



WEST SUSSEX WOODTURNERS

LOCKDOWN 2021 NEWSLETTER

EDITION 2

An Associated Club of the AWGB

So here we are again with yet another Fake Newsletter. It is beginning to look like this could go on for some time. My son, who is the Head brewer at the Brewhouse and Kitchen in Horsham, has been told by his bosses that they may not be opening until June but they are hoping for May.

Still things are looking up a bit. I've just had my first Covid job and to make the weekend even better the 6 Nations is kicking off. The bad news was England losing to Scotland, followed by Ireland losing to Wales.

My thanks go to Barrie Fitch for his splendid article on casting Resin blanks.

I have not added anything to Barrie's purple prose as I know nothing about casting.

A journey into casting resin for pen blanks:-

I decided to "have a go" at making my own blanks using epoxy resin.

Having sought advice from some club members (Gordon Eaton) I bought some Glasscast 50 resin & hardener) & a Paul Buckley (Cast tube in) mould.

I first tried some plastic 22mm pipe with a modicum of success.

Then made myself a couple of moulds out of some Corian I had in my cupboard.

Wanted a couple of pine cones to cast in the larger mould (suddenly realised the road adjacent to my house was called "The Pines" so I didn't have far to go to get a selection. Dusted them off dried them out thoroughly!

The last item I wanted was a vacuum chamber and my club mate Andy Heath came up trumps and loaned me his (thanks Andy).

The pictures show the rest of the story!

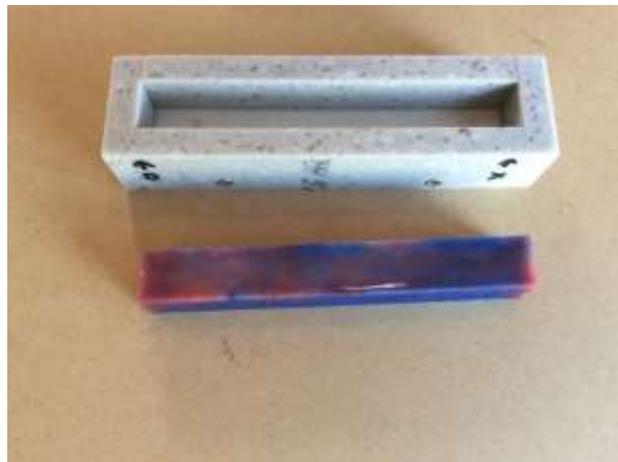
I've learnt a lot with this experiment, not least as to how much cost and effort is involved - I'll never complain about the cost of cast blanks again.

It has however used up a lot of lockdown time and I've had fun so far. I don't intend to stop here!



22mm PVC tube with resulting Blank

Great fun trying to extract the blank from the tube – lined the tube with Vaseline which helped as an effective release agent!



Mould made from Corian and resulting Blank

I was very pleased with this; the only thing I don't particularly like is the merging of the colours – more about this later.



Larger mould – big enough to accommodate enough resin for eight blanks.

Heading into mass production here. I had seen some pine cones used and decided to try them out with my first go!



Pine cone cut through the centre and trimmed off at each end to fit the mould.

This was definitely a “mind your fingers” moment on the band saw followed by a quick finish with the disc sander.



A nice tight fit with some off-cuts added (later) makes sure the cones don't float when the resin is added



Resin mixed, coloured and poured into the mould!

Made my first telling mistake here – didn't make enough resin to fill the mould so I've now got four complete blanks and four thin blanks that are of no use for anything!



The final product – some rather effective pen blanks!

All I need to do now is to find a couple of decent pen kits to use them with – a bit too good for the usual slimline or streamline kits, I think.



The Paul Buckley mould and a resulting cast and turned blank



Two finished pens from my casting – The top was from the PVC tube and the bottom from the “tube in” Method.

I have to say I'm pleased with the results but would prefer to have less merging of the colours. I used bright green – canary yellow and bright blue for the bottom one and the pine cone ones and they just merged into almost one colour. The reason for this is the type of resin I used. I tried “Glasscast 50” which, I found out as I progressed takes an awful long time to set (24 – 30 hours and it was still soft). I have since found out that I should have used Glasscast 10 which will set in a couple of hours. The resin needs to be partially set such that it's still runny but not so runny that the colours merge into one another. The other issue is that bubbles are easily removed from the runny resin but not so easy from the partially set.

NEXT MONTH:

I'm looking for ideas or contributions. Other than Colin Willetts (a serial contributor) and Stewart Furini (with his Zoom meeting) only 6 other members have contributed major items for the Newsletter.

MEMBERS SHOW AND TELL TABLE:

See the Club's website for examples of work done by club members.