

Cheam Woodturners Association Newsletter 12

March 2003

AGM - No Changes at the Top

Chairman reports successful year, summarises the events and thanks people involved.

Secretary outlines committee's activities and Treasurer explains financial statements showing a net profit over £400 for year and balance in hand of nearly £3000.

Officers and committee members all re-elected unanimously.

General approval to update one TV monitor, purchase a roving microphone/receiver with amplifier and two speakers and look at purchase of videos for the library.

More time to be planned for interactive informal chatting at some meetings.

The AGM reviewed by the Hon Secretary, David Buskell:

The 19 February AGM was well attended and we thank those members for taking an interest in the running of the Club. We thought that we would have the formal AGM, a coffee break, and then an open forum. The AGM dealt with the usual business with only 3 apologies for absence. Shortened minutes of the last AGM were read out (full Minutes have been on the Noticeboard for a while now) and approved.

The three officers then gave their reports, following which we all waited with bated breath for any difficult questions. There were only a few and the three reports were duly approved. The elections followed and the committee were re-elected en bloc.

As always subscriptions for the forthcoming year (2004) are difficult to predict as they are affected by levels of membership and costs. The Committee recommended no change for 2004. With no 'any other business' notified prior to the meeting the Chairman closed the formal AGM part of the meeting, and we adjourned for a coffee break. This gave us all time to network and admire the wide range of turning on display at the end of the Hall.

The second part of the evening was an open forum, in which all members were given the opportunity to raise any matters they wished. The Committee also took the opportunity to get feedback from the membership on several items that had been discussed recently.

We decided to invest in a reasonable PA system and one of the members offered to investigate the possibilities and report back to the Committee. We are going to get a new television, and Brian Chaves explained that there will also be a second video camera shortly. We agreed to extend the Library to include videos, and several members offered to donate or loan items. We will select a range for purchase, as well.

The Chairman pointed out that under the new Constitution the current committee could stand again in 2204, but after that, had

to stand down. The members were asked to consider joining the Committee in the next year or so,

Tim Lawson spoke about the format of the Club evenings and we all discussed the lengths of the coffee break. I think we felt that as some evenings we had a supplier and others a demonstrator, we should take a view on the amount of time for the break, at each evening.

Tim reminded us all that in the past, we used to bring in unwanted tools for sale, equipment we wanted to demonstrate, and he even suggested we might have an extra lathe running.

The Committee reminded us of the various Craft Fairs that Cheam has attended and outlined some of the benefits obtained. We have to remember that we are charged by the AWGB with promoting woodturning to the wider audience, and attendance at such events helps us to do this. It was agreed that those members that wished to participate in such events, should do so.

We need to publicise the Club and the Committee outlined the suggestions made at a recent Committee meeting. There was a good discussion and we finally agreed to prepare a leaflet that could be left with relevant suppliers, local libraries etc. We will also check the cost of including details of Club events in the local newspaper. Car stickers were also suggested and again, we will investigate.

Trips to the Yandles show in April and to Axminster later in the year were suggested and details of interest noted. We also asked for suggestions for the 2004 programme - if you have any, let Jeff Cordery know on Club nights or via the website.

Thanks to all present for a very useful and informative open forum. Please remember that the Committee run the Club on your behalf and for you, so if we do not know what you want from us, we can get it wrong!

My Experience of four years turning

Academic schooling gave me little opportunity for hands on arts or crafts, but before university I tried some woodwork, sculpture and painting then helped run the university arts society and publicity office and later became a specialist identity and brand consultant.

Although enthusiastic at DIY, I did not try woodturning until nearly 30 years later when I needed a balcony to match my Victorian house. My neighbour had a small lathe and some basic training so we made the balcony – the turning mostly his work. Attracted to wood and woodturning, I attended the Wisley show and saw Tim Dawson's work and David Reeks demonstrating. David's leaflet offered two day beginner courses and my neighbour was also interested. Only taking two students at a time, we got good one to one tuition and turned five items each in the two days. That was in May 1999.

David suggested that I join a club to meet other turners. However it was still several months before I took a step further - when the weather is good I enjoy the garden and the golf course!

I set up a small workshop, installing the bench top lathe and dust extractor given on permanent loan by my neighbour. He probably foresaw the dust and turnings I might leave amongst his car restoration work and on his wife's car. I visited the Sandown show and at the East Surrey Club stand chatted to a gentleman of somewhat imposing stature. He said the club was full but I might like to join a club he expected to be formed shortly in Cheam, noting my name and address. He was of course Frank Clarke and I later got a message about the first meeting in late 1999.

At around the same time I attempted the techniques I could remember from the course six months earlier then got a call from a friend's wife. She met David Reeks, somehow my name being mentioned and wanted to give me a commission! She needed a pipe rack for her husband's Christmas present. My immediate response was that pipe racks are not turned. But I thought of a solution that was somewhat like a Tiffany lamp shape with the bowls of the pipes resting on the base, the stems pushed up under the lamp shade shape and pegs on the stem to stop then slipping out sideways. All was turned in cherry, she was pleased and asked the price. I said pay what you think it's worth and was pleased too.

The recipient phoned me after the Christmas with another commission. He is an architect and was rearranging a 1920's house in a very expensive private road in Esher. The main oak staircase had been moved and a grand staircase with minstrel's gallery created. The carpenter had used the original five inch newel post at the bottom complete with a turned acorn top. The remaining newel posts needed acorns, eight of them. I said I'll give it a try but needed to find the wood. An old eight by four inch newel post was found from the old staircase but even halving it to two four by fours wasn't easy. However I managed to get eight suitable pieces and started creating the acorns.

Oak, especially 1930's oak, is very dry, very dusty and not easy to get a finish with. However the architect was pleased – he had not wanted them to look new and seemed happy that they all had their own eccentricities. When he recounted he realised that he had missed seven posts against the wall that needed half acorns and the bottoms of the newels below the gallery that needed end

knobs. The job had grown. The owner paid by cheque within days and I guess my fee seemed small – the conversion must have been costing at least a quarter of a million!

Soon after I received a commission for a gavel, then when news got around, several more. I started collecting wood for later use, tried wet turning blanks with varied results, learnt from some of the club demonstrations, visited a timber store and tried both some exotics and some more English woods. I realised I needed a larger lathe and my neighbour had noticed an advert at a car parts fair. I soon had a second hand long base Union Graduate from a school workroom at a very reasonable price. It was installed on an eight inch high concrete plinth to create a comfortable working height for me and has been all I need.

By the end of 2001 the number of bowls, candlesticks, boxes, etc was beginning to fill parts of the house and the family were fearing wooded presents for years to come - after a while they fail to be polite about them.

My wife organised a table for me at a school Christmas fair and my first direct selling experience. I remember Tim Dawson saying that a very small percentage of the public appreciate wood and it was noticeable. After an hour of people walking straight past I was beginning to worry. But suddenly I had a customer for one bowl and things were looking good. My wife had said price low and make sure you don't come home with many, so this sale had only paid for a quarter of the table fee. Another hour went by.

Then I had another interested customer, Swedish – they like wood, I think. She spent about twenty minutes picking up different items and I was about to say make your mind up when she passed one to me. Thank you I said. Then she passed another and then another, and eventually bought seven items. The table was paid for twice over and I was in profit. Eventually I sold a few hundred pounds worth and felt pretty good.

No more fairs until late last year when I booked into the same one again. I had more work, more interesting woods, better quality, greater variety. My wife came and took a picture of the proud craftsman looking forward to selling out. Disaster – bad weather, too many stalls, not enough visitors, nothing much being spent. Did not even pay for the table this year and I was very despondent. It was not just me, all stall holders said the same. My wife was shocked to see all the boxes of turning return.

Then I met a local painter who was having one of her six monthly open studio events in December where she invites about six other artists to join her in her back garden studio in our village. How about a table she said, all you pay for is a share of the costs for the mulled wine given to all visitors, over a Friday night to Sunday afternoon show. By the end of the weekend I had only a handful of items left, an order list for copies of items already sold and a bulging wallet. I have even received a complaint from one of the family - I have sold something she liked.

What have I learnt? Produce a range of items with some stunners priced more highly, but others with very reasonable prices. Use a range of woods - people have different tastes. Sell where more people appreciate wood - art lovers seem to. Sell where you know people – it is more difficult for them not to look, admire and buy. Save some for family and friends.

The spring will see me wet turning a large quantity of bowl blanks ready for later turning and trying out some larger pieces of work – as requested by my children.

Roger Marsden

Shop Corner **English Hardwoods**

Geddington Sawmill, Kettering, Northants
Tel: 01536 330679

After a long drive up the MI and across country, we arrived at the village of Geddington and turned into the Sawmill. This is a deceptive site, as even though there are logs everywhere, you think "Have we come to the right place?". When you pull up outside the Barn, and then go into the two rooms there, you soon realise you have found a treasure trove!

English Hardwoods is run by Nigel Flackney and this was the first open weekend. Nigel's plan is to run sales throughout the year, every couple of months or so.

The first room contained a large selection of blanks in sycamore, beech, spalted beech, oak and hornbeam. There were logs of rippled sycamore, holly, yew and laburnum. All shapes and sizes. The second room contained walking stick blanks, and the stock of planks. Rippled Sycamore, walnut, burrs. Too many to mention! All stock was at very reasonable prices.

Geddington Sawmill is the Estate sawmill of Broughton Park. Broughton is the country house of the Montagues, and where in 1748, the 2nd Duke of Montague planted a forest of Beech trees. As these trees matured, the seeds gathered from them were used for other plantings within the Estate. With some 3000 acres, the Estate has a large variety of trees.

The Sawmill is a fully working facility, from the main saw cutting the trees into planks or whatever, to bandsawing blanks, with furniture and hurdle making in between.

Nigel runs the entire operation and has promised to keep Cheam and its members informed of any unusual trees coming in. He has regular meetings with the Estate Forestry Manager so gets advance notice of what is being felled.

It's about 2 hours from London, but well worth the trip to stock up on blanks or buy some very nice planks. A tip if you are planning to visit: use the M25/M11/A14 route it's a far easier drive than the M25/M1/A43.

David Buskell

Workshop Dogsbody required in turning shop

Suit active retiree with good back!

Duties to include clearing-up, maintaining machines, loading, lifting, some woodturning jobs, occasional deliveries etc.
Hours to suit both parties.

Part time, £7.50 hr, productivity bonuses

Ring Tim Lawson on 020 8394 2489

Build your own **Budget Dust Extractor** One member's descriptive guide of his own design

I used half inch mdf board for the case measuring 18 inch long, 11 inch high and 6 inch deep. A 6 inch hole was cut in the back of the case to take a kitchen extractor, or you could use two smaller extractors and use one only or both to suit conditions at the time of working.

A microclene filter MC400 was fitted onto chicken wire mesh situated just inside the front aperture of the case, the wire fitted to a three quarter inch softwood inner frame about three quarters of an inch from the face edge, kept in place with a trigger tacker or you could use staples. The filter pad was cut in half and fitted upright next to each other to give better proportioned shape to the extractor and an upright bar fitted to the inner framework to coincide with the join in the filter.

Finally one inch by half inch beading was fitted to the case front so the filterpad could be tucked under the edge and an offcut of the chicken wire tacked over the rear aperture to avoid mishaps with fingers.

The extractor was from Wickes and cost about £26 and the filter pad was £4.99. The extractor can be wall fitted or hung from the ceiling and extracts about 248 cubic metres per hour.

I found this extractor works very well for me and is sited above and to the left of my lathe, with a gap of around 3 inch between the back and the wall for free passage of air. I fitted baffles along the base and right edges to deflect the down draft of air.

Don Cording

Committee meeting

The committee met in early March and started work on the 2004 programme. They decided to buy two new TVs and a PA system and discussed how to keep the website updated, craft fairs, abrasive sales, the Croydon Advertiser article and extending an official invitation to the AWGB to come and see us.

David Buskell

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