

Reader's showcase

John Hodgson shows us around his large workshop in the Scottish Highlands

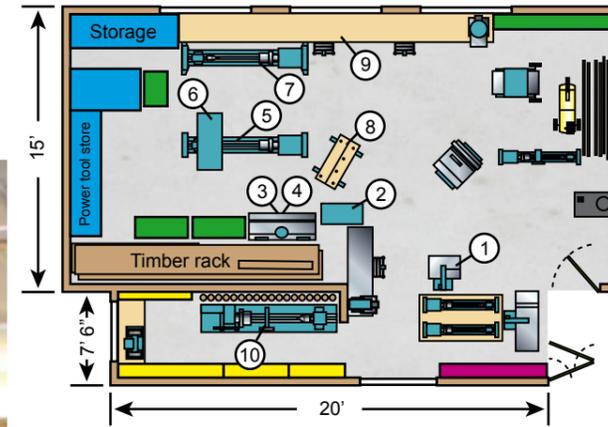
I developed a good working relationship with wood at a very early age. At school I excelled at art, woodwork, metalwork and science, so when the chance of an apprenticeship in wooden boatbuilding came up, I naturally went for it.

When I lived and worked in the Lake District, I was able to develop my interest in all aspects of timber production. The more I worked with wood, the better I understood it. It was inevitable that wood should play a big part in my life.

Being entirely self-taught and with no contact with other woodturners, it remained a hobby for about 40 years. I started off with a homemade lathe and turned a few things using tools I'd made from old files. I later acquired a second hand Coronet Minor combination machine and by fabricating a tailstock to fit the bed bar, it served me well for many years. Next came an old ML8 and that really opened up the possibilities for me.

About 18 years ago, I started experimenting with artistic or non-functional work that was to gradually develop over the years, and in 2005, I decided to take up woodturning seriously, leading me to buy a new Nova 3000.

I attended a three-day session with Jimmy Clewes and would recommend professional tuition to anyone embarking on serious woodturning. In 2006 I was accepted onto the Register of Professional Turners (RPT).



The readers' gallery is your opportunity to display your work to a worldwide audience.

Gallery

Below are some examples of turnings:



1. Vessel made from local wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*) 200mm (8in) wide x 255mm (10in) high



2. Vase in local spalted beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) with wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*) burr neck, 150mm (6in) wide x 330mm (13in) high



3. Bowl in wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*) 520mm (20in) square x 150mm (6in) high

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANN WEIR

1 Rexon bandsaw with 'V' block. This allows me to hold round items for cross cutting and square section material in order to cut off edges to make eight sides

2 Stock of offcuts for turning into small items and an oak tree trunk ready for carving

3 Router and table. This is handy for a variety of woodworking applications

4 Belt and disc sander. Again, handy pieces of equipment for the workshop which ensure that my turnings and other projects are finished to their best

5 Record DML36SH-CAM lathe used mainly for tuition, as the beginners find it easier to use than the Nova 3000

6 Air filter. This is a domestic cooker-type with an added micro screen filter

7 Arundel K450 long bed lathe that belongs to one of my students

8 Chainsawing bench with sacrificial block and Makita electric chainsaw. This is used for cutting up my turning blanks, which saves time and money

9 15ft long woodworking bench with two vices. It is important to have lots of space to work on my projects. It also provides space for me to work on my boat restoration project

10 Nova 3000 lathe with bed extension and variable-speed control. This lathe is central to all the projects I turn

5 THINGS THAT I HAVE LEARNT WITH MY WOODTURNING

1 Always keep the sticking plasters handy – you never know when you might have an accident in the workshop. It is best to be prepared for all eventualities

2 Large pieces of wood flying off the lathe can hurt very much indeed. It is therefore vital to check the speed of your lathe before switching it on – this will avoid any potential accidents happening

3 Don't poke bits of one's anatomy into that shadowy area round the edge of winged bowls – that also hurts!

4 The Woodworkers Institute forum (www.woodworkersinstitute.com) offers a great way of meeting other turners and sharing knowledge and ideas

5 They say that you learn by your mistakes, well, that's my excuse for making lots of them, and, in my opinion, there is always a lot more to learn

The little dog in the photo is my faithful companion, Rosie. I am trying to train her to retrieve the bits of woodturnings that fly off the lathe and get lost in the shavings, but she is much too interested in catching mice. She is very good at alerting me to visitors approaching the workshop

LATEST HOMEMADE JIG

The gauges I make give me maximum gripping power from my big Nova gripper jaws, which I use when I turn blanks up to about 20kg. The red gauge gives me the exact diameter, and the 35mm (1 1/2in) x 125mm (5in) strip of old handsaw blade is shaped at one end to replicate the exact profile of the chuck jaws, which gives me maximum grip on large bowl blanks. I use the saw teeth on the other end to scribe evenly spaced lines on the outside of vessels



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