

# NEWSLETTER

October



2021

*This Months Sponsor*



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The Club takes reasonable care to operate and instruct in a safe manner and strongly recommends all members to follow the Club's Health and Safety rules and the guidance notes that the AWGB issue in their Revolutions magazine from time to time.

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	Giles Headley

Website: <http://www.coombeabbeywoodturners.org>

**Copy Deadline for the November 2021 issue of the Newsletter is:-  
Sunday 24th October 2021**

**Please forward your News, Stories and Photographs to:-  
Graham Ball - Newsletter Editor -**

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**From the Editor**



What terrible times we have been through and still are to some extent. I dread to think what life would be about now if the Covid-19 vaccines hadn’t been developed and brought onto the scene. But we have to stay positive and try to get on with our lives.

I ventured to Coombe Country Park on August bank holiday Monday to lend some support to our committee for putting on the open day. I only stayed for the morning but enjoyed my time there catching up with the news of other members present. Then on 18th September we had our first live demonstration for some time at Walsgrave Baptist Church where we were entertained with a demo by Gianni Deidda on the Scroll Saw. Again I was able to meet members and have a conversation and I can tell you, that lifted my spirits enormously. We have other events booked as you will see from the calendar of events on page 20 of this Newsletter.

All this is good news but we must remember the sad news that has befallen the families of some of our members and there is two obituaries on the pages of this magazine for you to reflect on.

*Graham*

## Chairman's Jottings

Hello All,

It is with a broken heart I have to inform you of the loss of our Vice Chairman "Alec Steedman".

A great friend and a valued member of our club. He could sell snow to the Eskimos. Sadly missed.

The second sad day was another loss of a great tutor who would help anyone, "Don Robins". So sadly missed by his friends and family.



Brian Edwards

Our first Demo on Saturday 18th., September with demonstrator Gianni Deidda was brilliant.

A great success and as all who attended enjoyed it, we will have him return next year.

We are having two more demonstrations this year, dates are published in the calendar of events in this newsletter.

For all members who would like to join us for the Christmas Party please let Lee Cartwright or Janine Brindley have your details, the more the merrier. Competition details will be in next months Newsletter.

Here's hoping you are all well and we look forward to seeing you all. Keep Safe and Keep Turning.

*Brian.*

oOo

*One Line Philosopher:*

Keep questioning until you reach that 'ah-ha' of understanding.

## Work by Brian Edwards



## November Newsletter Sponsor

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## Open Day at Coombe Country Park

Bank Holiday Monday 30th., August 2021

Coombe Abbey Woodturners held their first open day since Covid-19 struck at Coombe Country Park on August Bank Holiday Monday. A few members volunteered to turn up and erect the party tent on the



grass at the front of the visitor centre. Phil Steele brought along his pole lathe which he had made at home during the pandemic and he demonstrated to the public through-

out the day. Other members brought along items of work for sale and there was also a table with items for sale in aid of our nominated charity "The Air Ambulance". The day didn't go without some problems though as the generator which was needed to power a lathe refused to start probably due to it standing for







many months due to the pandemic. I am sure it will be ok for our next open day. It was noticeable that visitor numbers were down compared with what we have been used to in the past but I expect there are a lot of people who are nervous about attending pub-

lic events after being cooped up at home for so many months. As more and more members of the public are getting vaccinated



against Covid-19 I am sure confidence will return and we will be able to look forward to a more normal life. ■



## Work by Trevor Hodges.



Root Ball and Resin Bowl



Above and Below: Ash bowl with hand carved design



The root ball used for turning the bowl above.



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## Report of a Demonstration

By

### Gianni Deidda

At Walsgrave Baptist Church on Saturday 18th September 2021.

*Photography by Martin Hitchiner*

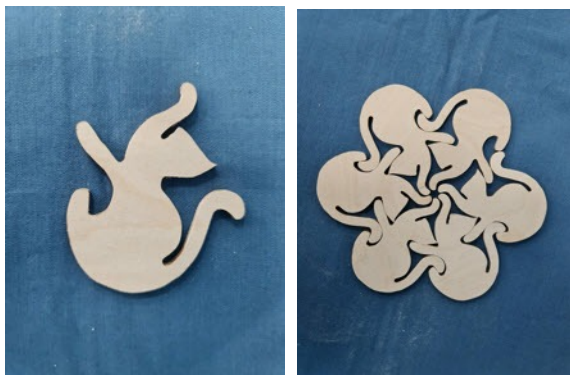
*Report by Graham Ball*

Our club has been hit hard by the pandemic, as have many other clubs, meaning we could not get together for a demonstration other than a virtual one online. However after 19 months we were able to have a get together for a meeting/demonstration at the Walsgrave Baptist Church on Saturday 18th September where we welcomed Gianni Deidda to demonstrate his skills on the scroll saw. What a fantastic demonstration it was for all the members who had ventured out to enjoy it.



Gianni Deidda

The doors opened at about 9am so that we could set up for the day. Gianni had arrived promptly and was helped by members to bring in all his equipment from his vehicle which in-



The image of the cat was cut from a stack of material and the resulting pieces rearranged as shown.

cluded not one but three scroll saws.

The demonstration started at 10am and Gianni introduced himself to the gathered company saying that he originated from Sardinia but had come to England and had married an English girl. He told us that he



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had been involved with the scroll saw since the age of eight so that told us that he had amassed an enormous amount of experience over the years. What followed amazed us all and I for one had not the slightest idea of what could be achieved on the scroll saw. Gianni asked for a show of hands



Two spare Scroll saws Gianni had brought with him.



Gianni used the Excalibur machine

First off, Gianni cut out some shapes of a cat and a dog from thin pieces of wood which didn't surprise us too much but then he started to cut a image of a cat using a stack of pieces and these formed into a larger and quite interesting

of those people who owned a scroll saw and quite a number of members raised their hands, then he asked how many used the machine on a regular basis and far fewer people raised their hands this time. Gianni said most people bought a scroll saw to do a particular job and then relegated it to a position under the bench not to be used for many months or even years and I am afraid that is exactly what I did not knowing its capabilities.



An example of 3D work

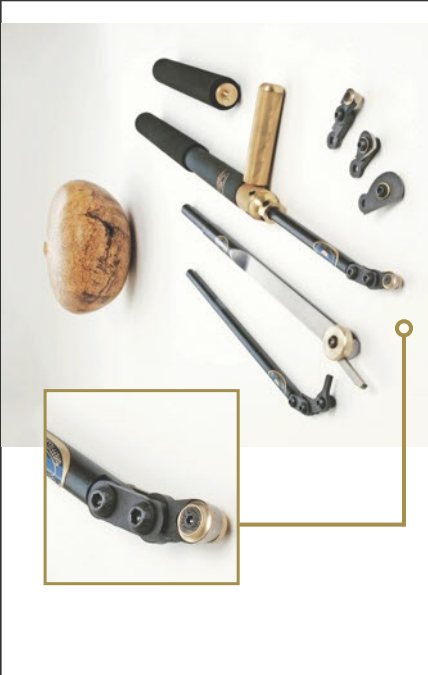


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pattern. Gianni then went on to 3D work which I hadn't realised was possible on the scroll saw. To make it easier to hold the work and keep fingers clear of the moving blade Gianni had made a simple clamp out of pine and a couple of bolts with wing nuts. Patterns were glued to the piece of wood using a tack glue making it easier for clean up later. The choice of blades for given jobs and species of wood was explained in detail



Clamp for holding small pieces whilst sawing.



Front and back view of a bowl cut on the scroll saw

and Gianni passed these around for his audience to inspect as he had done with the items of work he had produced. As was said at the beginning of this article Gianni had brought

along three machines and we were told the advantages and disadvantage of each machine, in fact the Excalibur machine which he had chosen to use for the days demonstration, he had



Another example of a bowl cut from a flat piece of wood



The rabbit on the left was cut from a piece of Copper. The Christmas decoration from Perspex.

substituted the metal table for a Perspex one saying that he could change the blade easier by looking through the table instead of bending down to look underneath to clamp the lower end of the





Another 3D design

one day demonstration but as the pictures accompanying this report shows many wonderful items can be achieved on the scroll saw given time and might I add, a little patience.

The day's demo sadly had to come to an end and we have to thank Jill Steedman and Alison Elliot for looking after us by their

blade. And talking of changing blades he informed us of the way he tensions them by pinging the blade with his finger and listening to the resultant tone emitted. This of course he admitted comes with experience.

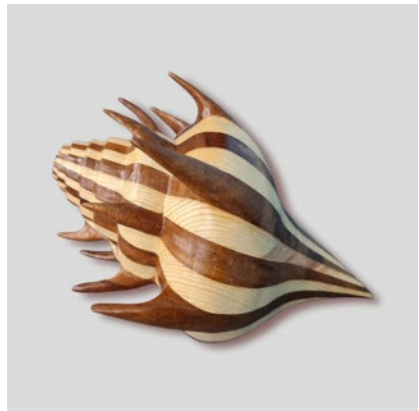
Choosing the correct blade Gianni demonstrated cutting Copper and even thin Steel as well as Perspex.

Some items of work which Gianni passed around the room took many hours to complete therefore not suitable for a



More complex work

tireless work in the kitchen serving up refreshments on the day including Jacket Potatoes at lunch time,



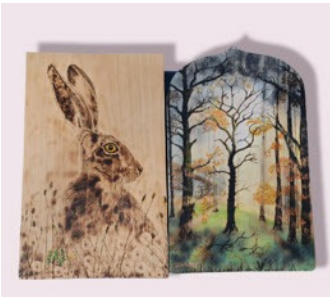
thank you very much ladies, it was very much appreciated especially at this very sad time for you both.



A few items of work were brought in by members for the gallery table and there was another two tables with items laid out for sale to those who were interested.

But finally our thanks to Gianni Deidda for an excellent demonstration which was appreciated by all present. ■

**NB:** The club have already booked Gianni to demonstrate again next March so I do advise anyone who missed this demo to come along in 2022.



These pieces of exceptional work were brought in and placed on the members gallery table.



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## Calendar of Events

23 October	<b>Demo - Mick Hanbury</b>	Baptist Church
13 November	<b>Demo - Dennis Wake</b>	Baptist Church
4 December	<b>Christmas Party/Competitions</b>	Baptist Church

### Next Meeting

On Saturday 23rd October at Walsgrave Baptist Church

10.00am to 4.00pm approx.

A Demonstration

by

**Mick Hanbury.**

Mick has demonstrated on a number of occasions at our club and never disappoints. It is therefore hoped that we have a very good attendance on this occasion, so please make a note in your diary for what is guaranteed to be an excellent day of woodturning brilliance.

### Coming Up

On Saturday 13th November at Walsgrave Baptist Church

10.00am to 4.00pm approx.

A Woodturning Demonstration

by

**Dennis Wake.**

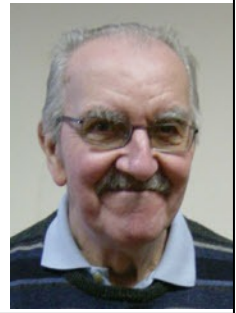
Dennis Wake will be a new demonstrator for Coombe Abbey Woodturners but looking at pictures of the work he has done I think we will be in for a treat. It is hoped that we will have a good attendance at this demonstration and I am sure no one will be disappointed.

## Notices

I have recently been informed that long standing club member **Gordon Horne** (pictured) passed away in July of this year. Gordon enjoyed attending demonstrations at our club and was also a member of the Coventry Woodcarvers Club.

We send our belated sympathy to Gordon's family.

*Editor.*



oOo

**IF THERE IS ANYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE  
BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF FELLOW MEMBERS  
PLEASE GET IN TOUCH WITH THE EDITOR.  
CONTACT DETAILS ON PAGE 2.**

oOo

### Results of the Monthly Workshop Raffle

The 50/50 Club raffle sold  
190 tickets = **£95**

Winning number is **136**.  
Drawn by a member of  
staff at Coombe.

Which means **£47.50** paid  
to the winner.

The club receives **£23.75**

Air Ambulance receives  
**£23.75**



## Obituary

### **Alec Steedman** 1953 - 2021



The late Alec Steedman

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of Club member Alec Steedman. Alec joined Coombe Abbey Woodturners on 27th May 2013 and became an active member of the club culminating in becoming Vice Chairman. In this role he supported our chairman through his own recent bereavements helping out by writing the jottings for the club newsletter on many occasions often at very short notice.

Alec was also involved with selling raffle tickets for the “Air Ambulance” the charity adopted by this club and it was very noticeable that if Alec had a stall outside the back door of our workshop at Coombe there were very few people passing that he could not manage to sell a ticket to. Alec also took charge of the Tombola stall at the Festival of Crafts enlisting the help of others in raising much appreciated funds for the charity.

Alec was also involved with the scouts and was instrumental in teaching them the art of woodturning at our workshop at Coombe on a number of occasions.

Always with a smile on his face and never a harsh word, Alec enjoyed a joke with the rest of us and many a time made a joke himself which sometimes wasn't immediately appreciated but the penny would eventually drop.

Alec Steedman will be greatly missed by this club and all the members in it, so many of us having fond memories of our contact with him.

I am sure that all our club members will join with me in sending our sincere condolences to his wife Jill, and family members at the very sad time.

RIP Alec Steedman.

*Editor.*

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**Obituary**  
**Don Robins**  
**1933 - 2021**



Sad to report that Club member Don Robins passed away On Monday 30th August 2021.

Don joined Coombe Abbey Woodturners on 1st October 2006 and I was privileged to conduct an interview with him which was published in this magazine in August 2008 as part of the “Your Turn To Talk” Editors interviews.

As a tribute to Don I am re-producing that interview now which will reveal so much about this extraordinary mans life. I am sure all our members will join with me in sending our heartfelt condolences to Don’s family.

**RIP Don Robins**

*Editor*

**Your Turn to Talk.....Don Robins**

(Editors Interview)

Don Robins was born in Salisbury, Wiltshire in 1933 and lived in several small villages around Salisbury.

Don was part of a family of eight and he says - ‘brought up during the war years was a very poor existence.

On leaving school in 1947, Don started work in a local garage earning £1 per week. The famous Wilton carpet factory was only six miles from Don’s home and they paid “Bobbin Boys” £3.50 a week - Don says that he wasted three years of his life at the carpet factory.

Living on Salisbury Plain, a very large military training area, Don saw the mass parachute drops in preparation for D Day and Arnhem and decided then that he would like to join the Army and in particular the Parachute Regiment when he was of age.

Don played a lot of football and was a very keen cyclist racing twelve and twenty five mile trials. This made him a very fit teenager which was going to help him a lot , later in his life.

Don say’s - ‘At age 17½ the time had arrived for me to fulfil my ambition



to become a paratrooper. I joined the army in 1950 and finally retired in 1998, a grand total of forty-eight years service. This consisted of twenty-three years in uniform followed by twenty-five years as a civilian instructor and examiner on driver training/maintenance of vehicles. For the twenty-five years civilian service I was awarded the ISM (Imperial Service Medal)'.

Army days did not start too good for Don; falling on a cross country run he suffered a very deep wound to his knee and was hospitalised for several weeks. On his return to the training depot Don says, 'I was harshly informed by an officer that as I had volunteered for the Para Regt I should pack my kit and report to Aldershot for the very tough two week selection course'.

The football and cycling helped Don to pass the famous selection course and off he went to the RAF parachute school and become a parachutist. Later in his career he became a parachute instructor and managed to do a few hundred "jumps".

During his career Don was selected for several instructors positions, such as Sergeant to train basic recruits, (50% pass), Sergeant instructor at the Para Regt Battle school, Sgt Major Instructor to the Berlize (central America) police force (forming a defence force).

Don says, 'I did reach the top by being promoted to WO1 / RSM'. ▶



A corner of Don's well organised workshop showing his Charnwood lathe and toolsharpening set up.



This box in Yew has good shape and form

so used to the Sgts greeting me with a very sharp ‘Good morning Sir’., now the Sgts walked past, not a glance, life was going to be so different’.

Before Don left the Army he passed the driving test for the I.A.M. (Institute of Advanced Motorists) both for cars and HGVs. He also qualified as an MOTADI (Ministry of Transport Approved Driving Instructor) and ran his own driving school (weekends/evenings) with a great success. Don Says - ‘So after 23 years the uniform and pace stick was put away. One day I was the Sgt Major everyone knew, the next morning I walked into a different army barrak as a civilian instructor. It was so different, I was



A selection of boxes with finials made by Don, some with inlaid fillers

The next twenty-five years of



A lovely display of work by Don Robins

Don’s life was going to be spent instructing soldiers, later the RAF and Navy, on driving all types of vehicles other than track vehicles.

In 1997 Don qualified as a driving examiner - Cars - HGV - Bus and Motor cycles. After 1000 tests it was time to retire. Don recently retired as a voluntary driver for the Walsgrave Hospital, after ten years service,

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A masterful piece of inside out turning by Don guided by the expert Ken Allen.

driving 8000 miles a year around and across Coventry, this he says became too much agro.

Don is now doing 2-3 days per week at the Age Concern workshops at the Gilbert Richards centre helping in the woodwork centre.

### **Q. When did you take up Woodturning?**

It was mid 2006 when on a bird watching visit to Coombe Abbey, I met Roy Nicholls who had a lathe for sale. I have always been interested in woodwork. I was a bird breeder for 25 years so I was always building nest boxes and aviaries and I did love DIY although having lost my dear wife 5 years ago I have rather lost interest in DIY.

### **Q. How did you learn of Coombe Abbey Woodturners?**

I have lived in Coventry for twelve and a half years and never heard of Coombe Abbey Woodturners until the day I met Roy Nicholls demonstrating at the Top Pool at Coombe. I had just gone along to do some bird watching which is another of my interests.

### **Q. What make of lathe do you turn on?**

I started off with a Record DML 24 which I bought off Roy, but I have since upgraded to a Charnwood lathe bought from Chris Barker. It has variable speed and a swivel headstock, 900mm between centres and about 310mm clearance over the bed.

### **Q. What other machinery and tools do you have in the workshop?**

I bought a lot of turning tools from Roy but have acquired others from shows etc. I have a texturing tool which I haven't used yet but intend to



Very attractive pieces decorated by using knitting needles. The clock is made from a reclaimed laminated kitchen worktop.





A selection of goblets of various shapes and designs some with captive rings

learn how to use it shortly. I have the BCT hollowing tool which I think is magic. With regard to machinery I have a bandsaw, table saw, pillar drill and lots of hand power tools.

### **Q. Have you had any professional tuition?**

Yes, I have been on a number of courses. In June 2006 I went to Craft Supplies and did all eight of their varying courses. I used to go for a week at a time and did whatever was being put on. I have also been to Axminster for a course and also had two days intro into woodcarving, but am not too keen to take this up seriously. I have also spent many hours with Chris Barker at Middleton Hall. I have booked to go on the “Norwegian Woodturning Cruise” in August, and hope to get some Hands-On under the eye of a few professionals.

### **Q. Who do you admire as a demonstrator?**

Mick Hanbury who taught me initially. I was very impressed with the demonstration of open segmented turning by Sue Harker, at Walsgrave recently, and hope to have a course with her next year.

### **Q. How much time do you spend at the lathe?**

I am probably doing woodturning most days in a week but the hours per day vary quite a bit, I have spent as much as seven hours in a day in the workshop.



This little wren is the result of Don's first attempt at woodcarving



Don enjoys turning boxes, and the picture above shows some fine examples of his work

**Q. What aspect of woodturning do you most enjoy?**

I like making little boxes of one kind or another. I admire John Whittles work and would like to achieve his standard of design and workmanship.

**Q. Do you turn green wet wood?**

I have turned some but without much success. I like to start on a project and see it through to a finish, so I haven't the patience to turn a piece rough and go back to it six months later to finish it.

**Q. What are your views on colouring wood?**

I would love to do some colouring of wood.

**Q. Have you done any Pyrography work?**

No, but I am going to have a go and I shall be having some lessons with Bob Neil on the woodturning cruise.

**Q. And Pierced work?**

Yes I have done a little. I have a couple of Dremels which I use and quite like doing this work.





Don has mastered the art of turning well formed eggs as these examples show. On the right is another lovely little box in Padauk

**Q. Have you attended other club’s meetings?**

I went to the Offchurch club with Fred Lapper to support Chris Barker when he was giving a demonstration. I felt sorry for Chris on this occasion as there was no interaction from the audience which we always get at a C.A.W.T. Meeting.

**Q. What other hobbies do you have besides woodturning?**

As mentioned earlier I go bird watching. When I retired my plan was to visit every RSPB reserve in the country. I have visited ten reserves so far and have been on six overseas holidays booked through “Bird Watching Magazine”.

**Q. What can the Coombe Abbey club do in the future to help its membership?**

I feel that more could be done to help new members, such as a couple or three at a time being invited to a more experienced members workshop, where they can discuss tools and equipment, probably have some tuition and it would also break the ice in letting them get to know each other. ■





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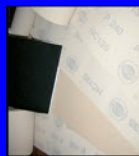


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## Back Cover Picture

This is a photograph of Leslie Ball father of the “*Newsletter Editor*” taken circa 1926 when he was then a young unmarried Man. He is standing outside the cottage where he was born in Chasetown, Staffordshire. Although the photo is not very clear he is beside his treadle operated Fret Machine and proudly displaying his work, which is a wall plaque of “The Lords Prayer”.

**Graham Ball comments:** I remember seeing this plaque on the wall in my Aunt’s house in Stoney Stanton, Leicestershire when I was just a young boy.

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## Activities of other clubs in the Midlands area

As a matter of courtesy and to ensure that there is space available to accommodate members wishing to visit other clubs demo's, please use the contact telephone number where shown.

### Hinckley & North Warwickshire Woodturners

October 5                      Resin Jewellery    Led by Barry Morley

Contact                      Steve Obrien      01788-521527

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### Tudor Rose Woodturners

October 28                      Live Demo                      Peter Carless

Contact                      Stan Bird              01788-813162

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### West Northants Woodturners

October 6                      Richard Findley              Demonstration

October 20                      Paul Hannaby              Demonstration

Contact                      Tom Donnelly              01327 349093

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### West Midlands Woodturners

October 17                      Demonstration              Andy Routhwaite

Contact                      John Hooper              0121 354 8464

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### Gloucestershire Association of Woodturners.

October 13/14    Evening & Full Day Demonstration              Emma Cooke

Contact                      Mike Holliday      01452 523551



Leslie Ball - see page 37 for details.