

# South Downs Woodturners

March/April 2022

## Dear Member

A bit late again, so this one will have to cover April as well as March. Partly my laziness and partly a rapidly changing situation in relation to our home base. You'll know from my last e-mail that the news about our return to Lancing proved premature as we were soon told that the Parish Hall's vaccination centre contract has been extended to the end of August and most likely will be carrying on to the end of the year. We had our usual meeting at Henfield in April but the committee decided that it would be prudent to look for a permanent alternative to Lancing. This is not at all easy as we have a particular need for a location where we can safely store all the heavy kit, including the projection equipment, three lathes, and the library and shop. We also need a location with a big enough hall, decent parking, and availability at convenient times (many village halls are very fully booked). With many thanks to Gordon Eaton for a valiant effort, we have found a new location - the Bramber and Bedding Village Hall. More details in Gordon's report below.

The March meeting at Henfield was a success, with a very good attendance. Thanks are due to Gerry Jones who did an excellent demo of captive rings, and to Graham Willsher who let everyone have a go with his carbide tools (and made a lot of shavings)! April was also a success. Following the AGM (my Chairman's report is below), David Smith carried on his series of demonstrations of basic techniques for beginners, whilst Gordon Eaton engaged lots of attention with demonstrations of fruit, whistles and a spinning 'tipping top'. Thanks to both for their efforts. Chairman's challenges at both meetings produced some lovely work. I just hope that the pens will still write when we can get them out of storage in Lancing!

## NEXT CLUB MEETING

Our next meeting will be the first in our new home, so put the date in your diary now:

**Wednesday May 25<sup>th</sup> 2022 from 7:00 pm in Bramber Hall**

This meeting will be the restart of the club competition cycle - see David's piece below for more details. Since it's a competition night there will be no Chairman's Challenge this time, but we hope to have the shop and library operating. There will be a "tools and turnings" table so do bring along any work you want to show outside the competition - it's always interesting to see what members have made.

One important change from Henfield - **bring your own coffee mug.**

## Competition Time - 25<sup>th</sup> May 'Freestyle'

Dear woodturners

Good news - after two long years we can finally start the competitions again. This is a great opportunity for everyone to show off their skills at the lathe and show everybody what you have been doing over the last few months.

The theme of the first competition is 'Freestyle' which means you can enter any turned piece that you have made, which has not previously won an award.

For those new to the club, the competition runs in three categories, beginner, intermediate and advanced, and certificates are awarded for the winners. Everyone who enters the competition, will gain points towards the end of year awards. Judging is by peer review - everyone gets a vote. Entries are anonymous.

To enter the competition, which will be held on the 25<sup>th</sup> May, please come along with one or two of your best turned pieces.

Good Luck.

*Dave Smith - Competition Secretary*



## PROGRAMME & EVENTS UPDATE – MAY 2022

Hi all

A fun April meeting in Henfield with some nice work showing on the Tools n' Turnings table, and some excellent entries to the Chairman's Challenge. Thanks to Dave for part 2 of his beginner's guide to tool use etc. I still haven't found my bit of leather (and my tippy top still won't turn up!). Hey ho.



On to next month (May).....per the chairman's recent announcement, we had expected to return to our normal home base at Lancing. It now transpires that the hall has been booked as a vaccination centre, probably until the end of the year. Rather than continuing with what is essentially a temporary arrangement in Henfield any longer, the committee decided to seek out a new permanent premises. The good news is that we have found one - our new base will be at Bramber and Beeding Village Hall. The hall is located just off the A283 Steyning bypass, a bit to the North of Shoreham. The postal address for satnavs is:

High St, Upper Beeding,  
West Sussex, BN44 3WN

It is ideally suited to our purpose – a decent size main hall with kitchen facilities, audio-visual, broadband and storage for all our equipment etc. The lane opposite the hall leads to a car park (approx. 50m). There is also parking available in the street but not opposite other parked vehicles (it is a fairly narrow road and cars parked opposite each other could restrict access for emergency vehicles etc).

Catering – back to the old Lancing rule – **please bring your own mug!!**

The only available slot for regular use was the last Wednesday of the month, hence our next meeting will be commencing at 7pm on Wednesday 25th May. We are booked up until May of 2023 – nice to return to a bit of certainty in our lives! Our first evening at the new venue will feature a “Freestyle” competition – enter anything you like provided it includes some turned elements. Let's have a good attendance and plenty of support for the competition – entries categorised into Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced sections. As mentioned by Dave Smith, our Competitions Secretary, some of the “Beginners” may find themselves instantly promoted!

This will occupy much of the evening and, given that there is likely to be a bit of a learning curve regarding setup, use of the hall facilities etc, there will not be a demonstration. However – Jim Young has kindly agreed to give us a talk on setting up a stall for shows and craft fairs etc, pricing your wares and a general approach to selling. Jim gave a similar talk many years ago and I can assure all that it is very interesting and is likely to involve a lengthy Q&A session! Not to be missed!

The June 29th meeting will offer an evening with professional turner Kevin Hutson, who will demonstrate turning of chess pieces and a square-edged box. A full programme of events for the rest of the year will be published soon.

We look forward to seeing everybody in May at our new “home”.

*Gordon Eaton*

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

**J**ust a reminder, following the AGM and the last newsletter, that subscriptions are now due from any new members who have not already paid, and from the few existing members who had *not* paid their subscription for 2020 before lockdown.

The treasurer will be very happy to take your money at the May meeting. If you prefer to pay by BACS, the 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 no longer wish to be a member, please let either Peter Pullen or me know and we'll remove your details from our database and mailing list, as required by GDPR.** 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.

### CAN YOU HELP?

I have been contacted by Carol Goddard from Haywards Heath. She has just acquired a 19<sup>th</sup> century St George's Chess set in box and ebony and discovered that not only is one of the black pawns badly chipped, but also that another of the black pawns is a poorly turned replacement. She needs two new black pawns turned to match, and hopes that this may be a job that one of us would be prepared to undertake. She may be able to provide some ebony if you don't have any. Pictures below showing the battered 'good' pawn and the rogue one with the non-spherical ball, as well as the rest of the set.



If you may be able to help, send me an e-mail and I'll pass on your details to Carol.

### HILLCREST WOOD CREATIVES

Members may be interested in the Hillcrest Wood Creatives in Newhaven. This was previously the Newhaven Wood Carving Club. The club is based in an old school woodwork class room with the original benches. We have several machines such as a bandsaw, chop saw, table saw etc. Although the club is still very much about carving, more DIY and carpentry projects are being undertaken by members. We are open twice a week - from 9.30 to 3.30 on Mondays and Thursdays. As we expand we hope to open on more days, and potentially evenings and weekends.

We have recently been given a big Fox lathe which seems to work well. We also have an old Union Jubilee lathe which we hope to modernise. We also have an old multi-machine with a lathe attachment which may also provide a third lathe. It is likely that we are going to start 'Turning Tuesdays' or 'Woodturning Wednesdays' in the near future. If anyone would like to come along to see what we do then just drop in any time when we are open on Mondays and Thursdays. In particular we would like to hear from anyone who can teach or demonstrate.

We are behind the Hillcrest Centre in Newhaven at Hillcrest Road, BN9 9LH, there is lots of free parking. See our website at [www.woodcreatives.co.uk](http://www.woodcreatives.co.uk) (note that there is an error there - we don't open on Wednesdays).

*Bill Giles*

### CLUB REGALIA

One or two members have asked where they can get clothing embroidered with the club logo. Merlin Workwear at Burgess Hill has a data file of the logo which they can embroider onto any suitable material. The address is:

Merlin Workwear

2 Albert Drive. Burgess Hill, RH15 9TN

Tel: 01444221101. Web: <https://www.merlinworkwear.co.uk/>

They can supply a wide range of clothes, but they don't stock turners smocks. However they will embroider onto your own garment if you supply one.

### NEW COMMITTEE MEMBER

I'm very pleased to let you all know that Anthony Trigg has accepted our invitation to join the club committee. Anthony has been very proactive in keeping our Facebook pages updated and in promoting the club, and we'll look forward to his input as we go on.

There is still room for another member, so if you are interested in helping the club, please contact any member of the committee or send me an e-mail.



## LAST TANGO IN HENFIELD

April 12th was our last evening at Henfield Hall. Although the Hall has been a life saver for us whilst Lancing is inaccessible, it has always limited what we can do. The evening was another excellent one. Dave Smith (below L) did his demonstration of basic tool techniques, whilst Gordon Eaton (below R) demonstrated a number

of small objects, with his usual mixture of dexterity and good humour.

Chairman's Challenge was 'kitchen' and produced some excellent entries including a coupe of peppermills using the now very popular 'crushgrind' mechanism. Particularly fun was a collection of bottle stoppers by Dave Smith, combining

beautiful turning and finishing with real whimsy. Dave tells me the stoppers are from Prokraft. Their web site is worth a look:

<https://www.prokraft.co.uk/>.



## DON JOHNSTON STARTS A BIG CHERRY VASE

A friend gave me some large pieces of cherry and I have started to turn one into a vase. It is green wood but actually not too wet and it is about 30" long which I have trimmed down to 26", so it is pretty heavy; but it appears to be not too far out of true. I put it as it is on to my Union Graduate lathe (which is Rawlbolted to the concrete floor) (Photo. 1). The log is about 11" diameter

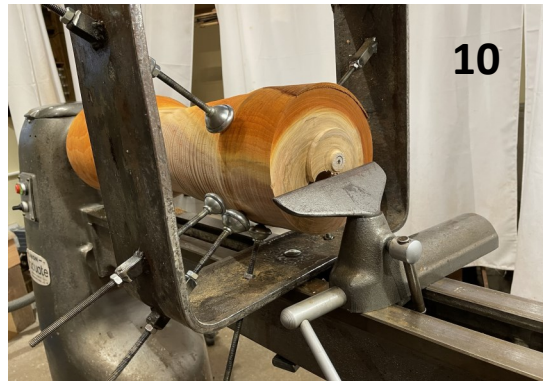


and Photo. 2 is a close up. Photos 3 and 4 show a pin chuck (my favourite for heavy pieces) going in the headstock end and a Oneway cone going into the tailstock revolving centre as I had drilled into both ends with a Forstner bit. Using my outboard toolrest (photo. 5) the first trimmings come off (photo. 6) to make the cylinder. Photo 7 shows further truing up. Then I installed my 'long piece support' so that I could remove the tailstock revolving centre in order to make a spigot so I could reverse the log to be held by



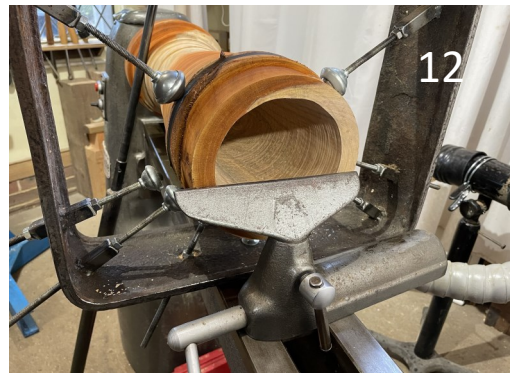


my Vicmarc scroll chuck. The support is something I made myself from a cast iron moulding frame with a set of roller bearings brazed on to threaded bar to enable the bearings to go in and out according to the thickness of the wood.



It is very noisy when the whole thing is turning! The piece started to take a bit of a vase shape (photo 9) and then I wanted to take some out of the middle, particularly to reduce weight (photo.

10), so hollowing out began. I use a variety of chisels, basically my Exocet, the 5/8ths Roly Monro both with tungsten carbide cutters and, as the hole gets much deeper, my homemade chisel made from a steel pipe with another steel pipe welded into it, which takes the Roly Monro head (photo. 11). The insert of the pipe is filled with lead shot to give it weight and reduce vibration. It all works pretty well but is hard going as I wanted to get about 20" into the wood (photo. 12) before I could take it



off and coat it well in Pentacryl hopefully to stop it splitting. Then it can be left to dry out until it gets down to about 18-20% moisture when I will attack it again. Sometime ahead I hope!

*Don Johnston*

### Chairman's report for 2021/22 to the 2022 AGM

When I reported to the club last year, I had to do it on Zoom as we were still prevented by Covid from meeting in person. At that time, I had hoped that we might be able to resume our normal activities in Lancing last Autumn but it was not to be. Although there has been considerable easing of Covid restrictions thanks to the remarkably swift development and roll-out of effective vaccines, the Hall was booked as a vaccination centre all year. This made things particularly difficult as we had only very limited access to our store cupboards, and no way of using our large lathe and audio-visual kit or setting up the shop, the library and the toolbank – I'll have more to say about this later.

Although it was very much a compromise, we were able to keep some contact with members via Zoom meetings and these proved to be a useful way of keeping some activity going. It was particularly good to be able to see some of the excellent work being done by members and to be able to discuss techniques and methods.

Because Lancing is inaccessible to us, members of the committee worked hard to try to find an alternative, and we were lucky to be able to book the hall in Henfield. We put it to use for a social evening in December and I remember driving up on a night of foul weather, wondering if anyone bar the committee would turn up, and whether I had bought too much wine. The event was actually a resounding success with an excellent turnout. I *had* bought too much wine but it is now providing raffle prizes each month.

With the success of the Christmas event, we carried on meeting at Henfield, and all of the meetings have been good. For obvious reasons we can only use the small, portable lathes and I'm very grateful to Dave Smith for being willing to store and transport them for us. The older of the two small lathes tripped the circuit breakers in the hall when first turned on. We sold it 'as seen' to a member and invested in a new Nova lathe. This was seen as such an improvement in terms of smoothness and transportability that we sold the other Jet lathe and now have two of the Nova lathes in regular use. I hope the big lathe still works when we can use it again after two years of sitting idle.

Although Zoom and Henfield hall have been life savers for the club, there is no doubt that our activities have been constrained. We have not been able to host full demonstrations with the big lathe and the video kit, we have had no professional demonstrations, and the shop, the library and the toolbank remain off limits. We had hoped to be back in Lancing next month

but were disappointed to find that the Parish Hall is still booked, at least until this September. With that in mind the committee decided that it would be sensible to look for another permanent location for our meetings. This is not at all easy as we have a particular need for somewhere where we can safely store all the heavy kit, including the projection equipment, three lathes, and the library and shop. We also need a location with a big enough hall, decent parking, and availability at convenient times (many village halls are very fully booked). With many thanks to Gordon Eaton for a valiant effort, we have found a new base - the Bramber and Beeding Village Hall. The Hall is only free on Wednesday evenings and we plan to have our first meeting there on Wednesday May 25th. The Hall meets all our needs, including storage for our kit. Hopefully the change from Tuesday or Thursday to Wednesday evenings will not impact attendance.

The May meeting will also see the restart of our club competitions. For those of you new to the club, the competitions are held in three categories, novice, intermediate, and advanced, with certificates for the three winners in each category and success contributing to the ward of a trophy in each category at the next AGM. The May competition will be Freestyle – any turned item which has not previously won an award. The move to a new base will allow us to resume some of the activities which have been so restricted. In particular we will be able to restart professional demonstrations, and the first of these will be at the June meeting – more details in the next newsletter. The new hall also has fast broadband which should let us do remote professional demo's something not possible at Lancing.

Although I am not a social media user there is clear demand for the club's Facebook page and it seems to have been well used over the year. Stewart Furini and Anthony Trigg have acted as Administrators, and Stewart continues to maintain the club web site. I thank both for their efforts.

One very pleasing thing about the last year is that our membership has held up remarkably well. We have had only a couple of formal resignations and far more potential new members. Assuming that our currently paid-up membership holds up and that all the potential new members actually sign up, we will have a membership of over 100. There has been quite a big influx of people who characterise themselves as beginners, and we must try to ensure that our evenings give some opportunity to real beginners. David Smith has been busy every time in demonstrating basic techniques and we are very grateful to him for his efforts.

The enforced shutdown happened just at the point of collection of subscriptions for the 2020/21 session and many had already renewed their membership, leaving some still to pay. Since the club activities were so reduced, the committee decided to declare a subs 'holiday', and we extended this to cover the current year. If you had paid for the 2020/21 session, we won't ask you for more money until the start of the 2023 session and we propose to restart the subscription year from the next AGM in April 2023. For new members and those who have not paid, we invite you to pay from this meeting, and Bob Nye will be very happy to formalise your membership and take your money.

It has been another difficult and strange year for us all and none of our limited activities would have been possible without effort. Peter, Jim, Graham and Bob all make my job as Chairman so much easier. All your efforts are much appreciated. Gordon has been a most active programme secretary and is full of ideas for future meetings. He took over the role from Jim at a difficult time, and I am most grateful to him for his input and efforts, particularly in locating new premises. Many other people make club meetings possible by helping so willingly with catering, raffles, and door management and we are most grateful to all of them – it wouldn't work without you all.

Jim Young has been a member of our small committee since the club was started, and his input has been invaluable. He stepped down from the Programme role last AGM and is now stepping down from the committee. He leaves with our grateful thanks for all his wisdom and his excellent organisational skills – he will be hard to replace. He's not leaving the club and he and Yvonne will be around at future meetings – indeed we are planning a talk from Jim at the May meeting.

Speaking of such things, Jim's departure creates a vacancy on the committee. It's important that we recruit new blood now and again to maintain the vitality of the Club. If anyone is interested in volunteering to help out, do contact me. It's important to stress that the club belongs to all of its members equally – if there are things which we should be doing and are not doing, or things which you think would improve the running of the club, do feel free to contact me or any other committee member, especially if you are able to get involved. We do our best to get things right, but we are always open to constructive criticism and suggestions. Financially, the club is in good shape. Finally, I would like once again to express my thanks to all who have contributed to keeping the club healthy and functioning as best we can over the last year, especially the committee members. Let's all look forward to a better year to come.

*Norman Billingham*

#### **AND FINALLY**

**A** longer than usual newsletter this time, but I hope you find it useful and informative. As always, if you want to express your feelings on anything club related please contact me, or any member of the committee. It's always good to hear from you. I'm still very short of material for newsletters. I can use pictures of your work, your workshop or anything else you think may interest fellow members. For now, my very best wishes to all members as always. I'll look forward to seeing many of you in our new venue in May

*Norman Billingham*