



ASSESSMENTS OF APPLICANTS FOR MEMBERSHIP - JOHN BOYNE-AITKEN, CHAIRMAN

Shortly after I took over the chairmanship it was decided that the application and assessment process would be overhauled. At that time potential members were required to travel to London for an interview to see if they were suitable candidates for membership, I felt this was a waste of time and money, both on the part of the applicant and the members of the committee, as the interviews could very easily be carried out during a workshop visit; so we set about changing the system.

Now we needed a baseline to work from. We assume that all of our members are honest and of good character, so when you sponsor an applicant you are saying that the person you are sponsoring is also of good character and has high turning standards. Based on this assumption, we accept your recommendation. Our next stage is to find suitable people to carry out an assessment. So that one person does not have an inordinate amount of influence, the selection of assessors is carried out by the membership subcommittee. In order to make the assessment as open and honest as possible, we trust that those we approach will have the integrity to declare whether or not they are a suitable person for that particular assessment, as we do not wish applicants to be assessed by friends. As an organization we do not discriminate against anyone, regardless of race, skin colour, religious leaning or political or sexual persuasion. The only thing we look at is whether they are a professional turner of good character, and if the quality of their work is good enough to be accepted.

We will then arrange a workshop visit. The details of these visits are recorded and, during the visit, an informal interview takes place, the

details of which are also recorded. The results of these visits are then sent to the membership subcommittee which consists of Mike Woods as membership secretary, Philip Greenwood as vice-chairman and me as chairman. If both assessors recommend them, the applicant is accepted. They are then informed and admitted. If, however, there are differing opinions, or both say the applicant should not be admitted, the subcommittee then discusses and decides on the next step. That can include rectifying an organisational issue that the applicant failed on, such as fire extinguishers, risk assessments or insurance problems, or perhaps a perceived problem with turning quality. We could recommend that these issues are addressed. Each applicant is given every opportunity to show themselves off at their best and to demonstrate that they meet our high standards, but if they do not come up to the mark they are told the reasons why.

Each applicant is given one opportunity to appeal the decision about their assessment and if they are not successful on that occasion they do not gain admittance. In order to ensure fairness, when a reassessment is carried out, it is done with different assessors.

All of these details about the process can be seen on the members' only area on the RPT website under "resources".

I would like to reassure members that we are doing our utmost to maintain standards but would like to remind you that any comments you may have about a particular member's abilities as a turner should be directed to the management committee rather than made public. We should be seen to be professional at all times.

I work mostly with spindles, fitting them all together correctly using special jigs, which I make.

At the moment I am starting to make a 40" diameter great wheel (spindle wheel) for a client – they are very expensive! - and I have made several now. A year or two back, Valerie and I helped to restore two fancy boudoir table spinning wheels for the V&A, now on show in the European Gallery. One needed new ivory parts which, of course, I could not work with, but I was able to make copy parts in apple which they replicated. I have also restored a rare John Planta spinning wheel (1780-1800) for Jane Austen House & Museum. John Planta came from Fulneck near Leeds.

Right now I have a fancy spinning wheel under restoration (image to the right) made, I am sure, by John Jameson of York (1780-1802), though with a Doughty trade label in the drawer. I do not think Joseph Doughty made this wheel as, in 1802, John Jameson closed his business and he had a number of spinning wheels for disposal. Joseph Doughty lived around the corner in York, and he was in an ideal position to buy the stock and, maybe, put his own trade label on one of them. Knowing Doughty wheels quite well though (we have done a 24 page article for the Regional Furniture Society 2011 Journal) I am convinced he did not have the turnery skills that Jameson had and he appears to have had an ornamental turning engine. One of Doughty's wheels is currently on loan to Fairfax House, York, for their exhibition 'The Age of Enlightenment' which is about the makers of York from every discipline, and runs until November.



I have recently worked with a colleague making four cannons for a re-enactment group pirate ship (Traders, Invaders and Raiders), and I have also made a cannon for the Tree of Imagination at Lower Peover (pronounced 'peevev').

VERY USEFUL WOOD JAWS AND AN ECCENTRIC ADAPTION - JEAN TURNER RPT

A turned hollow wood sphere that had been made (by turning) into a face by Keith Holt a number of years ago served as the inspiration for the off-centre chucking system that I am happy to share with anyone who would like to do eccentric turning on small items without the need for expensive equipment and shop-bought jigs.

This type of eccentric holding system (the basic principle) has been around since the year dot in metal lathing, and something reasonably similar was illustrated in Bergeron's manual. It was shown in the basic form by Holt at one of the past AAW conventions, and it was through there that I became aware of its possibilities and extended it to cater for my own turning needs/desires.

My jig consists basically of a set of home-made wood jaws, which hold and compress a flexible off-centre C-shaped clamp. This C-clamp in turn holds a work-holding insert, or the item of work itself. See illustration 1 below.



Illustration 1: The entire jig including (L-R) chuck, wood jaws, C-insert, carrier

The jaws are made of a stable, preferably light-coloured wood, such as maple, so as to avoid marking (and, because of this, they can also be used to hold finished work). The jaws are screwed directly onto the carriers of the chuck the same as metal jaws. It is necessary to use extra-long chuck screws because of the additional material thickness required when making jaws out of wood as opposed to steel. For work-holding safety, the inside holding edge of the jaws is turned to a dovetail shape, in the same manner as conventional metal jaws. The jaws' holding area should be at least 12mm (0.5 inch) in depth to hold a 12-19mm (0.5 to 0.75 inch) thick wooden C-Clamp insert. See illustration 2 above right.

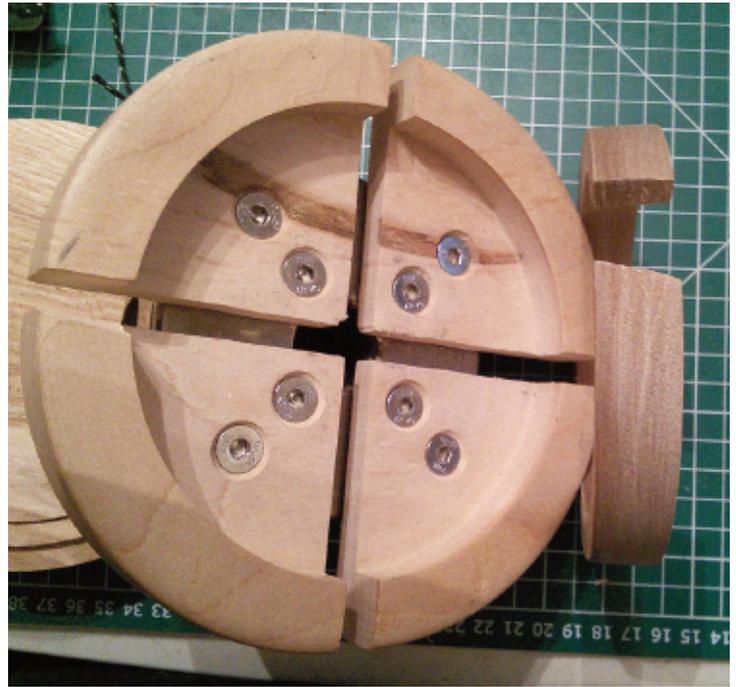


Illustration 2: Wood jaws from the front showing the recessed extra long screws

This C-clamp Insert is made of a flexible timber (also light in colour so as not to mark the item you are holding within it). For these I have used ash, elm (both highly successful) or more recently, maple. Plywood is not recommended as it sheers off in layers, and MDF is as always a no-no. The blank is set between centres and turned round with the outside edge turned to a dovetail angle to match the inside of the wood jaws. A new centre is marked (along the direction of the grain) around 5 to 15mm off centre, depending on the results you want, and it is again held between centres at that point. The inside is now carefully turned out, again in a dovetail angle. The hole size can be made according to your needs. The inner dovetail will match a similar dovetail turned on the carrier inserts you make. A 5mm slot is cut along the grain though the 'thick end' to form what looks like a C with an off-centre hole in it. If maple is used, the thin side of the C also needs to be weakened with a part-slot. Additional C-clamps can be made with the inside 'hole' walls turned parallel, or even slotted or curved, to suit the outside of a finished item you wish to hold for turning. If the finished item is wrapped in masking tape, it does not mark and holds quite securely with careful turning. See illustration 3 at the top of Page 4.

If, like me, you choose to use a further carrier to hold your work, say, for holding a sphere - you do need the dovetail connection for safety. I make carriers approximately 50mm long, with a dovetail on the base which matches the c-clamp. The business end of these disposable carriers can be turned or adapted to

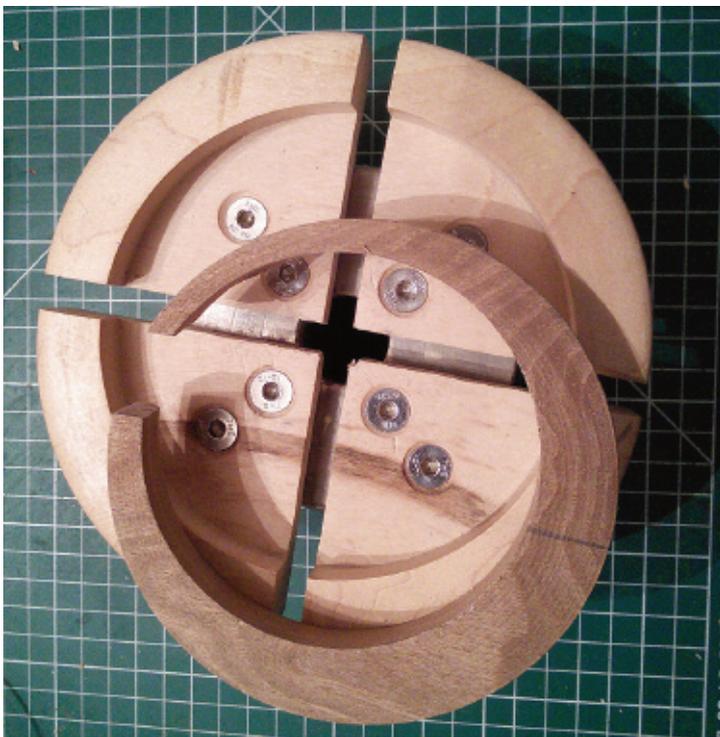


Illustration 3: Wood jaws (maple) and C-insert of elm - the dovetail angles match

suit specific needs, for example to hold spheres, flat pendants, or turned out to become a cup chuck or carved out to hold a square shape. It is also possible to use insulation foam to support odd shapes in a cup chuck shape as shown by David Springett in one of his books. If your wood jaws are made strongly enough, even medium sized pieces can be safely held and turned – safety of course being our no 1 priority. See illustration 4 below.



Illustration 4: The carrier insert rests on a shoulder against the top surface of the C-insert. The dovetails on these also match

Anyone who has a passing interest in Ornamental Turning will by now be shouting into the air about this chuck – since it basically emulates the core setup of

an ornamental lathe... Yes! It is the first step in the general direction as 'real' ornamental turning, but it is suited to all wood lathes and is easy, cheap and simple to make. The nice thing is that the results can be reasonably accurately repeated with careful marking on the item, insert and c-clamp. See illustration 5 below.



Illustration 5: Markings on the C-insert and carrier help repeatability of turned patterns

The possibilities are truly awe inspiring once you grasp how it works, and you release your imagination to fly free. Hot glue or masking tape can be used to hold small items to carriers, so long as you are careful to use a controlled turning speed and of course it is necessary to use a very light touch.

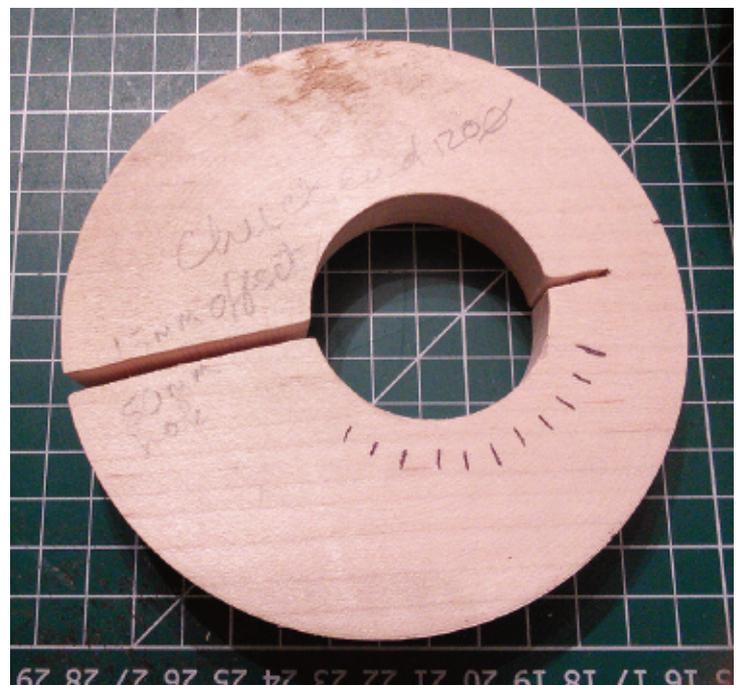


Illustration 6: The C-insert can also be made to hold smaller dovetail spigots and inserts

I have spent many happy hours playing with this chucking system. I hope someone else will be inspired to make one and try it out. Questions and suggestions for improvement happily accepted.

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DEMONSTRATING WOODTURNING OVERSEAS

THE CHAIRMAN

I suppose, eventually, the membership will get fed up with me keeping on about what you can do to help our organization. Of course, as I am only allowed to be Chairman for 6 years, you only have to put up with me for another 4 - if I get voted back in at the AGM. But the same comment seems to be cropping up time and again "I would help but I don't know what I can contribute", or words to that effect.

After travelling out to Ireland to take part in the IWG seminar, I think I have identified exactly what some of you can contribute experience and advice. Thankfully I was in the Republic of Ireland with a seasoned professional, Jason Breach, and we spoke at length or, to be honest, I asked questions and Jason was nice enough to answer them. I wanted to know what visas were needed and how tools were taken into some of these countries etc. As we have quite a pool of itinerant professional turners travelling the world and, as there are probably an equal number, who wish they could or wish they were invited, I thought it might be a good idea to put together a guide

for our members who have the potential to demonstrate overseas.

Now if one of you international turners feels that you could write this guide that would be just fine, but from past experience I doubt if there will be a queue of volunteers. So, if you just let me have some of the pertinent details - for example use a certain company for insurance or fly with this company for more baggage allowance, use this visa or do this to your tools if you want to take them to this country, that sort of thing - I will bring them all together and make a small paper available on the website for our members to download as and when they need it.

This would only need half a dozen of you to jot down some notes and email them to me, one piece of advice or several - they will all be used. If you do not want your name mentioned then let me know and I promise to keep that confidential. With the spirit of cooperation together we can put in place a 'toolkit' that will help our organization to become respected the world over.

THE REGISTER OF PROFESSIONAL TURNERS - RETIRED MEMBER STATUS

Situation

1. Senior members are allowed to retain the entitlement to use the letters RPT after their name once they have retired.
2. Retirement is classed as no longer turning to earn a living from turning.
3. It is anticipated that retiring members will have old stock, tools and machinery to dispose of. The sale of these items should not be considered as earning a living from turning.
4. It is the retired, or retiring, person's responsibility to inform the RPT of their intention to retire and retain the entitlement to use the letters RPT after their name.
5. It is the responsibility of the committee to consider all requests for Retired Status.
6. Once the committee are satisfied that the person is retired they will then confer Retired Status on the member.

Action

1. Once retired Status has been conferred, the member is then entitled to continue using the letters

RPT after their name.

2. The annual membership fee will be fixed at the level the member was paying the year he/she retired.
3. They will retain their entry on the RPT website but it will have the word "retired" added next to their name and on the register maintained by the Turners' clerk.
4. Upon acceptance, retired members will be sent a letter confirming their acceptance and drawing the pertinent rules to the retired member's attention.
5. The annual fee will be payable each year and must not be allowed to lapse.
6. Assuming all fees are paid up to date, retired members will be invited to attend the Craft Meeting and AGM and Lunch.
7. In the event that it is found a Retired Status member has not actually retired he/she will revert back to full membership and pay back fees to the RPT for the years they have continued working, or be asked to leave the organization.
8. Retired members will continue to abide by the criteria and codes of practice in accordance with the RPT constitution Paragraph 4; Membership; sub-para (a)

FRACTAL BURNING - THE LICHTENBERG TECHNIQUE

It has been brought to the attention of the RPT Committee that there have been a number of fatalities worldwide and, recently, in the UK, due to the use of improvised homemade equipment to carry out the process known as Fractal Burning. We therefore have decided to issue a statement regarding this technique and its use.

I am sure that most of you are aware of the tragic event in Oxfordshire which involved the use of a homemade device for fractal burning. The RPT committee recognises that wood turning is dangerous but feel that the deliberate use of unregulated equipment, that is not covered by any safety standard and is capable of causing death by electrocution, is irresponsible.

In line with other organisations we feel that work that

has been created using this technique should not be publicised in the media or to clubs or other organisations. At no time should members of the RPT demonstrate this technique at any event. Instructions on how to make such a device, or the sale or advertising of such devices, will not be published on any media site owned and operated by the RPT until such times as safety standards for this have been produced and accepted for adoption by the wood-turning community .

Our members are urged to work safely at all times and to encourage other turners to do the same. Risk assessments should be properly carried out before any risky procedure is undertaken and we would remind our members that they have a duty of care to other people within their immediate vicinity.

THE NORTH OF ENGLAND WOODWORKING AND POWER TOOL SHOW 2017 AT HARROGATE

The RPT attended the show with many of our members demonstrating on trade stands, as well as stands sponsored by Nelton, the show organisers. The RPT stand was looked after by Deputy Chairman Philip Greenwood and Gerry Marlow, with help from Wendy Greenwood and Christine Marlow. Eight membership application forms were handed out over the 3 days to turners who expressed an interest in joining. Although we still have not received the attendance numbers, several of our members visited over the show period, and we received many positive comments about the members work on display.

Both the Master of the Worshipful Company of Turners - Andrew Neil - and Christopher Scott, chairman of the Turners' Company Howe committee, visited with their wives. The show was deemed to be a great success.



THE 2017 AGM AND CRAFT MEETING

The Committees would like to remind members that the AGM and Craft Meeting is to take place on 20th March 2018 at Skinners' Hall in London. Coffee will be available from 11am and the AGM will start at 12pm. As usual there will be a buffet lunch with wine, and an interesting talk in the afternoon.

The formal Calling Notice, Agenda, Voting arrangements and Proxy papers will be circulated during February 2018.

Members are reminded that the complete day is heavily subsidized by the Turners' Company, thus

allowing more of the RPT funds to be used to support the association. It is important, therefore, that as many members as possible attend, if we are to retain the support of the Company.

The day provides a very good opportunity to meet other RPT members, and raise any questions you have with the Committee. At the close of the formal meeting, members normally adjourn to the "Banker" pub, at the end of the road by the river, where committee members can be approached more informally.

CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - THE RED CROSS AND THE ARMY BENEVOLENT FUND

Members may not be aware that the major activity of London's Livery Companies in the 21st Century is to raise money for charity and, if they are fortunate enough still to have a craft to support, to do so. The Worshipful Company of Turners is one of those fortunate companies with a flourishing craft; both amateur and professional.

Two of the charities supported by the Turners' Company are the Red Cross and the Army Benevolent fund. The Red Cross hold a biannual fair in the Guildhall in the City, while the Army Benevolent Fund benefits from the annual "Lord Mayor's Big Curry Lunch". The Turners' Company has a stall at both events, selling both utilitarian and art turning to members of the public. This could not happen without the support of the UK's two main wood-turning organisations - the RPT and the AWGB.

The Red Cross Fair took place on the 27th and 28th of November. The Turners' stand was much admired for the quality and variety of the work on sale - much of it donated, very generously, by members of the RPT. A total of over £4,000 was donated to the Red Cross.

So much was sold at the Red Cross Fair that little was left over for the Army Benevolent Fund event next year and, therefore, the Turners Company is asking RPT Members, or any of their wood turning friends, for contributions to be sold at this lunch on April 11th 2018. This year the lunch will benefit all Service Charities and not just the Army. Any pieces would be welcome, especially smaller items which can be sold cheaply. If you could, bring donations to the AGM/Craft Meeting or send them to the Turner's clerk with your name and a suggested price included.

QUALIFICATIONS IN WOOD-TURNING

Over the last 5 years, many members will have become aware of the wood-turning qualification sponsored by the Turners' Company and the AWGB - with support from a number of individual members of the RPT. The basic qualification - the Certificate in Woodturning - has been available since 2012 and the 100th certificate is shortly to be awarded.

Since the first certificate was awarded, work has been proceeding with the development of stage 2 - the Diploma in Woodturning. While the certificate is aimed at novice turners who have little or no

previous experience in turning, and have undertaken a number of courses, the award of the Diploma will only go to individuals who have considerable experience and skill.

Since the inception of the qualifications, individual members of the RPT have benefited by teaching modules of the course, although the association as an entity has not endorsed the concept. Once the Diploma is launched in 2018, further RPT involvement will be needed. Look out for more information in the Spring and at the AGM.

THE RPT AND THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF TURNERS - A VIEW FROM THE COMPANY

The Worshipful Company of Turners has supported the Register of Professional Turners since its formation in 1978. In the early days, the Register was administered by the Turners' Company Clerk. In 1990, the membership decided that they needed their own administrator and Malcolm Cobb RPT took on the role. In 2001, a formal management committee was formed with Malcolm Cobb as Chairman.

In 2011, Malcolm Cobb handed over to Guy Ravine RPT who then, in turn, handed the Chairmanship to John Boyne-Aitken RPT in 2016.

By 2012, the world had moved on from 1978 and the standards of skill, administration, adherence to fixed codes of practice and ethics, expected of anyone claiming to be a professional, had risen markedly. Despite the title of the association, there was evidence that the members of the Register were not all aligning themselves with professional standards. There was a view amongst some members that any craftsman, who received payment for his work, was a professional by definition.

By the end of 2015 morale amongst the membership as a whole had deteriorated to the point where a small number of long-standing members were resigning, while very few working turners saw any advantage in joining the Register. Indeed, some working turners were refusing to wear the RPT smock, as they were unwilling to be identified with the organization.

On becoming Chairman in 2016, John Boyne-Aitken and the management committee immediately set about planning the way forward for the Register. While a lot of progress had been made under Guy Ravine's chairmanship, it was recognised that there was still some way to go. Two ideals were identified: Firstly, that, in due course, all working turners would aspire to be members

of the RPT while secondly, that, in due course, no potential customer would want to employ a turner who was not a member of the Register.

It was recognised that the first of these ideals could be achieved more easily, and early actions were designed to assist the RPT to reach that aim. After 18 months under the new chairmanship the RPT has moved a long way. Procedures for dealing with complaints from the public have been introduced as well as disciplinary procedures for members. Rules for the claiming of expenses have been introduced and the process for the assessment of new members has been made more rigorous. Courses in particular specialist areas are being made available. The web-site has been redesigned and the webmaster now oversees the content on a daily basis. One area that is still causing difficulties is that of persuading members undertaking tuition, or carrying out demonstrations, to hand out and encourage completion, of feedback returns. In this modern age, all professionals have to undergo Continual Professional Development (CPD). The concept of feedback is the RPT version of CPD and members are expected to cooperate.

Members must recognise that the support of the Turners' Company is conditional. The RPT has done much to improve its professionalism and its image in recent years - much to the approval of the Turners' Company. Nevertheless, standards must continue to rise - particularly if the second of the two objectives is to be achieved. The Committee are doing a great job but need more help. If you want to help the RPT to achieve its aims and continue to improve its professionalism, why not volunteer to join the Management Committee.

The Worshipful Company of Turners wishes all members a Happy Christmas and congratulates the Committee on their achievements in 2017.

2018 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that subscriptions rise to £36 with effect from January 2018. Please ensure that, if you pay by Standing Order, the appropriate amendments are made well before Christmas. If you use on-line banking you can do it from home!

AN END OF YEAR MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

As we reach the end of another year, the committee members and I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year. We look forward to seeing you all at the Annual General Meeting and Craft Day at Skinners' Hall in March.

Patricia Spero RPT
Newsletter Editor