



Martock and District Woodturners Newsletter

June 2024

News

The second weekend in July is a busy one for the club – Saturday is the Yandles Summer Craft Fair where one again we need volunteers to man the carpark and help with the club stand. On the Sunday we have another all-day demonstration, this time with the ever popular Colwin Way. No time for a holiday!

Diary Dates

Tues, Jun 25 th	Club night – 7pm, Ash Pavilion – Liz K & friends
Sat, Jul 13 th	Yandles Summer Craft Fair
Sun, Jul 14 th	All day demonstration with Colwin Way – 10am-4pm, Ash Pavilion. Cost £15.
Sat, Jul 20 th	Hands-on – 10am, Yandles Training Room
Tues, Jul 30 th	Club night – 7pm, Ash Pavilion – Dave A

April Club Night – Chainsaws and Lasers



In the first half of the meeting, Brian H gave a talk on chainsaw maintenance and safety.

Chainsaw Oil

One of the most important things with a chainsaw is to make sure there is plenty of chain oil in it. It doesn't matter if it runs out of fuel (because it'll stop) but there is nothing to tell you it has run out of oil until the bar starts getting hot, goes blue and starts going soft (unless maybe the chain comes off).

Generally there is a fuel tank at the back of the saw and an oil tank at the front (nearer to the bar). Oil is pumped from the tank onto the bar when the chain is running.

Biodegradable oil is available which can reduce the environmental impact and is essential when working near rivers. It is thinner than normal oil and would not properly lubricate a long bar, but is fine for smaller saws.

Chain Sharpening

There are several different techniques of sharpening. The common sharpening kit is shown here.

It consists of a round file in a guide for sharpening the teeth, a flat file for removing material from the rakers and a guide that sits over the teeth to expose the portion of the raker to be removed in order to maintain the correct gap between the top of the tooth and the raker (which in turn controls the amount of timber removed by each tooth).

The guide for the round file usually has two lines engraved on it to show the correct angle for the left and right side teeth. Most chains now have a 30 degrees across and 10 degrees up angle. Some chains have "witness mark" engraved on each tooth to show the correct angle for sharpening.

Mark your starting point with a felt tip pen and use the same number of strokes on each tooth so that each one is sharpened evenly. Always push the file and never pull it back when in the tooth.

This is a new type of sharpener now on the market. It has a square file in the centre. And two round files, one on the either side. It will file the raker to the correct depth at the same time as sharpening the tooth. The two round files mean that it can be flipped over to do the left and right side teeth.

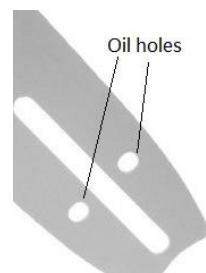
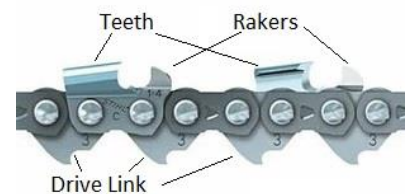
With the sharpening kit there is usually a little tool designed to be used to clean out the slot in the chain bar where the chain runs.

At the tip of the bar is a sprocket wheel, which needs to be able to rotate freely.

At the other end of the bar are a couple of holes that connect through to the chain slot and allow the chain oil to be fed thorough to the chain. These holes should be cleaned out so that the oil can flow through. Turn the bar over each time you put it back so that it wears evenly on both sides. When the bar starts to wear, use a flat file to remove any burr and flatten the top of the bar.

Fuel

E10 petrol will absorb water, which combines with the ethanol. This will subsequently form a sludge that will block your carburettor, usually catastrophically. You can add a fuel stabiliser, which may help, but it is best to find a source of E5 fuel (such as BP Ultimate Unleaded).



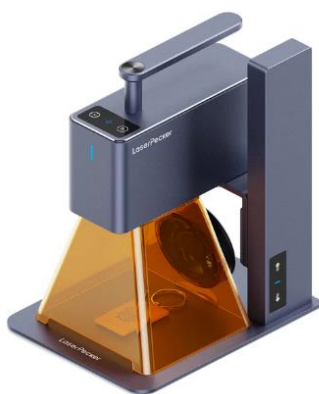
If you don't use your chainsaw often then Stihl Motor Mix is pre-mixed two-stroke fuel with loads of additives in it and a shelf life of five years. But it is expensive at £25 for five litres.



Safety Wear

Safety boots, chainsaw trousers, helmet & gloves!

Note that a typical safety helmet is only meant to last two years, five years maximum.



In the second half of the evening Steve and Tim introduced us to laser engraving using the [LaserPecker 2](#).

This is a product designed for consumer use out of the box. It is controlled by a smart-phone app which communicates with the device via Bluetooth. Any image file can be used as the source, or the app can be used to create simple designs with geometric shapes, lines, text, etc. Control is offered over the laser intensity and number of passes in order to vary the depth and darkness of the burn.

Several members were given the opportunity to use the device to make their own key fobs and coasters.



Tim also owns a larger, more powerful AtomStack laser which is capable of cutting plastic, thin ply, etc. Unfortunately it was too heavy to bring along to the demonstration. This machine is sold in kit form and requires a significant amount of assembly, as well as requiring separate PC/Mac software.

Please talk to him if you are interested in knowing more about this type of machine.

All-day Demonstration – Les Thorne



Les is primarily a production turner making items from columns for houses, bespoke candle sticks for churches to staircase spindles. His workshop is located in Four Marks, Hampshire where he shares some facilities with Martin Saban-Smith of Hampshire Sheen fame.

Project One – Double-Finialled Urn

Les describes this as a project that you may like or you may hate, but it makes no difference to him whatsoever. It has loads of interesting aspects to it, covering tooling, hollowing, skew work, basic wood turning, drilling, and making a piece out of different components.

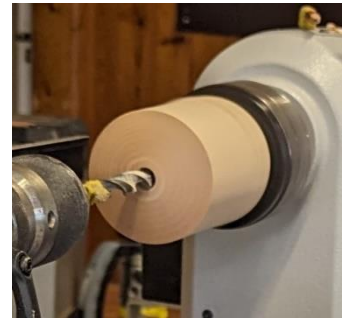


The project is made from three pieces and features a double-ended finial that can be used either way up (which Les admitted renders the entire piece completely useless from a practical point of view).



The centre section was made first from a piece of ash. Les stated that the whole basis of woodturning can be taught by correctly using a roughing gouge to make a piece of timber round, that is presenting the tool the right way so that it uses the edge and bevel to cut the timber (rather than scraping pieces off it), and moving the tool with your body.

After making a spigot and fixing in a chuck, Les faced-off the end of the piece and drilled a depth hole for the hollowing. Les's tips for successful drilling are a) always make a pilot hole to locate the tip of the drill, b) make sure the morse tapers are clean so that the chuck is firmly held, c) start with minimum length of quill extended, d) clear the swarf regularly – Les has a "4 turn" rule, clearing the swarf after every four turns of the tailstock handle. When using twist drills it should not be necessary to use a slower speed since most bits are designed for electric drill that run at 1500+ rpm.



To hollow the inside Les started off with a spindle gouge using a pull cut, before demonstrating the Richard Raffan back cut and then going on to discuss various carbide hollowing tools (mostly those from Simon Hope) and finally, scrapers. A [6mm carbide scraper](#) was used to remove the bulk of the material, but this leaves a lot of ridges, which can be removed with [a round-nosed scraper](#). A smaller scraper is needed to finish the bottom to avoid digging into the end-grain.



Note the small recess cut in the top for the lid.

The outside shape was completed with a spindle gouge; normally when making a piece like this, Les would work on the inside and the outside at the same time to make sure they both follow the desired contour.

A very short spigot is made on the end to fit into the base and (after sanding and finishing) the piece can be parted off.



Les admitted that he would not make the base like this if using an exotic timber, but because he was working with sycamore he started with a much bigger diameter piece of timber than was needed in order to be left with enough to make a jam chuck. For this reason the spigot was also oversized leaving the chuck jaws much further open than is normally advised, although the small size of the piece reduces the risk of it not being securely held.

Les's tip for facing-off end grain – to avoid pulling out the fibres from the centre and leaving a hole, stop before you get there and sand off the little nub that remains.

A recess was made to fit the short spigot on the middle piece – because this does not need to be deep it gives more scope to be able to shape the base. A small bead around the top helps unify the two parts of the urn.

In competition pieces it should be made obvious to the judge that the base was properly finished off, so to show how to do this Les made a jam chuck from the waste to invert the piece and decorate the bottom (this explains the need for the oversized spigot since the inverted piece extends back between the jaws into the chuck).

The double-ended finial also started with an oversized chucking spigot to allow for making a jam chuck later, as for the base. In this case the jaws were even more extended so Les used masking tape to cover the sharp corners.

After turning one finial, the second finial was started in the timber nearest the headstock. This was then parted off (allowing sufficient length to complete the second finial) and the jam chuck made. The jam chuck requires a hole in the bottom to allow the finial to fit through into the chuck.

Les used some more masking tape to help secure the piece in the jam chuck before completing the finial.

The second finial was a spherical shape similar in design to a drawer knob. To look "right" it actually needs to be slightly squat, with its height smaller than its diameter.

Les added a couple of lines in the end of the finial which show that the piece was reverse mounted and not just made in one go...



Project Two – Bowl with an Inset Ring

This project is an ideal way to use up timber planks – especially exotics - that are too thin to be of use for anything other than segmented work.

Les started out by mounting the blank for the bowl on a screw chuck, trued it up and shaped the back whilst giving lots of explanation and advice on technique.

Spigot or recess? If done properly, both should be capable of safely holding the blank, but a recess is "inside" the piece and starts to influence the design.



Les has recently changed the way he does this demonstration if you have seen it before; he used to turn the ring to fit the bowl, but now part-turns the bowl, makes the ring and then finishes the bowl to fit the ring.



The material for the ring (bubinga) was mounted on a screw chuck and trued up. The top of the ring and the inside were shaped as much as possible whilst it was securely held, before parting off from the side.



The bowl was then remounted on the lathe and a recess cut around the inside of the rim to fit the ring.



Les then proceeded to finish turning the inside of the bowl and using a scraping cut, complete the shaping of the ring so that it blended into the side of the bowl.

Gallery

Here is where we display any items made by club members in recent weeks.





Please send photographs of anything you have made to newsletter@madturners.co.uk, or better still bring them along on a club night to put on the inspiration table for all to admire.



In July we have the second Yandles craft fair of the year where we need half a dozen volunteers to do a few hours car-park duty in the morning.

If we can muster enough support we will also be having our usual stand outside the shop. For this we need a few able bodies to help set up and clear away at the end, as well as people to man the stall and demonstrate to the public. We also need plenty of items to display and sell on the stall (a chance to earn some cash from your hobby!).

If you are prepared to help in any way please talk to Caroline.

Timber of the Month – Iroko



Iroko (*Milicia excelsa* or *Milicia regia*) is a large hardwood tree from the west coast of tropical Africa. In much of the literature the genus is given as *Chlorophora* even though it was identified as its own genus in 1909. *M. regia* is only found in a narrow region of forest areas within West Africa and, although *M. excelsa* is much more widespread and common throughout tropical Africa, it is still listed as 'near threatened' on the IUCN Red List. Iroko is one of a number of woods sometimes referred to as African teak, although it is unrelated to the teak family.

The tree reaches 50m (160ft) in height, with a diameter of about 2.5m (8-9ft) and can live up to 500 years. The bole is clear and cylindrical up to 21m (70ft). The heartwood is usually a yellow to golden or medium brown, with colour tending to darken over time. The pale yellow sapwood is clearly demarcated from the heartwood.

Iroko is very durable, and is resistant to both rot and insect attack. It is generally easy to work, although some tearout may occur in regions of interlocked grain. It can also contain deposits of calcium carbonate, which can have a significant dulling effect on tools.

The timber is used for a variety of purposes, both indoors and outdoors, including boat-building, domestic flooring, furniture, doors and gates. It is found in musical instruments such as the djembe and recently as part of the txalaparta, a Basque musical instrument constructed of wooden boards.

Iroko is sometimes marketed as a low-cost alternative to genuine teak, as it is stable, durable, and has an overall look that somewhat resembles teak.

To the Yoruba tribe the tree is believed to have healing properties; however they also believe that the tree is inhabited by a spirit, and anybody who sees the Iroko-man face to face becomes insane and speedily dies. Any man who cuts down any iroko tree causes devastating misfortune on himself and all of his family (although if they need to cut down the tree they can always make a prayer afterwards to protect themselves!). The spirit of the Iroko may be heard in houses which use iroko wood, as it is trapped in the timber.

Don't Forget to Use Your Club Discounts

Just present your club membership card (it may be worth checking beforehand whether a discount will apply to your intended purchase)



10% off most items, except power tools.



10% off all timber and finishes

If you have anything you would like to share through this newsletter, or have any ideas of what you would like to see included, please let me know by emailing me at newsletter@madturners.co.uk.

Thanks, Dave H