



Woodworms

Issue 97 Woodworms

Another Year Almost Gone!



There was a distinct Autumn feel as I drove into the car park for the club meeting last Saturday when I was accompanied by a loud crunching sound as I drove over a carpet of acorns etc. shed from the adjacent trees.

The dreaded ‘C word’ was mentioned at the meeting so there’s no getting away from it! For the benefit of those who missed the meeting it was announced that there would be a Xmas competition. Slightly different from previous years in that the club will not be sourcing the timber - you can use whatever wood you have to hand and the theme of the competition is Yes, you’ve guessed it . . . “Christmas”. So that gives you plenty of scope and no doubt we’ll see a plethora of Xmas trees, Santas etc. on the table. (Full details on page 2)

Our guest speaker on Saturday was the Master Thatcher David Wood making a return appearance; several us have seen him before but it still makes for a very entertaining session.

By the time this newsletter is published the annual Brailsford Ploughing Match aka ‘The Show’ will be history; the club always has a stall at the event but at the time of writing the secretary was struggling to find volunteers. The end of the month sees the Stickmakers Guild Woodcraft Festival at Bakewell; we hope to have a stall, why don’t you volunteer to do a couple of hours or so promoting the club?

Finally, may I remind you that unless we find someone willing to act as webmaster, the website will cease to exist from February next year.



My thanks go to Graham Legg, David Waldron, Brian Walker, Peter Branson and Lisa Williams for their contributions to this issue.

DDWC Competitions with Emphasis on Christmas



After much discussion and great deliberation, the theme for this year's Christmas competition is to be "Christmas". Entrants are not restricted to any kind of wood; it can be any size and can incorporate any other materials etc. as long as it is



over 51% wood and over 51% your own work. Small cash prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The competition is open to all club members and only **ONE** entry per person. In the event of a tie for any of the placings a selected member, who is not involved, will have the casting vote.

As you may know the annual competitions are drawing to a close with November being your last chance to enter this year. As usual the standard of the entries this year has been exceptional although numbers of entries have been reduced compared to previous years.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have entered this year and invite all those who haven't, to "give it a go". Although prizes and trophies are handed out at the end of the year, everyone who enters is a winner. The chance to strike up a conversation and explain or ask how something was done always brings joy to those involved and from



our own personal experience gives people the confidence to try new things.

There will be themes again for next year. For anyone with any ideas for the competitions or the themes, the suggestion box will be on the table in November!!!!

Good luck and thank you – Lisa and John

(Images shown are entries from previous years - Editor)



Ready for Varnishing

by David Waldron

I've just come back from another enjoyable week at the Cambridge violin makers' summer school. Last time I'd finished the violin in white (Figure 1 below). So this time I started on the finishing process



before the final setup. So after taking out the violin from its case, it was given a couple of coats of looking at.

After that they said we need some tea. Well why not, got to start the job off right!. However, it ended up as one tea bag in one inch of boiling water, well mashed and left to cool. This was then coated over the back, front, sides, and scroll, just missing out the neck.

In Stradivari's day they used to expose the violins to the air and sun for a period from several days to weeks to take away the whiteness of the wood. Air darkens the wood by oxidation with the ultraviolet rays sun tanning the wood. But in the poor old UK it would probably take years to get a good suntan. Hence, the summer climate was in the form of a UV light box, where it remained for 24 hours. It was



then given another coat and put back in the UV box. Figure 2 (page 2) shows the instrument after two coats of tea, which has a light staining.

The next stage was to put on a coat of primer, which I understand was a mixture of potassium nitrate and potassium nitrite. The primer accelerates what normally happens when you put the violin out in the sun, by oxidising the outer layers, making it look darker. Again this went for the sunshine treatment and came out of the UV box with a golden sun tan (Figure 3 below). This was repeated with another coat of primer, followed by a final coat on the maple wood only.



No sealer is used, so the next part of the process was to give it a coat of oil varnish. Again this was put in the UV cabinet and left overnight. Figure 4 (below) shows the current state of the violin. So the next stage is to give it three more coats of clear varnish, followed by three coloured, and a final coat of clear. That will be next year.



Not sure if you have heard the joke about the oak tree? It's a corny one!

Members' Open Competition - September 2022

Taking first place was **David Waldron** with his maple leaf produced using Maple and Walnut



Second place went to **Bronagh Cassidy** for her musical piece cut from MDF.

Elaine Massey took third place with her rather savage looking creature !

Members' Open Competition - September 2022 cont'd



Also entered was the walking stick in Rose and Hazel from **Greg Holmes** and the pen in Amboyna from **Ben Klein**



“He’s behind you!!!” Comic tree discovered by Lisa Williams

Masters' Competition - September 2022

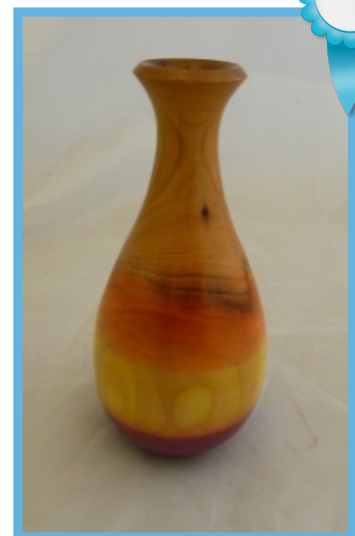
First place taken by **Peter Fantham** with his carved bowl in Sycamore; it only just fitted into the photo tent!



In joint second place were:

Left: **John Williams'** drawer set in Walnut and

Below: **Dick Potter's** bud vase in Yew.



Masters' Competition - September 2022 cont'd



Third place was won by **Graham Jerram** with his bowl turned from Oak

Also entered: Below: Bowl in Holly from **David Reynolds**

And Right: Pepper grinder in Yew from **Graham Legg**



Competition Voting - September 2022

Members' Open Class

Position	Name	Votes
1	David Waldron	16
2	Bronagh Cassidy	7
3	Elaine Massey	6
	Greg Holmes	1
	Ben Klein	4

Masters' Class

Position	Name	Votes
1	Peter Fantham	16
2=	John Williams	6
2=	Dick Potter	6
3	Graham Jerram	4
	David Reynolds	1
	Graham Legg	1

September 2022 Meeting



The turners' group held a session devoted to a mallet making workshop. Members who had booked a place were guided by the AWGB tutors in the group.



Left: Group lead, Graham Legg, briefs participants at various stages before they take the plunge!

Below: Examples of what they hoped to achieve.



Display of work by invited members:

Above: Elaine Massey and
Right: Richard Latos.

Thanks go to these members for contributing to the meeting.





Above left: Dick Potter was kept busy sharpening tools for members.

Above right: The carvers had a very busy session again with several people returning from last month and signing up as club members. They continued working on their 'oak leaf' projects with gusto and they are sure to be thinking about what project to undertake next. The regulars carried on with a variety of items - a very intricate bunch of flowers, a dog and yet another spoon!



Above Left, a junior member gets some coaching from Peter Branson, the group lead.

Not a lot of burning done by the pyrographers, it seems that a bowl of strawberries and cream takes precedence!!! .

....

..... but

..... there were a couple of keen exceptions!!!!



One clearly delighted and proud (rightly so) junior member shows off her completed mallet. It wasn't quite finished at the club meeting but that was rapidly corrected when she got home. Look out Graham, she'll be after your job next!!

What was Sir Walter Raleigh famous for?
He is a noted figure in history because he invented cigarettes and started a craze for Bicycles.

Masters' Competition - October 2022

Plenty of space on the table this month as there were only four entries and Pete Fantham is on holiday thereby releasing a fair sized area of table!!!! In first place was **David Reynolds** with his vase in Sycamore (Sorry for the poor picture quality, one or two technical issues with the lighting!)



Third place (below) taken by **Geoff Dalton** for his, clearly not watertight, vase in Apple.



Second place (above) went to **John Williams** for his lidded bowl in Ash.

Also entered (right) was Graham Legg's pot pourri bowl in Elm.



Members' Open Competition - October 2022

As with the Masters' table, the numbers were a little depleted this month.

In first place with this splendid carving in Lime of a bouquet of flowers was **Lesley Dennis**.



Second place (below) was taken by **Colin Fishwick** with his pair of finialed boxes in Walnut.



Right - Pyrographed picture on Baltic Birch ply by **Lucy Dentith** took third place.



Members' Open Competition - continued

Also entered was Carole Snell's carving (below left) in Pine and Bronagh Cassidy's laser cut picture (below right) in MDF (can you make 'em a bit smaller Bronagh, they won't fit in the photo tent????!!!!)



Turners' Chat Hour - September

The turners were back in business via Zoom with their monthly chat in September after a Summer break. There were ten members attending the meeting with lots of chat about mallets, this being a major event at the September meeting. Quite a chunk of the meeting was taken by people talking about what they had been making over the summer, and yet more chat on wood in general. There were a few proposals for topics to discuss in the future; the meeting ended at nine as it was already past the bedtime for some!

100 years ago everyone owned a horse and only the rich had cars.

Today, everyone has a car and only the rich have horses

Oh how the stables have turned

SEND Woodturning -Autumn 2022

As the new school year is just starting, our Woodturning group will be once again teaching SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) students in Long Eaton.

Thanks to the efforts of our team, we are delighted to announce that DDWC has secured significant sponsorship from “**MIRKA**” (who supply Abranet). Mirka have donated a good number of Abranet boxes, which sell at £19.28 per box. We have a rather large supply of various grits!

“**Beaufort Ink**” are also sponsoring our SEND project, by supplying each of our students with two high quality pen kits (Sirocco and Headwind), each kit having a value of £9.

We are very keen to continue with our Outreach programme, which also brings in significant funding to our Club Charity Fund.

Having raised £1,000 for CRY (Cardiac Risk in the Young), our Committee have agreed to now raise funds (through the Woodturning SEND project), for a Methodist Church charity known as Phakemisa.

Looking further ahead, we have been invited to run a Christmas decorations work shop at the Wirksworth Heritage Centre on Saturday 26th November.

The funds raised from this project will also go towards our charity fund raising efforts.

My thanks go to David Reynolds, Brian Walker, Derek Puplett and Colin Fishwick for their brilliant support, energy and commitment to our Outreach Programme.

Graham Legg

Members' Open Competition - October

Position	Name	Votes
1	Lesley Dennis	10
2	Colin Fishwick	6
3	Lucy Dentith	4
	Carole Snell	2
	Bronagh Cassidy	2

Masters' Competition - October 2022

Position	Name	Votes
1	David Reynolds	11
2	John Williams	7
3	Geoff Dalton	6
	Graham Legg	0

October Meeting - David Wood, Master Thatcher

Our October guest demonstrator was David Wood - Master Thatcher - making a repeat visit to the club. On this occasion though he arrived in a modern van and not his 1949 vintage van.

It was when he was 13 years old that his interest in thatching was kindled by Master Thatcher George Mellor. David showed an interest in the contents of George's truck which he had spotted whilst on his morning paper round and after a lot of questions he was invited by the Master to go and work for him at weekends and later in the evenings. The work was chiefly clearing up and labouring and when the time came to leave school and the enthusiasm hadn't dimmed, he was invited by George to join him and embark on a seven year apprenticeship.

At that particular time in the 80's there were grants available (up to 85%) for home owners to finance re-thatching; consequently they always had plenty of work and travelled around living on site in a caravan and returning home at weekends. At the end of the seven year period, David was allocated a property near Melbourne, Derbys. to thatch being closely watched by an "inspector"; his work evidently was satisfactory as he was accepted as a Member of the Society of Thatchers. At the time there were 900 thatchers on the books, there are now between 600 and 900 which is good news for the preservation of an old craft, even so there is a 2 1/2 to 3 year waiting list for thatching to be done as the work is very weather dependent which is a distinct disadvantage in the UK!

Materials used have changed very little over the years although some materials have gone out of use; blackberry briars were used to tie the straw to the roof; hemp twine was put to similar use but went out of favour, however, it is back in use now having been treated with modern wax preservatives. Any straw which was pulled out of a bundle along with weeds etc. would have been twisted into ropes to tie the thatch to rafters; David demonstrated their durability with a 400 year old sample.

Specific varieties of wheat straw are used and will have a life of 20 - 25 years; it will not be useless after this time but some will need removing and fresh added on the top. At one time the life expectancy of the thatch was only 4 or 5 years owing to the way the straw was harvested; after being cut in the field it was beaten and rolled to extract the grains but of course this action damaged the straw. David spoke of a re-thatching job he had completed which had an 8 feet thickness of thatch and exhibited 20 layers added over the years! The roof had become domed through all the additions and was known as The Beehive Cottage.

Straw roofs started to decline in the 50's as the use of combine harvesters broke up the straw, rendering it useless for thatching; thus the price of quality straw went up and the more astute farmers grew a field just to sell to thatchers! David has a supplier in Yorkshire who grows long stemmed wheat specifically for thatching. It was then that Norfolk reeds came into their own and it was customary to thatch a roof with reeds and then cap it off with straw. Norfolk reeds

**My mate just found out
that he failed the RAF
entrance exam.
Apparently the bomb
bay doors are not an
Indian tribute act.**

You need to have been around in the 60's and 70's to understand!!

are little used now as the quality has fallen because unfortunately the current generation of reed bed farmers don't apply the dedication and attention to the upkeep of the beds as was done in "the old days"! Scottish reed from the Tay are favoured which in a way has encouraged re-newed upkeep of the Norfolk beds but local thatchers keep the best reeds! David now relies on reeds which are imported from Hungary.

Hazel sticks (here's the woodwork!) are split and used to put a pattern on the roof capping; this is generally specific to a thatcher and is his trademark. It was customary to split short lengths of Hazel to make pegs which would hold down the thatch, however, this too has changed and metal rods and hooks are now used.

Following the talk about his career and craft, David demonstrated the techniques used and thatched a bird table.



David demonstrates the stages in thatching a roof using a bird table as an example.



The roof was topped off with a lead cap and then covered with wire netting.

At right is an exhibit which shows the construction of a house roof.



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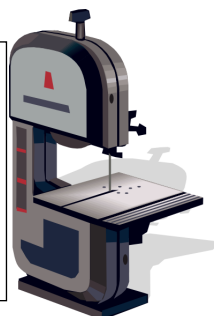
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Woodworms - newsletter of Derbyshire Dales Woodcraft Club.

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Name one of the early Romans' greatest achievements.

Learning to speak Latin.

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Committee members can be contacted by e-mailing the addresses above or info@ddwc.co.uk. Your message will be forwarded to the appropriate person.