

This demonstration was the first time in 6 years that Jimmy has demonstrated in the UK. He pointed out that the techniques he uses are his alone, that it is important to enjoy woodturning and do whatever suits you. He said that in his opinion UK turners are better technical turners than those in the US, this is partly because we traditionally start by learning spindle turning and move onto other tools afterwards, which gives us the best technique.



More than any other tool he uses a long grind bowl gouge with a curved swept back wing which allows him to use it for more types of turning. His tools are sharpened with the One-Way grinding jig, because it gives him repeatability. The tools he uses most are a  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{3}{8}$ ths inch bowl gouges.

Jimmy turns as fast as he can safely - there is less resistance to the cut and it is more fluid.



Jimmy's first demonstration of the day was a square edge box. He started with a square of walnut mounted on a screw chuck with a spacer on the screw to reduce its length. With his bowl gouge he used draw and push cuts to clean up the wood - the draw cut uses just the tip of the gouge, the bevel is only used with the push cut.

His dividers were set to the width of the tenon he needed, using the left leg only to scribe the line - emphasised it is important when using the dividers never to let the right hand leg touch the wood. He cut the tenon with a dovetail and removed more wood, reminding us to leave it slightly hollow rather than flat, as if the wood moves it will rock and the hollowing will allow it to be touching in at least 3 places.



The wood was divided into thirds from the point of the wing up to the foot and marked on the base, the edge was also divided into  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd's and marked (the  $\frac{2}{3}$ rd portion being nearer the foot). Moving the tool rest perpendicular to the angle he wanted Jimmy used a pull cut, which is most efficient, to remove the  $\frac{2}{3}$ rd portion of wood up to the mark on the edge - if you use a bevel cut on the outside of the bowl you will always be cutting against the grain. It may be necessary to use this bevel cut to help you to get a particular profile but you must leave enough wood to finish off with a finishing cut with the grain.

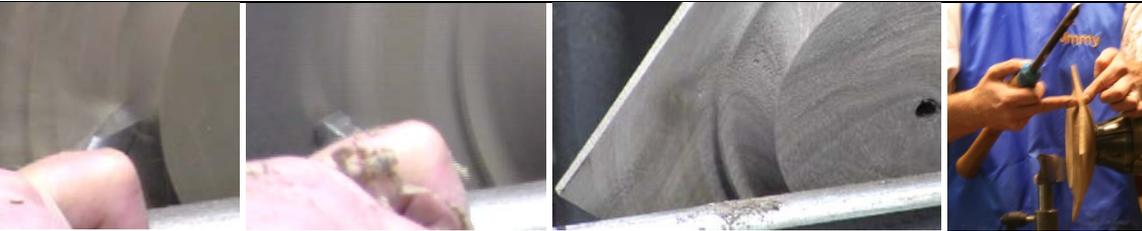
Jimmy then marked the remainder of the wood in half (between the centre of the edge and the inner third) to cut the ogee curve by blending the inner  $\frac{2}{3}$ rd. (he never leaves a flat next to the foot). He then finished it off with a very light pull cut dropping the tool down to use the bottom of the gouge wing - effectively a shear cut using just the bottom tip of the gouge in the direction of the grain.



The wood was turned round to mount the tenon – Jimmy told us to hold it putting pressure on the centre of piece when mounting it into chuck as this will help ensure it is mounted square.

Jimmy started with a draw cut to clean up face then moved backwards and forwards with his bowl gouge. He moved the tool rest to the required angle and took step cuts from the edge removing the wood gradually from each step.

Because it is often difficult to see the edges of the wings it is useful to put a white card on the lathe bed, another useful tip is to mark the edge of the wing on the tool rest so you know when you will start cutting.

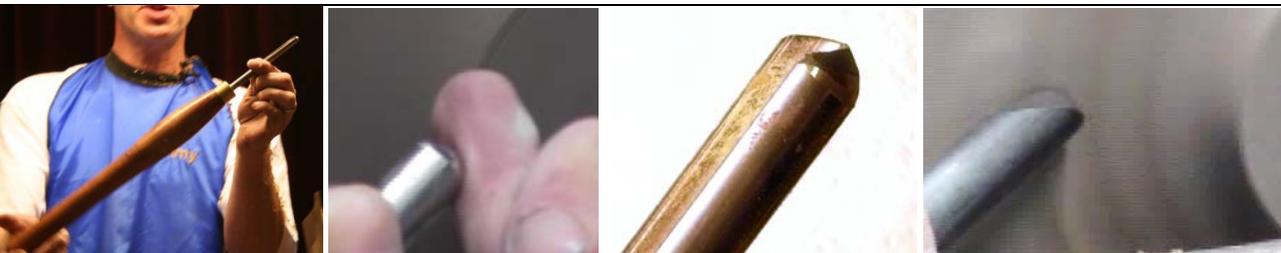


Jimmy cut the shape so that the wings were slightly thinner than the centre of the edge, he continued cutting downhill from the centre, then downhill from the edge.



Jimmy marked the size of the box lid, which will be overhanging the edge by  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. He checked to ensure the opening is big enough for the jaws to fit inside to finish off the bottom of the box later.

Jimmy wanted to make a curve from the inner mark to the edge of the wing, a cove initially using a draw cut. He got the curve he wanted and checked that the centre of the box was level with the height of the edge of the wings, centre needed to be dropped so the edge will need to be marked in the correct place again.



In order to make sure the wings were right Jimmy cleaned up the wings using his bowl gouge in the closed position remembering to keep moving the tool rest to always work above the stem and always sharpening the tool to get a good final finish.

He finished the inside of the curve using the  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch bowl gouge with a much shorter micro-bevel and the heel cut out of the way, which he uses a lot for a finishing cut.

He then used the tip of the larger tool with a curve on it to blend in the centre section with light pull and push cuts.



Jimmy advised sanding the wings first by hand then using a power sander on the curve.



The box was parted into making sure that the tool was absolutely dead square. A small flat was left on the edge in order to be able to reverse and remount the bowl on the chuck. Jimmy then changed height of tool rest to match the tool and used the small gouge to take out the centre starting with steps.

Jimmy talked about the tool bevel and said that one angle would not work for every cut you need to make – you will need different angles depending on the curves you are cutting.

Jimmy spoke about the finish he uses – he prefers to use shellac, which will stiffen soft fibres e.g. spalted woods, before sanding. He suggested covering the whole piece with shellac, letting it dry and even using 2 or 3 coats when the wood is particularly soft, this will allow you to get a good cut with the tool. He also said you can't tell the difference between pieces that were created by scraping and sanding or by cutting if the sanding is done well, the most important thing is to enjoy your work.



Jimmy then mounted the block for the lid, he normally uses a steb centre and tail stock (preferably with a ring so as not to drive the point into the wood) to hold the lid to cut the tenon. He spoke about Chinese knock-offs of steb centres which are available very cheaply in the US, work just as well and are a fraction of the price (<http://www.pennstateind.com/store/headstock-drive-centers.html> - some similar drives are available on ebay from the US, just remember to check the postage!).

So far all the tools he had used were a long grind bowl gouge, a parting tool, and the micro bevel bowl gouge.



Jimmy made the lid with a lift off fit – (he referred to this as a 'ladies fit' which is easy to lift off rather than a woodturners fit that has a little pop). He pointed out that women buy boxes and they aren't interested in popping a lid off - remember who you are selling to. He is trying to dispel myths about what is 'right' in woodturning,

He measured a fraction wider than the opening to mark on lid so he can cut to the line then 'sneak up' on the joint.



Jimmy stopped the lathe to double check that the lid fitted.

He wanted to make the wing shape on the lid flare up to match the flare of the base. He put the base on the edge of the lid and marked the curve. He used the back of the gouge wing, dropping the handle right down, to take the lightest of cuts with the tip of the gouge. He also took out the weight from the centre of the lid by hollowing it out.

He then sanded the inside of lid at this point, the last chance to do it - he sanded it fast because it was small and there was less time for your fingers to fall into the gaps.

Jimmy spoke about creating curves in the wood and said when he turns a platter he never ever leaves a flat, he always put a radius on it. He always make the rim 1/3rd of the width of the platter and puts a curve on it to draw your eye into the centre of the platter. He said people don't feel flats.

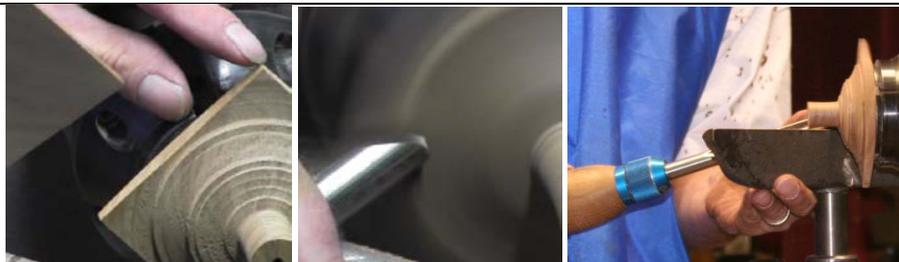


Jimmy then took the bulk of wood from the lid, saying it is useful to be able to turn right and left handed – which makes it easier to get into the back of pieces like this.



The wood was taken out and turned round, Jimmy commented it might get small crush marks – to remove these put some water on it to swell the fibres up, let it dry and sand it back.

He used the long grind bowl gouge to cut an ogee in the top of the lid as well. The wood was removed in steps, moving down from the end towards the headstock as there is less chance of getting a dig. From the edge he took the wood down again in steps a bit at a time - if you feel the tool pulling back off and take a lighter cut.



The lathe was stopped to check thickness of lid – Jimmy wanted the wings to be slightly thinner than those of the base, the proportions should get smaller as you go up the piece. At some points he was cutting uphill but bevel helped to get the cut he wanted.



When turning the handle –Jimmy used his small bowl gouge and a spindle gouge to finish it off, using a bowl gouge in exactly same way as spindle gouge saying that as long as it has a bevel and edge the name of the tool doesn't matter. The spindle gouge allows you to get more detail.

Looking at the detail - how the handle was attached to the lid needed to be lightened up by cutting a little fillet where the join is to make it appear aesthetically more pleasing. When sanding it is important to not spoil the piece wrapping sandpaper round your finger to get into the curve, he said you can always tell if spindle turning has been sanded as it rounds over the crisp detail. He suggested rolling the sandpaper into a little tube which is much more accurate and won't spoil the sharp detail.



Jimmy used a square bar ground to an angle to create the point tool to make 2 small detail cuts in the top of the handle.



The lid was then removed from the chuck and Jimmy attempted to remount the base in order to finish the bottom, unfortunately he couldn't mount it on the jaws in expansion mode as they were slightly too large. Jimmy spoke about the need to finish the bottom as the tenon would be ugly and would make the piece look unfinished. He did this during the break, mounting it on different jaws.

Jimmy finishes his pieces with sanding sealer (he uses Seal Coat Shellac - 100% natural shellac, wax free) and then an oil. The shellac prevents the oil soaking deep into the wood, which would be a waste of oil, he never oils bare wood. The only time he uses a different finish is when he colours a piece so the coloured part of the piece has a high gloss to give more depth to it. The end grain will suck in the oil, so he seals the end grain parts twice before oiling. It is better to put several thin coats of sealer on first, the oil then goes on more evenly and dries quicker. The square edge would be finished on a belt sander after the piece is turned as there is no point in sanding down wood that will be turned away later.