in his company (and learned a lot). I left with some makoré, edinam, limba, okan, and cedar of Lebanon. No, I had never heard of most of them either!

He has loads of these (left), some solid oak, some mahogany 10" – 12" - diameter (old snooker table legs, 100 years or more old!)

Enormous pieces of lignum vitae (right) - this log weighs in at 52.5kg!

Steve's prices are very fair and he will always do a deal if you are buying a reasonable amount. The main problem is leaving - he will talk about wood for days if you let him! If there is sufficient interest, I would be prepared to go up and pick up a quantity of timber and process down into smaller pieces, bowl blanks etc which could be sold at club meetings. If anyone would rather contact Steve direct his number is: 01628 0666191



Some more pretty wood

Pip pip

Gordon

CHAIRMAN'S CHALLENGE - FEBRUARY



February's challenge was 'Playful' - anything to bring a smile to my face. There was a good spread of entries including one which was so obscene it had to get an award!

JANUARY COMPETITION



Anna Cates enthusiastically collects her certificate from Norman Billingham

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

It has been a good start to the year and I'm looking forward to the rest of the programme. Although somehow this newsletter has filled seven pages, I still need input from you - pictures of your work, or any description you might want to write about whatever you are doing. I still have an article from Mike Sims waiting for space (sorry Mike), but short pieces 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