

# Cheam Woodturners Association Newsletter 21

June 2005

## Competition rules changed to boost entries from members

In order to encourage more members to enter their efforts for the Frank Clarke Awards competition, the committee has decided to modify the rules. So the guidelines for the three categories are now more loosely based rather than being decided by the time that a member has been turning.

For example, someone who has been turning for, perhaps, four years but only intermittently, can still enter the Novice/Beginner category rather than, under the previous rules, being

obliged to enter the Intermediate category.

And someone who has been turning for, say less than a year, but spends many hours a week in the workshop, would qualify for the Intermediate category.

This seems a much fairer system than the old one where two years, four years and more than four years were the defining parameters. It is hoped that more members will see their chances of success improved and will be encouraged to enter. **Latest news: see page 6**

### Rules for the Frank Clarke Awards competition

The Frank Clarke Awards competition is open to all members of the Cheam Woodturners Association.

The item(s) to be produced for the competition will be decided by the committee.

Each member may enter an item in only one category.

The competition entries will be judged, by a secret ballot, by the members.

Any items entered must not carry any marks to indicate the maker.

The entry gaining the most votes in each category will be judged to be the winner of that category.

The committee may also announce a runner-up in each category. This will be the entry that gained the second largest number of votes.

The first prize in each category will be a Certificate of Achievement awarded to the member, plus a silver salver, which will be kept by the winner until the next competition, or for a maximum of one year.

Anyone winning the same category twice in

two years must then move up to the next category. The exceptions are the winners of the Advanced category. These winners may continue to enter this category.

#### Categories

The categories are intended for those members who feel they meet one or more of the following guidelines:

##### Novice/Beginner

Members who have:

Recently started turning

Or do not turn regularly

Or regard themselves as unskilled at turning.

##### Intermediate

Members who have turned for some years

Or turn regularly and often

Or consider themselves reasonably skilled at turning.

##### Advanced

Members who turn professionally

Or consider themselves very skilled at turning.

# Six of the best!

by John Stinson

**W**ith a title of *Weird and Wonderful* I wasn't quite sure what to expect as Guy Ravine started setting up his demonstration during the March club evening. To be

evening with t h r e a d chasing and e c c e n t r i c turning.

Guy has been a professional turner since 1979, so what tips has he picked up over that time? Here are a few he passed on:



*Master at work: Turning and chatting all at once*

honest, I was fairly sceptical that I'd see anything new, having already watched a number of *weird* and *wonderful* demonstrations over the past two years with the club. How wrong I was!



*Examples: Some of Guy's work set out for inspection*

Guy covered six techniques that I'd not seen before and certainly haven't tried myself. He started by showing us how to decorate spinning tops using chatterwork.

He demonstrated how to turn bone, aluminium and imitation tortoiseshell, finishing off the

● When making lace bobbins from aluminium, be sure to cover them with lacquer rather than metal polish. This helps keep the lace clean.

● On long production runs of items like eccentric turned pears, stick with a nice easy wood. Don't let the client persuade you to use a difficult wood such as laburnum....

● When boiling cows' shin bones to prepare them for turning, be careful where you deposit the residue!

Guy mentioned that for the first half of his career he'd been able to make a reasonable living from production turning. Over the

past five to ten years, however, demand for turned work has dropped off and he now finds it impossible to make a living out of turning



*Metalwork: turning a lace bobbin in aluminium*

alone. On the one hand, it seems a shame that someone with his immense experience and talent is not able to make enough hard cash from his trade.

On the other hand, however, as one of his main sources of



*Lace bobbin: in aluminium – hand by Pat Pierce!*

income is now demonstrations, it does mean that we get to learn from him. Hopefully he managed to inspire us to try out some of his weird and wonderful techniques for ourselves.



*Strings attached: Man-made plastics have disadvantages!*



*Getting in close: Cutting a thread in lignum vitae*

Photos: Ron Grace

# Too expensive for eggs

by Brian Ash

**A**fter the March demonstration by Guy Ravine (you remember him — the Greg Morton lookalike) who turned an egg from alternative materials, I remembered that some time ago a friend gave me a rod of what appeared to be plastic that his father had used for wood-turning.

Of course, I put it with the other odd-ball bits that I am sure will come in useful one day and forgot it was there.

Yes, on inspection it proved to be a piece of the horn or tortoiseshell alternative material from GPS Agencies Ltd. So, during my next turning session, I decided to turn an alternative egg!

I mounted the rod between centres on the lathe and turned up the variable speed to high, (Guy did say high speed didn't he?). I put my spindle gouge on the lathe rest and went for it! Yuk, my cutting resulted in a surface like the moon's craters.

Perhaps my gouge was blunt, after all Henke was the last person to use it at the Saturday workshop. I tried again after sharpening but with only a small improvement; I also tried scraping but it was worse.

I almost decided to resort to sanding it to shape, a clever technique which I understand our chairman uses on occasions. However, a final try with a sharp 1/4in bowl gouge achieved an acceptable surface and shape.

The biggest problem then

was getting rid of the very fine streamer like shavings which had a static charge and were clinging everywhere.

I started sanding with 120 grit, (ok, so my cutting wasn't



Very pleased with the result, I showed it to my wife who said it was all right but the wooden eggs are better.

Having now phoned around and asked about prices, £45 for a 45mm bar, I think I also like the wooden eggs better.

These alternative materials — ebony, ivory, horn effect and so on — do produce an



*The finished egg*

that good) and continued through to 600 grit. The surface was still clouded but I found that fine wax paste with the 'kitten soft' kitchen roll produced a really good clear finish.

attractive finish and would look good as small decorations such as finials and inlays but at such a relatively high cost they are not really suitable for the turning of eggs!

## Woodturning tuition with Gregory Moreton RPT

Learn to turn in a Surrey-based workshop on either of two Vicmarc VL300 lathes with a registered professional turner.

Introductory and advanced courses, individual tuition available.

5% discount to all members of CWA

Maximum of two students

For details: ☎ 01372 467692

e-mail: [greg@moreton.co.uk](mailto:greg@moreton.co.uk)

[www.learntoturn.co.uk](http://www.learntoturn.co.uk)



# A club evening with Bill Care

**A**n experienced turner from Suffolk, Bill Care made a number of items and imparted many interesting methods and techniques during an enjoyable evening on April 20. He effectively demonstrated



*Box-making: at the beginning*

the great versatility of the skew chisel using it to rough out, smooth to a finish and make a variety of mouldings. He said that he prefers to use

by Malcolm Martin

a skew with some mass to it. He then turned an off-centre cabriole leg for a stool. He off set both ends to achieve the shape using a round skew and spindle gouges.

From a piece of dry box, 3in diameter x 4in long, he formed an onion-shape finial box. After roughing to shape it was mounted in a chuck and he finished, shaped, sanded and polished the finial top which he parted off from the body of the box. He quickly removed the inside of the box using a spindle gouge with the sides ground back using a shear cutting action. Next he formed a close fitting opening for the lid which he inserted while he completed the outside of the box.

He then demonstrated how one can use purpose made wooden chucks to aid the

mass production of items such as door knobs. The evening was ended

with the quite rapid manufacture of a bottle stopper which he said he



Photos: Ron Grace

*Stopper: no practical use for* could never find a use for. In his experience a bottle was either full or empty!

# Tim wants a brilliant new title

**P**olesden Lacy, a National Trust property near Great Bookham in Surrey, was the venue for a show of turned wood with the bonus of demonstrations from 21st to 29th May.

Tim Lawson, Colin Simpson and Gary Webb were the featured artists. Tim's blue vase, shown here, has the title Rhapsody in Blue — on the information label this had been



crossed out and Tropical Storm added.

Tim was asking for a new title. On the label: "Poplar Burr. This item was dyed to enhance the burr pattern. My immediate circle think it is hideous. I did not expect the result to be quite so startling.

If you can think of a less tacky name, like it and have the right white room, then this could be uniquely yours."

# Flavours of the Orient

by Andy Masters

**O**n May 18th, Jason Breach took time out from his teaching job at Axminster PTC to give us the benefit of his many years of experience — which he has been honing since he was 12! The item he demonstrated was a delightful squat, oriental looking box.

The timber was Massara birch, a pale wood with burr-like grain. Jason started with the underside of the lid which was hollowed, shaped and sanded. When satisfied with the finish Jason let in a recess to grip the body. This was done last, using a

body was hollowed using a fast pull cut before the final shaping with under-cut scrapers.

The body was reversed into a spare jam chuck so that the base could be completed.

Throughout the demo Jason



*Boxes: finished and roughed*

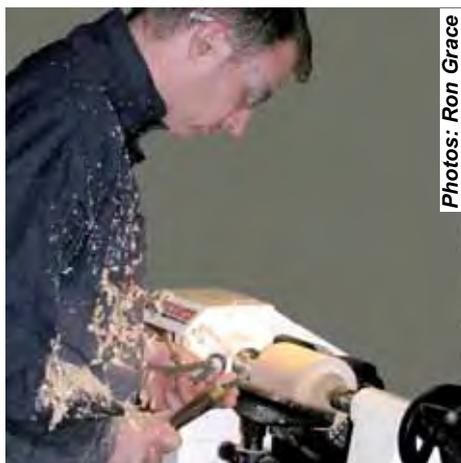
stopped to feel the work for shape, thickness of wood and quality of cut. He spent as much time sanding as cutting to get the very best finish.

When satisfied, he sealed the wood with cellulose sealer diluted 50/50 with thinners. This was applied quickly by brush and just as quickly wiped off with paper towels.

The inside of the box was polished with Bison wax but the outside got special treatment. Here a little plastic polishing compound, called Plastimax, applied to a stitched mop, was used as a grain filler and cutting agent. Finally carnauba wax was applied with a loose mop to give a hard, natural gloss to the piece.

All present enjoyed a very professional demonstration with many technical issues being discussed and a stunning finished piece to marvel at.

As the reporter I had a front row seat but still found that the introduction of a close-up camera to the video presentation added an excellent new view on the proceedings.



Photos: Ron Grace

*Jason: making the chips fly*

custom made handleless oval skew, to keep the form crisp.

Cutting a spigot on the body, frequent checks ensured the lid was a very tight fit. This was to make a sturdy jam chuck and to counter the relaxation of the rim when the body is hollowed. Jason stressed the use of dry timber to avoid undue movement within the form. The birch he used was around 15 years old.

The outer body was now roughed out before the lid was fitted and finished. The

## A different view of Jason Breach

by Gordon Cookson

**A**s Cindy Drozda (Front cover of *Woodturning Spring 2005*, No 148) said at Ripon this year: "Ask 10 woodturners how to do something, you get 15 answers, it's the best end result that counts."



Unlike Jason's, her finial boxes are made with loose-fitting lids so that the finials don't break and because her customers expect delicate tops to be easy to remove.

Bert Marsh in his demo to Orchard Woodturners on May 14th used button jaws to finish the bottom of a straight-sided box rather than waste expensive similar hardness timber as a jam chuck, as Jason did.

He part hollows the base of the box before fitting the lid to minimise the base going out of shape with drying/release of stresses in the wood, rather than completely hollow after fitting the lid, again, as Jason did.

Then again, he puts sanding sealer on pieces before sanding:

a: to reduce warping when the dryness of the wood is uncertain

b: to fill open grain so that pieces of grit from coarser sandpaper don't lodge and then come out later when using finer grades and damage the piece.

Sanding through the grades would then have to start all over again.

# Essex well turned

by Pam Pierce

**C**uriosity! We know what it did for the cat, but for me, well it landed me with writing this report of our visit to TurnEssex on Sunday, 15th May. How many types of item were on our excellent display table I wondered — and counted 25. That's not bad, so how many different kinds of wood — 38 including some I had never heard of. WOW!

Some had wondered how our standard of turning would compare with other clubs. Well, rest assured, we passed with flying colours! The winning stand was that of East Herts Woodturners who, I'm told, organised this event,\* so they deserved to win on two counts. There was also an inter-club competition, for which clubs were invited to submit no more than one item from each club member, which were then judged. Pretty difficult job, I should say, even for an expert, but the overall winner was Chelmer Valley Woodturners.

I spent a long time walking around, looking at all the stands — they were all so different and very interesting — some had clever ideas for displaying their work, some were too precious to be generally handled and some were not for sale, but for me the best were those where, like ours, the items were accessible and priced! There were several innovative ideas that I really liked, but I shall have to think of my own!

Some 16 clubs exhibited in

the main hall, where seven small lathes were in use, plus one where experts such as Phil Irons and Bert Marsh demonstrated to a seated audience. Gary Rane, Stuarts King and Mortimer and others also demonstrated and, among the other famous names, our own Colin



*Delightful: just one of the many photos I took but space prevents me showing. RG*

Simpson (Salve, O Illustrious Editor) was roving around.

In the second hall, there were at least eight commercial stands. Some, like Sorby, Chestnut and Meantime, known to me, others were new, with several wood suppliers outside (it would have been helpful to have their names more obvious, instead of having to look at their price labels) and yet more demonstrators.

The Essex Region of the British Woodcarvers Association

**Frank  
Clarke Award  
competition**  
August club evening  
Subject: box with lid  
No other criteria  
Start turning!

was well represented, with some amazing pictures, statues and a work-in-progress that I should have liked to see finished. There was one stand displaying beautifully made chairs, one with a superb burr maple seat — almost too good to cover. One young lady was taking advantage of the opportunity to make flowers to adorn small, wood 'cards', decorated with pyrography, with which she hopes to start her own business, thus demonstrating the co-operation and crossover combinations of different crafts.

All in all, it was a very good day, there was a really relaxed, friendly atmosphere, the sun shone (we could see it through the open doors!) and for me it was particularly good to see that there were three ladies exhibiting turning and pyrography. But the final high spot was when I won a respirator in the raffle, as I have been persuaded to try my hand at turning!

\* [I am led to understand, by the Surrey Association of Woodturners, that it was a joint effort between Chelmer Valley, East Herts, Fairlop and Thameside woodturning clubs — Ed].

# Stop shaving and save cash

by Richard Hoodless

**W**oodturners are well known for taking a beautiful piece of wood and converting 70 percent of it to shavings on the floor. For the last Frank Clarke competition I thought that I would see just how much you can get out of a 3in cube. The result was the three boxes (right). This is how it was done.

Turn the cube of wood to a cylinder and using a thin parting tool make cuts at about 3/8in from either end. Cut these pieces off and mark them so that the grain on the finished box will match up. Mount the centre piece in a 3- or 4-jaw self-centring chuck on the headstock. Remove the pilot drill from a 64mm diameter holesaw and mount the holesaw and arbor in a tailstock Jacobs chuck. Set the lathe to run at its lowest speed and slowly feed the holesaw into the blank, withdrawing frequently to clear the waste. Continue

cutting to almost the full depth of the holesaw. Turn the blank round in the chuck and continue from the other end until the central core is freed.

Mount the core in your chuck and make parting cuts



Photo: Ron Grace

Three boxes: all from a 3in cube of wood!

at about 3/8in from either end of this core and cut off the ends. Mount the remaining centre piece in the chuck and cut out a core using a 38mm diameter holesaw as before. The core from this is used to make the smallest box.

Clean up the inside of the two hollow cylinders and cut a lip on both ends for the top and bottom of the box. The size of holesaws suggested provides an allowance for

cleaning up the inside of the cylinders. Mount the top or bottom in the chuck and cut a recess so that it fits closely over the lip on the body of the box. Remount the top or bottom in the chuck holding them by the recess. Turn the outside and decorate to your choice. Glue the bottom on to the body of the box.

Hollow cylinders produced in this way can be used to make boxes using a different wood for the top and bottom as a contrast to the body; rings can be cut from the cylinder and used to ornament your work

and various sizes of cylinders can be put together to make a vase. There is a limitation on the length of hollow cylinder that can be produced due to the length of the holesaws. This technique can be used for other materials such as polyester resin rod and possibly other plastics.

Next time you spend £10 on a nice piece of exotic timber, think twice before throwing £7 worth away as shavings.

## Slippy and resistant

### Tip from Brian Reynolds

**M**y grandfather was an engineer in HM Royal Navy and used a mixture of white candle wax and turpentine substitute (white spirit) that would not only lubricate but also protect from corrosion (sea water?).

I've made up two mixtures,

one fairly stiff. However, the one I use most is fairly runny. The white spirit evaporates to leave a film of white paraffin wax on the metalwork.

The actual proportions seem to have been lost in the mists of time but this does not seem to be that important. I use an old piece of Scotch-Brite to apply it to the lathe bed bars, turning chisels or indeed anything else — the bandsaw table

immediately comes to mind.

I've found that when it has dried out it is not sticky, so the wood dust and shavings do not stick and it does not mark your work. In my condensation riddled workshop the rusting of items is minimised.

An added benefit is that it can be used as a wax resist, to stop glues sticking things to other things that you don't want stuck!

# Library Listings

Spring 2005

by Malcolm Martin

**K**ee your eyes on the notice board for the latest additions to the library and a complete listing of what we have. We have books galore on woodwork, turning and finishing. We now have a large selection of videos and, in particular, a number of videos of club evening demonstrators. So if you missed a professional turner a few months ago now is your chance to catch up on what you thought you had missed. Even if you did attend, it is very useful to have the video out to see exactly what he did and see it again and again.

We have very kindly been loaned three really super DVDs from America. If you have any interest in turning bowls and platters these are a must see. They show and demonstrate the use of the swept-back grind of the bowl gouge, how to sharpen, how to rough cut, how to shear cut and how to finish cut with such a tool – and lots more from Stuart Batty, Mike Mahoney and David Ellsworth.

If you have means of watching DVDs get yourself on the waiting list for these three. I have found that if you have a DVD drive on your

computer, as I have, then you can watch them without having to bore the rest of the family or interrupt their favourite TV programmes.

I am sure DVD will be the way to go for the club in the future but let me know what you think when you return them. And please keep them for only one month as others will be waiting to borrow.



We have also got some very good videos – not forgetting the excellent woodturning books to

inspire you in the workshop. We now have another librarian. Graeme Boast has offered to help so we hope to have the library attended most of the time for item borrowings and returns. There is a wealth of information and ideas to help you to improve your woodturning. If you have any ideas about how we can make things better then let us know.

Loans or donations of woodturning books, videos or DVDs are always most welcome.

## Both common and rare timbers on sale together

**S**ales of some desirable timbers are held at Westonbirt Arboretum, Tetbury, in Gloucestershire, usually on the second Sunday of the month. Buyers have three hours – between 10 am and 1pm – to make up their minds. The next event is on July 10th.

Sale items usually include yew, holly, oak, hickory, lime, birch, hawthorn and various maples and acers.

More unusual timbers are often available – currently tulip and crabapple. Pieces are usually logs/branches up to 4ft long. Sometimes there are slices down larger trunks.

Wood will also be on sale during the Wood Festival from August 27th to 29th (bank holiday). This event will include the final of a week-long chainsaw carving competition.

Westonbirt is three miles south-west of Tetbury on the A433. Nearest motorway is the M4, junction 17 or 18.

Normal admission charges are payable (£5 to £7.50 for adults). The sale is signposted from the main car park towards the Silk Wood.

More details from Tony Pearce on 01454 261 808, who may be able to arrange a different date for a small group of members to buy wood.

He will also be happy to receive wood needs from members.

## Old magazines can add cash to club funds

**H**aving read them from cover to cover (and absorbed all the information!) you may be tempted — or cajoled — into leaving your old woodturning magazines out for the recycling men; or put them in the waste bin.

But there are many turners and would-be turners who will pay good money for these publications and Brian Ash will be delighted to receive your throw-outs to sell on an internet auction site, with the profits going into club funds.

Can't be bad!

Before the next club night, have a root around the house and tuck the mags in a supermarket plastic bag and present them to Brian.

### Letter to the editor

Dear Sir,

I have just joined the CWA after attending a beginners' course with



Greg Moreton. Now I need a lathe.

So I thought I would ask members which one to get and from where to get it.

The Axminster 950 is about the right price but what chucks and other things do I need?

I need someone's expertise so I don't buy the wrong lathe and/or accessories.

I can be contacted on 01372 457442 or e-mail [stephen@swgarden.co.uk](mailto:stephen@swgarden.co.uk).

My thanks in advance for any help you can give.

Stephen Waters

## TurnEssex2005 the biggest wood show

An edited version of a letter to Hon Sec David Buskell

**T**o all woodturning clubs and traders who participated in TurnEssex2005, we report a good feedback. We have probably succeeded in making the event the largest ever non-professional woodturning show.

To sum up: 15 clubs presented turning examples of an exceedingly high standard, with lovely displays and a working lathe on almost every stand. Most clubs were AWGB affiliated but for the first time we had some independent clubs taking part.

Some 24 traders took part showing, demonstrating and selling their wares.

The two raffles were very successful with 70 lucky people going home with prizes.

TurnEssex2005 was a non-profit making enterprise and the total profit from food, coffee and tea sales, the grand raffle and the turners raffle, after expenses, was £1,896. This amount will be divided between the School's Hardship Fund, a charity supporting children (and grown ups) with learning disabilities and a local hospice.

We hope you all had a good time and wish to thank everyone for taking part and helping us to make TurnEssex2005 into a successful day.

Gabor Lacko  
Charlie Day



## Thank you, Eggsperts

**I**n November 2004 I presented Kingston College Pathfinders Group with about 170 wooden eggs turned by our members. The eggs were to be decorated and sold by the students in Kingston market with the proceeds going to the mayor's charities. The club received the following e-mail from the college and I add my thanks to all the eggsperts who contributed. *Brian Ash*

Dear Brian,

Please can you pass on our immense gratitude to all the woodturners who made such wonderful eggs for our Pathfinder students to paint and sell in order to raise money for the Mayor of Kingston's five charities (Samaritans, Homestart, Volunteer Bureau, Domestic Violence Outreach and Bereavement Service).

The students managed to raise over £700, which is a wonderful achievement.

The students thoroughly enjoyed designing and painting their eggs and some found it extremely therapeutic.

We really do appreciate all the support, help and kindness that you all have shown us — thank you again from all the Pathfinder students and staff team.

I hope that we can work again together in the future.

Best wishes

Katherine Greening  
Course Tutor

# 2005 Programme

Date	Demonstrator/Event	Details/Subject
July 20	Chris Pouncey	Sorby tools and techniques
August 17	Practical Evening	Plus Frank Clarke Prize
September 21	John Davis	Turning burrs plus timber sales
October 19	Stephen Cooper	Translucent hollow forms
November 16	Jimmy Clewes	Another masterclass
December 21	Christmas Social	Social evening plus events

**Club website: [www.cheamturners.co.uk](http://www.cheamturners.co.uk)**

In addition there may also be ad hoc tree harvests, hands-on mornings and exhibitions. Changes to the above programme may be necessary at short notice owing to unforeseen circumstances.

## Committee

**Chairman: Andrew Griffiths**

020 8644 1546

e: mail2griff@yahoo.com

**Secretary: David Buskell**

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

Tel: 020 8657 5565

e: davidbuskell@yahoo.com

**Treasurer: Richard Hoodless**

Tel: 020 8330 1338

**Membership Secretary: Pat Pierce**

Tel: 01959 573229

e: patpierce@fsmail.net

**Events Secretary: Jeff Cordery**

Tel: 020 8647 2691

e: jeff\_cordery@hotmail.com

**Raffle Administrator: Fred Cannings**

Tel: 020 8337 8250

## Next newsletter September

**Copy deadline: September 1st**

**Ron Grace**

**Editor**

16A Lynwood Road, Epsom,  
Surrey KT17 4LD

Tel: 01372 723657

Fax: 01372 749685

e: ron@ron-grace.demon.co.uk

Views expressed in the newsletter are those of the people submitting the material and not necessarily those of the committee.