



Fan Bird Carving Fantastic



In January we welcomed Mr. Sean Hellman, woodwright, who gave us a demonstration on carving fan birds. This was a departure from the norm as there was no woodturning involved. However, judging by members' comments, it proved to be a fascinating and enjoyable talk.

Fan bird carving is an ancient traditional craft originating mainly from Scandinavia, Finland and the Baltic areas. This may be partly due to the fact that trees in that area grow so slowly the annual rings are particularly close, making them more suitable for riving the feathers. Variations of the fan bird can be seen in museums and collections such as the Pinto collection in Birmingham. Of course, being made of delicate sections of wood very few have survived over the ages.

The birds were often hung over babies' cots and were associated with good luck or had religious connotations.

Sean began the practical demo by cleaving a piece of green ash first radially then tangentially to produce a small plank which he trimmed, marked and shaped to the right profile. For these processes Sean used a small Kent pattern axe. Traditionally the birds would have been made with nothing more than a sharp knife.

Whilst working, Sean discussed suitable woods for this project and also covered many interesting facts. He also discussed safe working practices

The piece was then held in the vice and the feathers were rived using an improvised knife made from a coping saw



Sean Hellman preparing the blank

The next stage was to carve the bird's body. Using a sharp knife, Sean developed the profile then bevelled the corners and finally rounded them off. Sean then removed some of the hinge area of the feathers to allow them to be manipulated without breaking. The feathers were then carefully fanned out alternately on each side and interlocked to make the wings. The remaining ones made the tail. The final stage was to attach a pin at the centre of gravity, tie on a piece of nylon line and hang the bird up. The birds can be customised by adjusting the shape of the wings and by adding colour.

After lunch Sean described how to make a shrink pot. This involved hollowing right through a piece of green branchwood, making a groove inside the bottom and fitting a dry base. As the green wood dries, it shrinks over the base making a tight fit. Shaun makes these pots on his pole lathe and fits them with lids.



Left Coloured fan birds
Right Some of Sean's work including shrink pot in centre
Far right More of Sean's work



To finish, Sean prepared another fan bird blank and members had the opportunity to have a go at riving the feathers.

There were plenty of entries for the Richard Hasleden Cup Here is a selection.



Nutcracker dish in walnut by Ken Page.



Pot by Roger Smith.



Seed pod in oak, blackwood seeds and kingwood stand, By Richard Hasleden



Neale Sands having a go at riving the feathers. Notice Sean's leg vice and shaving brake.

Thanks are due to Lynn Chambers and Brian Rowson and team for managing the audio visual system.

Thanks also to all members who help to set up and clear away and to Bob Hollands for running the raffle.

Forthcoming Events

Axminster Sittingbourne branch have a woodworking event on March 18-19 9am-4pm. There will be workshop machinery demonstrations, routing, sharpening and woodturning with Jason Smith who specialises in texturing and colouring using a variety of mediums.

The United Kingdom and Irish Woodturning Symposium is being held at The Hilton Hotel in Coventry on June 18-19.

All the demonstrators will be concentrating on the use of a boxed set of six standard tools with maybe the use of one or two specialised items. Great for novices!

Wizardry in Wood, organised by The Worshipful Company of Turners, is on 12 - 15 October in The Carpenters' Hall, London.

This includes two displays, "Kew in the City" and "The Daniel Collection" and works by over thirty contemporary turners with live demos and guided talks and the biennial competitions.

Wanted

Set of basic turning tools. Contact Malcolm Page email maljan44@gmail.com Tel 01424843639

For Sale

RECORD CL2 LATHE on purpose built bench including large bowl turning attachment. £160 Contact Dave Rogers on 01424430927

Congratulations!

Congratulations to our Chairman, Maggie Wright, who has been awarded a bursary from the Worshipful Company of Turners to learn ornamental turning.

Reminder for this months' meeting

February 21st AGM and Critique. Remember to bring your pieces for advice and appraisal.

Next Month's Meeting

March 20th 10.00am

Tony Handford Demonstrating



Hon President	Allan Beecham
Chairman	Maggie Wright
Vice Chairman and	
Competition Secretary	Peter Castle
Secretary	Anne Smith
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