



Maggie Saves the Day

As the planned demonstration for our August meeting had fallen through, our chairman, Maggie Wright, organised at the very last minute a demonstration of finial turning, followed by a hands on session. Maggie adds finials to many of her pieces to give extra interest or a more balanced look. Finials are generally turned from timber with dense grains that will hold the fine detail well.

The type of wood used for the main piece will also affect the choice as generally a flat but contrasting colour is more suitable for the finial than anything with a busy grain pattern.

Before starting, the safety issues of dust protection and suitable clothing were discussed.

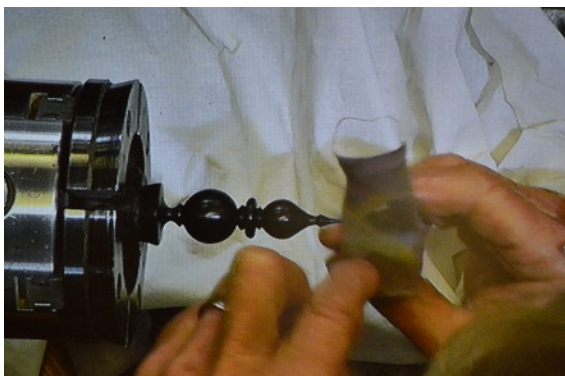
Maggie used a piece of Blackwood for her demonstration. The turning is basically spindle work but the piece needs to be mounted in the chuck in order to work on the very tip. Unless you are experienced you should draw out a design before you pick up your tools. Maggie explained that you need to work with tailstock support as much as possible. The shaping is done in stages starting at the tailstock end to maintain strength in the wood as you work back to the base. You should also aim to make a definite beginning and end to each adjoining shape.



Maggie refining the shape of the finial

Maggie turned the finial using a gouge and a point tool. Small work like this is best turned at high speed with a light touch. Shapes never look quite the same horizontally so it is a good idea to remove the piece to look at it vertically. To do this always leave it in the chuck and remove the whole chuck so as to maintain concentricity. It helps to see the profile of your work if you place a contrasting background behind it, in this case something white.

I use mainly native woods for turning which are not normally very dark so I have an old vehicle panel covered in black vinyl permanently under my lathe bed. It is also easy to clean.



Refining and finishing the finial.
Note the contrasting background.

The base of the finial needs to be shaped to fit into a recess cut in the piece receiving it. Once satisfied with the shape, the work needs sanding through the grits and sealing. A tip from Maggie is to colour code your pieces of abrasive for easy recognition of the grade. Maggie used cellulose sanding sealer, a popular choice as it is quick drying and will take most finishes. Our thanks to Maggie for her demonstration, not easy at such short notice.

We then had a break for the raffle and lunch.

During the break Peter Castle handed out the blanks for the winter competition. It is entirely up to the individual how the blank is used. It may be turned as it is, cut and turned in separate pieces or cut and glued into different dimensions and turned. There is a blank available for every member and plenty of time to prepare, so no excuses. We expect lots of entries when the time comes and lots of novel ideas.

After lunch members set to work at the lathes under the guidance of the more experienced. Thank you to all those members who helped with tuition.

Finials on show



Two of Maggie Wright's pieces adorned with delicate finials

Other work



Above left, glasses holder by Ken Page and right, box with chicken knob by Gaya Taylor.



Fred Mitchell with his completed finial.

Hazards of turning green wood

Did you read the article in the AWGB Revolutions newsletter last month? We all know of the hazards involving dust etc when turning but green wood can produce its own dangers, particularly in the form of gases and sap. The heat generated by our cutting tools can vaporize the sap to very toxic gases.

I had personal experience of this a year or so ago when I was asked to turn a pair of pendant light shades from some green cherry. As I was hollowing the wood there was a strong smell of almonds. Lovely I thought, but those of you who enjoy a good Agatha Christie type detective story will know that the smell of almonds is an indicator of cyanide. After a bit of research I discovered that some members of the cherry family do in fact produce hydrogen cyanide gas when chopped or shredded which can be very dangerous. So next time you turn green wood please bear this in mind especially as some gases are odourless.

Reminder for this Month's meeting

September 18th 10.00am

Jason Lee Smith RPT Demonstrator

For Sale

Dremel 335 plunge router attachment.
Boxed as new. £17.00
Contact Gaya Taylor 07956817133

Next Month's Meeting

October 17th

Hands On Spinning Top Challenge

Please bring your tools and wood suitable for making the tops, ie branch wood or spindle blanks
The current time to beat for a continuous spin is 94 seconds set by Maggie Wright's top in October 2013

Chairman	Maggie Wright
Vice Chairman and Competition Secretary	Peter Castle
Secretary	Anne Smith
Treasurer	John Turner
Events organiser	Greg Collett
Librarian	David Spice
Newsletter editor	Sandra Day
A-V co-ordinator	Brian Rowson

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