
July Newsletter

2011 Committee Management

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Hi everyone,

I would like to welcome all new members. Its great to see our club is forever growing.

Thank-you to everyone who came along to celebrate our Christmas in July it was a great night to have a drink, a bite to eat and a chat outside the club. Look forward to next years.

We have the Gold Coast Show coming up. I hope everyone is busy turning new and creative items to enter into the show. Last year we had a great turn out and a big display. It would be great to see the same again this year.

Until next time.

Enjoy tuning.

Eddie– president.



Several months ago the Committee was offered the services of Robbo for a 'training weekend' in relation to spindle turning. The Committee jumped at the chance and organised two one day workshops. The first was on Saturday 28th of May and was targeted towards the beginner to intermediate level. The second day was on Sunday 29th of May and focussed on the intermediate to advanced level turner. Ian Robertson, better known as Robbo, is a professional spindle turner from Melbourne with a business named Cobb & Co Woodturning. Robbo specialises in turning that others cannot or will not attempt. His prize lathe is a custom built lathe that will turn telegraph poles up to 8 metres long. Robbo turns everything by hand (no CNC machines in sight). His skill with a Skew is renowned in woodturning circles.

10 members arrived early on the Saturday morning eagerly awaiting what was in store. The day started with how to tune a lathe and ensure that the toolrest is in optimum condition. We were all very quickly filing away nicks and scratches to make sure that the tools can slide smoothly along the rest. Robbo explained the importance of ensuring that the toolrest is kept in perfect condition. Next all the beds of the lathes were cleaned and WD40 applied – Robbo explained that WD40 is better than Silverglide on lathe beds as tailstocks can "travel" during turning if Silverglide is used. Robbo then produced a green piece of plastic known as a 'Taper mate'. The taper mate ensures that the headstock and tailstock tapers are clean of any grit or build-up. This is a product many of us had never heard of and certainly is a must have for anyone wanting to spindle turn.



Robbo gave us a good talk of spindle turning tools. He covered the differences between bowl gouges and spindle gouges, the different types and makes of spindle gouges, then of course the various skew chisels. He also outlined the advantages and disadvantages of the various chisels and their uses.

With the lathes cleaned and tuned and the foundations of spindle turning tools explained it was time to put some wood on the lathe and get some chips flying. Pine was the chosen wood for the day. Pine is easily found and "if you can get a good finish on pine you can get a good finish on anything". Initial roughing down took place and it was time to brush up on beads and coves.

Robbo demonstrated how to do the beads with the skew and the coves with the spindle gouge. The group started with the skew doing beads over and over again. He watched individuals guiding them on improvements and what they were doing wrong when things didn't go right. It took a while but everyone grew more confident using the dreaded skew. Different angles of holding the skew were discussed and rationale for each method explained.

I didn't turn on the Saturday and unfortunately couldn't spend the day there. The highlight of the day for me was returning in the mid afternoon to see a fellow club member with a grin from ear to ear now feeling confident to use a Skew Chisel. I'm sure that he will refine his technique and now more often pick this tool up in preference to others.

The day culminated in the turning of a Dibbler. Ah what I hear you say – a Dibbler (or Dibble) is a long cone shaped instrument with a handle on one end used for pushing into soil for the planting of seeds and seedlings. Three main tools are used in turning it – the Skew Chisel, the Spindle Gouge and the parting tool.

Everyone finished the day having learnt the basics of spindle turning – several eager to return the following day to refine the skills learnt.

12 members arrived bright and early on Sunday morning eager to get started. The day started off in a similar way to Saturday with tuning the lathe, dressing the toolrest and use of the taper mate covered.

Robbo went on to outline the basis for the tools that he regularly uses for Spindle turning – of particular interest was the use of the traditional forged spindle gouge as opposed to the newer type that is machined from round bar. Below is photos of each.

Spindle Gouge Round Bar



1.1/4" Forged Spindle Gouge



Robbo discussed the difference between spindle and detail gouges and showed us the best grinds and applications to use for each.

The Skew chisel and best grinds was discussed in detail. The angles of the skew from the horizontal, the angle of grind, the straight and curved versions, plus the flat or curved shaft types. Some of us later found out that our grinds were too long and this led to less control and being able to cut nice 'spirals' at random.

The course of the day on Sunday differed in the afternoon with the topic of how to turn 4 matching Coffee table legs. Robbo provided us with one of his designs to use as a template (Put copy of design in here). The table leg design was turned from 70mm x 70mm x 430mm pieces of dressed Silky Oak. The wood used had to be dressed square as the square section remained at the top of each leg. Mounting the timber dead centre then became essential.

Interestingly with the design there were only two cuts required to depth – the rest of the leg is turned by eye. We all used a piece of plywood with nicks cut in the edge to use as a marking board so each leg is marked exactly the same. This board is placed up against the headstock to provide an easy reference point.

We then all set upon trying to turn the leg, some with more success than others. One of us found that it is essential to use a parting tool that is wider than the Calipers to prevent going too deep. In conclusion Robbo went from lathe to lathe to constructively critique each piece.

Again we all had a fantastic day and left with a wealth of knowledge that will set us all in good stead the next time we tackle between centre work.

A special mention has to go to Col who came both days, not to turn, but to cater for the hungry mob. He did a fantastic job and cooked up a storm on both days!!

I look forward to future visits from Robbo and encourage anyone that didn't come along to consider coming next time. To the people that did come – thank you for helping make the two days a great success.



Note on usage of Vicmarc Lathes

We have just replaced another Variable Speed Unit on number 5 lathe. This is the second Variable Speed Unit that the club has needed to replace within the past 12 months. Each time the cost to the club is approximately \$1200 (\$900 for the unit + \$300 for an Electrician to remove the old unit and install the new unit). The Club cannot afford in excess of \$2000 per year to maintain the Variable Speed Drives in working order.

I have spoken with the Company that distributes the Variable Speed Units to try and problem solve why this is occurring. The most likely reason is that members are not using the stepped pulleys when turning large items. When turning a large item the belt needs to be changed to the appropriate pulley. This will mean that the motor can rev faster for the same speed therefore placing less load on the motor and in turn the Variable Speed Drive.

The Vicmarc VL300 lathes have three-step pulleys providing three ratios: 1:1 for small to medium size work, 1:2 for medium to large work and 1:3 for large work.

There is a VL300 Variable Speed Long Bed available with outboard turning setup and accessories. This machine was purchased new approximately 18 months ago shortly before the owner was diagnosed with a terminal illness. It is now being offered for sale. This is an opportunity to obtain a secondhand lathe that is in as new condition. If anyone is interested please contact Todd on mobile 0408879209.

The Redcliffe & District Woodcraft Society are holding a get together on Sunday the 2nd of October. They have invited anyone from several clubs to attend including Gold Coast Woodturners Inc, Blackbutt Woodies and Caloundra Woodies. There will be a BBQ on the day and demo's from 9:30am - 3pm. If anyone is interested in going let me know and I will organise a car pool for the trip up.

This is a fantastic opportunity to meet people from other clubs and see what the other clubs are currently doing. I will forward out more information when it becomes available.

Todd