



Cheam Woodturners Association

Associated with the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain

Twinned with Central Oklahoma Woodturners Association



Turned by Chris Grace

December 2014

Chris: champion spin doctor

With Christmas looming, it seems appropriate that toys are on the menu. Richard Hoodless reports on how Chris Grace entertained us royally in November, demonstrating how to make two types of spinning top, one with a separate launcher, the other with a means of spinning the top without a separate launcher



Chris started by marking out the centres of a 60mm square blank, 80mm long, with an engineer's centre finder marking the centre from all four corners in case the blank was not quite square. He put a wood faceplate in the lathe chuck, faced with a piece of cork tile fixed with double-sided carpet tape.

The cork was trimmed to a circle with the long point of a skew chisel. To turn a chucking spigot he secured the blank using the pressure of the tailstock. Using a roughing gouge with slightly swept back wings he cut the corners off the blank to form the spigot.

A scraper ground to the angle of the dovetail jaws was used to form the spigot. About 50mm of the blank was turned down to just under 12mm using both a roughing gouge and a spindle gouge and rounded over the top of the spinning top.

Protect the fingers

He recommends gripping the stem of the tool rest with the fingers so that they are not struck by the jaws of the chuck. The top was reversed and the stem held in a split disc of wood held in the chuck and having a 12mm hole in the centre. The tailstock was brought

Pictures (right) top to bottom:

Wood faceplate with Steb centre giving backup pressure.

With the bottom formed, the Steb is pulled clear to allow final shaping.

The finished spinning top showing where string is fitted.

Chris drills the holes for the second launcher handle.



If you have any comments, corrections, or items to add, please contact e-news editor: ron_grace@btinternet.com

We look forward to seeing you all on December 17

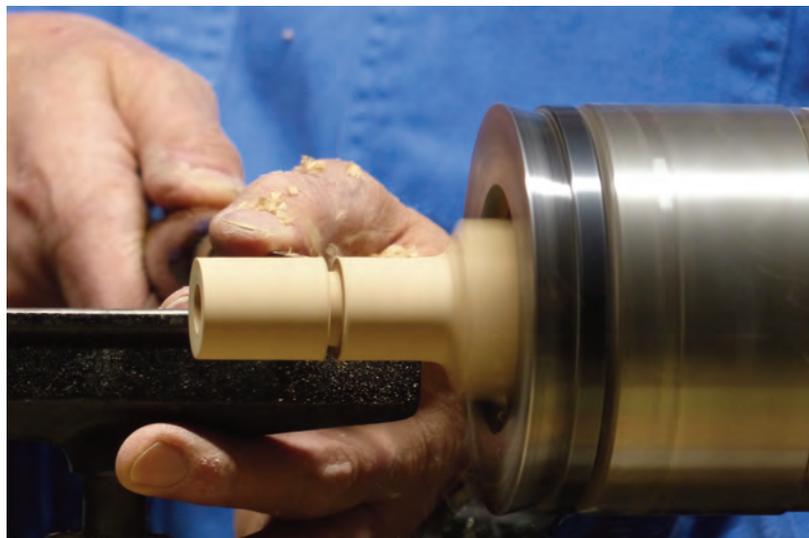
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up to support the end of the top and the bottom of the top turned to shape.

The tailstock was removed and the shaping completed using shear cuts. The launcher handle was formed from a 150mm x 30mm square piece of wood. Two holes of 12 and 20mm were drilled at right angles to each other near the end and the handle was turned to a cylinder leaving the part where the two holes had been drilled square (about 30mm).

Some decoration was turned on the end of this handle in the form of beads. The square end of the wood was cut into the 20mm hole to make a yoke shape. A 3mm hole was drilled in the stem of the spinning top to coincide with the centre of the yoke.

To spin the top, slip the yoke piece over the stem of the top and wrap a piece of string round the stem. Pull the string sharply and let the top drop to the floor from the yoke handle.



Don't lose the launcher

Chris explained it was easy for the top and handle to get separated and so after the break he made a ring to go on the stem which could be left there permanently.

To make the ring he drilled a 20mm hole in the end of a 35mm square blank and placed it on a spigot in the chuck. The end was turned down to 11.5mm using scraping cuts as there was not much holding the wood.

It was ensured that the shoulder was cut square. This piece was held in the split jig, a mark was made 30mm from the end and a 12mm hole drilled at right angles to the blank on a centre 15mm from the end. The 30mm length of the blank was turned to a barrel shape. Then a 20mm hole was drilled in the end to a depth of 35mm and the piece parted off to 30mm long.

To spin the top with the captive launcher, place the ring over the stem of the top and wrap a piece of string round the stem. Hold the ring, pull the string sharply and let the top touch the floor leaving the ring in place.



Top and above: spinning top with captive launcher. Left: just one item from Chris's display. Below: Collection of items on show



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