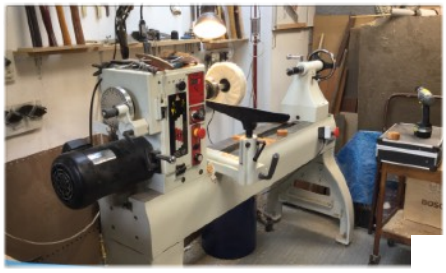


# Crow Valley Woodturners Club



## Club Newsletter

Lockdown Edition July 2020

Just enjoying an ice cream break,  
then it's back to making shavings.



Editor for this Edition

Walter Wigmore

Situations Vacant.

Hopefully we have amongst the membership, one or more budding reporters, perhaps someone would like to be the regular editor, and continue this project.

The format and content is not fixed, and is at the discretion of whoever would like to take on the role, knowledge of woodturning is not essential but might be useful! Come on, give it a go!

## Chairman's Corner

Hope you and your families are keeping well and safe in these very challenging times.

It is great to see the members busy in their workshops, and sharing the projects with the rest of the club members via e-mail with Jim and Walter.

With face to face club meetings suspended due to the Covid-19 crisis, communication and engagement by members is vital to ensure some sort of contact within the membership. Jim and Walter are doing a great job to facilitate this, so carry on sending in your photographs and stories.

The newsletter is another communication tool for members to get involved, so please contribute anything of news and interest. This first newsletter has been put together by the committee, but we are looking for more volunteers to share the load of producing future editions.

Another communication tool worth considering is video conferencing such as 'Zoom'. The committee has had a couple 'Zoom' meetings to discuss topics such as setting up this newsletter. This could be extended to a group of members who would wish to get together to discuss a topic or just to catch up and have a chat.

Video conferencing could also play a part when we do eventually return to the Centre for our club meetings. One thing for sure, club meetings are going to be very different when we do return. Numbers attending meetings may be limited, and there will be some members unable to return for some time. Therefore, it could be possible for some members to join a club meeting via video conferencing.

Professional woodturners are using the video conferencing technology to present demonstrations and delivering training that enable interaction with the audience.

I understand that some will not have the equipment or the knowledge to take part with online activities, but there are solutions to most scenarios, so please let me know if you require any help in setting things up.

Hope to see all soon, whether it be face to face or online!

Take care and keep safe.

Peter Bradwick

## Secretary Says

### PLANNING AHEAD

### WE NEED YOUR FEED BACK

I am aware that, as much as we would like to, we don't always get time to take a step back from what we are doing on club nights, to see where we are going. It would be useful, at this time of lockdown, to take the opportunity to make sure we are covering all aspects of turning including new trends.

As turners, whether we are beginners, intermediates or advanced in our turning skills we should try to make sure there is something for everyone. Projects, tasks and 'skills-sharing' form the basis of our meetings and we try to provide a comfortable and supportive atmosphere for that exchange of ideas.

It isn't possible to please everyone all the time but we try to strike the correct balance, so there is something for everyone.

Every member has a part to play in the continued success of our club – be it by sharing their skills in the workshop, running the library, devising tasks or making the tea.

The committee work hard to ensure the continued success of club nights and respond to members feed-back and suggestions for events/activities.

They need your ongoing help with ideas, tips, sources of inspiration – in fact anything to do with woodturning.

Please share YOUR tips. If they help/inspire you, they might do the same for others.

## WOODTURNING IS FUN

I know that woodturning can be very rewarding but it can also be very frustrating. I'm sure we've all managed to put a gouge through the bottom of a bowl we've spent hours on.

For most of us, woodturning is a hobby and we should have **fun** doing it. Every time we turn something, it is practice and we learn more, increase our skills and gain experience.

I know that, the more I turn, the more I enjoy the process.

The more we turn the fewer mistakes we make and we don't need to change 'design' so often because we develop a better understanding of how to use the tools.

I know it is very frustrating after making something when cracks appear.

Just think of it as practice. Keep a few of your spoilt pieces to remind you of tool errors.

This is not a cheap hobby and despite the industries advertising we don't need every new tool available. I have found that personally, I now use a few 'favourite tools' rather than a lot of 'specialist' tools and 'must have' tools become occasional used items although they are vital at times.

If possible, try a new tool, before you buy and consider buying pre-loved items when they come up for sale at club meetings

We will try and arrange a 'bring and buy' evening once the club is open again...you could maybe sell your 'obsolete' tools you came across when tidying out your workshop during lockdown.

**Jim Hitch**

## Editors Input

I've been asked to get a newsletter together to keep you all informed, and hopefully get you involved, both in the content and possibly production.

At the moment the club activities are all on the 'back burner' as we 'keep safe' and 'stay alert' in these strange times. We will of course keep you informed through Newsletters and emails, of the current position regarding club activities, along with advice and information from Torfaen Council and the Croesyceiliog Centre.

Hope you enjoy seeing the pictures of members projects that have been in the emails, As long as you keep sending them, we'll continue to publish any pictures of your work via email, so keep them coming.

Where better to socially isolate than in your own workshop? With time on your hands, you may want to put some thought to your entry for the Oz award. We can't give a definitive date for the competition until we get further information on the relaxation of lockdown restrictions, but get busy on your entries.

Letters and question, hints and tips, are and any articles for publication, are all welcome, and should be sent to [walter.wigmore@crowvalleywoodturners.org.uk](mailto:walter.wigmore@crowvalleywoodturners.org.uk)

The Club maybe closed as a meeting place, the practical aspects at the workshop are on hold, but hopefully the social involvement between members can continue, (Electronically), so if you have anything of interest that may benefit your colleagues, just drop an email to Jim.6

Keep an eye on the Clubs Facebook page, Julian is doing a great job publicising the many online demonstrations that are available.

*Walter Wigmore*

## Crow Valley's Own Lockdown Agony Uncle....

Nigel has been generously dealing with everybody's queries, giving help, advice and support both on the phone and by email.



Here are some pictures of his super workshop...likely to make a lot of us jealous. He is already in regular contact with several of you and like the professional he is, is always willing to try and help should you have a woodturning problem. – Corona Virus advice and other matters available elsewhere.

He is keen to get back to what he likes best..teaching in the workshop... once local restrictions are eased and is looking forward to the club re-establishing itself with the necessary adjustments for social distancing and personal protection for members.



## Committee Contacts

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# Members Memories

## Rob Williams

Hello I'm Rob Williams,

I have been an Engineer for most of my working life. I did spend one year at Nash training centre to learn brick laying, after finishing the course with good results, I decide to start my own building business , which was not at all successful! So I had no contact with anything wood related, I was even rubbish at carpentry. So I was back working in engineering for the last 20 years of my working life.

At the age of 62 I decided I would want to be retiring soon and I didn't want to be sat at home watching telly for the rest of my life. So I decided to take up a hobby, as it happens a booklet came through the door for Gwent education courses. I saw there was a course for Pottery, so I went to see about enrolling, I like pottery a lot and did another couple of courses, but I did start to get bored. I was walking down the hall in the centre and stopped to look at the display stand. I was amazed at some of the work that woodturners had done. There was one piece in particular that I was amazed at, it was the monkey puzzle vase that is still on display now. I didn't find out till later that it was our great tutor "Nigel".

After seeing all the lovely items on display, I was hooked on woodturning, I went to an opening day at the centre and was given the chance to have a go. There was a lovely old bloke there to teach people, his name was Gordon, ( A lot of you will know him) One of the nicest people on the planet. Sadly he is no longer with us. When he found out I was an Engineer, I couldn't get away from him, though I did enjoy our conversation.

So, that was it, I signed up there and then and began my training with a slightly eccentric guy called Phil Bird.

I did 24 lessons with him and he gave me good feedback on my efforts.

I had the pleasure to be at our Great Club one evening, when they had our annual competition and again I was amazed at the workmanship and I was determined to have a go the following year. Fortunately I bought a piece of burr wood off Mac, It was about 150mm diameter and 100mm high I ended up with a small bowl, which I thought was quite good for me, well at least it had a lovely patina, I was surprised to win second prize for my bowl and I was over the moon.

Five years later on, I managed to win first prize with a large lidded bowl and finial and that was even more amazing, and the cream on top? My piece is on display in the display cabinet. My proudest moment.

Now my goal is to be better than my best each time I make a new piece. Another great thing about our club is the lovely people I get to meet and have good conversations with and I want to thank you all for being my friends. Keep turning and keep on enjoying your turnings, you should only be pleasing yourself with your work, if other people like it, That is a bonus.

Take care all.

**Rob.**

## Walter Wigmore



Woodturning! What an interesting and addictive hobby. But how did I get involved?

Well! I trained as an engineer with The Post Office, later to become British Telecom, and eventually became a manager with a team installing and maintaining Telephone Exchanges in South East Wales.

During these years I was always involved in DIY, and hobbies, and turned my hands to all sorts, from electrical wiring to building work, and hobbies from making model boats and aeroplanes, and flying model helicopters, but throughout all this, there was a common theme, WOOD.

I owned an array of woodworking tools, including a “cheap” lathe, but the lathe was used to make parts for other projects, it was never a hobby of its own.

At the age of 50, I took early retirement, and with my Son in Law, opened a computer shop, after a few years at this, I decided I needed to get away from the regular commitment, so I left that and became involved in the building trade, working on an ad hoc casual basis, and yes, you’ve guessed it, mostly carpentry work.

I was also heavily involved in model helicopter flying, but bad weather, wind and rain, led to long hours sat about waiting for an improvement in the weather.

It was then that I made a conscious decision to give up the radio control hobby, and look elsewhere.





I don't recall how I found out about the woodturning course at Croesyceiliog, but I enrolled in a series of lessons, with the late Gordon Rich as tutor. After the first term, I was hooked, and enrolled for a second session, and joined the club. Since then I've upgraded the lathe, spent more than necessary on tools, gathered a stock of timber, and made a lot of shavings. That's the best bit, if you're making shavings you're having fun!

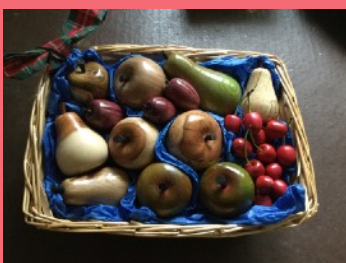
My first turned items, prior to any training were, at best acceptable, but only just, but the impetus given by the lessons and club meetings, prompted more and more practice, and as we all know, practice makes perfect!

So, I'm sure you'll say I still need more practice!

The encouragement, and help that I've got from the club has certainly helped.

I've had a go at most facets of turning, from pens, and straightforward bowl turning, through piercing, and decorating. I've done some segmenting, open segmenting, basket weave illusion, but I still get pleasure from using the lathe to make parts for projects; or embellishing items, rather than making a turning that is complete in its own right, and I still enjoy making things that don't involve turning!

Have Fun. **Walter**



## First of the series on 'Trees and Wood'

By Peter Bradwick

### Ash – (*Fraxinus excelsior*)

#### The Tree

Ash is a native species; its Latin name is *Fraxinus excelsior*, excelsior means higher, a suitable name for a tree which can reach 110 – 130 feet in height. Ash is common in hedgerows and woods where, until the latest bout of Dutch Elm disease, ash and elm were the two dominant large trees. As the elms diminished, the ash proved to be a great restorer of the hedgerows, but sadly the onset of the 'ash die-back' disease now threatens the numbers of ash trees.



Ash is classified as a hardwood having broad leaves and therefore deciduous where it loses its leaves over the autumn and winter months. The sooty black buds and upturned grey shoots is one of the easiest ways of identifying the common ash, even in winter when the tree has no leaves.

Ash leaves are made up of multiple leaflets, having typically 4-6 pairs making 9-13 leaflets in total. Each leaflet is minutely serrated, rounded at the base and pointed at the end.

The bark on small young trees is grey and smooth. As the tree develops the bark lightens to a smooth beige grey colour, eventually developing pronounced fissures in the more mature tree.



Ash tree in late October with the leaves changing colour



Leaves with 13 leaflets



The seeds of the ash



Sooty-black buds



Bark of a young ash



Bark of a mature ash tree



## The Wood

There was a time when my good friend John Atkins and I harvested ash trees that had either blown down in a storm or had come to the end of their life. John required the wood for his wood burner and I required it for turning. John used to say that ash was 'too good for turning' and I always said it was 'too good for burning'. John kept the smaller diameter bits for burning and kept the larger bits for turning; until that is John took up turning!

In truth ash is good for both turning and burning, being an excellent firewood, and one of the few species that burn even when green. Ash is one of my favourite woods for turning, it works well off the tool and accepts stain and finish well.

Ash timber usually ranges from cream to a pale biscuit colour, with no distinction between heartwood and sapwood. The more mature trees that have had chance to fully develop in girth have a 'ripple effect' that runs at right angles to the grain and is combined with grey-brown streaks running through the heartwood known as 'olive ash' for its resemblance to olive wood. It is easily worked despite its coarse texture that gives a decorative figure to the grain. It is also very tough and elastic with a resistance to shock; qualities that makes it an ideal timber for tool handles, and sports equipment. With its toughness and resistance to shock, ash can only be equalled by hickory.

Ash is not a very durable wood, therefore not suitable for external applications. Ash is used extensively in furniture, cabinet making and high-class internal joinery. For turning, ash is ideal for salad bowls, platters, spindle work such as chair legs and candle sticks, boxes, etc.

Ash is also known for the decorative 'flame figure' found at the crotch of the tree, also giving extra strength to the wood. Tobias Kaye takes advantage of the strength and decorative effect of the 'flame figure' producing fine sounding bowls.

Look out for this remarkable tree when you are out and about, and enjoy working with this very versatile beautiful wood.



End grain



Side grain



Side grain with slight olive figuring



Decorative flame figure



Salad bowl in olive ash with a little sapwood

# Question Corner

A few of the most frequently asked questions .....

*What is the best adhesive to use when making pens?*

*Answer*

This is not an easy question to answer. There are basically THREE adhesives that will work, cyanoacrylate (super glue), two part epoxy, and polyurethane glue, (the best known being Gorilla Glue). In all cases, it is beneficial to roughen the brass tube before gluing. All are suitable for wood or acrylic pens. But the question is, which is best?

Cyano glues are rapid, so fast they sometimes stick before the tube is in place, but are quite brittle, and sometimes the turning forces, can cause the joint to fail, so it has its uses, if you're in a hurry, but don't turn it until the glue is fully cured, and take light cuts!

Polyurethane glue, is extremely strong, and will foam up and expand to fill any irregularities in the timber, although the foam itself has no strength, so it may be useful on some timbers, but takes 24 hours or so to cure, as it relies on the moisture in the atmosphere for activation. It can be wasteful as over time it tends to cure in the bottle. Ideal if you do a lot of gluing and use it up fairly quickly.

Two part epoxy is the ideal adhesive, but is a bit messy, requiring two parts to be mixed, the quick set type allows work to proceed in a short time, but can be wasteful if it cures before it's all used, the slower curing version means waiting 24 hours to proceed.

*What is the most suitable finish for a cereal bowl?*

*Answer*

On the outside, I use Chestnut cellulose sealer then wax, which can be buffed to the required level.

On the inside use I Chestnut food safe oil, just top up whenever you feel it needs more, to maintain a quality finish.

*How to get good results with staining wood turned projects?*

*Answer*

The short answer is good preparation. Another consideration is that not all woods take stain well; only add stain to wood if it enhances appearance.

First let us look at the preparation; things to consider...

Achieve as good as finish off the tool as possible to avoid using course grits of sandpaper. The stain will highlight any scratch marks left by the sandpaper. Work through the grits of sandpaper ensuring all sanding marks from the previous grit is removed. Take time to carry out some hand sanding with the grain, especially on spindle work.

Faceplate work on cross grain bowls gives some challenges because generally on end grain the stain absorbs more giving a darker appearance. Any torn grain will also give a darker appearance, making it more important to get that good finish off the tool on end grain, and to avoid torn grain in the first place.

*When staining wood, it is beneficial to 'raise the grain' before applying the stain, especially if using water-based stains. Before applying the stain, dampen the surface using clean water and cloth, allow to dry, cut back or de-nib using 400-600 grit sandpaper. Apply the stain to the bare wood using a cloth; wiping off the excess before the stain dries. When dry apply the final finish.*

*Woods that has open grain such as oak and ash, stain really well highlighting and showing off the figured grain to good effect. Good results are also achieved with some other woods such as Mahogany. Avoid applying stain on naturally beautiful grained wood such as yew, and laburnum etc. Only use stain on woods to enhance the appearance and the beauty of the wood.*

*This is only a brief insight into staining turned projects, perhaps a topic for an article in a future edition of the newsletter!*

*Peter Bradwick.*



Stain applied to part of these two bowls.

See how the stain enhances the open grain on these oak and ash bowls.

You would be forgiven if you thought that two different species of woods were used.

**Lockdown Logic**

**Stay Safe Keep Alert**