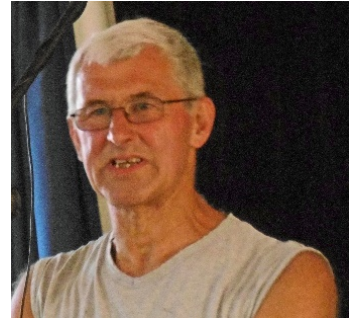


December 2017 Meeting—John Woods

Our erstwhile Secretary and programme creator stepped in to fill the “Techy talk” breach with a presentation on many aspects of Health and Safety as applied to Woodturning. In order to focus the presentation John chose to centre it on Wood dust.

His Power point presentation was well prepared.

He gave examples of problems caused by not controlling dust. Dust has traditionally been seen as a nuisance by-product, product of the craft with little regard to safety and health. It was known that dust can be explosive, usually when it was too late. For some workers, all that was suggested for personal protection was to tie a handkerchief or scarf over your nose and mouth. Research has shown that carpenters have a four times greater likelihood of asthma than other trades. Fortunately, we are now more aware of the hazards that dust can cause.



John went on to talk about risk management relating to dust. He explained that there are five aspects to consider with Risk Management:

Identify hazards

Identify who is at risk

Assess the risks – and take action

Record for future reference

Review the Risk Assessment

He discussed each of these in turn and then went on to talk about hazard prevention.

The priority should be to solve the problem at its source by not creating dust by use of sharp tools, and where possible use green wood. Capture the dust that is created by use of extraction equipment. Oil or oil/wax can be used when abrading to aggregate the dust and stop it becoming airborne. Also, remember that cleaning up dust creates a further hazard (vacuum rather than brush).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should always be worn but it must be remembered that it is a third level precaution and should only be considered to supplement other prevention measures. Various examples of protective equipment were discussed including disposable masks, masks with replaceable filters, powered helmets, etc. High efficiency filters are required for wood dust and should bear the designation “P3”.

Once the dust is airborne, volume filters can help to clean the air. Popular main brands being ‘Microclene’, Jet, and Record. Ideally these need to be left working for a while after the work area has been vacated to reduce airborne dust to a minimum. These do not alleviate the need for personal protection

All wood dust is hazardous. it can cause allergies, respiratory problems, cardiac conditions, skin conditions, eye problems, slip hazards and is potentially explosive. There was a discussion in the room about known explosions of flour, grain, coal and wood dust. During general discussion, there was quite a level of scepticism in the room about explosive hazards and also about the use of masks.

The workshop of Peter Taylor was discussed, Peter has used some form of control of dust for many years. He built it himself and it uses a domestic fan to provide a high volume, low flow extract which takes the dust outside his workshop. He also uses a wall fan to blow fresh air into the top of a face mask and so forcing dust away from his face.

To round off the evening John showed various video clips that showed various aspects of woodturning and its possibilities.

The presentation was given using the club’s new projector which was excellent. The quality of the projected image was outstanding and we will make more use of that facility in the future.

John did well to present this subject in a clear and informative manner, which provoked quite a level of discussion which was about evenly split between those who were convinced and those who remained doubters.