

It must be in the blood!

Richard Findley turns an unusual bowl

Before starting his demonstration to members at our February meeting, Richard Findley (Turnersworkshop.co.uk) gave an interesting précis about how he became a turner. He comes from a long family of woodworkers who made furniture, did woodcarving and turning — much of which Richard learned, as it seems, from dad's knee! But, he says, turning is the most satisfying and addictive!

So he started to show how to make a bowl! Not only was it an unusual bowl but it was decorated with tips, thoughts and hints from the master on timber, tool selection, shape and finish. See our pictures.

OK, so the maple block had a small crack, so advice on how to make it a part of the waste was given. Then, having mounted the blank on a screw chuck, which method of holding the base is chosen? Richard favours a spigot rather than a recess as this puts less strain on the bowl — especially if it is a thin one.

Draw cuts feature quite a lot in Richard's armoury. They offer a smoother finish and delicate shavings are much easier. They also reduce the colour shades variation between side and end grain.

We were treated to a useful explanation of exactly how chuck jaws should fit on a spigot (snug against bowl and on spigot).

An ogee shape is chosen for the outside of the bowl and we are advised to place the partly finished blank in its finial sideboard/table location to judge that the shape blends in well with the surroundings.

Much was made of the push stroke (centre to edge) for the final cuts. with thoughts on applying an acrylic coat to make the fine wood hairs stand up and be cut rather than just lying flat! Holding the bowl gouge for this operation (be flexible) included getting an audience member to grasp the handle "like I was told how to hold a tennis racquet!" A good demonstrator like Richard embeds advice in your head — as did his antics to illustrate the importance of foot positioning and balance. Bevel bounce also came under the microscope — where a chatter necessitates an easing off wood pressure and adding weight to the tool rest. "A lot of practice is needed!"

A power sanding devotee, our demonstrator uses a soft pad backed abrasive disc in a drill chuck; but care is needed in restricted areas to avoid the disc edge marring the work. He also emphasised cleanliness, like removing all dust before changing to a finer grade of abrasive.

Reverse sanding? Richard did not appear convinced of any benefits, but admitted it may be worth a try!

The bowl of the evening has a very small capacity, the top face being decorative. The natural tendency would be to have a flat surface but this is not the best approach, says our man. "A slight curve looks more attractive and is easier to produce than a dead flat one".

For the decorative face a 6mm beading tool is used, the angle of the tool being 45 degrees, raised as the cut progresses. An odd number of beads is preferred, for some reason odd numbers dominate in many fields. Surfaces adjacent to sprayed areas should be well finished as, like sawn timber, a rough surface absorbs more, making it difficult to remove.

The colour — in this case black — is sprayed on and, when dry, adjacent surfaces are cleaned back to bare wood with a skew chisel used as a scraper.

Apart from finishing, the last job is hollowing. Work from both sides, forming steps to avoid gouge wings digging in. And to add interest (and a shadow does this well), undercut the outer edge of the hollow then finish with power and hand sanding.



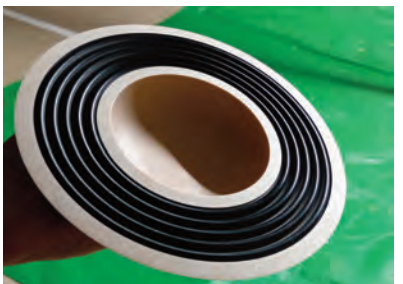
Starting approach angle for the beading tool making the rings



Power sanding around the spigot
Pic: Hilary Sinclair



Applying black spray paint



The finished job