

David Bates RPT of Stiles & Bates - Timber Conversion - 17th April 2002

Reviewed by Robert Lyles (photos Gregory Moreton)

At our meeting in April we were given a very interesting talk by David Bates on timber conversion and selection. David said that timber has always been the main area of their expertise and the base upon which Stiles & Bates Woodturning Supplies had been built. Buying their own sawmill was an exciting move which enabled them to cut timber exactly how it was required. It was interesting to note that the best time to cut down trees was in the winter months when temperatures were low and humidity high so minimising the risk of timber splitting by rapidly drying.



We were shown several drawings of the end grain of trees describing the best way to quarter or plank them, then David went on to say that sometimes trees were split down the middle with wedges if the cracks in the ends more or less lined up. This method also avoided the danger of trees splitting whilst being sawn as had happened on one occasion.

Problems were also encountered when actually felling trees as David explained when one nearly fell on a car and house; although he had made a cut in the right place the branches caught in other trees which caused the tree to twist as it was falling, but all was well in the end.



David said that the type, dimension and characteristics of their timber stocks will vary throughout the year so they don't boast a large list of timbers. He said that they cut all diameters from five inches upwards and that if you need a special size give them a call. I think we all found the talk very interesting and hadn't fully appreciated the hazards involved to produce the pieces of timber we so painstakingly turn for a living or purely as a hobby.

Brian Ash (our membership secretary) admiring a pair of Roberts goblets at the members table and Robert explains the techniques he used to create them. This table is there for all members to bring along pieces of their work to show. It is open to all regardless of experience and is a great point to get valuable hints and tips or to offer them out.



Perhaps a visit to see this interesting operation might be worth consideration. Check out Stiles and Bates web site at www.stilesandbates.co.uk for tool and timber sales.