



AWGB 16th International Woodturning Seminar 5-7 Oct 2018

By Robin Goodman

Previous seminars up to 2015 were held at Loughborough University, but some of the facilities were not ideal and the AWGB decided to look for somewhere else. They settled on Yarnfield Park training and conference centre in Staffordshire.

This used to be BT's training centre, but it is now independent. The main building had plenty of rooms and included full catering facilities; 4 halls of residence were situated conveniently close by.

There was an international line up of 10 demonstrators: Max Brosi and Glenn Lucas from Ireland, Benoit Averley and Jean Francois Escoulen from France, Mike Hosaluk from Canada, Harvey Meyer from the USA, Asmund Vignes from Norway together with Gary Rance, Les Thorne and Rod Page from UK. They each gave 3 demos – 2 or 3 of them different subjects - and one masterclass, which was limited to about 6 people to give all participants time for hands-on. There were 8 demo periods of 1½ hours and it was not easy to decide which of the 26 different demos on offer to attend; I decided to concentrate on demos by demonstrators from abroad, since I was much less likely to have another opportunity of seeing them again.

I started off with Norwegian **Asmund Vignes**, **photo 1**, a woodturner for more than 30 years. He demonstrated making a **vase with silver inlay**, using a blank of Masur Birch, which is readily available in Norway.



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He is keen on ring and hook tools and used them throughout, after showing how they can easily be sharpened with a credit card type sharpener if the bevel is on the outside and a round file if it is on the inside. After hol-

lowing out he made and fitted an ebony collar, within which he inserted a secondary ivory collar. Using the lathe's index system, he drilled 9 evenly spaced 2mm diameter holes about 3mm deep in the ebony and proceeded to glue very short lengths of silver wire into the holes. The silver wire is quite soft and the ends were easily turned flush with the surface of the ebony, to add a simple decoration to the top of the vase, **photo 2**.

I have previously tried inlaying round silver wire lengthways into a groove on a turned piece. It was quite effective, but the wire needed hammering in to squash it to fill the sides of the rectangular groove; the wood was then turned down to a level at which the wire filled the full width of the groove.

Then I saw **Rod Page** demonstrate how he makes his very neat and effective **lattice bowls**. He gave a demo at the club back in 2014, but this was another opportunity to remind me how he does it. The grooves were 2-3mm deep on each side, so the bowl has to be quite thick, but he reduces the thickness at the rim to improve the appearance. On the outside he marked out a series of 2mm wide grooves with a specially ground 2 pronged tool, before using a 1.6mm wide parting tool to cut the grooves to half depth. On the top side of the bowl the grooves were radial and perpendicular to the underside grooves. He used a small router mounted over the bed bars, **photo 3**, to cut the radial grooves at small spacings determined with the help of an indexing system. A set of his lattice bowls is shown in **photo 4**.

Over the last few years, the American turner **Harvey Meyer**, **photo 5**, has specialised in pieces with the 'Basket Weave Illusion' as decoration. Lincoln Seitzman in the USA was probably the first turner to introduce this method, but it became much better known in the 1990's, when David Nittmann took up the idea and used it on many pieces. The end result is that pieces appear to be woven like a basket. A series of evenly spaced circumferential beads, typically 3mm wide, are formed in the surface using a special beading tool with the flute pointing down.; the valleys are then highlighted by burning, most easily achieved using the sharp edge of a piece of plastic laminate such as Formica. With the help of an indexing system, radial lines are pencilled on and then burned in using a special concave pyrography burning tip – a process that can take hours. The final process is adding colour to



produce the pattern design, which has previously been planned out on polar graph paper or on a computer using special software.

A typical item may have 72 radial segments and 28 bead rings resulting in over 2,000 individual tapered rectangular 'pixels' to be coloured up. Harvey says you need good eyesight, steady hands and patience to do this work. A reasonably complicated pattern may take 50 – 200 hours to complete. He usually spends more time in a comfortable chair colouring or burning in his sitting room than in his workshop!



g2

The platter shown in **photo 6** has about 5,500 individual 'pixels'. Most of us do not have the patience for this. I have previously tried out the method on a small pot, **photo 7**. Even this simple design has about 600 individual squares in the pattern and took long enough!

Mike Hosaluk, photo 8, is an internationally known creative Canadian turner, who demonstrates

widely and has produced a couple of interesting DVD's. His demo was turning an **end grain drinking cup offset 3 ways**. This is where a piece is marked out with 3 equally spaced offset centres at 120 degrees to each other at each end. By turning on 1-2, 2-3 and 3-1 centres in sequence, with angled axes, the resulting intersection of the 3

turned surfaces forms a gentle spiral along the piece, **photo 9**. He added interest to an otherwise plain profile by adding beading over the full height. I have tried this method several times before and the resulting spiral often surprises people. Mike is very keen on hook and ring tools and he uses cup drives

for most of his spindle work. Cup chucks reduce the severity of any catches, but in a letter in the December edition of

Woodturning, Richard Raffan claims that a turner will experience more catches!

Benoit Averley, photo 10, was initially self taught, but later learnt a lot from his mentor Richard Raffan and even worked as his workshop assistant for a while. I note that his website refers to himself as a sculptor rather than a woodturner. Much of his work is about lines and shapes and he likes to apply texturing, often using a Dremel or Arbortech. Black seems to be his favourite colour, usually using a leather dye. He is well known for his textured boxes and this is what his demo was about. He calls his tall boxes '**hut boxes**', which have rounded conical lids taller than the base, **photo 11**, rather than the more typical base $\frac{2}{3}$ and lid $\frac{1}{3}$ proportion. For the demo he used a



14



16



15



13

micro drill with rotary chisel bit for the texturing. Some club members will have enjoyed seeing him demonstrate at the Mill, but he does not often visit the UK.

Irishman **Max Brosi, photo 12**, came to woodturning via furniture making and boat building; most of his current work tends to be sculptural in form. His demo involved turning on 3 axes at right angles to each other. He made what he calls an **octahedron**, so named because he forms the octahedron only as an interim shape to help form what looked finally as a junction piece with 6 pipes at 90 degrees to each other, **photo 13** shows it part turned. He said that accurate setting out was very important and surprisingly found it easier and more accurate to turn the piece via a tetrahedron and then a sphere, before turning the 6 spigots. The holes were drilled before turning the final outside shape on the 3 axes and then scorching the whole piece with a burning torch.

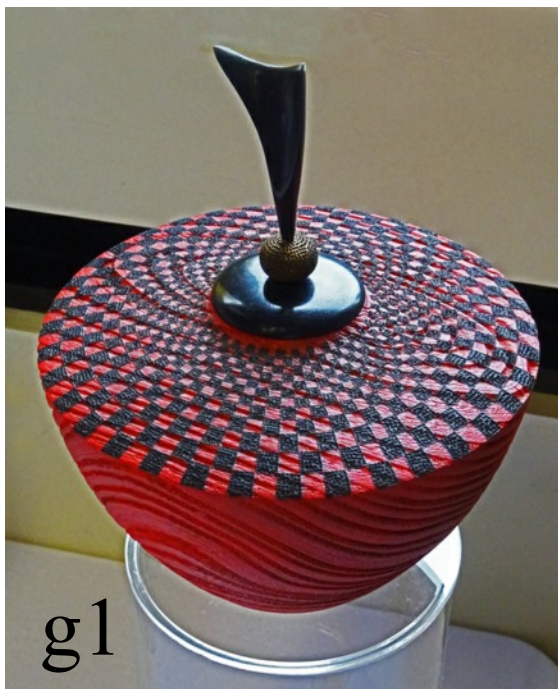
Jean-Francois Escoulen, photo 14, learnt his turning via the cabinet making route. In 2010 he started a woodturning school in Aiguines, southern France and he is best known for his whimsical offset turning pieces and he designed the most sophisticated eccentric chuck available. One of his demos was about making a **trembleur**, a long piece with extremely thin spindle of 2-3mm diameter and various elements along its length. String steadies are needed as intermediate supports along its length, which can exceed 1 metre. The demo I saw was about using the part of his **eccentric chuck** that allows the angle to be varied by up to 15 degrees from the main axis. He makes it look easy to include golf club like features, but predicting the final shape is not that easy. His demo piece is shown in **photo 15**.

Glen Lucas, photo 16, from Ireland is known worldwide in the woodturning world. Having specialised in mass producing bowls, he is now branching out to do more teaching at his Woodturning Study Centre, together with demonstrating, producing DVD's and selling his special signature turning tools. His demos at the seminar were, surprisingly, not about bowls and how he can make them so efficiently with the minimal number of judicious cuts on both outside and inside. Some of us have seen him demonstrate at the Mill and his skill with the tools is very evident.

The 2 UK demonstrators that I did not see are well known to many club members and both have given demos at the club in the past. **Gary Rance** has been a full time woodturner since he was 16 and he gave 3 different demos including a screw-threaded salt bell and a humming spinning top. **Les Thorne** has worked with wood all his life and has been turning for at least 20 years. His demos were entitled 'All skewed up' and 'OMG it's a box again, is it?'

The **Instant Gallery** has always been a highlight of the seminar. Delegates can bring 3 turned pieces and they are all displayed together with additional pieces by the demonstrators to create the largest display of woodturning items in the UK. There were at least 250 pieces by some of the best turners in the UK and also many from abroad. All the pieces can be viewed at <http://www.awgbseminar.co.uk/Stone2018INDEX.htm>, There were many exquisite and interesting pieces to suit all tastes including both traditional and artistic.

The **Tony Bose award** for 'best in show' was won by the Spaniard **Pepe Rubio** for his clever vessel, **photo g1**, that had people guessing how he created the black and red squares spiral decoration on the top – apparently by meticulous masking before sandblasting. The AWGB chose over 50 top items, most of which they will use for their travelling exhibition over the next year. Included was the pair of beautifully made fluted bowls on a tray, **photo g2**, by ABWT club member **Andy Mason**. Photos of some other pieces from the instant gallery are also attached. Nearly 30 pieces from the gallery were picked out for the **critique session**, which was carried out by Mike Hosaluk, Jean-Francois Escoulen and Phil Irons. Although the session was rather drawn out this year with perhaps too many pieces included, it was interesting to hear the varying professional opinions

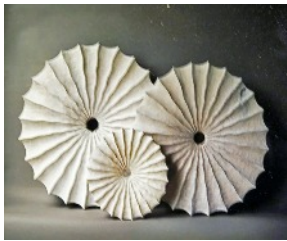


about the pieces. Some general points included :- **Bottoms** – these can easily spoil a piece and their general thoughts were not to use a "traditional" bottom where it is "modern" on top; always eliminate chucking marks and features; keep bottoms simple. **Rims** – do not leave a sharp edge inside, but





Paul Hannaby



Benoit Averley



Max Brosi



Colin Smith



Marcel van Berkel



Chris Hart



Max Brosi



Margaret Garrard



Mike Hosaluk



Mike Hosaluk



Robin Goodman



Klaus Kirchner



Liz Kent



Helen Bailey

