

## Buddy Lawson meets Frank Pain

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Wood turning has been a craft that probably predates recorded history. Men served apprenticeships and then earned a living making many common items out of wood. Functional items such as legs for furniture, bowls and platters, handles for tools, toys, pulleys, wheel hubs, patterns for castings, etc were turned out by the hundred by production turners. Many of these wooden items have now been superseded by modern manufacturing and materials, resulting in a corresponding decline in the number of professional woodturners. The craft of turning has now changed over to less functional items and more creative “art”.

There was a brief fashion of interest in ornamental turning amongst the aristocracy in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, before interest waned. The modern revival started after the Second World War, as the economy became more industrialised, and people looked for creative outlets from their modern industrial jobs. Frank Pain wrote a series of articles in the *Woodworker* published by Evans Brothers in the early fifties. This material formed the basis of a book, **The Practical Wood Turner**, published in 1956. Subsequent editions were produced in 1965, and reprinted into the 1980s, but were basically unchanged.

In the preface to the first edition of 1956, Frank Pain records that he has fifty years of experience as a wood turner. This picture from his book was also published earlier in *The Woodworker* in 1953, probably of him in his mid fifties, working on his Myford ML8.

Frank lived in High Wycombe and worked as a professional turner. He first came to notice as a demonstrator in 1949 at The Ideal Home Show in London. He became in demand as a speaker and was probably the first professional wood turning demonstrator in the UK. A series of articles in *The Woodworker* meant that he became in demand as a speaker and teacher, and spent at least the next decade travelling around the country. He complained that he was on his fourth car, so he must have spent considerable time on the road. The second picture seems to be around the time of the second edition of his book, as he looks somewhat more prosperous! The caption still states his mantra of “cut the wood as it prefers to be cut”. He died in 1979 at the age of 82.

Judging from the writing style in the article and books, he must have been an entertaining speaker, and combined with his turning skills, I imagine he would have made an entertaining demonstrator. He probably did a lot to promote woodturning as a craft at the time. The revival continued in the hands of Peter Child (who spent some time with Scott Myles while he had a business in



**"CUTTING WOOD AS IT PREFERS TO BE CUT."**  
One of the secrets of both gouge and chisel turning is to let the bevel of the tool rub the work. If it does this the tool cannot dig in. But don't just take my word for it. Get your tools and try it for yourself.



**MY INSTRUCTIONS MEAN JUST WHAT THEY SAY**  
You may be troubled with tools digging in. Well, if you follow my words carefully they won't. My aim is to show you how to cut wood as it prefers to be cut.

Scotland) and many others that followed. The design of tools and lathes stagnated for many years, and Frank complains about unsuitable tools and badly designed lathes. He provided inputs to the design of the Graduate lathe, an example of which Schalk has. The design of the Graduate continues to this day in updated form as the VB36 which several local turners have - Schalk, Butch, and the Earlys (Natal Midlands).

Clearly tools and techniques have evolved substantially since then, but Frank Pain's contribution to our modern craft of turning is clear.

So where does Buddy fit into the picture? Well, while he was in the UK doing his surgery studies in 1954, he met Charles Hayward, who was the long standing editor of *The Woodworker*. He arranged a visit to Frank Pain, and they drove to High Wycombe. Buddy recalls a most entertaining afternoon. Below is a copy of the letter that Buddy wrote to **The Woodworker**, that appeared in the May 1989 issue. (Chris O'Connell also used to live on the Isle of Wight, if you look at the letter following Buddy's)

Thanks to Peter Middleton for digging out a copy of an article on Frank Pain written by Stuart King in *Woodturning* #87, that gave me some more background info for this article.

### Success

I am a full-time mature student at the City College, Liverpool, and the Advance Craft Certificate and College Diploma course has changed my life totally; making furniture is so satisfying. We learned recently that three of the lads (myself not included) had won bronze medals out of the four awarded nationally. Not bad, when the course has been cut from three years to two, and the weekly hours reduced. Many thanks to the dedicated staff who made this possible, and ensure a high pass rate here.

P. Cardus, Wallasey

### Applause

I've just had marvellous service from one of your advertisers. The Power Tool Centre of Widnes, Cheshire, and also, for once, the Post Office. The bearings packed up in a 10-year-old Black & Decker drill; the manufacturers said it was obsolete and could not be repaired. After reading the advertisement in the December issue, I posted the drill on Thursday afternoon, 19 January. On the Saturday morning, 21 January, I had a phone call saying it was ready, and I gave my Visa number to pay. The drill arrived here on Tuesday 24 January. All this in just five days, including the weekend, on a drill that was supposed to be irreparable.

R.M. Harding, Winsford



### Charles Hayward

In 1954 I was studying in London and met Mr Charles Hayward, who was as always impeccably dressed in a three-piece suit. He kindly took me to visit Mr Frank Pain, author of *The Practical*

*Woodturner*. When we arrived Mr Pain was busy on an old Myford ML8 lathe; he gave us a most superb demonstration of between-centres and faceplate turning. Mr Hayward, who was also a master craftsman, took off his coat, put on a clean white apron and joined in the turning. I marvelled at the skill of both these gentlemen for hours; how the long shavings curled from their educated skew chisels. They forgot about me, and I watched and listened, fascinated at what I saw, heard and learned. Eventually Mrs Pain insisted that we all came in for tea, and what a wonderful spread she gave us. That afternoon remains with me 35 years later as one of the most memorable experiences of my life.

H.H. Lawson, S. Africa

### Adhesives – 1

I was disappointed that the article on adhesives (*Premium bonding*, *WW/Mar p212*) had only a few lines on epoxy resins, and on only one type of epoxy system (presumably the thick, Araldite or Bostik, type). There are resin manufacturers, including our own company, who produce a wide range of specially formulated epoxy systems for different jobs, including systems that overcome all the negative factors ascribed to epoxy resins in the article. Our systems are thin, easy to spread, easy to use and virtually vapour-free. They also overcome all the negative aspects of resorcinol glues, as quoted in your article, since they are gap-filling, don't require high-pressure clamping, and are not so sensitive to moisture and temperature.

Although designed primarily for the marine industry, particularly boatyards working in wood,

we have customers in the furniture and construction industry, and we even have a product that can bond teak effectively.

Chris O'Connell,  
SP Systems, Love Lane,  
Cowes, Isle of Wight,  
PO31 7EU

### Adhesives – 2

What a pity your article on adhesives didn't include trade names of the various types. I'm sure my DIY shop would not know what a resorcinol glue is.

W.P. Ford, Uckfield

### Adhesives – 3

As Nick Gibbs suggested, I decant PVA from large containers to small ones; I squeeze the large containers before re-capping to exclude air and reduce the tendency for the adhesive to harden.

However, has anyone got a solution for keeping the spout of the small container from clogging up and even forming lumps inside if not used for a few weeks; I'm sure I'm missing something obvious!

Howard Watkins, Reading

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