Brian Ash, Peter Westermann - Members specialities - June 20th 2007

Demonstration at the club meeting for June was not by an outsider but by two club members. Peter Westerman showed the making of a natural-edge bowl, followed by Brian Ash explaining his method for turning hollow form items using simple tools.
Peter started with a square block of unseasoned oak with bark on one of the square sides. A chucking ring was screwed to the bark side and he shaped the outside of a roughly conical bowl with a spigot at the bottom. Care was needed to avoid splitting off the bark. The outside surface was sanded using a small angle grinder with a home made fitting to take sanding pads Peter reckons that this is more comfortable to use than a power drill. His grinder had a speed controller so it could be run at moderate RPM. Before re-chucking the base spigot was dosed with superglue to make the damp wood less liable to crush. The centre was marked to assist eventual spigot removal. After re-chucking the inside was worked out gradually with a bowl gouge. The final surface was cut with a large half round scraper, then sanded as before. All surfaces were treated with melamine and the bottom spigot removed with the bowl held between a padded dome and the revolving centre.

Brian’s interest in hollow forms was triggered by the club’s February competition. Hollow form seemed to imply expensive tools that not all would want to buy. Even with such tools, some shapes are not possible because of narrow necks, squat shape or large internal radii. As a result of reading Edward de Bono Brian tried lateral thinking and decided that hollow forms could be made of top and bottom sections glued together at their rims. He discovered that some top name turners also do this. The objective was to manage with simple tools such as bowl gouge and parting tool. His approach is to glue end-grain spigots at top and bottom of the blank. If a natural edge is required the top spigot is in the form of a cup with clearance so that glue does not spoil the natural edge. The preferred place to cut through is usually a little below maximum diameter. After starting with a thin parting gouge Brian finishes with a pull saw. Before separation, locating marks are made across the cut. During hollowing consideration must be given as to how the bottom spigot will ultimately be removed. The cut surfaces are lightly trued and glued and the outside can be finished. A number of high quality pieces were passed around and admired. Glue lines were almost invisible, especially if they coincided with a light decorative cut.
This double demonstration by two of our members made a very worthwhile and memorable evening. Many of the audience will be inspired to try these techniques for themselves.