

Wizardry in Wood 2008

THE RECORD



The Worshipful Company of Turners of London

In June 2004, to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Worshipful Company of Turners of London, we held a magnificent exhibition, *Wizardry in Wood*, in the splendid Pewterers' Hall.

Wizardry in Wood 2004 created so much interest and enthusiasm that in June 2008 the Company organised another exhibition, in the Hall of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters. Being larger than Pewterers' Hall, it allowed us to include additional collections of wood turning, and our Turning Competitions.

I know I am biased, but the exhibition was truly superb. The quality and variety of work were breathtaking, and our visitors, many from other City Livery Companies, were astonished and delighted.

Wizardry in Wood clearly demonstrated that the Company is successfully supporting and promoting the craft of turning to a growing audience.

Our success was due to the enormous amount of time and energy given by the Exhibition and Competition Committee, all volunteers from the Company. I congratulate and thank them all, especially the Chairman, Renter Warden Peter Ellis, for his indefatigable work as mastermind. My thanks too to Assistant Peter Gibson, Chairman of the Howe Committee, for organising the Turning Competitions, and to our Clerk, Edward Windsor Clive, for his advice and help.

I also thank the Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery; the Daniel Collection; the Smouha Collection; the St Petersburg Collection; the Guild of Flemish Turners; the Crafts Council; our individual professional turners; the Register of Professional Turners; the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain; the Society of Ornamental Turners; the Theological College of the University of Leuven; the Worshipful Company of Musicians; and the Guild of Arts Scholars, Dealers and Collectors.

Last but not least, I thank the Master Carpenter, Michael Matthews, for allowing us to use Carpenters' Hall, an appropriate and marvellous setting.



View of *Wizardry in Wood 2008* held in the magnificent Carpenters' Hall, home of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters



The Master Turner, Col. Rob Lucas (left) presenting the Master Carpenter, Michael Matthews, with a commemorative box ornamentally turned by Paul Coker RPT at the opening of *Wizardry in Wood 2008*

Rob Lucas

Rob Lucas, Master Turner 2008-2009

Wizardry in Wood

The definitive exhibition of the art and craft of turning



The entrance to Carpenters' Hall is tucked away in a dark corner at the end of Throgmorton Avenue, but once inside, visitors to *Wizardry in Wood* were dazzled by the splendid wood panelling, the magnificent staircase, the stained-glass windows and the wonderful displays.

Visitors crowded around a working pole lathe and the Angels' Lathe, complete with feathered white wings. They marvelled at the virtuosity and variety of shapes, woods, colourings, sizes and functions: from simple, useful, plain platters to an intricate ivory posy-holder, turned for a bride's bouquet, and pieces of wood art which incorporated ebonising, painting and texturing, as well as nails and strips of steel.

People were amazed by four concentric bowls turned from a single piece of wood; by small boxes in alternative glitter-striped plastic, whose screw lids fitted with total precision; by the symmetry and classic beauty of a chair turned on a pole lathe; by the delicacy of twisted finials and fine inlays; by the realisation in wood of imaginative flights and intellectual concepts; by mazers turned as they have been for centuries, with silver rims and targets; by urns and chess sets and loving cups and oboes and Windsor chairs and so much more.

The delights were endless.



Fragmented vase by American turner Bud Latven, from the superb collection of turning of Hana and Brian Smouha

Above: Wall piece in walnut *He Wouldn't Listen!* by Mark Hancock RPT
Below: Black forms with characteristic inlaid rims by Carlyn Lindsay RPT



Innovative pieces by Nick Agar RPT, winner of a Company Bursary which will enable him to travel to the USA and France to work with the finest contemporary wood-turners



Above left: Magnificent wassail bowl dated 1685 from Sampson & Horne Antiques

Above right: Lidded standing cup in antique ivory by Liveryman Geoffrey Brandon, superb turner and Company Gold Medallist

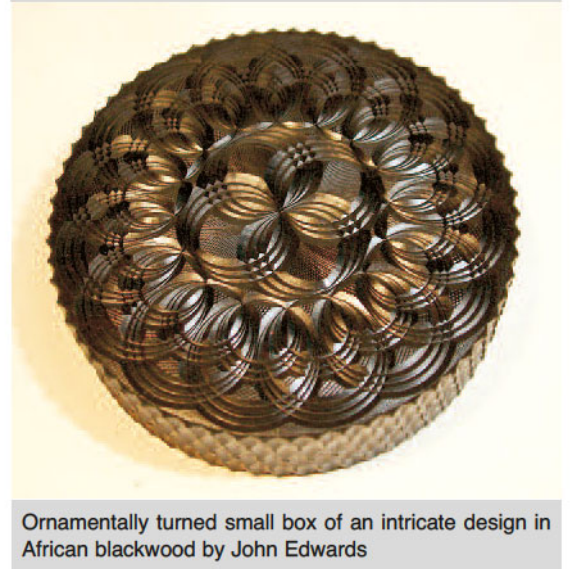
Below: An eye-catching display by Liveryman Stuart Mortimer RPT, who specialises in complex twists and finials



Midnight Sun, by celebrated American turner Binh Pho, who has brought to turning the skills of a consummate artist and craftsman



Futuristic design by Richard Bicheno



Ornamentally turned small box of an intricate design in African blackwood by John Edwards



Autumn Garden, a beautiful piece by Gabor Lacko RPT and Patricia Spero RPT



Two prize-winning entries in the Company's Turning Competitions: an ornamentally turned gavel in blackwood and lignum vitae, by Richard Hoodless and a table by Roy Bonner RPT



The Master Turner opens *Wizardry in Wood 2008*, watched by Geoffrey Bond (left), Chairman of the City Livery Committee and a Past Master of the Guild of Arts Scholars, Dealers and



Above: Luc Knapen (left), the Master Turner, and Renter Warden Peter Ellis, organiser of the spectacular exhibition. Mr Knapen is Librarian of the Theological Library of the University of Leuven, Belgium, source of the original drawing of the Angels' Lathe dating from 1627 (above right). Bottom right: Freeman Stuart King RPT and Luc Knapen discussing one of the finer points of the Angels' Lathe, exhibited at *Wizardry in Wood 2008*.





Collectors, and by the creators of the wonderful Daniel Collection, Shirley Sinclair and Jonathan Cuff (second and third from the right)



Bowl/Box in boxwood and ebony by Freeman Ray Key RPT



Above: Delicate piece in pierced sycamore by Margaret Garrard RPT

Right: Ivory casket ornamented with Burmese cabochon rubies and silver, turned by Honorary Liveryman the late Theo Fabergé to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee. From the St Petersburg Collection

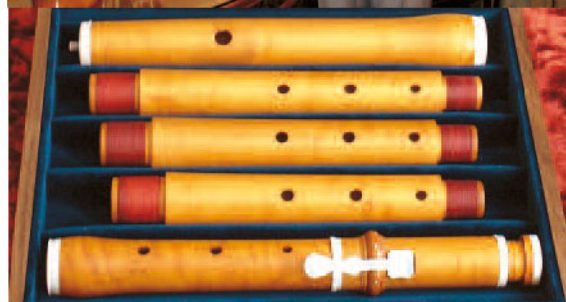
Bottom right: Vase in burr red resin in a style pioneered by Liveryman Bert Marsh RPT

Below: Wig stand from the Pinto Collection

Bottom left: Miniature cannon turned by John Berkeley RPT

Middle left: Flute turned by Mathew Dart to the 18th-century design of GA Rottenburgh

Top left: George White with his turned dish of astonishingly realistic turned fruit



The Worshipful Company of Turners of London

from 1295 to the 21st century

In 1295 there was in the City of London a Turners' Guild of craftsmen. It evolved into The Worshipful Company of Turners, which was granted a royal charter in 1604.

The Company is rightfully proud of its continuing and ever-increasing support for the 'mysterie or art' of turning. Recently, we have initiated a Bursary for talented Turners, provided prize money for competitions, and created a Charity Committee to focus our charitable resources on aiding our Craft by, for example, sponsoring lathes for both schools and adult training centres so that practical, vocational turning can be undertaken.

We shall continue to help our Craft to expand and prosper by encouraging the development of new forms and techniques, by collaborating with overseas craft organisations, and by holding more exhibitions. Our next *Wizardry in Wood* exhibition will be held in 2012. Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy this *Record* showing turning at its very best, and the wide-ranging activities of the Company in support of our three Cs: our Craft, the City of London and Charity.

Register of Professional Turners

Since 1978 the Company has supported the Register of Professional Turners (www.rpturners.co.uk). The RPT accepts only turners whose work is of an excellent standard, as judged by a Company-approved assessor. Members' workshops have to conform to stringent safety requirements. Membership of the RPT is growing steadily.

Consult the RPT to buy a marvellous ready-made turned object, or to commission a special wedding present, sports trophy or commemorative retirement piece, or to repair a damaged piece of precious furniture – or to learn the fascinating art of turning.

Turning Competitions



Chairman of the Howe Committee, Assistant Peter Gibson, presenting a prize. The Howe Committee promotes the craft of turning

The Company's first competitions were held in the Mansion House, home of the Lord Mayor, in 1857. They attracted two entries (both fishing rods). The competitions developed into exhibitions of the entries, turned in wood and other

materials, including ivory, steel, brass and vulcanite. Over 4,000 members of the public attended in 1883.

Today, the competitions are held biennially, in conjunction with the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain and the Society of Ornamental Turners. They attract the finest turning by Britain's top turners, competing for prizes of money, vouchers, medals and prestige. There are classes for plain and ornamental turning, and a Junior class for turners under 18.

Bursaries

Biennially, the Company awards £9,000 in bursaries to promising turners who are extending the technical and design boundaries of the craft, and who need a vital piece of equipment or time to study.

Several bursary-winners have spent their award in the USA, where wood art is far more highly prized than in Great Britain. Joey Richardson used her bursary to study under the renowned turner Binh Pho in America, then starred in the exhibition *Wizards in Wood: Stuart Mortimer & Joey Richardson* at LINLEY Mayfair.

One of her pieces was bought by the Master of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters at *Wizardry in Wood*, and she was invited to show at the prestigious international *Sculpture Objects & Functional Art (SOFA)* exhibitions in New York and Chicago.

Exhibitions & showcases

Jointly with the Register of Professional Turners, the Company regularly exhibits at national woodworking shows such as those at Harrogate, Stoneleigh and Alexandra Palace and holds a popular annual turning demonstration for members of the Company.



Joey Richardson with Lord Linley and *Cherish* - one of her flower series of turned wood art. She says that winning a Company bursary changed her life

We also organise one-off exhibitions and demonstrations, for example at the Museum of London, the Royal Cornwall Show, Tower 42 (in the City), the Barbican Library and LINLEY.

Our major exhibition, *Wizardry in Wood*, was such a success in 2004 and 2008 that it will be held again in 2012.

As part of the Livery Companies Wood Group, the Company exhibited at *Art in Action* in 2008.

The Hon. Secretary of the Register of Professional Turners, Liveryman and Gold Medallist Dr Malcolm Cobb RPT, made a large collection of door knobs which are on display at the Arboretum at Castle Howard, demonstrating the different varieties of wood.

Learning turning

Turning is a great hobby, so the Company encourages people with an interest to learn the Craft. The Register of Professional Turners and the Association of Wood Turners of Great Britain list on their websites professional turners who teach.

The Company also supports the Teenage Training weekends organised by the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain, at which under-18s benefit from intensive tuition from highly-skilled turners.

International links

In the USA fine turning is sought after by collectors. The Company is developing closer links with American woodturners, particularly via our bursary-winners. Internationally-known American turner Binh Pho kindly sent two of his amazing pieces to be exhibited at *Wizardsry in Wood 2008*.

Links with other countries are also growing: the centrepiece of the exhibition was the magnificent Angels' Lathe, a replica of a 17th-century lathe, lent by the Guild of Flemish Woodturners.

Livery Companies Wood Group

The Turners and four other Livery Companies associated with wood - the Furniture Makers, Carpenters, Joiners & Ceilers and Upholders - form the Livery Companies Wood Group.

Members of the Group raise the profile of their crafts at exhibitions and arrange outside activities and visits to places of common interest.



Teenagers on a turning weekend run by the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain with support from the Company

Woodturning associations

The Company has close links with a number of Craft associations. The President of the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain (AWGB) (www.woodturners.co.uk) is the internationally-known turner Ray Key RPT, a Freeman of the Company.

Nick Edwards, leading ornamental turner and President of the Society of Ornamental Turners (www.the-sot.com), is an Assistant on the Court of the Company.



The courtyard of Apothecaries' Hall, where the Turners hold their official functions, painted by JC Moody, great-uncle of Mrs Judy Lucas (Mistress Turner 2008 – 2009)

The Association of Pole-lathe Turners and Greenwood Workers (www.bodgers.org.uk) brings together users of traditional foot-operated lathes such as Stuart King RPT, Freeman of the Company and historian of the craft.

Sponsors

The Company is grateful to the many sponsors who have given very generously, particularly to supplement the prizes in our Turning Competitions with money and vouchers. They include: Antiques Trade Gazette, Ashley Iles (Edge Tools), Axminster Power Tool Centre,



The Gardner Williams Banquet, held each year in Apothecaries' Hall in memory of our benefactor Richard Gardner Williams

Liveryman Clifford Champion, Craft Supplies, Freshwood Publishing, GMC Publications, Liberon Waxes, My Hobby Store Ltd, Record Power, Rustins and Sorby's.

The Church

The Company holds its annual Patronal Service, commemorating our patron saint, St Catherine, in St Bride's, Fleet Street, whose rector, Archdeacon David Meara, is our Honorary Chaplain. The names of Turners who died in the past year are commemorated, and we sing the hymn in which a lathe is mentioned:

'Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
Whose strong hands were skilled at the
plane and the lathe'.

To celebrate the Millennium, the Company presented to St Bride's a portable font and in 2009 contributed to an offertory-box (shown below with Archdeacon Meara) of similar design.



The City

Born and bred in the City of London, the Livery Companies support the City's unique system of governance, headed by the Lord Mayor.

Members of the Turners' Company give to the Lord Mayor's charities, attend City functions, often work, live or worship in the City, and are interested in its history, culture and financial life.

The Services

The Company has links with all three Services and the Army Cadet Force. It has particularly close links with The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME).

The Turners' Shield is awarded to the winners of Exercise Southern Craftsman, an annual three-day competition for REME Territorial Army units in the South East of England who compete in nine military disciplines (one of which is shown below).



A new annual award goes to the best regular REME battalion as decided by the Director of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, and it is presented at our Ladies' Dinner.

Hospitality

The Turners are renowned for their friendliness and warmth of welcome to visitors, at both informal events and formal dinners. Our Honorary Chaplain sets the tone by opening our dinners with delightful graces composed by him for the occasion.

"Seldom have I eaten so well, met so many charming and interesting people and been made to feel such an integral part of the occasion," wrote a guest. "My toast is: The Turners' Company!"

Charity

Most of the oldest Livery Companies had a benevolent aspect and this is reflected today in the Turners' Charitable Trust. The Company donates to the Lord Mayor's Charities, City-based charities, the Armed Services and the Craft.

The Company gives prizes, grants and lathes to organisations such as the Building Crafts College and REME. It is particularly concerned to help disabled people, and has given lathes to Treloar College and the Valence School in Kent (both for severely disabled children), Dorton House School for the Blind, Street Forge (for disabled adults) and Hereford Headway (which rehabilitates and restores confidence to people who have had a serious head injury).

Other Livery Companies

The Company holds Court meetings, lunches and dinners in Apothecaries' Hall.

Wizardry in Wood was held in Pewterers' Hall in 2004, and in Carpenters' Hall in 2008. At Christmas we join the Musicians' Company in their carol service at St Michael's Cornhill. The Company is on friendly terms with many other Companies, who are invited to our Masters' and Clerks' lunches.

Publications

The Turners' History, updated in 2004 by Past Master Brian Burnett, is the definitive account of the origins and development of the Company. The Company gave a grant towards the production of *The Wooden Bowl*, published by Stobart Davies, a comprehensive story of this apparently simple object by Robin Wood RPT, historian and turner. A further grant is helping to produce a translation of *L'Art de Tourner*, a key 17th-century text.



The Lord Mayor of London, Alderman Ian Luder, learning to turn a spindle on a pole lathe with the help of bodger Matt Jarvis on the Company's stand at the 400th Anniversary of the building of London Bridge in July 2009

Golf

The Turners' Golf Society plays in the two annual inter-Livery matches, the Prince Arthur Cup and the Newson-Smith Trophy, as well as hosting its own Society meeting.

Additional information

For rules and entry forms for the Company's bursaries and Turning Competitions; general information about the Company; membership; and information about future exhibitions and other events, please contact:

The Clerk of the Turners' Company

Telephone: 020 7353 9595

Email: clerk@turnersco.com

(Please state whether you agree to allow your details to be held on the Company's database and used for Turners' Company invitations and mailings.)

Press enquiries

Please contact the Company's Press Officer: Sarah Fabergé: 07843 143 315

Websites

www.turnersco.com

provides a wealth of information about the Company and the Craft.

www.wizardryinwood.com

is devoted to our major exhibition, *Wizardry in Wood*, held in 2004 and 2008, and planned for 2012.