

Fungi, Pyrography, Flying Turnery & Arrows!



Hello all and welcome to the December edition of the Woodpecker. We've had a great end to the year with lots of variety every month – from a lecture on fascinating tree fungi to beautiful pyrography at speed (of delivery!). There's even been a bit of professional turning demonstrated – who'd have thought it?

So, on with the news...

September Meeting (38 members)

Chairman Clive started the meeting by apologising for the lack of wood sales; this was due to Frank Harnwell cracking a rib and therefore being unable to attend. However, Jenny brought along some wood for sale.

He mentioned that this year, the East Cambridgeshire District Councillor, Charles Roberts, formally opened the Art in Wood exhibition. Apparently, he has done a bit of turning before – Clive suggested we could perhaps persuade him to come along one evening.

Mike Marsters gave a run-down of the exhibition; have a look at our [website](#), [Facebook page](#) and [Twitter](#) for more information.

A new member, Ian Hipkin, was presented with his member's pack and 4 new visitors were welcomed for the evening.

He also announced that there was a space on the committee if anyone would like to join the quarterly deliberations. He spiced the offer with the lure of cheap beer at the Beet Club.

David Humphries – talks a load of rot!



David is a Trees Management Officer in the Open Spaces department of the City of London Corporation and manages around 20,000 trees across the North London division of Hampstead Heath and Highgate Woods. He got into arboriculture (as it's known) after the storm of 1987 and hasn't looked back since.

His talk was very extensive and informative; you'll have to forgive me if I've missed any details – there was a lot to cover!



David talked about the ability of trees to seal, not heal. This can be from strimmers or squirrels (but probably not squirrels with strimmers).



Burrs are caused by trees adding growth as part of this sealing process and to aid against disease and wind load.

Some storms can cause trees to flex so much that it causes the tree fibres to unravel.

Another fascinating topic that David introduced was that of fungi. The variety of shapes and colours as well as the association that these living things have with trees was amazing – I think the pictures speak for themselves!



Some fungi are protected by law due to their scarcity, even the destructive ones as they ensure biodiversity in other species in the region they populate – an example was the Great Windsor Park beetles feeding on specific fungi.

There were quite a few questions from members ranging from treatment for the hollow of a 70-year-old Bramley apple with disease to tree houses in willows, from how to handle a beech tree during a drought to the correct pruning of branches (near the shoulder or as far out as possible, apparently).

The other element of the talk that elicited great interest was the equipment that David used, including a microdrill (below, left) which has a 2-mm drill bit which was 40 cms long! This allowed David to determine where the rot is inside a tree and is measured through resistance tested with sensitive electronic equipment. Also, the use of tomography which can produce a ‘picture’ of sections of a tree – as Clive Baker pointed out: “we know how to make yew talk”...



Much of what David does involves ensuring that these large living things don't squash the smaller living things – humans! His work involves testing trees to determine whether remedial action needs to be taken, such as reducing a tree canopy to prevent serious wind load damage.



Some interesting show-and-tell items David brought along

All in all, a very engaging talk.

The competitions

Senior section: Offset or Involute Turning



- 1st • Peter Symonds (13)
- 2nd • Clive Baker (8)
- 3rd • Stephen Franklin (2)
- 4th

Novices: Pot Pourri



- 1st • Andrew Stone
- 2nd • Simon Taggart
- 3rd • Graham Sanderson
- 4th • Ian Hipkin

October Meeting (38 members)

Clive kicked off by reminding members about the Andy Coates all day demonstration and that Malcolm was sorting an Axminster order. He also made the customary plea for more raffle prizes and the return of the trophy so that it could be presented again later in the year.

Also, there was an email from Laura & Tim Barnes asking for a set of fold-out bed legs to be made.

Howard Dyson mentioned that Roy Herring, with whom he used to car share, had sadly died the previous Monday.

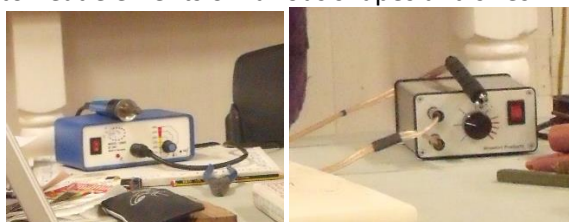
Tic Challis – Speed Talker and Pyrographer!

Our demonstrator for October was artist and pyrographer, Tic Challis.



Yet another month without a demonstrating woodturner! However, it was not without a lot of novelty and interest.

Tic introduced herself and gave a brief history of pyrography, the art of burning patterns in wood. In Victorian times, it was referred to as poker art – literally using pokers to make designs in wood. These days it's much more sophisticated; using special machines to heat elements of various shapes and sizes.



Tic emphasised that the smoke given off from pyrography is very carcinogenic, so anyone wishing to have a go should ensure that they work in a well-ventilated area with as little dust as possible. Also, ensure that you tie back loose clothing – oh, and don't fall asleep!

The work can be slow and painstaking, leading to drowsiness if you're not careful.

There are basically two types of pyrography machine: **Stamp** and **Wire Tip**.

Stamp

A stamp pyrography machine is like a soldering iron and is a cheaper machine than a wire tip one, but takes longer to heat up and cool down. It's great for stamping (as the name implies!) different patterns into wood.

Wire Tip

A wire tip machine uses an inch of wire set between two contact terminals and, as electrical current passes through, it generates heat at the tip. For best results, the tip should be set at a cherry glow rather than a bright hot colour. This machine gives a lot of scope for creating different shaped tips to produce custom patterns in the wood and can also be used like a pen or pencil to 'draw' on the wood. You can buy different thicknesses of wire on a 10-m reel and, as you only use an inch at a time, it can last quite a while.

Tic explained that pyrography is about the visual aspect – more writing than calligraphy. You need to slow down and drag the point, not push it. Ensure that you support the work with both hands to gain more control and push your elbows out to relax the gestures – don't use too much pressure.

The type of wood also makes a difference – silver birch and field maple are good, but oak, yew and ash can be tricky due to grain and greasiness. Try to pyrograph on side grain, not end grain. Sometimes, it can be useful to practice with a 'chessboard' of different patterns and techniques (ensuring you write the technique on the back). Using a stamp pen requires using a feathering technique, using multiple drags across the wood.

Sometimes, tips can start glowing due to build-up of wood material – just give it a brush occasionally. For stamp tools, you'll need to wait until the end is cool or you might risk damaging it.



To start your artistic masterpiece, you'll want to sketch out your design on the wood using an HB or B pencil – ensure it isn't too sharp as you don't want to mark the wood. If you're going to copy a design, ensure it isn't copyrighted (copyright is still valid between media); the chance of getting caught is minute, but the penalty can be severe if caught.

TIPS (no pun intended!):

- Be brief with your tracing and cut slots in the paper to go around objects.
- Tic uses willow charcoal pencil rather than carbon paper as it wipes off easily.
- As with most artistic close work, Tic uses her little finger to support her hand against the work.
- Pyrography can also be used to stop colour bleeding and for texture under thin water-based paint.

Tic mentioned the use of a colour wheel at this point to pick out complimentary and contrasting colours. She also suggested using watercolour pens and pencils (InkTense was the brand) which can be good for merging colours, and the nibs only need a wipe to clean. The pencils can be sharpened like a normal pencil and then dulled for use; useful for tracing designs and can be wiped off with water. Always work the colours from dark to light and don't alternate – work around the colour wheel.

TIP OF THE MONTH:

- Don't have cups of tea on the table – you're likely to dip your brush in them!

There was quite a bit of interest around getting the traceable artwork on the piece with suggestions for using Modpodge (Clive) and just burning through the paper (Hugh) – Tic suggested that you should do the entire outline at a lower temperature initially, then fill in with more detail.

Tic always uses a UV lacquer finish or sanding sealer spray if painted which stops the pyrography from fading.

Big take-away: make a mistake and it's back to sanding, so take care...

Some of Tic's work



Great quote: "Sawdust? Don't you mean man glitter?"

The competitions

Senior section: Tropical Fruit



- 1st • Clive Baker (24)
- 2nd • Ray Dellow (1)
- 3rd
- 4th

Novices: Goblet



- 1st • Simon Taggart
- 2nd • Malcolm Lister
- 3rd • Andrew Stone
- 4th • Mark Williams



Stephen Franklin (previous Chairman) presented John Last with a **lifetime membership of the Guild** for his magnificent efforts as Chairman – he stepped up when the need arose and kept the Guild alive

Stephen commented that John was unflappable and great at getting the youngsters involved in woodturning

All-Day Demo with Andy Coates



A really great day with Andy Coates, albeit he had a missing front tooth. Apparently, the dentist knocked it out! Didn't stop him imparting his knowledge whilst creating four pieces over the course of the day.

First piece

This was a dry maple natural-edged bowl with an interesting pith – almost mineral.

Tips:

- Creating a perfect tenon
- Cutting a perfect quarter circle curve
- Grain direction and finishing with the tool
- Cutting through the “corner” of a bowl
- Parabolic bowl hollowing
- Flange for bowl feet



Second Piece

This was a wet oak winged vessel.

Tips:

- Be careful when gluing up – finger to eyelid, hand to lathe, etc.!
- Look for inspiration everywhere – antler finials!



Third Piece

This was a wet black poplar goblet.

Tips:

- Recover wood rings for other projects from bowl waste
- If the bark rim comes off a piece, you can pyro instead
- Golden ratio
- Adding a pyro touch can make pieces interesting



Fourth Piece – Made Quickly!!

This was a wet end-grain “bullseye” vessel – unfinished.



The bullseye was not quite centred, so he reset the centre and turned back to true which kept the bullseye but lost the bark edge.

November Meeting (34 members)

Clive kicked off by recounting the Andy Coates all-day demonstration, commenting that it was excellent, although he forgot to ask Andy to critique a couple of pieces that were brought in and nobody reminded him, so it didn't happen – ah well.

The **Christmas party** was announced – tickets are £10 each and include a buffet and live entertainment, the odd quiz and a bit of music to dance to (if the mood takes you). It should be a great social event with entertainment, so do sign up and come along.

Clive made a plea for experienced members who are happy to give advice to sign up to a mentor programme. If you give your name and locality, novice members can get in touch if they need advice. **Come on people – pass it on!** I'm sure you had help when you started out, so please sign up – every little helps as a well-known supermarket would say...

The **Hands-On Day** for next year will be on **Saturday 14th April 2019** and we will be distributing a sign-up sheet at the AGM in February for those who can help by supplying a lathe on the day. Some mug has been volunteered to organise it this year, so please do help the poor soul out, won't you? He looks a bit like the chap at the top of the newsletter...

Art in Wood next year will be held between **17th – 26th August 2019**.

As many of the members find it difficult to hear at some of the meetings, we are considering the purchase of technical equipment that can help those with hearing aids to hear more clearly. Currently, we are reserving the front 2 rows on the right (as you look at the stage) for those who need to sit a bit closer to hear our demonstrators and speakers.

Clive reminded everyone that the March 2019 novice competition was to make up to three flowers as demonstrated by Richard.



There was also a plea for more tuition demonstrators for 2019, as several senior members have stepped down. I've only been turning since 2011, but have agreed to step up next year and pass on what I've learned – don't be afraid to share!

During the competition announcement, Clive stated that there had been some comments that some of the novice entries are perhaps a little too good which could deter some novices from entering. This encouraged some debate from members and it was agreed that it would be discussed and settled at the AGM.

Mark Williams was welcomed as a new member.

Hugh Castle did a **show-and-tell** about his attempt at making the winged vessel from Andy Coates' demonstration – I thought he made a great attempt at it, although he was too modest to admit it!

Willy Rackham – of course he will!



I must admit, I wasn't sure what to expect from this talk/demonstration, but Willy soon had everyone engaged with plenty of examples of both bows and arrows to accompany the stories behind their discovery and invention.

Did you know?

Bows are just large springs
They've been around for at least
10,000 years
Arrows need feathers to create drag
to stop them tumbling end over end



Willy brought along lots of props and equipment from bows and arrows to helmets and fulchions – unfortunately I don't have time to list it all, but here are a few of the highlights:



Viking hunting arrow



Viking fowl arrow



Fire arrows – gun powder, vinegar and urine made a paste that burns slower so you didn't see the flame until it hit the thatched roof



Explaining the making of a bow



Using a tillering post – the art of tillery and hence artillery

Willy also did a bit of name dropping – he helped design and make the bows in many Hollywood films such as Troy and Kingdom of Heaven. He even had the equivalent of an early iPad used by monks to recount the details of battles.



Apple, eat your heart out.

All in all, a fascinating talk from a charming man.

The competitions

Senior section: Christmas-themed Gift



1st	• Clive Baker (12)
2nd	• Hugh Castle (5)
3rd	• Ray Dellow (3)
4th	

Novices: Bottle Stopper



1st	• Graham Sanderson
2nd	• Malcolm Lister
3rd	• Mark Williams
4th	• Andrew Stone

[Ed: Media team has let me down again; if anyone has a photo, please send it to me]

Addendum:

Geoff Housden commented that, although we mentioned his dizzy bowl show & tell in the last newsletter, we didn't provide a photo. Well, here you go:



And finally...

Last Month's Caption Competition



Winner: **Mick Saul**

"This viagra works really well"

Runner up: **Dick Brown**

"The shavings were this high!"

END