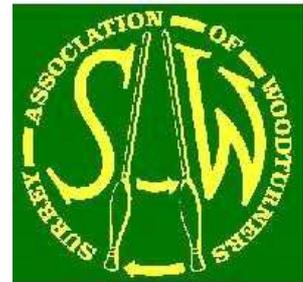


Surrey Association of Woodturners

Newsletter March 2008

Reports, News and Views from North West Surrey



New Members

Simon Booth Geoff Goddard
Corrado Marino Roger Tiller
Rick Williams

Paid up Membership 136

Items for the Diary

Friday 11th April C/T – Paul Nesbitt
2nd & 3rd May West's Wood Show
Friday 9th May John Johnson
Sunday 18th May Seminar
24th & 25th May Rural Life Centre
Friday 13th June Jason Breach

MEMBERSHIP

Your renewal fee of £22.00 if not already paid, is overdue. If you do not pay, then this is the last newsletter you will receive.

February Evening

We had the welcome return of Tom Pockley. He has been turning since 1999 having been a Chemistry teacher before that. The first part of his demonstration I

only had half an ear to as I was sorting out membership fees. He showed us a bowl which resembled a chamber pot which He thought was not a very pleasing design and went on to create a better one. Each of his tools has a different style of handle or is made from a different wood to ease recognition in the tool box. All the handles are as long as possible to aid control. He talked about his three rules of wood turning. Rule 1. Look into the flute. Rule 2 If not working, then sharpen the gouge. I did not hear what rule 3 was.

The wood was quite wet so there was a good chance it would warp. He talked about rims on bowls and the need for care with sharp edges. Three of his pupils who were viola players had accidents cutting their fingers. The correct angle of grind is required to deal with pimples or dimples that form at the bottom of the bowl.

He showed us his Tormec Diamond wheel which had become damaged due to leaving the wheel in water overnight. He had various jigs to get the correct angle of grind on different tools.

Having sharpened the gouge Tom gave the finishing cuts to complete the bowl, which was a far more pleasing shape than the chamber pot.

After tea he made a little sphere from Judas wood. The block was mounted between centres and reduced to a cylinder. A spigot was cut so as to fit it in the chuck. The end was trimmed and he started to shape it into a hemisphere then continued to create the ball with a very narrow bit

holding onto the chuck. Tom then drilled in from the end a few mm less than the diameter of the ball. He has made a special tool to cut out the inside. The problem is clearing away the shavings. Part off the sphere using a very sharp thin parting tool to cut down through the fibres or a spike is left attached to the chuck and a small hole appears in the ball as happened in the case. Usually the sphere would be mounted in a jamb chuck so that the ball can be trued up.

Tom has a commission to make some spheres 600mm in diameter for a Cricket Bench.

A very interesting evening.

Ancient Tree Facts

The UK has the largest concentration of ancient trees in Northern Europe.

The oldest tree in the UK, and perhaps in Europe, is believed to be the Fortingall Yew, near Callendar in Scotland, which is thought to be 5,000 years old.

An Oak spends 300 years growing, 300 years resting and 300 years declining gracefully.

A hollow tree is often a healthy, strong tree. The decaying wood produced as it hollows acts as extra food for the tree, and might even send down aerial roots inside the hollow to make the most of the rich pickings.

Trees shrink as they become ancient, becoming shorter and squatter. It's a great survival strategy, as it means they can cope better with high winds.

LETTERS

Here is a further letter from Confused.

Firstly apologies for the grammatical errors in first letter Spell Check does not get it right all the time. Answers to Charlie and Basil Charlie It is easy to determine Woodturning by definition the wood must be turning for the

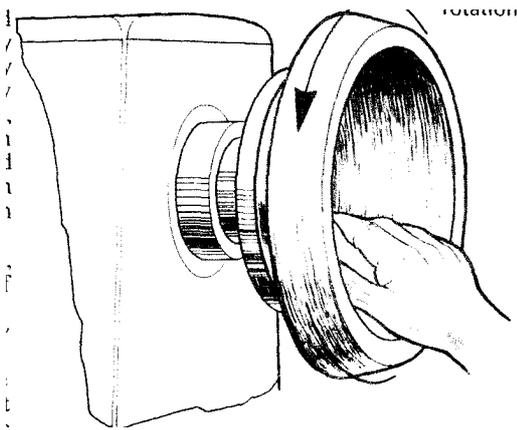
major part of the work i.e. at least 80% of the time in my opinion, if not more. Basil I do not possess a narrow view of woodturning my work covers the widest of disciplines. The book shows added work to wood not woodturning. I use colouring in my work also plastics, resins and metals and have demonstrated this lots of times over the years. Phil Irons tends to colour on the lathe, force dry on the lathe and then sand on the lathe with it running, so woodturning. In segmented work the turning is often simple but is made beautiful by the work in setting up the segments the same was true with some of Mikes work. I still like it but the hours put in setting up take it out of woodturning. This applies to carving. In some respects Twists are outside woodturning, the lathe is just used as a vice. As I said in the beginning I am not against added value but do not call it wood turning for the competition. I would like to put forward the idea the that a design for a single piece of work to incorporate both face plate and spindle turning in a plain wood (a colourful wood can improve a bad bit of turning) is set for a competition. I would be prepared to design this i.e. maybe a small candlestick 12 inches high and also produce a prize platter for this. This I feel is the way to improve the discipline. Regarding form, form is what you or your customer likes not the preserve of a judge. The whole point was to get people thinking not get into heated "Discussions" on club nights hence the Nom de plume. CONFUSED of S.A.W

The following was extracted from a 1979 Woodwork Technology for Schools & Colleges by Douglas.

Polishing in the lathe

Articles made on the lathe can be removed from the lathe and finished by French polishing. Many articles are polished while still in the lathe, as this is generally much quicker than French polishing by hand. The grain of the wood is filled by applying a coat of French polish and when it is dry, rubbing it down smooth with fine grade glass-paper. A second coat of French polish is applied and, when it dries, is again rubbed down smooth with fine class-paper.

With the work revolving in the lathe carnauba wax is applied to the surface of the work, so that a thin film of wax is deposited on the surface. This film of wax is burnished with a soft cloth. Care must be taken, when holding the cloth, to ensure that any loose end of the cloth is not caught up in the revolving work. The wax and the cloth are applied to the lower half of the work, to prevent the hand from being snatched as the work- rotates.



WOODTURNING CRUISE IN NORWAY



Our company organizes the Woodturning Cruise, taking place in Norway in August this year.

We would be very grateful if you could put up a link to our site regarding the Woodturning Cruise:
www.woodturningcruise.com
 <blocked::http://www.woodturningcruise.com/>

In brief, The Woodturning Cruise is a floating woodworking show which sails from Stavanger to the North Cape and return, crossing the Arctic Circle into the land of the Midnight sun! Onboard we will have top

turners from all over the world, Richard Raffan, Mark Baker, Jimmy Clewes, Nick Agar and a lot more. These guys will be demonstrating in the harbours for our visiting customers and when we sail the passengers can use the lathes and tools. They will also get some tuition on the way! Onboard you will find passengers from all over the world! All with a genuine interest for wood and woodworking!

Please check our website for more information!

Med hilsen - Best regards from
 WWW VERKTØY AS Odd Erik Thjømmøe

Sjøhagen 2, 4016 Stavanger. Norway
 Web: www.verktoyas.no
 <<http://www.verktoyas.no/>>
 Email: post@verktoyas.no
 Tlf +47 51886800 Fax +47 51886810

See: www.woodturningcruise.com
 <<http://www.woodturningcruise.com/>> for information about the Woodturning Cruise 2008.

HANDS ON DAY

There were four tutors and fourteen pupils.



Two of the many comments sent to Paul:-

I am writing to say how much I enjoyed the recent hands on day and to thank you and the tutors (Jenny, Brian, Jim and yourself) plus all the other

unpaid work that went into setting it up,
The enthusiasm and commitment shown is a credit to you all, I am a novice turner and learnt a great deal to the extent I can now create something apart from shavings but the day was not only about newcomers as there was turning going on that I can only aspire to on a future Hands on Day With the humour and banter going on and only a token £5 for the whole day it was great thank you,
Nigel Turnbull.



Paul,
Thanks for running the Hands On day.

Having relatively recently joined the club and started turning (Sept 07) I have been greatly encouraged by the amount of friendly support to 'have a go' that I have received. At the Country Life Centre, you gave my girls and I a beginners lesson. Colin Spain has invited me round to his house for a couple of sessions and of course the two hands on days that I have attended. I have been greatly impressed by the way in which the club has welcomed new members and actively supported them in getting started.

The Hands On days have worked particularly well, in that the way they are structured allows for people of widely different abilities to learn something new. Often, when you are trying to learn a new technique or cut, there are many variables involved, and it is disheartening to have carefully read up on the cut, and then it all goes horribly wrong, and

you don't know why. Having someone on hand to spot the thing that is not right, and suggest a correction saves hours of aggravation. A personal example was use of a bowl gouge that had come with a factory grind that in your estimation was dangerous for what I was trying to do with it - needed to grind off the wings, before I could attempt that!

A second point is that the Hands On day is great for things that you are a bit frightened of trying on your own. Again personal examples are: grinding my precious new Henry Taylor tools, and use of a skew chisel.

So much easier when you have someone on hand to stop you doing anything dangerous or stupid.

I suspect it will be a many, many years before I don't want to come to the hands on days because I feel that I have nothing to learn. Even then they are sufficiently good fun, that I would probably volunteer to be one of your assistants at that point!

Richard Lucas

Jottings from a Big Country (with apologies to Bill Bryson)

During my recent travels to Australia and New Zealand, I came across a few things that may be of interest to fellow woodturners.

I expect most of us have seen at Yandles or Wests, or other similar wood suppliers, the wooden crates full of 'Banksia Nuts', and am sure some of us have tried turning one into a small pot or similar distinctive item (I bought a 'nut' several years ago but have never got round to doing anything with it yet!).

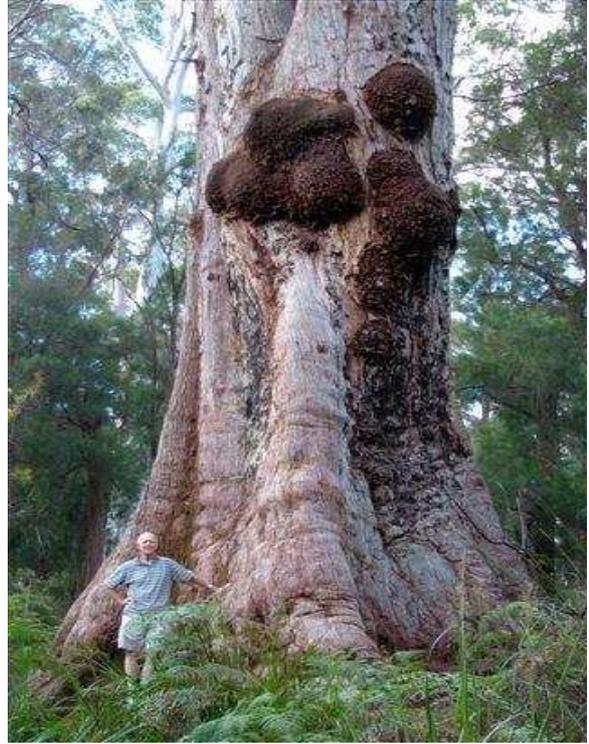


The nut is inside these blooms.

These crates of 'Banksia Nuts' have been exported from their native Australia.

Near the town of Albany in SW Australia I came across Banksia Farm (www.banksiafarm.com.au) which was really more of an arboretum than a farm as they reckoned they had examples of all 77 species. What we call 'nuts' are really the seed pods and are called 'pods' over there. The pods we are familiar with come from the 'Grandis' variety - more of a shrub than a tree – the example I saw was only about 7ft high. There were some tree size Banksias but they seemed to produce smaller pods. There was the inevitable box of pods for sale – but at 5 Australian dollars each that is more expensive than Yandles!

Another interesting place I came across in SW Australia was Djarilmari Timber Products (www.djarilmari.com) in the town of Denmark. As well as boxes of Banksia Pods waiting to be shipped to UK and Italy, they had a wonderful selection of burls (or burrs as we know them). It was interesting to learn that they go out into the forests and 'farm' the burls from the living trees.



Neil by a Giant Red Tingle Tree. I had just assumed that these burls/burrs were cut off trees once the trees had been felled. More next time.... From New Zealand...
Neil Lofthouse

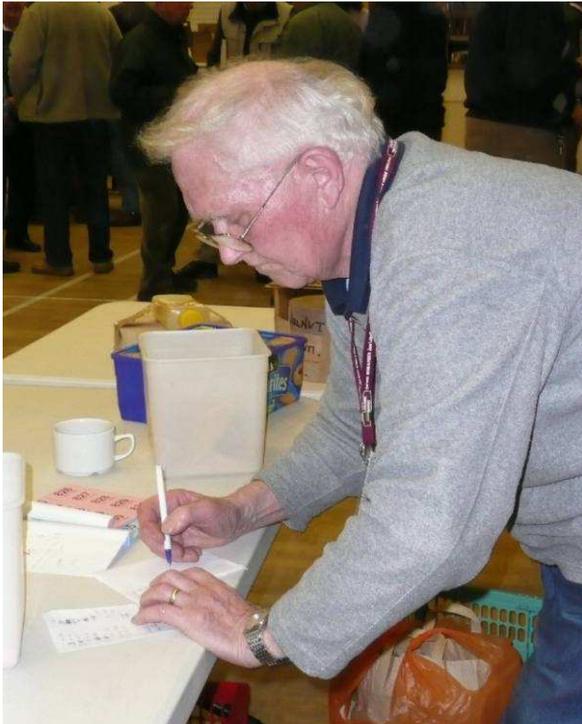
MARCH EVENING

This practical evening was organised by Nick Smith. About 80 members enjoyed a variety of topics covered by the demonstrators. Having chairs out did help to some extent but there were still some members who had to ignore the heat and safety issues and stand next to the demonstrator.



Working our way around the hall from the door, we found Ian with the raffle,

managing very well on his own as John was sick.



In the corner Chris was experimenting with the new audio visual equipment and showing Don and Robert how it all worked



. George was using the new Wivamac to make a large platter in London Plane. On the stage Brian Wooldridge was judging the competition, supervised by Roy. The duty doctor was Jennie, who had an unusual patient in the form of a newt which was take away to be released by a stream.



Ollie with June was making sycamore pots on his own lathe.

Claire was using their lathe to make pens in Coriander while Rodney was making larger items.

As usual Phil Wolsencroft was using his own big lathe to make big burrs and lots of shavings. This meant that Phil Jackson with help from Bill Thackary had to mind the shop. They are selling so much super glue that we are now getting special rates from the suppliers. This will mean a small profit to the club.

Colin Spain was using his own lathe to make light pulls in yew. Richard was using his own lathe to make long stemmed goblets in Yew.

In the centre, Neil with help from Brian Rogers was manning the TABLE. Hire of DVDs and books plus booking for future events. I was taking membership fees from late payers.

Most important were the ladies in the kitchen, Sylvia and Pete's wife Brenda, providing tea and coffee.

PRINCES MEAD

Thirteen of us had an early start to get to the shopping centre in Farnborough by 8am. With everyone helping it did not take that long to set up the display stands and seven lathes plus some sales tables.



Roy was using his scroll saw to cut thin ply into shapes of rabbits, chickens and teddys which he coloured in felt tip to give to the children.



We had a steady audience and may have gained several new members. Garrison Radio came and advertised our efforts and will continue to plug events for us in the coming year. Those of us with items to sell were pleased with the results.



The joke of the day must be one member who during the morning advised that he had lost his hearing aid. There was much

searching though the sawdust etc at the time and when we packed up. He was fearing the wroth of his wife when he got home. However when he got in, there was the hearing aid which he had never fitted before he left in the morning!

Basil Wins 1st Place!

Report by Jennie

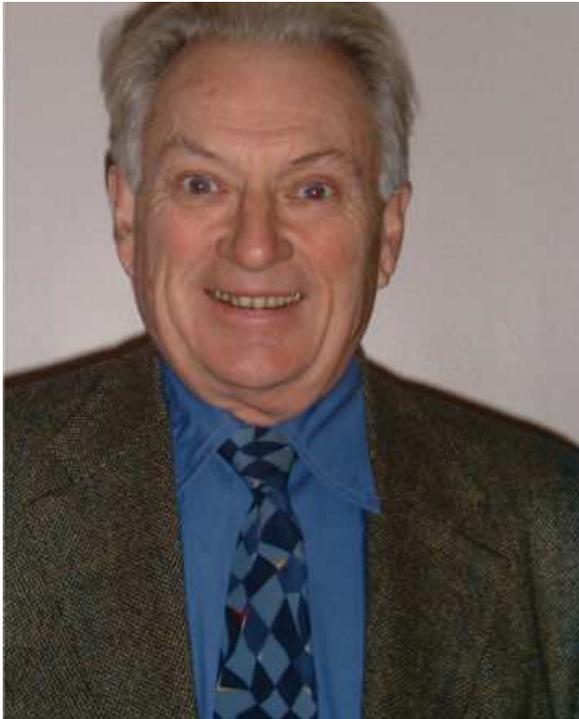
Those of you at practical evening will have had the chance to see (and handle) Basil Gridley's winning entry for the 'Enthusiast' category at the Alexandra Palace Show in February.



Basil needed some 'arm-twisting' to enter his piece which is 'in the style of' Hans Weissflog. As those of you who have seen it will know, it is a beautifully turned example of lattice work. It has won him a 5 day turning holiday in France with his wife, and a cheque for £250 donated by the Worshipful Company of Turners.



It is always worth entering competitions. Most of the show organisers will give 2 free tickets to the show to everyone who enters - so you can't lose!and maybe, you will be as successful as Basil!



Paul's Paragraphs

It's that time again to write up my notes for the past two months. How time flies, as I get older it seems to go quicker. Has anyone else noticed this or is just me. The weather has been too cold to go out to the workshop much, therefore not a lot of turning done, but I have been able to spend more time with Sylvia which is good.

Subscriptions

Don't forget that subs are due and remain the same as last year at £22.00. This will be the last

newsletter you receive or notice via e-mail. If you are not rejoining please inform us and tell if we got it wrong or you have moved on to other things. It is nice to know.

Woodturning Show at Ally Pally 8th, 9th and 10th February

It all started with the set up on Thursday and I think we were so organised it was done in no time at all. The big worry we had on Friday was getting back to the club in time. Lady Luck shone on us every road we travelled on was great with minimal traffic and we arrived at Mytchett at 7pm. Well the club had a great presence at the show. Lot's of people talking to our stewards and demonstrators, which is what it is all about. A great display of work on a shared display area with the Cheam Woodturners. We had one person who joined the club, (Corrado Marino). Who lives in Cobham. I also spoke to a couple who live in Ash, who both turn but it is mainly the lady, I gave her a bowl blank and asked her to turn it and show me the finished item. They have been to our Open Day Show but did not know we held monthly meetings there. The show seemed quite busy each day but went quiet in the afternoons. There was always great camaraderie between our members and the Cheam members. We also had a lot of our members visiting us on the stand. I was luck and missed out on the tidy up, but was told that it went well and my thanks go to a dedicated team who had a late finish on Sunday. I need to give a hearty congratulations to Basil Gridley on winning at the show, if you need someone to take on the holiday let me know, I will be there for you.

Hands on Day 24th February

That's the first one of the year done and dusted. 13 "Students" and 4 "Tutors". This was another successful event and I believe everyone got more than they came for. These events are proving to be ever popular and we have now arranged for a third one this year. Now it is time to start taking bookings for the next one in June. So get your name down early and you 'TUTORS' watch out I may be calling on you for your help.

Princes Mead Shopping Centre 15th March

This was something that Roy Edwards got us involved with last year and he did such a good job that we have been invited back for two dates this year. I have asked Roy to continue as the organiser for these events and he will be looking

for helpers and demonstrator. The theme for this date just before Easter is eggs and egg cups. This is a great local event to show off our club and the skills of woodturning.

March Club Night

This is a practical night and that means competition time. Last year I was involved more with the club competition and that was a great eye opener in many ways. One of the things that I was amazed at was the number of members who entered something on the first and second occasions, built up a reasonable score and then did nothing for the last one. As the lottery says 'you have to in it to win it'. So come on a new years resolution from you all to try and enter the competitions. It is not about how good you think you are it's about taking part and learning from what you make and how to improve from it. Although I had written the above before the event I was pleased at the amount of work entered and of course the quality, well done to all who took part and can we see some more from others please!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Princes Mead Shopping Centre

What a great day had by all. Setting up went well with everyone arriving on time and all getting stuck in we were ready in good time. We were inundated with people all day talking to us, watching us turn, buying from us and even joining us, yes one person even filled out his membership form and paid his subs so that he could have a go. Also a lot of members turned up to see us and had chat. Garrison Radio was also at the centre and I gave two on-air interviews about the club and woodturning. The DJ continually mentioned the club throughout the day on air. We had two photographers attend, one from the Star and I am not sure about the second one. The day went quickly and no sooner had we started we packed away and went home for a well deserved rest. So on Roy's behalf a big thank you all for being there and making it such a success.

Tools

The club has now started to invest in tools for members to "try before they buy". The first tool is a Sorby texturing tool, which will, be available from the April meeting on Neil's table. If you have any ideas or suggestions for other tools let us know.

West's Wood Show

This is the next event on the agenda and we are still looking for helpers, so if you can help the please put your name down. 2nd and 3rd of May (Friday and Saturday)

Wounded in the course of duty

Chris Starbuck while unloading the car after Prices Mead fell and broke his ankle in three places and so will be out of action for several weeks. We wish him a speedy recovery.

Here are some more photos of the Practical Evening and Princes Mead. Thanks to Jennie and Pete Evans





A Woodturner's New Year Sudoku Puzzle (the Solution)

c	o	K	H	e	d	S	a	t
D	h	s	T	o	a	C	K	e
E	A	t	s	c	k	H	o	d
K	S	C	e	A	o	d	t	h
h	e	a	d	s	t	o	c	k
o	t	d	c	K	h	E	S	A
s	k	E	a	h	c	t	D	O
t	C	O	k	d	E	a	h	S
a	d	H	o	t	S	K	e	c

The nine letters are A C D E H K O S T

The given letters are in upper case, the letters which have been written in are in lower case

The secret woodturning word is therefore HEADSTOCK

Many thanks to Donald Bell for this teaser.

Lots of members are reluctant to enter the competitions. Here Jennie explains how the points are decided

Learn to Judge Your Own Work

Last month, Tom Pockley started his demo by showing us a 'bad' bowl. He went on to demonstrate what was bad about it and gave us all a chance to handle it and see for ourselves the features he criticised. He then made a 'good' bowl – or what is currently thought to be good, because, when you get down to it, a lot of the appeal in a piece of woodturning is 'in the eye of the beholder'. The finished item looked and felt much better – but how do we actually decide what turning is good and what is bad?

Recently, some members have asked how individual pieces are judged in club competitions, especially in regard to decorative techniques. We have looked at this before, but not for a couple of years – so, as one of the current club judges, I felt that it was a good time to look at judging again.

When we set up the Club Competition, a sub committee of members who had been successful in National competitions was asked to put together a set of criteria that would then be used to judge pieces. These are published in the **Club Handbook** – but as a reminder, here they are again.

Aspect	Points out of 10
Technical Challenge - Degree of difficulty, originality.	
Execution - Craftsmanship, Tooling, Crispness of Detail	
Design - Form and proportions	
Finish - Choice and quality of finish	
Timber choice - Suitability and exploitation.	
General appeal - Do I Like it?	
TOTAL POINTS (out of 60)	

After we had run the competition for a couple of years, some other clubs and professional turners became interested – ‘Woodturner’ did an editorial about our judging criteria, and now, similar criteria are used more widely.

We felt that it was difficult for a member of the club to ‘judge’ the work of fellow members without having these criteria. We also felt that we needed more than one judge’s opinion, so over the years a number of members have been asked to judge the competition.

The best bit of advice I can give any of you before you enter a piece in the competition is to **judge it yourself** against these criteria – and **without your rose-tinted safety glasses!**

Let’s imagine you have made a bowl or platter you wish to enter. I am not going to take the ‘aspects’ in the order they appear above – but in an order that I hope will start to help you to judge your own work more easily. Find a bowl you have turned and are pleased with and give yourself a score out of 10 for each of these aspects.

Timber choice – If the timber is heavily figured, too much decoration or complex turning can make the finished item look cluttered and fussy. If you plan to add embellishments to your bowl or platter to demonstrate a greater degree of skill, be careful that it doesn’t overpower the features in the timber. As a rule of thumb, the more complex the figuring, the simpler the design should be. . Scoring is subjective, but most judges will ‘prefer’ to see beautifully figured wood turned well into a simpler form and not highly decorated.

Execution – This is where the judge looks for evidence that the timber has been cut cleanly. For a bowl there are specific ‘problem’ areas the judge will look at – and feel - closely. Most bowls and platters will be turned from wood that has been planked or cut along the grain, so, as the shape is turned the tool cuts with the grain and across end grain twice every revolution. The judge will be checking that there is no obvious ‘end-grain’ damage. It will appear both on the inside and the outside of the bowl – but probably the most difficult area to deal with is close in to the foot. It doesn’t only need to look good – it also needs to feel good. The judge’s finger tips will immediately find rough patches – they also can feel any hollows or ridges that can not easily be spotted by the naked eye – the main problem area being the centre where a ‘pip’ often forms- and getting rid of it without reshaping the whole of the inside of the bowl can leave a hollow instead!

The judge will also be checking the wall thickness – the skill is to keep the thickness the same all the way round the curves of the piece.

Over sanding can lead to ‘rounded over’ edges. The judge will be looking for crisp (but not razor sharp) edges.

As you get into turning more and develop the techniques (or buy the gadgets) you can turn the bowl over to clean up the chucking point. This is where it is tempting to add unnecessary detail that does not fit the design of the piece (beads and ‘v’ cuts) and often lead to areas of torn grain.

So, in summary, this aspect allows the judges to award marks for the turning techniques that have been used to make the piece.

Finish – On a simple bowl or platter, the finish is usually the aspect that ‘sells’ the piece. Whether it is a gloss or matt finish is a matter of taste – but the judges will be looking for a perfect finish – not the shine! Generally, this means that the finish is even – no darker patches – and completely smooth with no rings from sanding or from a build up of wax, sanding sealer or oil showing.

As skills improve, you should find that you need to sand less – over-sanding can cause a multitude of problems that **will** be spotted. Some timbers will ‘check’ if you allow too much heat to build up whilst

sanding – Yew is notorious for checking in this way. Others have such a wide difference in density across the growth rings that you can inadvertently sand a hollow into the wood – even if you started out with a perfectly smooth curve (watch out for this on Ash and many of the spalted timbers) Most turners sand down to 400 grit for most items, but it is wise to have some finer grits available for competition pieces. Watch out that you remove all of the sanding dust from the piece before you apply a finish.

Design – Some turners work from drawings, some from pictures and some from memory. There are also turners who look at a piece of wood and visualize the shape of the piece hidden in the blank. However you proceed, it is unlikely that you will ever come up with a completely original shape for a bowl or platter – or at least, an original shape that is 'pleasing to the eye'.

As we grow up, the culture we are in shapes our appreciation of things around us. For example, we are not used to the quarter tones of Asian music and can find it hard to enjoy this music. Similarly, our tongues learn to shape the sounds we use in English and can find other languages difficult to pronounce. So it is with design. Our eyes are used to seeing harmony in certain shapes and we are drawn to them. Tom's 'bad' bowl looked heavy. It seemed to sink down into the surface it was displayed on. For good or ill, the judges will have developed a 'vocabulary' of shapes that seem to work well and they will be looking at the piece as a whole and trying to fit it into those accepted shapes.

If there is a curve, **it should not have flat spots**. If it does not sit on a foot which lifts it off the display surface, the side should curve in at the base to prevent the piece from looking too heavy.

There are plenty of design resources to build your own 'eye for design'. For example, the AWGB website has 3 galleries of work chosen to have some merit from the pieces exhibited at the last 3 Loughborough seminars. We also have a number of books in our lending library and DVDs to borrow.

Another aspect of design is decoration. However you feel about colouring, texturing, adding other materials or carving – when it comes to judging it has only a small impact on the overall score.

Any embellishment has to fit into the general design and add something to the piece or it will be considered 'bad' design.

General Appeal (Do I like it?) - This is probably the most subjective area for judging. If a judge dislikes a particular finish, shape or technique, the marks could reflect their particular prejudice. To be honest, although you try to be impartial and judge everything on its merits, it is possible not to recognise your own prejudices. This is why we developed the second level of scoring. Every score out of 60 is made into a score out of 10 that has **not** been generated simply by dividing by 6. We wanted to be sure that a good piece could get a high mark out of 10, even if the piece lost out because the judge thought it was well turned but did not like it.

Having this 'scaled' final score also allows the judges to judge the Open and the Standard competitions to the same criteria, because the score out of 60 you need for a 9 or 9.5 in the Open competition is higher than the score you need in the Standard competition.

I know that it sounds complicated! I would be happy to talk it through with you using your actual scores, any practical evening.

Technical Challenge: This is the area I thought was hardest to describe, so I left it until last! Understanding what we mean by technical challenge depends on your previous turning experience. If you are very new to turning, everything can be a challenge, but as you turn more bowls, you will start to understand what the main problems to be overcome are. Thinking back to Tom's 'bad' bowl, the base showed the chucking marks, the outside surface had some torn grain, which can not be disguised through sanding, the inside had a 'sharp' corner rather than a smooth curve and there were ridges that had not been cut or sanded smooth. The base had some inappropriate decoration which added nothing to the design and the wall thickness was not even.

If you address all of the above points you are likely to have produced a reasonable bowl - but how can the judge differentiate the skills of the turner if he or she is presented with a number of apparently similar bowls - this is when we look out for technical challenge and originality.

Here, I am going to have to use examples of pieces you may have seen that have been turned by a club member, Mike Morley.

Mike has made a number of exceptionally fine pieces in segmented sycamore, laminated with dark veneers. The basic turning skills his pieces demonstrate can not be faulted - but then you see the individuality and technical challenge of each piece. In some, he has developed a way of segmenting the wood so that you get maximum iridescence as the piece is rotated. In others, he has segmented and layered veneers in the wood to produce precise and aesthetically pleasing patterns as the shape is turned, whilst others depend on precise geometry for their effect. Each piece is unique in some way and specific technical challenges have had to be overcome in their construction as well as each showing excellent turning skills. This is what we mean by technical challenge.

As your own turning skills progress, you too will be looking for ways to make your work stand out. No amount of embellishment will hide bad turning and judging will, I hope, always be looking first at the turning skills and then the factors that make a piece stand out from the rest.

So, what score have you given yourself? If you have done this exercise, you may well have spotted a problem area that you were not aware of before. The thing to do next is to use the resources of the club to find out how other people manage to cope with the problem. Talk to the turners on practical evenings, bring a piece for 'the Doctor' to critique, check the DVDs to find a professional turner who will demonstrate how they do it, talk to the judge at the end of the competition, come to a 'Hands-on Day, come along to one of the events like the Rural Life Centre and spend time talking to the turners.....etc.etc.....

We run the club to help all of our members develop their skills. It is up to you whether you take advantage of everything that is on offer!

Jennie Starbuck

THIS SPACE NEEDS YOUR ARTICLE

Please send any wood related items to the editor

It is your items that make the newsletter interesting