

# Your Turn

## HAMPSHIRE WOODTURNERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume 17, Issue 4

Winter 2006



### About us

Hampshire Woodturners' Association meets at the Railway Institute, 2 Romsey Road Eastleigh (02380 612270) on the first Monday of each month (the second or third if the first is a bank holiday). Meetings start at 7.30 and finish around 10.00. Most meetings feature a talk or demonstration about a turning or related subject by a club member or an invited guest. Several times a year we have "turn-ins" with lathes being operated by members demonstrating various techniques. There is a club shop selling various turning sundries, and a library. Members can advertise things for sale or wanted. Every month members are invited to bring work for the gallery and there is usually a critique of selected items. There is also a monthly project for novices with the opportunity to discuss the problems encountered and overcome. Refreshments are served at a mid evening break when members can catch up with the latest gossip. A raffle rounds off the evening.

Membership is £17 per year with a joining fee of £5 for new members. Potential new members are welcome to come along and visit us without obligation or charge.

There's a Web Site too:-

[www.hants-woodturners-hwa.co.uk](http://www.hants-woodturners-hwa.co.uk)

### Contacts

**Chairman.....Roy Nailor 023 80861893**  
**Secretary.....Ian Woodford. 01962 854528**  
**Treasurer.....Alan Sturgess 023 80892622**  
**Membership... David Ackroyd 01489 784985**  
**Turn-ins ..... George Gale 02380 265195**  
**Newsletter..... Dave Gibbard 02380 262660**  
**Webmaster..... Jon Gibbs. 01962 774051**  
**Lottery.....Chris West 01794512718**

And the address for your Newsletter contributions:  
7 Balmoral Close Chandlers Ford SO53 1TG  
d-m.gibbard@dsl.pipex.com

### In this issue:-

#### EDITORIAL

#### REVIEW OF EVENTS

- 4 September – Gary Rance
- 2 October – Colin Simpson
- 6 November – Pen making
- 8 & 9 September – Yandles Autumn Show

#### COMING EVENTS – HWA MEETINGS

- 4 December – Stuart King
- 15 January – Les Thorne
- 5 February – Turn-in

#### PROGRAMME FOR 2007

#### LOTTERY GRANT UPDATE – Chris West

#### TRAVELLERS' TALES

- Loris Marazzi – Dave Gibbard
- Encontros - Colin Spencer
- Shieldhall – Roy Nailor

#### PROJECTS

- Tin Inlays – Jon Gibbs

#### SIGNING OFF

With a cautionary tale from Ian Woodford

## EDITORIAL

This is my penultimate issue as I will be standing down in April. No, I really mean it this time. I have enjoyed editing Your Turn for the past 6 years plus though it has not been without its frustrations. However, I have felt for some time that my enthusiasm and source of ideas has been waning and the Newsletter would benefit from a fresh approach. Also there are other personal demands on my time which I won't bore you with.

I tried to give the Newsletter a Magazine style with a name, pictures and more articles of broader interest. I was particularly keen on the front cover. It was with reluctance that I dropped it earlier this year to limit the number of pages to keep copying and distribution costs under control. We had hoped to distribute a large proportion of copies electronically via the website but had to revert to 100% postal distribution when this failed. (Though of course you can still read Your Turn on the website and download it ).

I would like to continue contributing articles and would be happy to help the new editor get set up though I would not want to cramp his (or her?) style.

I've had no serious volunteers yet but if anyone is prepared to consider taking over I would be pleased to work with you on the Spring 2007 issue (my last) to get you started. It would be a pity if the Newsletter were to become at best a bulletin sheet for announcements for want of someone willing to put in a bit of creative effort.

*Dave Gibbard. Editor*

## REVIEW OF EVENTS

### **4 September - Gary Rance (Barracking by Stuart King).**

Gary introduced himself in his own inimitable way and gave a brief history of how he became involved in woodturning. After leaving school at a fairly early age he was offered two jobs from the local job centre, metal turning or wood turning. A flip of a coin and the rest is history. He served a three year apprenticeship then joined another turning firm. Emphasis was always on speed. A little while later he was sacked after a disagreement with the boss and promptly became self employed. From that day he has never looked back.

After a short discussion on safety he turned on the lathe and gave a demo on how to use the various tools with particular emphasis on the skew. His mastery of tool use was a pleasure to behold. He then touched on the use of copying fingers he uses in his production work. These enable him to turn quickly and accurately. He uses very little abrasives as most of his work is finished by the firms he supplies. The exception is obviously to shops, where he finishes to perfection.

Gary then set about making his trade mark candle stick which involves both spindle and face plate work. In his own workshop he can make the stems at the rate of ten an hour. The base is quicker still. He demonstrated the 'professional' way to apply baize and how to refit the stem to the base when the spigot is too loose. This was followed by a short description and demo on tool sharpening. Throughout the evening Gary never missed the chance to promote his new video which shows in detail all the points he covered during his demo. I believe the club library have bought a copy.

His critique of our gallery pieces was crisp and to the point with no punches pulled. All in all, a good evening and we look forward to seeing him again at our December meeting when it will be his turn to barrack Stuart King.

*Ian Woodford*



## 2 October – Colin Simpson

Roy opened the meeting with the usual announcements and a reminder that he will be stepping down as chairman next year as will the editor of Your Turn. A couple of vacancies there you might like to think about.

Roy also remarked on how little work there was on the novice table. It is an ongoing struggle to keep up the interest and John has already indicated he is unlikely to continue. Shame.

Tonight the new lathe and video system bought with the lottery grant had its first outing and the guinea pig was our guest for the evening, Colin Simpson. Colin is soon to be the ex editor of Woodturning magazine and if anyone is interested in applying, talk to Colin as nobody has been appointed yet. (*Hey, Colin, I asked first – Ed*)

Apart from his journalistic work, Colin is a full time production turner of mostly faceplate items. He started by talking about converting wood.

For logs around 12" diameter he would cut them lengthwise into 4 slices and rough turn to about 1" wall thickness, wax the end grain then kiln dry for several weeks. In that time the rough bowls will distort but hopefully not split. If you haven't got a kiln, just let them dry in a cool place, finishing in a warmer place. You married men will find your wives like nothing better than a stack of damp wood in the airing cupboard.

Drying naturally takes longer and there is greater residual moisture content making it more likely that the finished item will move a little.

Larger logs would be quartered before roughing. Small branches should be kept in as long lengths as possible so that the ends which will split do not waste the whole log.

His main theme for the evening was platters and decorating the rims. As he turned an ash platter there were many useful tips and discussion about chucking and how to present the gouge to the wood. He was only decorating the rim but he turned the whole platter and sealed the inner dished part. This was to prevent the stain he would be using on the rim from penetrating the pores and emerging on the unstained surface. He used a Sorby tool to texture the rim before applying red and black acrylic paint from a spray can then took a fine cut of the dished centre to remove the over spray before finishing that. He also showed another method of stippling with brushes. He used 3 colours of powder paint suspended in meths. He prefers spirit to water as it does not raise the grain. He used all 3 brushes together. He then applied liming wax, removed the excess with Danish and burnished with a cloth. Nice items and completed in a short time as befits a production turner.

Whilst waiting for the paint to dry, Colin reviewed the gallery which contained some very nice pieces of work. (Pictures on website)

Generally the video display system worked well and the close ups on the large screen gave everyone a better view than would have been possible without it. One teething problem that has since been addressed was the glare from the spotlights being too much for the cameras so Colin had to work in rather subdued lighting (*picture below*).

*Editor*



## 6 November – Penmaking event

The hall had been redecorated since our last event. Gone was the sticky carpet for the time being and the lighting was much improved. Roy opened with the usual announcements and pleas for volunteers to stand for chairman next year, for newsletter editor and helpers for the lottery project. More elsewhere in this issue.

Roy then handed over to Ian Woodford who, with Harry Butler and Matthew Stafford, would be telling us all we ever wanted to know about pen making. Harry in particular has a long experience in this area and has won the Axminster Tools prize for his work and was invited to demonstrate by them.

Ian started by talking about preparation of blanks, cutting diagonally to give an interesting grain pattern and drying for 4-6 months to stabilise. He also uses stabilised blanks which have been impregnated with resin and are available in various wood, often coloured. He uses Craft Supplies USA, who have a large range of good quality materials and tools. Despite the internet, shipment and importation they are quick and the cost is low.

Ian drills the blanks on the lathe, and scuffs the outside of the brass inserts with a flap sander for better adhesion. Polyurethane is his choice of glue over the faster Cyanoacrylate (see his cautionary tale later in this issue.)

## Penmaking continued...

The pen parts are slid on a proprietary jig and turned between centres.

Harry has developed various special jigs to speed up the process. He uses a jig to cut the blanks on a bandsaw and then drills on a pillar drill with a wooden clamp to hold a number of blanks. He showed an interesting bed of nails which, contrary to rumour he does not sleep on but uses to keep the 2 parts of each blank to avoid getting them mixed up. Matthew spoke about "alternative materials" by which he means any plastic which will cut. His sources include buttons and beads from Oxfam shops to sheets of plastic falling off lorries. He demonstrated turning a number of pieces mounted together on the jig like a kebab skewer. Finishing is by sanding (don't forget the mask, some of these materials can irritate) and polishing with Tcut.



*Selection of pens from Harry left and example of plastics turned by Matthew, below.*



## 8 & 9 September Yandles Autumn Show

The twice yearly pilgrimage to the Yandles show greeted everyone with the familiar scene of demonstrations, trade stands, refreshment areas, galleries and hobby area. Fortunately the day was dry and parking easy because of this.

The show is popular, partly because it's free and partly because people like the informal atmosphere generated by the utilisation of the saw mill area. However, I hear that the numbers were down this time but individual spend per customer was up. Is their attendance trend mirroring other national shows? I don't know but familiarity does breed contempt and I feel that shows like this do need to be refreshed and a different approach used to attract the buying public. Trade incentives are used to get people buying but to see mainly the same turners demonstrating and the same routines being followed around the show area is becoming a little boring.

One refreshing change was to see our own Les Thorne there in his own right and attracting good audiences to his lively demos. Well done Les.

I achieved my objective by purchasing a Microclene Air Filter from Ron French at an attractive price. My other aim was to visit Axminster Power Tools on the same day. I am just setting up a new workshop and needed some bench and storage equipment.

All in all, a successful day out but I might think twice about going next year unless they can apply a different approach to the show.

*Ian Woodford*

## COMING EVENTS

### 4 December – Stuart King and friends

Woodturning with a festive flavour.

### 15 January – Les Thorne and the skew

*Note the later than usual date*

### 5 February – Turn-in

## PROGRAMME FOR 2007 – Ian Woodford

15 January	Les Thorne, spindle turning	2 July	Les Thorne solo turn-in
5 February	Turn-in	6 August	Social & bring & buy
5 March	Simon Hope, pewter inlay	3 September	Adrian Smith, turning balls
2 April	AGM & Chris Pouncy (Sorby)	1 October	Turn in
21 May	Phil Irons, wooden hats	5 November	Alan Sturgess
4 June	Daniel Garner, (wheelwright) & Chris West	3 December	Quiz

## Lottery Grant – Progress Report



As you will be aware we have now purchased the necessary audiovisual equipment we need to improve the members' viewing of our demonstrator's turning. Another objective of the Lottery Fund grant was to offer talks/presentations and demonstrations to all age groups within the community.

I am now in the process of trying to build up a database of clubs/groups and schools who may wish to invite us to present to their members.

To help me achieve this **I NEED YOUR HELP.**

**Please could you all spend 5 minutes thinking of 3 clubs/groups in your locality who you feel would be interested in a visit from us.**

Let me know through any of the contact points below.

If we **all** put our minds to it I could end up with over 300 potential groups to contact. Please take a few moments from your busy lives for me .....

Don't forget we still need members who are willing to help out with presentations. If you can help either with demonstrating on the lathe, speaking at a visual presentation or with storage and transport, I'd like to hear from you.

*Chris West*

Tel No: 01794 512718

Email: [chris@westwoodturnery.co.uk](mailto:chris@westwoodturnery.co.uk)

## TRAVELLERS' TALES

**Loris Marazzi** by Dave Gibbard



The pictures will give you some idea of the quality and humour of his work and the website has much more. If you go to this spectacular city before it slips beneath the rising sea and you are suffering from an over-rich diet of art galleries and churches, I can recommend a visit to Loris in the Campo S. Margherita. You can have a chat to this very nice man and be bowled over by his work. There's also a café a few doors away that the tourists don't seem to have found where you can get a drink or a coffee without taking out a mortgage.



*Carved coat complete with carved hanger.*

Arriving in Venice by train is very civilised, affording tantalising glimpses of the great historical city as the train crosses the lagoon whilst cocooned in calm. Peace was shattered immediately on leaving the train to join the throng trying to make sense of the water bus routes. We eventually found the refuge of our hotel right by the Rialto bridge and spent the next few days exploring the treasures. It was on such a walk that I noticed an old poster on a wall showing some very interesting woodcarving of everyday items by Loris Marazzi. So we went to look him up.

His tiny shop is also his workshop and is crammed with carvings of coats, hats, parcels, umbrellas, washing on lines etc. The accuracy and realism was uncanny. Loris was there, working on a furled umbrella. Fortunately his English put my Italian to shame and we had a nice chat.

Although I'd not heard of him, he seems to be well enough known to make a decent living from private clients via his shop, word of mouth, participation in local artistic events and his website ([www.lorismarazzi.it](http://www.lorismarazzi.it)). Almost everything he makes is a commission and over a third of his output goes to British customers. He had a full size carved coat stand complete with coats and a walking stick that he was crating up to go to Chichester. I thought better of offering to deliver it.

He uses mostly pine from the northern Italian mountains with some hardwood for finely detailed parts. Everything is carved from wood, even the string on parcels and the wire on coat hangers. He uses waxes to finish and though he does not colour the wood, he does use waxes of different shades to get some contrast.



*These boots aren't made for walking*

## Entrecos Symposium by Colin Spencer



*Turned items at the Entrecos exhibition*

I moved to Spain nearly three years ago and now live there in retirement. My wife and I decided that we wanted to see more of our new country and so we decided to visit the Galicia region in North West Spain in September which we had heard was beautiful.

In February I read about a woodturning symposium in Galicia in September 2005. I made some enquiries and found it was organised by the Galician Artisans organisation and funded by local government but there was doubt about future funding.

In early August it was eventually confirmed that the event could be held as there was a promise of funds from the Galician government. Naturally I rescheduled our itinerary to take in the event (called an "Encontros") in A Fraga near Xermade for a couple of days. My long suffering wife would not allow me to attend for all four days as it was her holiday too!

The event was held in the workshop built next door to a barn which is used for residential training courses on woodturning and furniture restoration. The attendees (about 45) were split into two groups and there were two demonstrators. On Thursday they were Colin Simpson from Woodturning magazine and Nigel Maddocks from Robert Sorby. Colin demonstrated turning and decoration of bowls with stains and used both the Arbotech and Sorby spiralling/texturing tools. Nigel demonstrated the various range of specialist Sorby products such as the eccentric chuck, thread chasing and the spiralling/texturing tool. Their demonstrations were made all the more challenging by language problems. The two unpaid translators were working overtime.

On Friday the demonstrators were Manuel Castro, from Galicia, who was turning on a home made lathe with traditional Spanish hook tools and Carles Nicolas from Barcelona who demonstrated turning pens. Galician local television arrived and filmed some of the demonstrations and also interviewed Colin Simpson.

Turning with a hook tool is most challenging. It is used well below centre and is moved by the arms rather than the body. Some of the tools that Manuel used were his grandfather's and others were his great grandfather's. They were sharpened with a water stone and had handles about 3 feet long. I received some instruction from him in the use of this tool and found it most unusual. He let my wife have a go, which was very brave of him, as she had never shown any interest in turning before. She now says that she wants to have a go on my lathe (that will be another story).



*Colin trying the hook tool directed by Manuel*

A lot of the turners had not seen pen turning before and so Carles was in great demand. He gave an excellent demo and made a few converts of his countrymen to turning pens. During the morning a display was set up in the sports hall in Xermade about 15kms from A Fraga. This had two tool suppliers' stands, from Madrid and Majorca selling all the usual turning items. They sold a lot of pen mandrels and kits following Carles' demo. The exhibition comprised items brought by the Encontros attendees as well as other items turned locally. Some of the work was outstanding particularly some of the chanters on the bagpipes (a local instrument here too). The number of pieces on display from such a small number of turners was outstanding, if only HWA could get similar numbers on a Monday night.

We said our goodbyes late on the Friday night and heard later that the temperature on Saturday morning was only 2C, we were glad we left when we did as the workshop was unheated. We arrived home to our usual 30C; it was nice to be warm again. We had a great holiday in this part of Spain and can recommend it as a holiday destination; however, you do need to be able to speak some Spanish.

*Some more photos of the event are available at [www.turnspain.com/encontros.htm](http://www.turnspain.com/encontros.htm).*

## SS Shieldhall by Roy Nailor

Fuelling my interest in our engineering heritage I was given a 3 day "Engine Room Experience" course onboard the steamship Shieldhall for my "Big 60" birthday. As a result two fellow "apprentices" and I worked and slept onboard for three days.



Reminiscent of a bygone age, the 268ft long Shieldhall is berthed in Southampton. Built 1955 to a 30 year old design for Glasgow Corporation, she was bought in 1977 by Southern Water and passed into preservation in 1988. Two large oil fired boilers power the many steam engines on board, which range from two triple expansion 800hp main engines to deck winches, pumps and the rudder steering engine. Given her old world glory it's no surprise that she's often used for film and TV shoots. So far her most famous role was for the film "Titanic", during which her engine and boiler rooms were used to film the conditions in the great ship's engine room and the ensuing panic after the iceberg collision. Ship's maintenance and repair jobs are done by volunteers using the facilities of onboard woodworking, electrical and mechanical engineering workshops (with medium sized lathes and milling machines) to carry out the necessary work.

Day 1 of the intensive course began with a safety briefing followed by some steam theory. My entropy (or is it enthalpy?) knowledge isn't too hot anymore (forgive the pun) and so this was quite a challenge. Afterwards we were shown how to bunker the ship, light the boilers and bring them up to 150psi working pressure. Taking it easy, for she's an elderly lady, raising steam from cold takes two days - just right for day 3; a seagoing trip with paying passengers to view the yachts taking part in Cowes week.

Day 2 dawned after a lovely dinner from the galley and a kip in one of the crew's cabins. Following breakfast, our day speeded up and we were kept "at it" by the Chief Engineer who taught us how to lubricate, start and run the various engines – all of which had their own foibles, some needing coaxing into life using a variety of wheezes (and the odd big hammer). I was interested in the steering engine, which turns the rudder via unusual gearing, and has an ingenious steam driven closed loop feedback mechanism to control the rudder position.

By day 3 we'd a better idea of how things worked and joined the engine room crew for the cruise down the Solent to Cowes. Dressed in my best blue boiler suit (with impressive and strategically placed greasy marks) I was stationed at the main engines and was busied keeping them lubricated as well as fault finding the ships telegraph that'd decided to go "u/s" at the last moment. You've all seen films where the bridge rings down for something like "Slow Ahead" and it's relayed at the engine room telegraph by bell "dings" and operation of the repeater levers. On Shieldhall this works via a complex set of bells, wires, chains and pulleys - some of which had become entangled hence stopping the port side telegraph working. Luckily we fixed the problem en route to Cowes – a small triumph for our trio of apprentice engineers!

My wife was one of the passengers and, after giving her a special below decks tour, we spent time together admiring the various yachts with their brightly coloured sails. Shieldhall sits quite low in the water and travels very sedately thus she's an ideal photographic platform and we took some good shots of passing yachts.

Under the Captain's supervision I was allowed onto the bridge to steer the ship for a while. I also controlled the starboard main engine as we docked at the end of the voyage. Main engine revolutions are a mere 86rpm at ship's cruising speed, but there are an awful lot of rods, linkages, pistons and reversing gear whizzing about that you have to be wary of when you are at the controls.

Thus a very enjoyable three days and I was sorry to be paying off at the end of it. Anyone can join the ship's preservation society and help with her maintenance and restoration. So far there's not much evidence of any woodturning onboard, and some of the woodwork needs refurbishing. Should you feel the need to build a balustrade or do some cabin fitting then I'm sure that you'd be welcomed with open arms.

*Roy Nailor*

## Tin Inlays by Jon Gibbs

I've been experimenting with tin inlay work as those who saw my efforts at a turn-in earlier this year will know. I think that these inlays look best with a dark coloured timber and the picture shows examples in Mgrure (left) and African Blackwood. I use lead-free solder which is typically almost pure Tin (99.5%) with a little Copper added as a hardener. This is similar to lead-free plate pewter or Britannia metal which typically is 91% Tin, 3% Copper and 6% Antimony.

The description that follows is how I made the Mgrure box.



The first task is to rough-out the blank and cut the grooves to be inlayed. By experiment, I've found it slightly easier to form complete rings with grooves of approximately 3 mm wide by 2mm deep. This blank is approximately 50 mm diameter, but the smaller the diameter the more chance there is of getting a complete ring first time. Keep the edges of the grooves as sharp and clean as possible, consider defining them with the point of a skew before removing the waste with a fine parting tool. Keep the bottom of the grooves flat. I have tried cove-shaped grooves, but this wasn't successful.

If you plan to hollow out the blank later, it's handy at this stage to measure the diameter of the inside of the grooves, so you know when to stop!



Once we have the grooves we're ready to start. Wrap masking tape around the grooves – try to keep the tape taut to prevent it sinking into the grooves. Cut a slit in the tape into the groove and open-out the tape to form a square opening. Make a small funnel from aluminium cooking foil (2 or 3 layers thick) and place it over one of the holes.

Keep the funnel slightly above the hole in the tape and support it reasonably firmly with small strips of masking tape.



It's important to have the hole top-dead-centre otherwise the solder will only fill one side of the groove.

Cut a generous amount of solder into small billets (5 to 10 mm long), to make it easier to melt, and put into a suitable receptacle.

This is a small size (7oz) baked bean tin with a 1cm V-cut out in the side near the top, to act as a pouring spout.

Melt the solder. Tin melts at about 230°C so almost any small gas stove or blowlamp will work fine.

I have tried melting with and without, a small amount of flux but it seems to make little difference. The additional problem with flux is that it's flammable. Once the solder is well heated, heat up the edge of the vessel including the spout (V-cut out) and then quickly pour into the funnel. We need to get it in there before it cools too much!

There will be some overspill, but provided the surfaces around the mould are clean-ish you can easily remove the solder splashes and reuse them in the next melt.

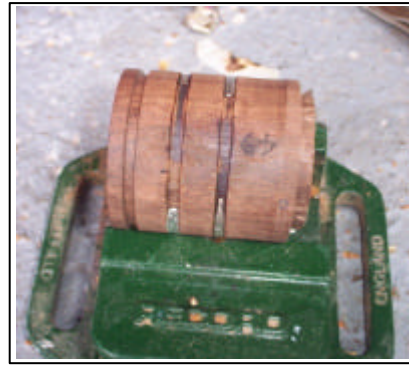
Continued...



## Tin Inlays continued...

Well, if you were hoping for a full ring of solder when you remove the tape then you may be disappointed at this stage (right)

But not to worry, we can repair this with a soldering iron and a bit more solder. Work slowly adding more solder and building up the ring a bit at a time until complete. Don't have too much solder molten at any one time as you proceed, or else there's a possibility that the molten solder will all run off in one go and you'll be back to square one!



Here the right hand ring is being made up. The results with the soldering iron are not neat, but we're aiming for a complete ring. Once the ring is complete, and there are no holes or gaps, then apply a generous amount of thin CA glue around the edges of the ring to hold it firmly in-place and take-up any slack, and "zap" with accelerator. The CA glue helps to hold things firm but take it steady to prevent the solder breaking up. Don't forget to wait a few minutes until you're sure that the CA glue will be completely cured before turning – it's quite common for the glue underneath to be liquid even after applying accelerator.

Then all that's needed is to patiently turn the ring flush with the surrounding timber (see above left hand ring). I recently saw a demo by Simon Hope, who advocates only turning the tin/pewter in short bursts of 3-4 seconds; allowing the metal to cool in between to prevent "dragging" of the surface.

Sanding is a bit tricky because the solder is quite a bit harder than the timber, and will tend to stand proud, so it's best to keep this to a minimum with the coarser grits, say less than 150. On the plus side, the solder does turn very easily with a gouge and produces beautiful fine shavings with normal HSS turning tools. Simon Hope collects these precious shavings for the next "melt".

I hope that this article has whetted your appetite for adding tin/pewter highlights to your work. I recently watched Simon Hope at John Davis' open day. He uses jewellery grade pewter, rather than my cheapskate variant, to decorate his immaculate turnings. He casts the pewter in a wooden or MDF mould turned to a generous size. The mould is placed flat on the bench for easier pouring. Simon then glues the pewter in-place with thin superglue and with the mould back on the lathe, turns the pewter part on all sides to form a completed item, parting it from the mould at the most appropriate point in the process. Finally, he attaches it to the wooden piece he is decorating. This procedure has the advantage of removing all of the roughly cast edges of the tin/pewter part which clearly makes for a better overall finish.

*Jon Gibbs*

## SIGNING OFF

I leave you with a cautionary tale from Ian Woodford:

"I had just received a batch of new style pen mechanisms and was eager to try one. Forsaking my usual polyurethane glue, I resorted to CA (superglue).

I was holding a nice blank of figured box elder between fingers and thumb and checked to see that the inside was coated with thin CA. In my other hand I held the brass tube with a blob of thick CA on it which I inserted and applied accelerator. I then went to put it down. Yes, you've guessed it; the blank was also glued to my fingers and thumb. Some thin CA had run out of the blank. The immediate reaction is to try and pull it off but the glue had really worked well. The situation was compounded when my wife knocked on the workshop door, and started laughing.

She reminded me that I had promised to drive her to a friends house a couple of miles away within the next few minutes. "Oh s—t" was my reply. This brought even more laughter. I was not a happy bunny!

Driving a car with a blank glued to ones fingers is not to be recommended especially with your wife laughing. However I managed it OK and arrived back home. I knew that the outer layer of skin is dead. I found a scalpel and very carefully cut away the blank. This took about an hour and my fingers were very sore.

I finished the pen the following day and it came out well but I shall keep that one as a reminder and since then I always wear gloves when gluing and always keep a bottle of debonder close by."

*Have a good Christmas – Dave Gibbard, Editor*