Woody's World

6th August 2026

Pen Making



Many thanks to Paul for giving us a great insight into how he makes three different styles on pen – all superb.

All pens are made on a mandrel ie a steel rod used between centres to hold and align pen blanks and bushings securely while you turn and shape. The bushings are made of nylon to which CA glue will not adhere (more later). Paul uses small tools which provide finer control on the small blanks – both traditional and carbide.

Blanks are made from a range of wood, acrylic and also 'hybrid' mixture of both. Blanks require boring to a diameter of the pen kit being used and which will be inserted after turning & finishing.





Olive wood blank.
Paul roughs down his blanks with a short spindle gouge, shaping and then sanding to 600 grit. He advises to always finish each grit by hand sanding along the length to remove the spiral lines left by the abrasive.
Paul uses abrasive discs and rhyno/rhino pad. He then uses a tack cloth to remove all dust followed by a clear lacquer eg Hycote, denib with kitchen roll, reapply and repeat. Once happy with the finish, remove pieces of pen from the mandrel and assemble using a vice to insert the mechanism.







Acrylic blank.
Following a similar process to the first pen, Paul bores the blank, glues in the tube and takes the corners off. Because the blank is acrylic he uses a square format carbide cutter and shapes in a similar way to the first pen.

He sands to 600 grit and then on to use micromesh starting at 1200 grit and going up to 10k grit. The micromesh is kept in water with a little washing up liquid. Once happy, finish with a chrome polish.







Note the different style of pen kit versus the olive wood version.



Hybrid blank – wood + acrylic.

This blank is made from maple and acrylic. Whilst handled in a similar fashion to the other two blanks, it is important to be conscious that the acrylic is much harder than the wood and to manage the cuts and sanding appropriately.





Consider using a scraper as it is less aggressive than the carbide tool and will be more sympathetic to the wood element.
Shape and sand as previous examples.

Apply CA glue (where the nylon bushings come into their own) and accelerator, sand to 800grit. Repeat at least 4 times but preferably 10 times. Then use the micromesh routine to 10k grit followed by chrome polish.





Assemble as before using a vice to efficiently push in the pen mechanism.

Example of a hybrid pen blank made from acrylic in cones – more of a pine blank than a pen blank.



Thanks again to Paul for his excellent demonstration and sharing his tips for fine penmanship.



Other news:

Open Evening Thurs 3rd September:

We will publicise the evening starting at 7.30pm but we will be setting up from 6pm if you would like to come a bit earlier to help.

Our open evening is very important for the club as it will help us recruit new members to keep us viable. The evening will include:

- **Live demos on 2 lathes**
- **Display of members' work**
- **Raffle for visitors to win a woodturning**
- **Tea/coffee, cake and biscuits**
- **Potential for visitors to have a go at woodturning**
- **Judging our 'for the kitchen' competition**

We would really appreciate your support in making it another success.

- **Display of members' work** – please bring along a range of your pieces on the evening. We need all standards of work to show how woodturners develop their skills and ability. Please bring your pieces and place on the display tables.

- **Raffle for visitors** where they can win a woodturning to take away and hopefully inspire them to join. So, if you either have a surplus piece that you're not sure what to do with and are happy to give away…or have time to make something simple and inexpensive, please bring along on the evening. Don't bring something you cherish or value! Thanks to those who have already provided something.

- As many members as possible to chat to visitors and show that we are a friendly and welcoming club – this seemed to work well last year and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

Thanks in advance.

Competition News:

Our next competition will be judged by us all at our meeting on Thursday 3rd September.
The challenge for that competition is **"Something for the kitchen"** – no tighter brief than that - could be a bowl, egg cup, pepper mill, trivet, cocktail stick, kindling or anything you reckon you might use in the kitchen.
Good luck.

Forthcoming Club Meetings

Meetings are normally on the first Thursday in the month except when there are elections. Meetings start at **7pm** in Offchurch Village Hall, CV33 9AL unless stated otherwise

2026		
Thu 3rd Sept	7pm	Autumn Open Evening
Thu 1st Oct	7pm	Hollow forms 2 - Nick
Thu 5th Nov	7pm	Inside Out - Ray
Thu 3rd Dec	7pm	Finishing techniques & types

As always. If you have any particular requests for demonstrations (or to do a demonstration), discussions, techniques, tools and their use, wood types etc, please ask at a meeting or have a word with a committee member and we will see what we can do. We are all on the same journey and every question is a good question.

Committee 2026/27

Chair & Demonstrations	Paul Liggins	pliggins445@gmail.com
Secretary	Alan Begg	alanrbegg@hotmail.com
Special Events	Ray Burden	rayburden1@btinternet.com
Treasurer	Mike Jones	cmike.jones@btinternet.com
Comms & Competitions	Mike Widmer	07484 270479 m.widmer@btinternet.com

Following the AGM in March 2026 the roles & responsibilities of the Committee (as above) and associated members are shown below.

If you would like to help run the club or become a committee member in the future, please have a chat with one of the team…all help welcomed.

Role		Responsibilities
Chair	Paul Liggins	Leader with overall responsibility for ensuring quality and efficiency of the club.
Demonstrations	Paul Liggins	Agree topics, arrange internal and external demonstrators for club nights.
Secretary	Alan Begg	Arrange committee meetings, write and circulate minutes, maintain membership list, output of AGM.
Treasurer	Mike Jones	Manage the finances and 'back office' operations (eg hall bookings, insurance, bank etc). Take subs and raffle money at meetings. Maintain attendance record. Create year-end report.
Communications	Mike Widmer	Newsletter, ongoing club email comms, ad hoc comms, Facebook, event promotion.
Competitions	Mike Widmer	Agree competition programme, comms, organise space, judging method, prize.
Special Events	Ray Burden	Christmas, Open Evenings, BBQ.
Refreshments & Raffle	Andy Smith	Provide the necessary for half time sustenance and entertainment.
"Kit man"	tbc	Ensure lathe and accessories etc are fit for purpose and identify need for spares or repairs.
Camera Operator	Dave Hyde	Set up camera for live view of demos. Ensure batteries charged, cables function and look after camera.