

As ever Gary Rance gave us an entertaining and instructive demonstration – this time the topic being ‘Treen’ (small handmade functional household objects made of wood), which are a speciality of his.

Gary sells DVD’s of his techniques, which give considerably more detail than can be covered here, they can be found on his website - [www.garyrance.co.uk](http://www.garyrance.co.uk). His background as a production turner means his demonstrations are instructive and very fast!



Having demonstrated spindle turning on his last visit to us in July 2012 he turned his attention to faceplate turning. He started with general principles of face plate work, demonstrating making his popular picture frames, in this case from the offcut from a larger frame, in this way several frames can be made from one blank.

The blank was initially mounted on a screw chuck and Gary covered the basics of cutting coves and beads, reminding us not to hesitate when starting a cut. The frame was marked and the back of the frame turned, the centre removed with a parting tool, then the frame reversed, being held by the jaws inside (do not tighten too much). When the frame is finished glass is fitted inside and a piece of mdf is used for the back with books to hold it in place and a hook on the back for hanging.





Gary followed this with his main demonstration of a Mexican Rosewood (Bocote) box with a Corian inlay in the lid. He started mounting the 2½” blank with the corners removed between steb centre and tail stock.



The blank was roughed with a roughing gouge – with the handle dropped to go in at an angle and Gary uses his thumb over the top of the gouge to deflect the shavings they are removed. He turned a 1/8” spigot on both ends. The point where the lid was to be was marked then the blank was re-mounted in the chuck at the lid end and parted off.



The lid was then cleaned up with a spindle gouge – either getting the bevel and cutting in or going into the centre and drag it back. It was then cleaned up with a ¼” skew or a box scraper, keeping the handle low and scraping across .

The inside was sanded inside working on the 2 o’clock area starting with 120 grit then going straight on to 400, 600 grit and then 1500 grit mesh. *Gary commented that he never uses the intermediate grits between 120 and 400 as this takes time that a production turner doesn’t have.*



The lid was removed and the base of the box mounted in the chuck. In order to fit the lid a skew chisel was used turning a taper so that the lid doesn't fit all the way down. Gary kept touching the lid onto the taper and once it fitted it was squared, leaving a fillet to allow a gap between base and lid – this allows it to be knocked off if it is difficult to remove.



The lid was fitted onto the base and a spigot was turned to fit the Corian insert. The Corian had been previously drilled out (Gary holds it in pliers or the jaws of a wood clamp when drilling) and a central mount was turned on the lid, with Gary continually tried the corian onto the lid to ensure a good fit and checked that the spigot was square. A 3/8" spindle gouge was used to get rid of the hole created by the tail stock. Gary mentioned that contrasting timber could be used instead of Corian. The Corian was fixed to the lid with superglue (tapping it on gently with a hammer to ensure a tight fit).



The wood and Corian were then turned to give the impression that the Corian was inserted into the wood (this only works with a curved surface). Remember to make sure you are careful when turning Corian which blunts the tools fast and is very messy (a mask should be worn).



When complete the lid was removed – *if the lid is too tight to remove try using a block of softer wood to tap it off*) and the inside of the box finished. *If using a box scraper remember to set the tool rest higher then tip the tool slightly to go down the side and very gently across the bottom*



The base was then removed from the chuck, reversed and mounted on a jam chuck in order to finish off the bottom of the box. Despite the quality of the finished article Gary said he finds that boxes don't sell very well and this would usually only only sell for £40 up to a maximum of £55-£60



In the last few minutes of the evening Gary demonstrated one of the items that sell very well – a bottle stopper using a small laburnum log.



The log was mounted between steb centre and tailstock and skew was used to flatten the end. The length was marked and the size was stepped down with a skew – rocking it from side to side



The shape was made with a skew, with the tool rest low and the skew handle dropped and lifted up. A ¼ " spindle gouge was used to soften the bead.



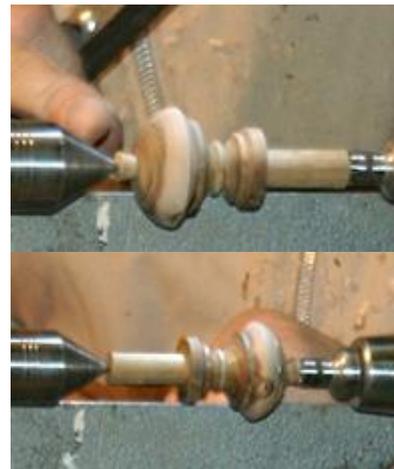
Gary sanded the piece at the back – commenting that all production turners use this technique



Gary would often pattern these bottle tops with a zig zag pattern or a knurling tool, he then makes a V-cut either side of the pattern and uses a pencil line to emphasise the line – looks like an ebonised line.

The steb centre end is left untouched as it produces a pretty dotted pattern.

The piece was turned round - it is not a good idea to part off between centres, but if it is essential then it should always be done at the drive end – and the spigot was turned down as near as possible without removing it entirely



Gary removed it from the lathe and removed the small spigot from the top. Gary fixes the rubber bottle top cover on with an 2-part epoxy resin. He sprays them with a sanding sealer and denibs if the grain has lifted and then finishes with an acrylic gloss lacquer – leaving it to cure overnight.

These pieces each take Gary about 4 minutes to make – important when you are trying to make a living at turning.



\*\* A final and extremely useful tip Gary gave us was that he quickly dries his pieces by wrapping them in newspaper, which he frequently changes as it becomes damp. He finds the Sun works particularly well!