

Cheam Woodturners Association

Newsletter 11

December 2002

Chairman's Christmas Message

With the Christmas season almost upon us, I, like others, may find the need to mothball my workshop in favour of time in front of a roaring fire with a glass of wine in the hand. The more hardy of you will plough on, determined to make gifts for our families, fingers numb to the bone and dew-drops on the nose.

Some of you, like me, will have been busy with craft fairs; I hope they will have been a success for you.

I hope you have enjoyed the programme of event this year; the Committee has been very active to ensure an equally varied programme for 2003.

I would like to wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. May Father Christmas bring you the woodturning equipment that is likely to feature highly on your "wish list".

Andrew Griffiths

The Irish Woodturners Guild Annual Seminar

For those of you who expect a technical report on my trip to Ireland, prepare to be disappointed. Others, read on.....

It was early in the morning on October 9th that I found myself on a bus to Heathrow to catch my flight to Ireland to attend the Irish Guild's annual seminar.

In the departure lounge I met up with Gary Rance and Mike Dennis. Interestingly, and it could only happen on Aer Lingus, our tickets each gave different departure gate numbers. On overhearing a conversation with a check-in clerk, I knew I was on the right track; "Shannon"? asked a passenger, "no" said the clerk, "this is London, you have to get on that aeroplane to take you there".

What a dry flight. Not a drinkie in sight. But perhaps just as well as the next few days would prove a challenge to even the hardiest of alcoholics!
- read on overleaf

In this issue

Chairman visits the
Irish Guild Seminar
and enjoys a drink
with Frank Clarke

Reports from shows at
Yandles, Hackbridge
and Wisley

Information on
the Club Library
and a planned visit
to Styles & Bates

An article on
Timber Drying and
Tips from Bob French

Next Year's
Programme
of Events

Notice of the AGM
in February

News from
Frank Clarke
in the Emerald Isle

The Irish Woodturners Guild

continued

The baby screaming directly at Gary kept him awake for the 1 hr flight. (I think he tried to calm it by explaining he was a woodturner but it seemed to make things worse).

On arrival at Shannon, I was pleased to see that my chauffeur was waiting –none other than Frank Clarke (remember him?). He was accompanied by two leaning slurring characters from Axminster Power Tool Company –Mark and Colwin. It was clear that their flight had not been “dry”.

The first pub was at least a mile from the airport and we spent a short time sampling some Guinness. – it does taste different over there.

Then came the first challenge –to find Siobhans house where Mark and Colwin would be staying. “The yellow house next to the red one” was the instructions she had given to Frank over the phone. Most houses in Ireland seemed to be red or yellow. But after a while we surprised ourselves by finding the right one (thanks to Frank who seems to have gone native).

The next challenge came –to find Mrs Nelly where I would be staying. No problem here as Frank swept into her drive. Now it might be because I’m Welsh but Mrs Nelly asked for cash up front; no problem as I might otherwise have spent it on “entertainment”.

The next challenge –to assemble two Axminster lathes assisted by Colwin and a spanner. The three of us got there eventually. We’d worked up a thirst by this time so it was off to Frank’s hotel where we met up with an extremely pleasant bunch of Irish woodturners (all of whom new Frank of course) Now I can understand most Celts –being one of the- but I have to confess that I had great difficulty in tuning into the discussions and found myself nodding and saying “yes” a lot. I may have said the occasional “no” for balance. The puzzled look on their faces indicated when I’d made the wrong response but they didn’t seem to mind.

The seminar started with a bang –David Ellsworth making a hollow form from Ash. After a slight delay his wood arrived in the form of a 6 ft tree trunk. Not to be outdone he swung into action with a petrol chainsaw; this is quite an unusual sight in the classroom of a junior school –how times change, it was a cane in my day! David’s demonstration was one of the best I had ever seen; very articulate, he interacted with the audience - heckled by Phil Irons. It was man and gouge in harmony. Interestingly, he practices Tai Chi as a means of sustaining physical flexibility for woodturning. The finish he achieved from the tool was better than I get with 600 grit!

My next port of call was Laura Ponting who demonstrated a variety of colouring techniques involving scorching, water-based dyes and shoe polish. It crossed my mind how it might occur to anyone to try shoe polish; surely it couldn’t be by accident?

Well I couldn’t miss an opportunity to see Gary Rance in action. He demonstrated making a pepper mill and a barley twist candlestick - both with considerable speed and ease.

Phil Irons was donated a piece of bog-pine for his demo. He formed a 1 mm spigot for the chuck; the front row of his audience moved back a bit when he switched on the lathe. But the result was a bit of a masterpiece, such a lovely aroma, and it stayed on the lathe.

I popped in on Roger Bennett to listen to him describe his work on silver wire inserts in bowls. These truly were impressive but required the patience of a saint. One of his bowls was said to have 3600 inserts; it impressed me that he’d counted them! The inserts were on a spiral starting near the centre of the bowl and spiralling towards the outside edge; he’d tried a number of techniques to draw the spiral before realising that moving a pencil from the centre towards the edge whilst rotating the work gave him the exact result. I explained to him that I’d stumbled across this technique 3 years ago - but using a bowl gouge. And I can still do it!

What can one say about Ceiron Forbes? His reputation as one of Ireland’s top turners precedes him. And a voice that could de-stress anyone; he could record meditation tapes as a past-time. Oh yes, he’s a monk. Now I’ve met monks before but not like him. A bit of a lad to say the least. He only makes bowls and showed us one he’d made “from virgin sycamore –as close to a virgin as I’ll ever get” he claimed.

Well with all the demonstrations over, I checked in with Frank Clarke. Mark and Colwin still looked blurry. Frank looked despondent –and one of the basketball posts in the school playground looked to be at a strange angle, leaning some 15 degrees from its normal vertical position; the large dent in Frank’s car explained the cause –Frank had failed to see the 12 ft by 4 inch post sticking out of the ground. But as I write this, his car is back to new again.

My last night in Ireland was spent in the very pleasant company –Frank, Lesley (his wife) and Barney (their new pup). A tour of Frank’s new workshop left me envious, the sight of 4 tons of rocks for the garden left me thankful that I wouldn’t be staying!

All in all an excellent seminar. I look forward to the next one by which time my body might have recovered.

Andrew Griffiths

The Irish Woodturners Guild the pictures



*Clockwise from top left - Phil Irons, Laura Ponting,
David Ellsworth, Ceiran Forbes and Gary Rance*

Frank Clarke settles down in his new Irish home and workshop

*Clockwise from top left - Bungalow with workshop back right side, sun shining, Workshop outside,
The woodturning area, The workshop shortly after Frank kitted it out. Letter from Frank overleaf*

Greetings from Frank in the Emerald Isle

Hi Guys - I promised Richard Hoodless that I would bring you up to date on all our happenings in the past year, but where do I start? I have had some busy years in the past, but this last one takes the prize.

Well, we fished up here at the end of February in beautiful County Kerry, the locals call it the Kingdom of Kerry, and although it is possibly one of the most beautiful parts of Ireland I know not why it is called the Kingdom. The bungalow had been completed prior to our move, but once unpacked, and boy did that take some sorting out, plans were put in motion to have the workshop built. Now, like most boys with toys like ours I had planned in my mind, hopefully, over the years the ideal workshop. It ended up 40' x 20' and built to the same specification as the bungalow.

Like all workshops, it is a work in progress under constant revision, I will probably get it the way I want it just before I pop my clogs. However, I hope I get some use out of it for a fair while.

During the eight months since I saw most of you last, I have kept extremely busy. The clubs, (or Chapters as they are known over here) hold a series of one day seminars through out the year, despite all we had to do to get the place straight I have managed to attend three plus the annual National 3 day seminar, more from Andrew on this subject. I have also be very fortunate to be able to attend two weekend long meetings of the Irish Woodturners Guild's Collaborative Chapter. The idea behind these weekends is for woodturners to collaborate with other craft workers (i.e. weavers, potters, blacksmiths, silversmiths and those working with pyrography) to produce pieces of artistic work. Much of what we are doing at present will be towards a joint exhibition during 2003 with a group of French woodturners. This is being funded by the Irish Crafts Council, and will require us going over to France on two occasions to work there with the French guys. What a bind, unfortunately turning can't all be fun.

During my days on the AWGB committee assisting with organising their seminars I was fortunate to meet the Irish turner Ciaran Forbes. Some of you may well have heard of him, he is one of the very best Irish turners, a Carmelite brother and a REAL character. He has demonstrated in the UK many times at the NEC. Well, as he only lives about fifty miles from me I have had two enjoyable daylong visits to his workshop. He is always an inspiration and a bloody good laugh.

It was great to see those of you that came to the Axminster show, and my thanks to those that stopped by the Perform stand to say hello.

I will put ink to paper sometime next spring when things warm up a bit to bring you a further bulletin. Just to mention, it doesn't always rain over here the weather is much the same as the UK, but living only twelve miles from the western edge of Europe we do get the odd wind. The place, the people and the pace of life more than make up for any sea breeze we might have from time to time.

Well, all it remains for me to wish you and yours a Very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year at your lathes.

Frank Clarke

Visit to Styles & Bates on 8 February

The Club has taken up the kind offer of a coach driven by one of the Club members.

At the moment the coach is full but anyone wishing to use their own transport are welcome to come along. Styles and Bates is about 6 miles from Dover and we will be expected there at about 10 o'clock. David Bates will show us how they convert a tree into planks and will also offer us a 10% discount on wood and most goods (but excluding machinery and a few other items).

David can supply tea and coffee on the morning but members must take their own lunch, as there are no cafes or pubs in the area.

Anyone wishing to attend should contact Jeff Cordery.

Yandles Show

The Show was advertised as a 10.am start. I misjudged the journey and arrived at 9.15am only to find the show already crowded. The main car park was full and the overflow car parks 'in a field' already very busy. First stop the wood stores – 'loads' of wood, hundreds of wood turning blanks from exotic South American and African hardwoods to the good old English oaks, ash, beech etc. – all priced lower for the show. In addition there were rows and rows of planks, 5/6 foot long 1 inch to 4 inches, mainly English woods, also boxes of 'goodies' all small offcuts and prices in pence. All very tempting but my garage is full of local timber.

Next the demonstrations, again very crowded, but a good relaxed atmosphere – and a good chance to talk to the experts, like Dave Reeks roughing out some large (and I mean large) wet yew logs. Steven Cooper was also working with wet wood but turning a very large ash log to a near finished thin vase, which he leaves to fully dry (and move) for 3 or 4 weeks before sanding and finishing. It was interesting to see him use a lamp shining inside the vase to turn the outside to an even thickness. I managed to chat to Gary Rance and Tobias Kaye who were also demonstrating turning. Finally a walk through the equipment manufacturers' displays with everything for turning, carving and cabinet making.

Overall the Yandles show is well worth a visit. The highlight for me was the vast selection of wood, after all Yandles is a wood yard. The bad news is the three hours journey down the M3 and A303. However it does make a good trip out with nearby places like Longleat and Stonehenge to visit. So next year why not take your wife/partner/girlfriend/mistress and make a full weekend of it.

Brian Ash

I did not make it to the Yandles Show but took the opportunity to visit Yandles before going onto the Axminster Show. The wood selection is very good and the prices reasonable. I have already output a number of pairs of candlesticks in Zebrano, Panga Panga, an African lacewood and some other woods I had not tried before. A largish bowl blank of Zebrano has become a platter with some spectacular graining, and some Masseur Birch has turned into an interesting mushroom shaped lidded box. I will have to visit again since I have now sold most of them at an artists' open studio! - especially since my journey took less than two hours from Esher.

Roger Marsden

Hackbridge Craft Show

I attended the first Hackbridge Craft show in November as a visitor. Richard, David and Jeff were manning the Cheam Woodturners stand. Although there were only 10 exhibitors it was really good - plenty of visitors and plenty of buying. I lingered for some time on our stand and was pleasantly surprised with the activity. Cheam was the only woodturning group with exhibits from Richards 'mice' at £1.00, and David's and Jeff's platters and small bowls up to £25.00. People were getting their chequebooks out and, unusually for a craft show, buying the higher priced items. Other stalls included, pottery, jams and honey, clothes and cloth fabrics and cards etc. Overall it looked a very successful show

Brian Ash

Wisley Woodturning Exhibition

My main interest in visiting Wisley in November was to see the work of Tim Lawson but had the added advantage of seeing woodturning of two other turners Mac Kemp and Dave Reeks. I spoke to Tim before the show who told me he was preparing some 300 hundred bowls and vases for Wisley.

The exhibition is held about this time each year and entrance is free. Wonderful work from each of the woodturners, all for sale from small yew bud vases at £25 to the now famous Tim Lawson Grecian urns at £2000 plus. I also saw for the first time some bog wood bowls exhibited by Tim, big black misshapen items (the bowls not Tim). If they are not all sold I will try to get TL to bring them to one of our meetings. I saw cheques changing hands whilst I was there so no doubt another successful show.

Brian Ash

***Thanks to all those
who have donated items
for members use.
Recently we have had quantities
of wood, green baize cloth and
magazines which have all
been very welcome.***

Brian Ash, Membership Secretary

Drying timber

by wrapping in newspaper

Following the Styles and Bates presentation I decided to try the "wrapping in newspaper" drying technique.

During the strong winds of early Nov 2002 I noticed a fallen Chestnut Tree just up the road from where I live. Taking chain saw in hand I went a harvesting - my main aim was to try and secure as large a plank as possible to turn a patter; something I have only done before in the 6 to 8 inch size. Thinking a bit like Isabard Kingdom Brunel who decided to make a ship four times those in current use - a platter just a bit bigger than this did not interest me. The main trunk was over 22 inches wide and with some adept chainsaw work I secured myself a plank 30 inches by 23 inches by 2.5 inches.

Scurrying back to the workshop like an excited squirrel who has just found the tastiest conker ever I set to work. First with the band-saw to make a round and then the roughing and bowl gouges. I know this timber was green (leaves still on the fallen tree) BUT - talk about wet or what - you could have bathed in the shavings let alone the excessive quantities of water which span off as I shaped the platter. Once roughed out I waxed the outer edge with wax-emulsion paint and wrapped the whole thing in two Daily Telegraphs (does the quality or political persuasion of the written word have any effect on the drying process?) . That is two papers opened out full size and then used similar to Christmas wrapping paper so you end up with about 14 layers at the thinnest point and more where the paper overlaps. Lots of sticky brown parcel tape later I was set for storing and drying.

One last thing - weighing - using the digital kitchen scales - the patter weighed in at 5Kg. I dry my timber in the utility room where all the washing (dampness), drying (more dampness), ironing (steam) and boiler (lots of heat) lives. The room seems ideal - warm and damp with lots of through air. After four weeks this little baby weighed in at 3.5Kg - a loss of 1.5Kg - that's a litre and a half of moisture (2.5 pints) - or 30%.

It's still not dry - I will wait until the weight has stabilised for a couple of weeks - but it never ceases to amaze me how much water timber will hold.

I have just opened it up for a quick peek - there is a little surface mould and its a bit warped but no cracking. I will update you when I return it to the lathe probably in the New Year some time.

Francis Clouston

Hints & Tips

These tips were given by Bob French during his demonstration of lidded boxes in July

To find the centre on the end of a piece of stock set a carpenters marking gauge to approximately half way across the width and mark from each side. It is then easy to judge the centre of the small rectangle or triangle to mark with a centre punch.

After roughing out, **to save time in changing tools** tilt the roughing out gouge sideways and use the side bevel as a skew chisel and end with a nice smooth finish.

To obtain a good parallel finish on a long cylinder e.g. rolling pins or mangle roller set up a smoothing plane at a similar angle to a skew chisel. This makes a perfect broad skew chisel with a depth gauge.

Hollowing out quickly Bobs way. Turn a bowl gouge upside down and enter in at an angle from the front so cutting on the inside away from you. The advantage is that the waste material shoots out of the hole down the flute of the bowl gouge and saves a lot of time not having to clear the muck out of the hollow. Who has the guts to try it? Bob showed us doing this without the use of a tool rest. The tool shank was rubbing on the entry to the hole which was in effect acting as a rest.

Bob uses his grinding wheel **to sharpen pencils** and to cut up rag. And probably some other uses he did?nt tell us about

On **production runs** he uses as few tools as possible. He measures things by the multiple of the tool width he is using. If spindle turning he uses a Stem Drive centre and work on one part right through the batch and then go through the whole batch doing another similar operation mounting and demounting each spindle in the lathe while it is running. He has found templates to be a waste of time.

When **Boring Holes** Bob uses a bowl gouge to do any drilling. He explained that that the gouge to use is one where the bottom of the flute is on the centre of the gouge diameter not all gouges are. Also you need to grind the left hand side edge slightly in advance of the right hand side edge.

He does all his **grinding** free hand he does not believe in all the fancy gadgets and he uses a red wheel which he says lasts a lot longer than the white wheels.

Notice of Annual General Meeting Wednesday 19th February 2003

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To receive and adopt the minutes of the AGM held on Wednesday, 20th February 2002.
3. To receive and adopt the Chairman's Report of the previous year's working.
4. To receive and adopt the Honorary Secretary's Report for the previous year.
5. To receive and adopt the Treasurer's Report and statement of accounts covering the financial affairs of the previous year.
6. To elect a Chairperson, a Secretary, a Treasurer and three Committee members for the following year.
7. To fix the Annual subscription for the ensuing year, following submission of a Committee recommendation.
8. Any other business

*By order of the Committee,
David Buskell FCIS, Honorary Secretary*

Please note any item for discussion under item 8 to be forwarded in writing to the Honorary Secretary by no later than 5th February

2002 AGM

It is usual at Annual General Meetings to read out the minutes of the previous year's meeting. The Minutes of the 2002 AGM run to eleven pages, and thus would take a while to read out.

The Committee have borne in mind the expense to the Club of mailing a copy to each member, so from the December meeting, a full copy of the Minutes will be posted on the Club Noticeboard for members to read. We recommend that you take a few moments to read these, ahead of the AGM in February. An abbreviated version will be read out at the meeting, and if any member requires a full copy of the minutes, please contact the Honorary Secretary, David Buskell.

The Committee

2003 Programme

January 15th Ted Farrow
Turning surgery, safety and dust control
Making your own dust extractor

February 19th Annual General Meeting
Take part in running your club

March 19th Terry Smart
Demonstration of Chestnut Products' excellent finishes and sales at special prices

April 16th Jimmy Clewes
Woodturning Masterclass

May 21st Crown Tools
How Crown tools are made together with sales at special prices

June 18th Practical evening
Subjects to be decided

July 16th Brian Waldrige
Involute turning

August 20th Practical Evening
Subjects to be decided

September 17th Dave Reeks
Turning wet bowls and converting timber

October 15th Peter Blake
Multi-centre and split turning

November 19th Stuart King
Wet, wild and ethnic

December 17th Christmas Social
Mince Pies, plus Practical Demonstrations,
Bring & Buy plus Display Your Work

In addition to the above there may also be ad hoc tree harvests, hands-on mornings and exhibitions

Gregory Moreton RPT

Professional wood turner Gregory Moreton offers tuition for one or two students in his Claygate workshop

Two day beginners courses and one day advanced or refresher courses are available or hourly tuition can be tailored to your own needs

Gregory is registered with the Worshipful Company of Turners and is a full member of the Surrey Guild of Craftsmen

Please call 01372 467692 for more details
or e-mail gregory@moreton.co.uk
www.moreton.co.uk

Club Library

The library was started earlier this year with the generous contribution of a number of books from Frank Clark with interest and borrowing gradually increasing each month. The Club plans to purchase woodturning books as funds permit and if there is sufficient demand in the future also plan to purchase videos. Your thoughts please.

We have already had several books permanently donated by members and these are always welcome.

At present the selection of books on wood turning is rather limited. If members have woodturning books which they would be prepared to loan to the library for a period, while still retaining ownership, this could be organised through our book loan system - although at the book owners risk. Such a scheme would be an immediate way of increasing the selection and scope of books for the club members to borrow.

Please discuss with me your thoughts and ideas for the expansion of your library.

Malcolm Martin - Librarian

visit our website at
www.cheamturners.co.uk

CLUB MEETINGS

*are held on the third Wednesday
of each month starting at 7.45pm at
North Cheam Sports & Social Club
658 London Road (A24)
North Cheam, Surrey
next to Sainsbury's supermarket*

January 15th

Ted Farrow

*Turning surgery, safety
and dust control*

Making your own dust extractor

February 19th

Annual General Meeting

Take part in running your club

March 19th

Terry Smart

*Chestnut Products' excellent finishes
and sales at special prices*

COMMITTEE

Chairman: Andrew Griffiths

020 8644 1546 mail2griff@yahoo.co.uk

Secretary: David Buskell

52 Upper Selsdon Road, South Croydon
Surrey, CR2 8DE

020 8657 5565 davidbuskell@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Richard Hoodless

020 8330 1338

Membership Secretary: Brian Ash

020 8642 8108 brian.ash@which.net

Events Secretary: Jeff Cordery

020 8647 2691 jeff_cordery@hotmail.com

Raffle Administrator: Graham Wood

01372 272077 glwooduk@yahoo.co.uk

NEXT NEWSLETTER MARCH

Copy date 19th February 2003

Roger Marsden Editor

Clare House, 22 Claremont Avenue, Esher, Surrey KT10 9JD
tel 01372 464242 fax 01372 470870 e-mail clarehouse@aol.com

*Any views expressed in the newsletter are those of the people
submitting the material and not necessarily of the committee.*