



# Martock and District Woodturners Newsletter

October 2024

## News

Autumn is now upon us, so time to start thinking about making you Christmas gifts and decorations, as well as what to bring along for the December show-and-tell.

Don't forget that the clocks change this weekend which will mean darker and colder evenings. I know some of you do not like venturing out to club nights under these conditions, but come along for a natter at the hands-on. And don't forget the Yandles monthly demonstration on the last Friday of the month.

## Reminder for those few that still haven't paid...

### **Subscriptions for 2024/25 were due at the beginning of September**



As agreed at the last AGM, these will be £65 for the year to allow us to continue to bring you quality demonstrations most months.

Payment by bank transfer is preferred, and details have been sent out by email.

## Diary Dates

|                             |                                              |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Tues, Sept 24 <sup>th</sup> | Club night – 7pm, Ash Pavilion – Colwin Way  |
| Sat, Oct 12 <sup>th</sup>   | Hands-on – 10am, Yandles Training Room       |
| Tues, Oct 29 <sup>th</sup>  | Club night – 7pm, Ash Pavilion – Dan Tarrant |
| Sat, Nov 9 <sup>th</sup>    | Hands-on – 10am, Yandles Training Room       |
| Tues, Nov 26 <sup>th</sup>  | Club night – 7pm, Ash Pavilion               |



## **August Club Night – Colwin Way**



Colwin normally starts making Christmas decorations around the beginning of August – partly to meet the deadlines for publishing magazine articles and also to stock up the shop for the end of September. Luckily he enjoys the task, so this is his excuse for this demonstration.

He has been turning Christmas trees in his own workshop (as well as making [this YouTube video](#)), so it is all prepared, and a chance to add to his stocks!

Colwin started with a few basic designs made out of Scandinavian redwood (somewhat denser than the sequoia redwood you get from B&Q or Wickes). He began by roughing down to round between centres and putting a tenon on one end of a number of blanks.

The first tree was made with a parting tool (far left), although it was first turned to a cone using a roughing gouge and the surface cleaned up with a skew chisel. The key to getting a good cut with the parting tool is to make the entry cut slowly and gently and to carefully pull the tool out at the end of the cut. Reduce the diameter of the middle as you go up the tree to give the impression of a tapering trunk. Colwin parts off the base slightly convex and sands it flat later using a sanding disk.

The second tree (far left) started in the same way but was cut with a skew chisel as a series of “v” cuts.

The third design uses the heel of a skew to make a series of flare cuts. Colwin prefers to start with a convex sided cone, although this is not necessary. Starting from the bottom of the tree, the tip of the heel is pushed in almost horizontally to make the flare.



The next tree was turned from Columbian purpleheart (not the more common Brazilian purpleheart). The shape is very simple and clean to show off the timber and finished with Hampshire Sheen Citrus Burnishing oil for a nice satin sheen.

Lastly a beaded tree made from a piece of tambuti. The beads were made with a small [Ashley Iles fluted parting tool](#). Colwin started by using the tool to make shallow cuts in order to mark out the spacing of the finished beads. It is necessary to leave the tops of the beads slightly flat to avoid chipping out the surface.



The final decoration was a bell, again made from Scandinavian redwood. The timber was turned to a cylinder and the outside roughly shaped, but not going too thin at the top of the bell in order to leave some strength for hollowing.

A 25mm forstner bit was used to do the bulk of the hollowing, followed by a 4mm drill to make a hole for a hanging ribbon. Even though it is in end-grain, Colwin prefers to use a bowl gouge to cut from the outside inwards with a bevel-rubbing cut.

The outside shape was completed and sanded before parting off.



## Gallery

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



A pair of owls by Phil O



A resin-rimmed platter by Tony R



Ebonised hollow form by Charlie W



A platter by Brian H



Flagon by Brian H



Banksia nut bowl by Tony R



Hollow form with pedestal and lid by CharlieW

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

## **Timber of the Month – Knob Thorn**



Knob Thorn (*Acacia nigrescens* aka. *Senegalia nigrescens*) is a hardy, small to large deciduous tree characterised by its knob-studded grey or yellow trunk and branches, which grows in savanna regions from West Africa to South Africa in rocky areas and on well drained soils. It is also known as Giraffe Thorn or Knoppiesdoring.

The tree grows upright between 6-18 meters (19-60 ft) in height. It has a straight single trunk which can reach diameter of 0.75 m (2 ½ ft) that branches out high up. It has a sparse, round and relatively narrow crown. There are woody knobs on the trunks of young trees and young branches of

older mature trees which are tipped with hooked spines.

The timber is reddish brown with a very fine, dense texture which looks something like a dark Iroko. It is a good turning wood, ideal for boxes and spindle work. It is a very hard timber which has exceptional impact toughness, thus a good material for wooden floors and has also been used to make fence posts and mine props. Locally it is used for walking sticks and fighting sticks known as a “knob-kirrie”. It is not a timber often used in furniture making. Knob thorn is very good quality firewood that produces long burning coals with a hot flame. It also makes a good bonsai subject.



The tall canopy attracts Paradise Flycatchers and hole-nesting birds, and it is the host plant of the Demon Emperor Butterfly. From August to November the tree produces sweetly-scented spikes of creamy-white flowers; the pollen and nectar from these flowers is food for numerous insects and birds.

Knob Thorn is an important browse tree for game animals; giraffes often browse on the flowers and foliage (hence its alternative name of Giraffe Thorn), while the seed pods and foliage are browsed on by a range of mammals, including elephants.

The claimed medicinal properties of the tree range from pain relief to healing eye-infections as well as breast enhancement and as an aphrodisiac. An ointment made from the roots has traditionally been used to treat convulsions.

### **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 <mailto:newsletter@madturners.co.uk>.

Thanks, Dave H