

# EL Wood News

July 2002

## What's On:

### Club Meetings

➤ Club meetings are held at Hudson Park High School Woodworking Centre on the 4th Wednesday of every month. Members gather from 17:15 and proceedings usually commence by 17:30. Meetings officially end by approximately 19:00, but members are welcome to chat for a while thereafter (while they assist with the tidying of the venue!). Basic skill session for members new to turning are usually held on the first Wednesday of the month. Details of specific dates, times and focus area are announced at Club meetings. Detail of content of forthcoming meetings is as follows:

➤ 24 July  
-Presentation on colouring wood by Ulrich Schnitzer. To be followed by a video by Jan Sanders. See the main body of newsletter

## Editorial

Having just read the recently received newsletter from the Western Cape woodturners, I must say that I feel a bit envious on a number of counts. Firstly, the club appears to have a wide range of regular get togethers, as well as five or six special events scheduled for the remainder of this year. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly from an Editors perspective( I use the word Editor rather loosely as an Editor can only be an Editor if he has something to edit!), their newsletter contains a wide variety of submissions from a number of their members. Come on guys - Gavin and Elliot are the only ones who have submitted information regularly since I took over the role of Editor in March 2000 and even these submissions seem to have dried up. Let me move on...

I need to make special mention of this month's club meeting scheduled for the 24th of July as it takes a somewhat different format to what is usually experienced. We will begin as usual at 17:30 with general matters, information sharing and discussion of the bring and show table. Thereafter, Ulrich will be discussing the topic of colouring wood and will be demonstrating some of his techniques. Thereafter, the Jan Sanders video on Colouring Techniques, which runs for approximately seventy minutes, will be screened. Members who wish to leave at around the usual closing time of 19:00 will be free to do so, but for those of you who intend to stay to watch the video, may I recommend the following:

- Bring a light supper/snack with you to stave off the hunger pangs and something to drink. (If the weather is anything like today, hot soup would be the most appropriate food and beverage!)
- Remind you wife that you will be home late or to reword this statement a little less succinctly, get permission from your wife to arrive home late (or she may just find an alternate use for that rolling pin that you have made for the August competition! For the more advanced turners who have made a gavel and strike plate for the competition, bear in mind that a gavel wielded by an expert can be just as effective as a rolling pin)

## What's On:

### **AWSA Congress 09 to 11 August Glenwood High School, Durban**

Word received from Elliot indicates that quite a number of our members will be attending the Congress. Errol Parsons and Don Wood from Port Alfred will probably also be attending. It is good to see that local turners are making the effort to attend. I am sure that you will find it to be a very worthwhile and enjoyable experience. It appears that most of you have sorted out your travel arrangements, but for those who haven't, please speak to fellow members concerning travel and other arrangements where sharing could make the trip more affordable, (especially given the impact of the Rugby test scheduled to be played in Durban on the Saturday.)

#### **Note**

The activities mentioned in this column are subject to change without prior notice. Attend club meetings to ensure that you are up to date with What's On.

### **AWSA Congress news**

For the past week or so I have been grappling with the production of the pieces I planned to make for the AWSA Instant Gallery. As two of the pieces are composite pieces using driftwood, some planning has been essential. However, I have discovered that translating a concept, even with fairly detailed sketches, into practice is quite challenging. The first piece is finished at last, but at this stage, it looks like the second piece may just remain as a concept in my mind - every time I think I am making progress, I hit another snag, ranging from a near complete bowl pulling out of the chuck and bouncing across the workshop to half a dozen different ideas about assembling the piece just not working in practice!

On matters of the AWSA Congress, I have been invited to demonstrate the turning of a driftwood bowl, which will follow on well on my demo/talk at last year's congress. I have also managed to secure a Voyager flight ticket to Durban (somewhat unexpectedly given the rugby test). What this means in practice is that I have a rather severe limitation in terms of a baggage allowance. Elliot has very kindly offered to take some of my tools needed for the demo up to Durban in his vehicle. If there is anyone else who could be of similar assistance should you have space in your car for some equipment or an Instant Gallery item, your help would be most appreciated.

### **Port Elizabeth Club Demo**

The Port Elizabeth club has invited me to do a demo at their meeting this Thursday evening on the topic of turning driftwood, which will tie in quite nicely as a dry run for the Durban demo. I will be using Nico Swart's home built lathe which I am confident will handle any piece of driftwood that I can throw at it. The lathe has a variable speed attachment, as well as a reverse switch so I am looking forward to turning in luxury to which I am not accustomed. I will provide an update on how things went in the next newsletter.

**Tip of the Month:  
Holding turning  
tools.**

**Submitted by Gavin  
Knowles**

When holding turning tools, the hand that holds the handle must be fully closed around the handle I.e. fingers not pointed towards the lathe. This allows for more control over the tool.

When roughing down from square to round when spindle turning or removing bark for end grain bowls, hold your hand over the top of the roughing gouge so that shavings are not scattered into your face and all over the workshop.

While I endorse Gavin's tip, I also strongly recommend all turners to use a face shield when turning. Mine has saved my face, and more importantly my eyes, on a number of occasions (Ed)

**Grahamstown Festival update**

The frenzy of production work for the Grahamstown festival is a thing of the past, at least for this year. I have once again promised myself that I will be better prepared should I decide to embark on this endeavour again next year, but it remains to be seen whether I will achieve my good intentions in practice.

I really enjoyed the event once again. The weather was very kind to us given the context of Grahamstown's notorious weather patterns and the fact that the festival is held in the middle of winter. Yes, the nights were extremely cold, as were some of the days, but we only had one morning of rain and the wind generally stayed away.

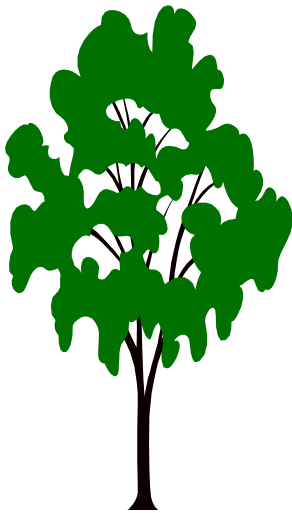
The general vibe was good and sales were better than last year. This can be attributed in part, to the fact that I significantly altered my stock mix for this year's festival. While I still produced some big bowls and platters, most of which sold to discerning buyers, the bulk of my sales were small rand value items of the type shown in Phil Iron's and Richard Raffan's books.

In fact, some of these items sold so well that I had to make more of them. I had the pleasure of spending a morning working with Andy Hatting in his workshop. His range of tools and the general set-up of his workshop is superb. Apart from the workshop, it was also very interesting to work with someone else. While we generally got on with our own individual production work, it was great to be able to observe another woodworker in action and have a chat over a cup of tea when we occasionally took a break. The experience was just so different to the general isolation and loneliness of one's normal workshop work that I can recommend the experience to all of you. Please don't get me wrong, I think woodturning is by its very nature more of an individualistic rather than a collaborative craft, and I do enjoy working on my own. However, I do think that there is scope for more interaction between club members beyond club meetings, which could enrich the club culture and develop/extend friendships.

On matters of friendship, I also had the opportunity, at long last, to visit Andrew Stevens and get a look at his workshop. Despite his protestations to the contrary, he has a very

## Wanted:

I am looking for some Juniper wood, even if in the form of small branch wood. Should you know of any that may be for sale, please contact me on 083 657 4090 or alternatively, speak to me at the next club meeting.



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organised and well laid out workshop. My visit included an impromptu lesson on the effective use of the skew. Thanks for the tips Andrew - I am already trying to put them into practice but still have a long way to go. Andrew is currently doing some fascinating work turning balls which cry out to be picked up and handled. (I hope I am not giving away state secrets here Andrew) While I have never attempted to turn a ball, I have heard from a number of people that they can be quite challenging. Nevertheless, having seen the end product, particularly in Wild Olive, I will certainly be giving it a go when time permits.

Perhaps the highlight of the Festival for me was the sale of a Red Pear platter which was to be used as a gift for a blind person. Focusing on texture and shape rather than the visual attractiveness of many of our indigenous timbers is possibly a truer test of whether we are succeeding as woodturners in producing quality products. While I have often read about and used touch to assess pieces that I am in the process of making, this sale has added a different dimension to my thinking in this regard. I will certainly pay more attention to this aspect in future by asking myself what a blind person would think of this piece.

Well that brings me to the end of another month of my ramblings on woodturning matters. Please consider the submission of items for publication and remember the August competition.

Until next time, have fun on the lathe.

Yours in turning

*Nigel Waters*