Woody's World

7th May 2026

Thread Chasing



We welcomed Steven Gordon to the Club in May to take us through the challenges and frustrations (his words) of thread chasing ie cutting threads into woodturned pieces so that they can be screwed together. This will certainly be a technical challenge for those of us who have never chased a thread before and will give us the opportunity to introduce new techniques into our work.

I am sure all of us are familiar with the concept of 'male' and 'female' threads – Steven mentioned that male threads are less of a challenge than female and do have plenty of uses on their own in the workshop eg for holding/storing chucks or thread converters when not in use, practicing on these is a good starting point.



For the demo project, Steven turned an Acorn lidded box – from Box wood and Laburnum. Whilst the object of the exercise was to focus on creating threads, Steven took us through the making of the box albeit missing out some of the hollowing and finishing to allow for time. Throughout, Steven was keen to assert that you should 'peel side grain and slice end grain'.



He began by focussing on the lid of the box, hollowing and undercutting. Note that the hollowing tool shown here is a wood remover and not a finishing tool and that you should use it with a gentle grip rather than force it. He then moved on to the outside, initially looking for the crude shape – whilst cutting, focus your attention on the horizon of the piece rather than the tool to monitor your progress.





Finish the inside of the box at this point, doing it later will potentially damage the threads, then put a flat on the inside of the top of the box where you will cut the threads. Finish by wet sanding using mineral oil and beeswax ‘sanding butter’.

Before beginning the thread chasing, put a small angle on the inside corner. Steven used a 20 TPI (threads per inch) tool. This is a mid-range number of threads and a good count to start with. Obviously higher number TPIs are for finer threads and smaller numbers for bigger threads. The image to the right shows the ‘female’ tool at the top with the cutting area to the side so threads can be cut within the opening of the box. Conversely, the ‘male’ tool allows for the thread to be cut on the outside of the piece.



Cut internal threads slowly, set the lathe at c.200rpm and make a gentle start.

Steven showed us how to use an armrest held under the left forearm with a strap over the shoulder to support the front end of the thread chasing tool up close to the cutting point with the handle of the tool at the back resting on the aptly named tool rest to minimise any movement.



If not using an armrest, set the tool rest so that the tool is at dead centre and cut with the tool straight/flat ie not pointing up or down.



You will know when you are cutting when you get strands. Use a toothbrush to clean the threads and tool as necessary. Keep cutting until you have 5-6mm of threads. Check for horizontal by using a ruler on the threads to align with the bed ways of the lathe. If they are not straight, they will not match up to the other threads screwed in to them so address any fault by re-cutting. You can use a recess tool to cut a recess just beyond the end of the threads. This will stop the male thread going too far and stripping the threads.

A light sand on the outside at this point, apply wax and use paper to take off the wax and create heat so that the finish is taken in to the surface.
Steven suggests that a 20 or 18 TPI is the best pitch to begin with and that you can practise on corian or plastic pipe rather than expensive wood such as box.





Steven then moved on to the Laburnum for the top of the acorn box. He used callipers to size the object. Slightly round over the end or you will get a catch. Take your time, if you go too far and make the male section too small, you'll have to start again. The male section is easier, so take your time and creep up on the correct size. Begin by sizing the first part to the threads. They will be too big so gently take the heads off the threads so you can make them deeper, if you don't they will crumble as you cut them. Aim for the threads to be parallel using the bed ways as a guide. Refine by taking the tops off, check, lubricate, refine.



You are likely to get it almost right but not perfect – so try the female on the male, if it's too tight as they screw together then the thread is not parallel and needs refining. Once refined, shape the nut of the acorn, sand, finish and part off.







Thanks Steven for a great demonstration and providing the majority of us with a new challenge.

Competition:

Thanks to all the members who put forward a piece for our “Trophy” competition. We had a great array of entries with a range of ideas and designs that really does bear testament to the creativity and capability of our members.
We had plenty of votes cast and it was a close-run thing with Roger (no 12) in second and Ray (no 3) just one vote ahead in first. Congratulations to both.
Ray’s trophy will now become the bi-monthly competition prize…the rest of us can pop ours on our mantlepieces!









Apologies if your piece isn’t shown here.

The Next Competition - Thurs 2nd July

Our next club competition will be judged at club night on 2nd July.

The challenge is to make a coaster or coasters ie the sort of coaster that you rest your glass or cup upon, not the sort that goes from port to port at sea.

Other news:

Summer BBQ – SAVE THE DATE – Saturday 1st August 1pm
2026 is the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the Club and we agreed that we should celebrate this with an afternoon 'late lunch' barbecue from 1pm for members, their families & friends.
Details are being finalised and will be shared in June but the BBQ will be at Offchurch Village Hall and playing field. Please save the date and time - and let us know at June's meeting whether you will be coming along.

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 4th June	7pm	Hollow Vessels - Nick
Thu 2nd July	7pm	Focus on Sharpening
Thu 6th Aug	7pm	tbc – poss. Back to Basic 2
Thu 3rd Sept	7pm	Autumn Open Evening
Thu 1st Oct	7pm	Pen Making - Paul
Thu 5th Nov	7pm	Inside Out - Ray
Thu 3rd Dec	7pm	tbc

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.