

# Cheam Woodturners Association Newsletter 35

December 2008

## Something fruity

### Frank Clarke Competition

February 2009

Bananas, apples,  
strawberries, pears...  
the choice is yours

## Chairman resigns

I regret to announce that, after serving as our chairman for five years, Andrew Griffiths has decided to resign.

I am sure that all members will join me in thanking Andrew for his unstinting efforts.

Until the AGM in February, Jennie Starbuck is standing in. See her remarks on page 3.

RG



## Thanks — but more needed

by Jennie Starbuck

**M**y thanks to members who have supported the club at this summer's events. Taking part can be an extremely enjoyable experience but it can also be very hard work when there are only a few helpers! It would be a lot healthier if more club members participated in events and I want to try to explain why — and what you might get from the experience.

One of the reasons we take the club out to the public is to promote woodturning and, hopefully, recruit new members. The more members we have, the more economically the club can run, so subscriptions should not go up so fast. Many of the venues allow us to sell work so there is an opportunity to get to new buyers, clear our shelves of items to make space for new ones and to raise a little cash for yet more timber and tools!

Some members want to improve their demonstrating skills yet are anxious about

turning in front of 'experts'. Making something for the public can help to build your confidence and help you to feel more at ease in front of people. Basically, it's a lot easier to turn for people who don't have your skills and it helps to give you the confidence to demonstrate for other turners.

If you are anxious about doing a demo, come along as a steward so you can see how things go; it is amazing how much you can learn from other members and it is always interesting talking to the public.

Although the committee sets up the opportunities for events on the programme, we need ordinary members to organize each event. If a different member organizes each one, the workload is spread. Unfortunately, recently it has been the same few members doing all of the work.

If the club is to be dynamic and proactive in the community, we need everyone to take part.

So please think about it!

# Roger Hall — a story to inspire

by Gordon Cookson

**H**ow do you say thank you to an inspiring craftsman who restores an eccentric boat to its former glory — a boat which has so many happy memories for so many people? My way is to tell you about the Cygnet, a boat that my great, great grandfather, Capt. George Peacock, had built in 1860 in the shape of a cygnet. Having given a huge amount of pleasure to him and his descendants (including myself), when it was no longer seaworthy and needed to be inside, it was enjoyed in a small museum in Exeter. After that museum closed, the Cygnet deteriorated considerably until it was rescued by the Topsham Museum in Devon.

With the considerable help of the Heritage Lottery Fund, they employed Roger Hall to restore the Cygnet and three other boats.

On his initial inspection he realised much of the hull (including the curved planks at the bows under the very heavy removable head) would need replacing. I know the head is heavy because as a teenager I helped to lift it out of its mounting to get the boat under the railway bridge and then put it back when the Cygnet was in the water! This was after we had stopped the traffic in the narrow part of the village of Starcross pushing the Cygnet dressed with bunting from its winter storage.

Roger also felt that under layers of paint a repair had

been made in mahogany and not elm, thanks to my uncles! What you should now realise is that Roger is blind. He is the only museum approved boat



*Roger Hall with his partner Sian Dorling and his yacht Lundy Gull*

restorer in the south west.

The complete restoration in Devon elm, as it was built originally, is superb. It includes the individual steam bending of several planks to form the bows. When I told several joiner/carpenter/woodturner friends that Roger uses a circular saw, they would not believe me at first. Not to be tried without really knowing what you are doing!

For the technically minded, Roger says that “Lack of sight doesn’t limit you if you’re cutting with a fence. Like everyone, I use my push stick, line the work up with a jig and you know when your fingers are going to be in the way. Like everything in life, you’ve got to be one step

ahead.” He cuts to battens, templates and scribe lines rather than pencil lines. He says “The only limitation is freehand cutting. I get someone else to cut a curve or make a pattern and cut it myself by hand.”

Few machines have been customised: he uses a Braille ruler instead of the vernier on the side of his planer/thicknesser and his small metal turning lathe has a Braille micrometer — a barrel, the size of a baked bean tin covered with Braille.

Roger is a mine of information about wood-working and classic boats through his wide practical experience and is now using his computer to convert text into speech. He warned me, a sighted woodturner, to be careful using fluorescent lighting as it can cause a strobe effect.

As I am one of those people



*Cygnet in Roger’s workshop, ready to be shipped to the Topsham Museum in Devon*

who haven’t learned how to e-mail, his partner, Sian Dorling, had to read my draft letter so the details are

*Continued on page 3*

# New face at the top table

by Jennie Starbuck



**A**s many of you know, Andrew Griffiths has reluctantly decided to resign as chairman. He is remaining a member and hopes to do more for the club in the future, but he feels he has to take a break for now. Secretary, Martin Dudley, who works full time, is struggling to find enough minutes in the day to do the jobs his office requires and he cannot take on anything else at the moment. Treasurer Stuart

Adey has had a knee operation so he cannot take on anything else at this time.

Our constitution does not cover these circumstances, so Andrew asked me to take over the day-to-day running of the club until the AGM. My credentials are that I am a current committee member and I was chairwoman of SAW for three years — so I have some experience of running a club and can, hopefully, keep

us on track until the membership can decide on a committee in February, when I will stand down.

I hope that you will all feel able to email or call me if there is anything you are unhappy about and I will do my best to sort out any problems. Andrew has done a great deal for the club and his leadership will be missed. He is a tough act to follow but I know that we are all grateful to him for putting so much into the club over the past five years. I will try to hold things together until we can elect a new committee.

*Continued from page 2*

correct. She painted the Cygnet (having found the original colours by carefully removing 15 to 20 layers of paint); does the paperwork and, when necessary, does double-handed woodwork in conjunction with his cousin David Phillips.

Roger's love of boats came from his father and continued after he lost his sight from eye disease at 17. When he is not restoring boats, he enjoys sailing the Lundy Gull — the boat he lovingly built from drawings with his lifelong friend Ray — and teaches the visually handicapped to sail as well as raising money for the blind.

In 2000 he raised money for the Sunshine Homes, an RNIB affiliated charity, by white water rafting, cycling 120km by tandem and climbing the 13,500ft Mt. Kinabalu in Borneo. He enjoyed the tandem so much, he cycled around Southern Ireland in 2002. He's also an accomplished guitarist who

plays in the pub occasionally.

Roger is very unassuming but so skillful that probably he will not like me saying it, but I reckon he is an inspirational person and next time I am having problems in my workshop or elsewhere, I will remember Roger's words: "There is always a way of doing it and think one step ahead".

Thank you so much Roger, Sian and David for restoring the Cygnet so wonderfully for future generations to enjoy.

Roger can be contacted at: Keel Hall'd Boats, 50 Plassey Street, Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan, CF6 1NE. Tel: 0292 0709944. e: keelhalld.boats@virgin.net.

The Cygnet can be seen at the Topsham Museum, 25 The Strand, Topsham, Devon, from the beginning of April to the end of October on Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Wednesdays 2 to 5pm. Their homemade teas are great!

Website is: [www.devonmuseums.net/topsham](http://www.devonmuseums.net/topsham).

## 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.

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# Seven workshops later!

by Malcolm Martin



**M**y life seems to have been spent building and converting rooms into workshops. At school we had a very good woodwork workshop and an excellent woodcraft teacher who taught and inspired me to make things in wood. I have since had to have a workshop of



*Extended workshop in Ewell*

some sort to satisfy my craving to make things.

Following the outbreak of war in 1939, the family car was put on bricks in the garage for a couple of years. My father got rid of it to make room for us to have a workshop.

When I left school I wanted to carry on woodturning which I had started at school so I built a very substantial bench and lathe bed in the Morrison shelter. I had bought a secondhand lathe, headstock, tailstock and tool rest from a junk shop in Croydon and my Dad got hold of a 1hp motor.

I was into turning for a few months until I went away to Birmingham for a four-year engineering apprenticeship and studying, followed by two years' National Service, courting my wife, looking for a home of our own (which must

have room for lathe, workshop and motor bike).

Flats were out so we saved for a house with a garage. In the asbestos sheet garage of this semi-detached first home I set up my bench-cum-lathe (6ft 6in long because that was the length of the Morrison shelter. I also planned to turn some standard lamps one day).

Then a baby was on the way and the motor bike had to go, to be replaced by a car. The garage not being big enough for car, workshop and lathe, so it had to be extended backwards. This took a bit of time. More lathe and woodworking time lost. There were also great demands on the DIY front for the house, but for this you need a workshop don't you? Not much woodturning had been done since leaving school. But the bench was useful.

Family was growing, career was expanding so we had to move. Again I was without a proper workshop until the house extension, central heating and the decrepit tin garage was built to accommodate car, boat (hung up above), and some workshop space for a shortened bench/lathe bed.

We were also into caravanning now and this had to go through the garage for storage in the winter. I had just got all this done when another girl, number three, had arrived and we needed more space so the house hunting had to start again.

We found the house — six bedrooms, corner plot, plenty of space but a pokey pre-war detached garage. So up went a new double garage to take car

and caravan leaving the old detached garage as a workshop for me.

Guess what? There was so much stuff from our growing family that I was very lucky if I could get near my bench which was stuck up in the corner. We had to have a utility room for the freezer, second fridge, washing machine, tumble drier, sink and so on. Half the old garage was converted for this purpose. My diminished workshop plans degenerated into a dumping ground. No wood turning for many many years.

Three daughters left the nest and married with families. Retirement — engineering career over — plenty of time to sort it all out! What to do? Looked at lathe parts, laughed at the old lathe arrangement — it had to go.

I had ambitions for making some nice furniture and



*Workshop conversion from garage — Burgess Hill*

wooden things. So I visited the shows and explored the options available. My space was very limited so a combination machine seemed the best approach. I opted for the Shopsmith system which I still have. It provides so many things. It is on wheels so it can be in the corner when not

*Continued on page 5*

*Continued from page 4*

wanted and brought out to be a full size sawbench, lathe, bandsaw, pillar drill and much more — there are so many attachments for all types of woodworking.

I cleared out the junk, got organised. I insulated and plaster boarded the walls and ceiling, screeded and tiled the floor. At last I had a small but very functional workshop. I made furniture and did cabinet making of which I could be proud.

The turning was improving and I enjoyed this so much that I found I was doing more and more turning than other woodworking. The pile of harvested wood was growing in the garden and my turning ambitions were expanding.

The one problem for serious turning with the Shopsmith lathe is that its lowest speed is too fast. I tried the reduction gear attachment which reduces the speed from 700rpm to about 200rpm but the whole system is really too light. I wanted a serious



*Before conversion to domestic room — Burgess Hill*

woodturning lathe which would take large chunks of wood and be really firm and steady.

I went for what I consider to be the best, a VB36. This does not come on wheels so I had to find space for it in a dedicated position. I decided to extend

the original garage rearwards. This was done during December 2001 and January 02. With the new lathe coming in February, the extension was not ready in time so it had to be installed in the existing workshop. This is where it stayed as I found it convenient to have a turning workshop as well as a separate woodworking workshop, the utility room being in between the two. A bit inconvenient.

I was happy now to devote my time to turning and woodwork but not for long, as we decided to move from Epsom to Burgess Hill in Sussex. Again we were house hunting, searching for a smaller house and garden near to our eldest daughter, the shops and other facilities but with space for the caravan and, of course, a workshop.

We have now moved and I have just completed, after a couple of years, a new workshop. Who puts their car in a garage these days?

The house had an integral garage which I used for a workshop initially but I found the bare brick walls, up-and-over entrance door, lines of shelves and a surround of logs and clobber so depressing to work in that I have now converted the garage to a fully finished domestic room, with access from the house.

We could use this as a ground-floor bedroom in the future if we should need to. It meets all current Building Regulations.

But now I had to build my workshop with space for my lathe, bench (the same one)



*Completed workshop, Burgess Hill*

Shopsmith and other machinery, together with cupboards for tools. In order to carry out this latest project I decided to separate and keep all the materials out of my workshop apart from a few screws and finishing stuff.

I have learned over the years that, with turning, everything gets covered in dust so shelves are useless. First I bought and erected a large insulated shed in the garden to take all the materials, that is the stuff you usually keep in the garage and all the stuff one has cluttering up the workshop.

You know what I mean, the timber under the bench, shelves of paint tins, cable and useful junk which may come in handy one day — all out and banned from the working area. All my tools are in drawers or cupboards so the only surfaces to clear of dust are the two window sills.

So I now have a super, fully insulated, clean, bright, centrally heated working area which is a joy to work in. It has taken a lifetime for me to achieve my ideal. Perhaps my experience may encourage others to take a leap and create a super workshop from the start.



## Dave Springett September demo

**W**oodturning Wizardry was the title for Dave Springett's demonstration at our September meeting. While Chinese ball turning is one of his specialities, he explained that he turns only small items — of which he had brought many examples.

Then he showed how to soak and compress wood in order to pass a solid wooden arrow through a hole drilled in a glass bottle.

Next was the turning of decorative frets for use on items such as box lids. Rings were turned on each side of a thin disk of wood and met in the middle. On one side the rings were centre-concentric and on the other, rings were off-centred so that the piece did not fall to bits.



*Examples of Dave's work: the first two are variations on his decorative frets while the last is a paper-joint turning split and rejoined to make an interesting shape*

A very pleasing pattern resulted.

Dave used a home made wooden faceplate to which he screwed the work-piece. The cutter was a flat tool with a single square tooth. This was presented to the work at centre height, supported by a flat tool rest.

The third topic was to turn a ball of some 62mm diameter. A home-made jig was used, consisting of a base piece fixed to the lathe bed with a pivot at its centre. An L-shape arm turned on this with an inward-facing cutter at centre height. A cylinder was turned to the ball diameter and the cutter was set to take off the corners, then carefully progressed until the piece was a ball on

spindles. These were sawn mostly away and the work mounted at 90 degrees between wooden cup centres.

A little "shadow turning" completed a very accurate ball. Twelve nodes may be marked using dividers set to 0.526r.

Finally Dave showed some of the interesting shapes that can be created by gluing two pieces of wood with a paper joint, turning the joint to a geometric shape, then splitting, twisting and re-gluing. Note! Use only ring centres for this. He went further to explain that diametrically split rings, produced on a wooden faceplate, can be glued to form twisty sculptural pieces.

## Colin Simpson October demo

**T**his was a master class on spindle work given by Colin Simpson, starting with usage of the skew chisel. A square block approximately 50x50x200 mm was set up and (because this was a demo) roughed to a cylinder using the skew. He kept the tool handle low, started within the wood length and got the bevel rubbing before cutting.



weight; don't put pressure on the wood, but be firm on the tool rest.

Next demonstrated were planing and peeling cuts. Too much pressure on the wood is the usual cause of spirals on the work and one should

**F**urther advice was to keep the hand against the body, move by transferring

not plane diameters greater than four inches. Slicing cuts, vee cuts, and use of the skew for shallow coves were also shown.

Colin then produced a small cabriole type leg from a piece of oak about 40x40x170 mm. Several off-centres were marked on the end diagonals. A square pummel was set for the top of the leg and the rest roughed to a cylinder. A round, off-centre foot was formed and, using off-centre

*Continued on page 7*

Continued from page 6  
and shadow turning techniques, the rest of the leg was shaped.

A piece of teak of about 25x25x200 mm was profiled for the handle and blade of a paper knife. Square blocks of wood were left at each end and drilled perpendicular to the turning axis. By screwing these blocks to another piece of spindle mounted wood a blade flat was formed. Reversing the piece on the same screws enabled the other flat. By making two blades at a time the unbalance can be reduced.



A tricky moment for Colin while demonstrating at an earlier club event

A wooden spoon was the final project. A length of wood was turned to a handle with a ball where the bowl was intended. To form the bowl a home made chuck was used comprising a hollowed piece to fit the bowl-ball with saw cuts and a jubilee clip enabling the grip. Fingers must be kept behind the tool rest.

## Reg Slack November demo

**R**eg Slack started by explaining that his main forte was the teaching of woodturning.

When he gives demonstrations he brings only six tools with him. This is also the tool set that he recommends to his students as being sufficient for all

a  $\frac{1}{4}$ in spindle gouge, a  $\frac{1}{8}$ in parting tool, a  $\frac{3}{8}$ in bowl gouge of deep U-section and sometimes a scraper. He then explained why some of the tools were bigger or smaller than might have been expected.



In full flow!

He keeps sharpening simple, holding tools on the grinder rest with the cutting edge aligned to marks on the grinder side-guard adjacent to the wheel periphery. Gouges are rolled, skewers are moved sideways. Scrapers are held flat on the rest with the handle down slightly.

On the lathe was a piece of pine about 3in square by 22in long. Reg explained that the tool rest should be set so that the cut was made into wood approaching the cutting edge.

A pummel was marked and

he rounded the remainder with the roughing gouge. Then he formed the piece to a table leg shape, all the while explaining the advantages of his sizes of tools.

After the break Reg said he would make something smaller — pens using inserts from cheap ball-pens are good for events such as craft fairs.

He started by drilling a central hole in a square blank, using the lathe as a pillar drill on its back. With a blind hole drilled he recentred the piece to allow for drill wandering and turned the outside to a pleasing shape with decorative beads, grooves and a tiny captive ring.

After an application of friction polish and wax he passed the finished pen round.

During the whole evening Reg provided an informative and entertaining explanation of his methods and was thanked by enthusiastic applause.



Sharpening: just a twist

basic woodturning. His suggested tools are: a  $\frac{1}{2}$ in roughing gouge, a  $\frac{1}{4}$ in skew,

## 2009 Programme

Jan 21	Phil Irons	The man with the hat — making a hat for us!
Feb 6/7/8	Alexandra Palace	(date to be confirmed)
<b>Feb 18</b>	<b>AGM, forum (Form and Finish) and Frank Clarke Competition</b>	
March 18	John Johnson	Involute turning
April 15	Club turners	
May 20	Dave Reeks	Masterclass — possibly hollow forms
June 13	Ashtead Village fair	Date to be confirmed
June 17	Club turners	
June 20	Worcester Park Fair	Date to be confirmed
July 15	Simon Hope	Masterclass - details later
<b>August 19</b>	<b>Practical evening and Frank Clarke competition</b>	
August 31	Carshalton Park Ecofair	Date to be confirmed
Sept 16th	Gary Rance	Masterclass in spindle turning
Oct 21st	Club turners	
Oct 25th	Surrey Association of Woodturners Open Day	
Nov 18th	To be announced	
Dec 16th	Christmas social and practical evening — Charity event	

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. Check our website for further information.

Meetings start at 7.30pm on the third Wednesday of each month at:  
North Cheam Sports and Social Club, 658 London Road (A24), North Cheam, Surrey  
(adjacent to Sainsbury's supermarket).

### Committee

**Chairwoman:** Jennie Starbuck

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### Next newsletter

March 2009

**Copy deadline**

**March 1**

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