Woody's World

3rd July 2025

Fishing Floats

****See "Forthcoming meetings" section for November date change**

Homework pays off:



Well done to everyone for rising to the challenge following June's meeting. I doubt there has been a better collection of whistles being shown and blown since J Hudson & Co's last clear out (you might want to look them up…a very interesting tour apparently).
Congrats to our worthy winner, a beautiful finish and a memorable tone… and that was just the whistle. Oh, and keep hold of that cork…….

On to Floats:



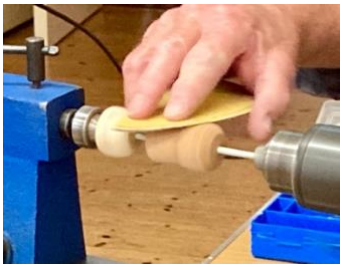
For our July meeting, Andy stepped up to display his passion for fishing and demonstrated how he designs and creates a superb range of fishing floats.

There is a wide range of inexpensive floats on the market that include man-made components. However, Andy prides himself on using natural and found materials where he can along with some recycled bits and low-cost alternatives where necessary. The results look fantastic and clearly provide the maker with immense satisfaction..and some fish.

Some of the components that Andy acquires and uses include dried cow parsley stems, pigeon quills, Norfolk reed (picked whilst fishing), garden bamboo, BBQ skewers, cocktail sticks and Champagne corks.

Champagne cork to ‘bodied float’:

Andy began his demo by converting a cork into a ‘bodied float’. The buoyant cork provides the ‘body’ of the float but needs refining and shaping. To begin with Andy centred the cork on a home-made mandrel (made from a knitting needle) and shaped it using high grit abrasive before sanding down to 600 grit (see end product for shape). This was coated with CA glue and finished with 600 grit.
Sanding sealer can be applied before the CA glue to seal the cork surface if desired.





The ‘stem’ of the float was made from a BBQ skewer. This was cut to length and the ends sanded to tidy them up. This was inserted through the cork and a little CA used to seal up the hole at each end.



The next stage was to ‘whip’ and eye onto the stem through which the float can be attached to the fishing line. Metal or plastic eyes can be bought but the ever-resourceful Andy showed us how he makes them by cutting down brass safety pins – he also makes them up from straight wire. If using cut wire or safety pins, sand the cut surface to remove sharp areas that can cut the fine thread that will be used next.



Andy used nylon thread to whip the eye onto the stem (I think he said the green reel in the pic was a thousand metres so goes a long way).

(note that cotton thread can give a fluffy finish and ‘whipping silks’, whilst built for the job, are fragile…Mr experience says nylon is the best!).



The following whipping technique is quite difficult to convey (and photograph) so might be worth asking Andy if you need precise details:
With the brass eye at the top and the legs either side of the stem (held by the crocodile clip shown in the picture above), begin laying the end of the thread along the stem and then whipping the thread down from the eye to the end of the legs. Adjust with thumb nail to make it tight and compact.



To finish the whip, create a loop of the thread, wind 12 turns over the loop, cut to leave a tail, put the tail through the loop and pull the loop + tail through and behind the winds that you have wound (!) to secure. [YOU CAN SEE THIS ON THESE PHOTOS…a picture paints a thousand words].
Once adjusted and tightened etc use yacht varnish over the whipping to finish. There wasn’t time to decorate on the evening but Andy finished with paint and some decorative whipping to and this is the final result.
Note that different colour floats are effective on different coloured waters and in differing light conditions (so a case of champagne might be required).



Similar process but with different ingredients include a pigeon quill with a malt whisky cork and a balsa wood sight bob on a stem.

Other top tips shared on the evening: With cow parsley stems and similar hollow stems you will need to plug both ends with sanded down

balsa wood dowels to prevent waterlogging. Chamfer the ends on a sanding disc.

Cocktail sticks are a lighter & more sensitive stem than the BBQ skewer.

Reed such as Norfolk reed have a natural cellulose coating so you will need to sand those down for finishes etc to adhere successfully. If reed is picked ‘green’ then store to dry thoroughly.

Some of Andy’s other floats shown below – finished and in process.

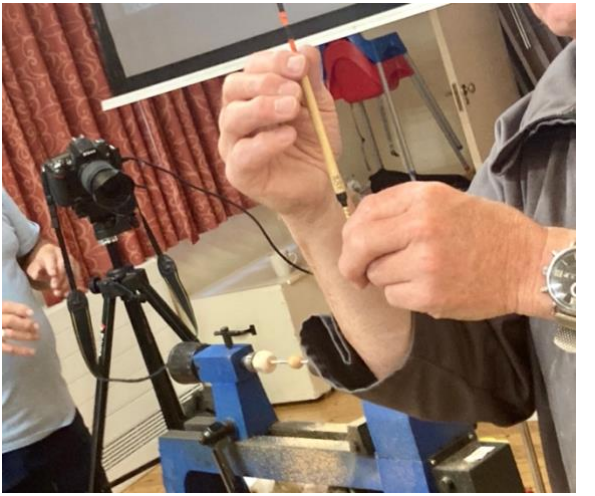







Thanks to Andy for a compelling demo this month and to all our demonstrators who put the time and effort in to preparing and delivering great evenings for the club.





See page below for more fishy fun.

PLEASE BE AWARE that the meeting originally planned for November 6th is now a week earlier on Thursday October 30th because the hall is required by Offchurch Church.

It says this is hard…but it is aimed at school (no pun) kids so might be useful over the summer holidays…and don't get me started with the inclusion of 'whale'…have fun.



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

2025		
Thu 7th August	7pm	Mastering the Skew - Roger
Thu 4th September	7pm	Open Evening
Thu 2nd October	7pm	Visiting demonstrator from Weedon Club
Thu 30th October	7pm	Exploring Resin – Ray **(DATE CHANGE)**
Thu 4th December	7pm	Christmas Trees Mick
2026		
Sat 10th January	7pm	Club Social
Thu 5th February	7pm	Captive rings - Nick
Thu 5th March	7pm	Hands on – topic tbc

Committee 2025/26

Chairman	Mick Jones	cmike.jones@btinternet.com
Secretary (joint)	Alan Begg	alanrbegg@hotmail.com
Secretary (joint)	Ray Burden	rayburden1@btinternet.com
Membership Sec.	Paul Liggins	paul.liggins@ntlworld.com
Treasurer	Andy Smith	01789 612649 / 07865 938850 Andrewrewsmith1125@outlook.com
Media Secretary	Mike Widmer	07484 270479 m.widmer@btinternet.com