

Tips:

Tips will be back next month.

What's On:

Club Meetings:

>Club Meetings are held at the workshop of Timber Warehouse, SBDC, Commercial Rd on the **4th Wednesday of every month (Not the 5th Wednesday)**. 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 while thereafter (while they assist with the tidying of the venue!)

Beginners classes for members new to turning are usually held on the first Wednesday of the month. Please contact Andy Knight at Club meetings.

Details of content of forthcoming meetings is as follows:

>23rd January

- Elliot will be making a salt and pepper shaker.

>27th February

- Rodney will be making a clock.

Activities and Notice Board

> **From this month club meetings will be held in the workshop of Timber Warehouse, SBDC, Commercial Rd.**

> Ulrich still has 1 Large and 2 Xtra large club golf shirts left. See Ulrich at club meetings.

> **Your club fees are now due and payable:**
R75 for Workers.
R50 for Students.
R50 for Retired people.
Please see Ulrich at club meetings.

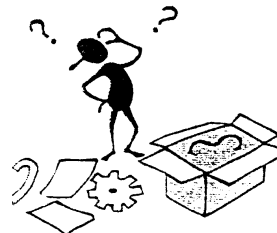
> If you are a pensioner or a retired person, did you know that you can have a cup of tea or coffee and cake and cocktail sausage rolls served by Gloria or Joan at Builders Express on the 1st Wednesday of the month?

> The 12th national congress of the Association of Woodturners of South Africa will be held on the 4th to the 6th July 2008 at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg. Start saving for it **NOW**.

> Our woodworking club will be launched at this months meeting at the new venue. A woodworker will be coming up from P.E. on the 22nd Feb to demonstrate the use of a table saw.

Wanted or for sale:

Johan van Tonder, a friend of Rusty Scherwitz is emigrating to Ireland and is selling his workshop equipment. He has a Toolmate lathe plus a set of turning tools(Sorby) for R2000. He also has a copy attachment. Make an offer. He can be contacted at 083-459-5665 or 043-740-2009.



This column is for any woodworking/turning item which you would like to sell or buy. Please contact me (see below)

See next months newsletter for more on Simon.

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East London Woodturners News

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Editorial

We are moving !!! From this months meeting, we will be congregating in the workshop of The Timber Warehouse. This workshop is situated across the road from the timber store in the SBDC in Commercial Rd. Elliot had secured this venue and Timber Warehouse has given us the use of their workshop for our monthly meetings. The christmas season is over,(thank goodness) and I hope everybody got what they wanted. One of my christmas wishes did come true, although it was not a Kity 260mm Planer / thicknessor (wish,wish), it was a music CD and DVD which I had wanted for some time. Thanks, Jenny. For a change I haven't got any major work for the year YET, so I am back to working on my own house. One of my old customers came to see me about trimming some white melamine kitchen cupboard doors on BOXING DAY, and I told him "No way, I am closed until next year". I haven't seen him yet.

The November meeting (our last meeting for 2007) was in one of the classrooms next to the woodwork room, because the woodwork room was not available for the meeting. The results of the judging for the November competition which was to make a mortar and pestle took place at this meeting. There were nine entries plus a late entry for this competition. A set made of Wild Olive and presented in a box with a moulded interior won first prize in the advanced section for Leon van Rensburg. Second prize in this section was taken by Ulrich Schnitzler for his Tipuana Tipu set. Third place was taken by Elliot for his Kiatt set. Rusty Scherwitz from King Williams town won first prize in the beginners section for his white ironwood and wild olive pestle and white pear mortar. Rusty now moves into the intermediate section. Roy, Rodney's F.in L took second place in the beginners section for

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his Jacaranda mortar and miniature pestle. Congratulations to all the winners, they all received prizes donated by Woodoc and Pau Marfin donated by Timber Warehouse. Thanks to Rodney Offord for electing to do the judging for this competition. There were 15 members including Roy, Rodney's father in law and two visitors, Ashley Hill and Guy Beaumont who became a member at this meeting, welcome, Guy. The draw for the two pieces of American spring steel was won by Ulrich, (I think a bit of conspiracy was going on here. ed). We then had our Lasange and rolls and refreshments, well I had another beer.

I received a rather alarming phone call before the schools for the December holidays. It was from a black sounding lady from the department of education, who said that I was teaching woodturning at a school. I told her that I was teaching wood turning once a week at the Isaiah 58 children's village. She then informed me that, as I did not have a teaching certificate, I was to stop teaching forthwith. I do not want to have any problems with this government, so it looks like I will have to abandon this worthwhile project. So on that sad note, you will be hearing from me next month.

Keep woodworking.

Gavin Knowles.

Simon Whitehead reflects upon parenthood, green flock paper and the dangers of turning large timber

For the second time in my short woodturning life I gave up. The first time was shortly after starting, it was hurting and I couldn't do it. This time it was because Marilyn had given birth to Hannah so I thought it'd be prudent to visit hospital and at least pretend to be interested. Harry Middleton - the bloke who taught me - had shown me how to make captive rings so I'd made Hannah a rattle. It was pretty good but folks were more into the baby than my turning prowess. I didn't turn anything for a week, I was doing the proud father bit.

Parenthood means it's so inconvenient to go anywhere that you just stay in more, and small babies are a bit boring once the novelty has worn off, so after a week I was back turning again. I did spend time with Hannah as a baby but, as I kept covering her with shavings each time I picked her up, or she got upset when long, sharp curls of elm got into her nappy, I spent a fair bit of time at the lathe.

I was getting better at it. At least in the future I'd have someone to teach to turn and take to wood yards because surely every turner's child wants to be a turner too.

Learning

I was learning a lot about different woods and where to get them without paying an absolute fortune. Harry kept giving me bits and I soon found the ones I liked. I loved laburnum and yew, and sycamore (the writer of this series is from the U.K. - Ed) remains my favourite wood to turn, but I loved burrs and turning things as big as possible.

After moving the tons of cherry I'd had to store in my newly cleared cellar, we moved my Jubilee into the larger, lighter cellar.

I had a proper workshop with ample running, ducking and diving space when things escaped the lathe.

The Jubilee was great and my shiny chuck was everything the adverts had promised so I had no need for my green baize anymore. The lathe had come with several small in-board faceplates, into one of which I fixed a coarse screw in, so had no need to use a faceplate at all on the in-board. I always found it irksome having to screw faceplates to stuff. Apart from never being able to find screws the right size, the wood was never flat which caused difficulties when attempting to attach a flat faceplate. It did occur to me to plane flats on stuff, but that was time I could have been turning.

I still had to use faceplates on the outboard end of the lathe though. I never really saw this as a problem as the stuff I was turning was fairly big and the wood was rough and ready and definitely far from round. The faceplate I was using was as small as I could possibly get away with as it still left screw holes in the bottom of my larger bowls.

I wanted as few close-together holes as possible as I hadn't even heard of reversing stuff a second time to remove any evidence of work holding.

Impatience

If I'd been told then to do such a thing I'd have laughed. How things change! Now, I wouldn't dream of leaving a spigot on a bowl let alone screw holes, but then - and we're talking 16 years ago - a spigot made a fairly good base for a small bowl, and a recess left on a larger bowl looked professional and reminiscent of pottery pieces.

Screw holes were either filled with bits of turned dowel or, being a tad impatient, covered with self adhesive green flock paper - even cheaper, faster and nastier than green baize!

I was turning stuff as big as I could on the smallest faceplate imaginable, as fast as I could with wood as uneven as possible, held as securely as achievable with the shortest screws that I could conceivably get away with.

My turning was, at best, verging on talentless and, more often than not, theory went out of the window. Actually more than a few bowls have gone that way too.

I replaced hard-learned skills with brute force and turned some fairly mediocre things but I was happy because they were big. Lots of them split, and I was turning green wood or at best stuff that was part-seasoned. To my eye part-seasoned meant that at least the leaves on it were dead.

I'd learnt a lot about turning but so far very little about wood, and waiting a year per inch for wood to dry seemed ludicrous.

Some of the pieces I had were over a foot thick, I'd be an old man of at least 33 before I could turn them at that rate.

I could have wet-turned them down to an inch or so and waited for them to dry in the workshop.

The fact that they would only be an inch thick, plus the heat generated by my blunt gouge, and the centrifugal forces spinning the wet out, would have meant that I'd only have a year to wait before I could finish a bowl.

I've been turning now for almost 20 years and this year is the first that I've actually managed to wet turn anything and store it to dry.

I've always been far too impatient, and planning ahead has never been my forte.

Turning and dancing

With the stuff I was attempting, the Jubilee, good as it is, was limited. Its 19 inch out-board swing was fine, but the out-board toolrest only gives around six inches depth. I'd have to find a way around that. The whole thing did have a tendency to follow me round the room due to my unprepared blanks being rather heavy and seriously out of balance.

Turning and dancing with a lathe with a lump of timber on it revolving at 550 rpm is not conducive to a long career as a turner. Also, big lumps of timber, small screws and lots of vibration all add up to a dangerous situation, especially when you ignore an extra bit of wobble.

You know what it is of course, but you tighten it and it'll hold for a while longer, you can just finish this bit and you'll have to stop to move your toolrest, you'll tighten the screws then.

BOOM! It held fine on four screws. One wobbles loose. It holds on three but wobbles more. Another screw loosens. It holds on two, but not for long. More wobbles. You dare not go near to turn the thing off. You estimate the line of trajectory your prize bowl will take and get away from it. You wait. There's nothing you can do. You can reach neither the plug nor the switch and your bowl is doomed. It's probably best just to get out of the way! The last two screws of course don't wobble out. They're torn out. Your bowl is free.

It hits the toolrest and the lathe bed. Still spinning, it hits the floor, then the wall, then the floor again. At least you can turn the lathe off but your bowl is ruined. Things aren't too bad, all you have to do is reduce the diameter by half an inch or so and you're back in business or would be if you could remount it, as the screwholes have pulled out and are stripped.

Fortunately the original screws were too short, but if you were to use longer ones in the holes you could remount your bowl almost concentrically and carry on, maybe the base would be a bit thicker. Who says that by using the shorter screws we didn't plan ahead in the first place. Thinking ahead and planning what I was going to do rather than just rushing at it would have saved me from a lot of cuts and bruises.

Using short screws to give me an extra half inch of depth to a bowl, over the years has probably lost me more wood through screws pulling out than it's saved.

We've chosen a hobby that can be dangerous at times and maybe, if we thought about it a bit more, we'd all be safer turners.