

Shropshire Association of Woodturners

Annual
Review 2025



Chairman's Introduction

I look forward to welcoming all members of the Club to our AGM. It is an opportunity to look back on the last year and forward plan for the next. It gives all members an opportunity to put their views on the club, what it does well and what could be improved.

I have enjoyed my 3 years as Chairman immensely but now feel it is time to pass the baton to someone else. I feel that we have had a good year as a club with a healthy membership and interesting meetings. I have felt very supported by members throughout the three years and would like to thank you all for that.

I would especially thank all the committee members for their very active roles in the running of the club, and especially for their, and many other members, support during my recent surgery. I am now well on the way to, I hope, full recovery.

The committee is asking for your help in some of the decisions that need to be made for next year and have put forward a number of matters for you to consider and vote on. It is your club, and it is important to hear every members opinion,

Julian

Membership

Membership for 2025 numbers 43, 4 more than the previous year. We have had 20 guests attend club nights and 4 have then gone on to join the club. Welcome to: John Twyford, Richard Shearing, John Peel and Alan Hughes.

Members are essential to keep the club alive - Without members there would be no club and membership fees is the biggest income for the club.

We are the *Shropshire* Association of Woodturners and we would like every woodturner (or person thinking of starting turning) in the county to be a member.

The number of woodturners in the county is hard to ascertain. The best estimate is somewhere around 300 but some of these may be some distance from Bicton. Shropshire is a big county and journey times to Bicton will be a barrier to some people joining. They may even be



Club members enjoying Emma Cook's November demonstration

geographically closer to clubs in other counties.

New members typically find the club from a Google search. Promotion to raise awareness of the club this year focussed around the All Day Event.

Club Nights

The club has held 15 events this year, including the AGM. This includes: 9 professional demonstrators (one live from Canada via Zoom); 7 hands-on nights and an additional demonstration at a hands-on meeting by club guest Aaron Smith.

Typically, 25 to 30 members attend monthly club nights, with around half of members attending more than half of the events. There is little difference in attendance numbers between hands-on or demonstration meetings.

Nine professional turners have demonstrated to the club: Long established turners such as John Boyne-Aitken, Peter Dixon and Phillip Greenwood,; rising stars such as Nathanael Griffiths and Katie Armstrong, and club regulars Emma Cook and Kade Bolger.

These demonstrator costs are the key expense for the club and the amount demonstrators charge has increased significantly over recent years: The average in 2023 was £174, for this year it was £237 and it is forecast to be £246 in 2026.

The committee is evaluating ways of minimising these costs by using more local demonstrators, and coordinating events with other local clubs to share any mileage or accommodation charges.





Hands On nights are precisely that - the opportunity for members get hands-on practice and instruction, or to show and discuss what they have made. Topics have included sharpening, finishing and *luminaires* legislation! Thank you to all who have contributed.

The *raison d'être* of the club is to learn and improve turning quality and the Challenge is a key part of that. This year the Challenges have moved to Hands-On nights. Previously, challenges were a case of "*Joe Bloggs deux-points*", hastily sandwiched between the demonstrator sessions, refreshments and a raffle. Moving them to the Hands On nights means there is more time dedicated to the Challenge.

Another change to the Challenge this year is that entries have not been scored. There have been no *winners* or *losers*. Members are encouraged to bring their Challenge turning along and discuss any lessons learned and to answer questions from other members. Stephen Ball's inside-out turning in particular sparking good discussion.

The number of items entered for each challenge has steadily increased through the year with close to 20 entries for the *platter* Challenge.

The club also made and presented of 26 wig stands to the MacMillan Trust which were gratefully received by Ella Sadd from the Shrewsbury branch.



Health & Safety

The annual risk assessment for meetings was completed.

Safety briefing documents for meeting attendance and lathe best practice have been produced and made available to members.

A new and improved safety screen has been constructed.

Insurance costs the club £362

Raffle

The raffle brought in £732 profit to club funds. Each attendee buys, on average, 2 tickets (£2) at a club night: Some buy none, others more. Some prizes are donated and some purchased by the committee using club funds. The committee has spent many hours pondering how to generate more income from the raffle. Which prizes are best? One high value prize, or more lower value prizes? Wine? Or wood? The committee welcome your thoughts.

Tools & Wood, Tea & Coffee

Money from sales of wood, commission on sales of retiring turners workshop contents and all your 50 pence pieces for the tea and cake have all helped contribute £711 to club funds.

A big thank you from the committee to all who have contributed.





All Day Event

The club held an All Day Event in September, where Katie Armstrong and Dan Smith demonstrated. The goal was to have 50 attendees. This was to cover the costs and to make some profit from the day for club funds.

It was also the main marketing event of the year for the club: Turners, and potential turners, in Shropshire were targeted by a number of activities: Ads in Revolutions (the AWGB newsletter); inviting neighbouring clubs; posters in Men's Sheds around the county and other locations such as Shrewsbury market hall; Being featured in Shropshire What's On and approaching local radio, print and online news channels with a *press release* to try to get coverage.

The event had 48 attendees: 21 SAW members and 27 non-members. Most of these were from neighbouring clubs and even as far as West Suffolk!

Feedback was very positive - *"11 out of 10!", "Really enjoyed it!", "Food was great and the hosts welcoming"*.

Total income was £1,100 and costs were £871, with demonstrator costs being £510 of this. Other costs were hall hire, raffle prizes and lunch ingredients.

The net profit on the the day was £238. Without any attendees from neighbouring clubs the day would have made a loss of £302.



Communications

At the last AGM there were a number of points raised around *communications*: the low number of web hits; the desire for a club chatroom; a public Facebook profile. This prompted a survey of club members on their communication preferences.

The key findings were:

The newsletter/email was the most read communication, with everyone reading it.

Most respondents visit the website, however a quarter only visit the site once a year.

Only 25% use the Facebook page monthly and a third have never visited the page.

The most important club communications are, in rank order:

- 1. Details of coming events - most importantly the NEXT one, but also the full year calendar.*
- 2. Reports on the professional demonstrations.*
- 3. Details of future challenges.*

New club members searched the internet to find a suitable club, not Facebook.

The club's communications were revised to reflect these findings:

Newsletters always include details of the next 2 club events and the full year calendar. The newsletter also includes a report on the last club night's activity - demonstration or challenge.

The website has been streamlined, making it easier to find key information. It also includes a chatroom - as yet little used.

Of these the website is the only channel with a cost - £76 p.a. domain and hosting fees. It typically receives 150+ unique visits per month. The most popular pages being, in rank order: homepage, calendar and map.

The website *is* the main information source for non-members looking to join the club. The number of these are small, with only 300 turners in the whole county and a small



proportion looking to join a club at any point.

People looking to offer redundant equipment or wood to the club also make contact via the website, 6 this year.

At 45/mth Facebook hits are lower than the website, reflecting the survey results.

Financial Summary

Income:

Membership fees	£1,755
Other income	£1,140
Raffle	£1,021
Tool sales	£ 303
Wood sales	£ 258
Refreshments	£ 152
Guest membership	£ 75

Total £4,704

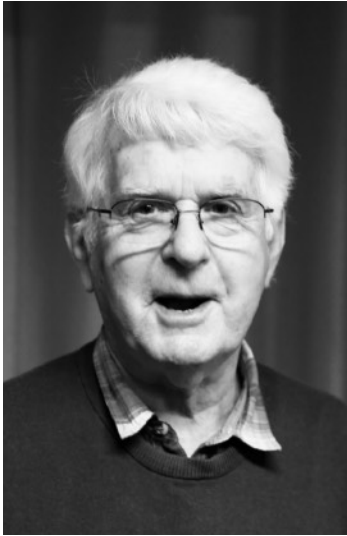
Expenditure:

Demonstrators	£2,411
Hall Hire	£ 645
Insurance	£ 362
Admin	£ 314
Club Equipment	£ 332
Raffle prizes	£ 289
Refreshments expenses	£ 259
Sales as Agent	£ 140

Total £4,752



The Committee 2025



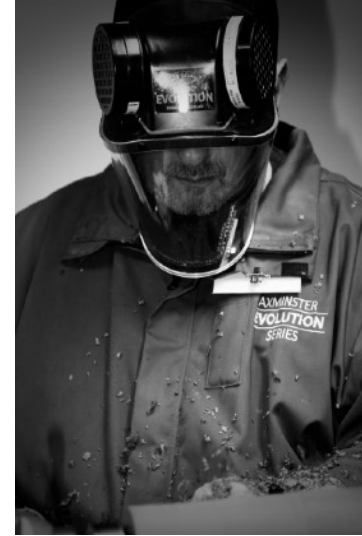
Julian Birch - Chair



Mick Caddick



Peter Eccleston



Ian Feldmesser



Graham Hewitt - News & Web



Paul Plant - Secretary



Brian Scrivens - Treasurer



Duncan Secker - Vice Chair



Alex Woodfine

Jeff Billing resigned from the committee during the year and the committee would like to thank Jeff for all of his contributions.