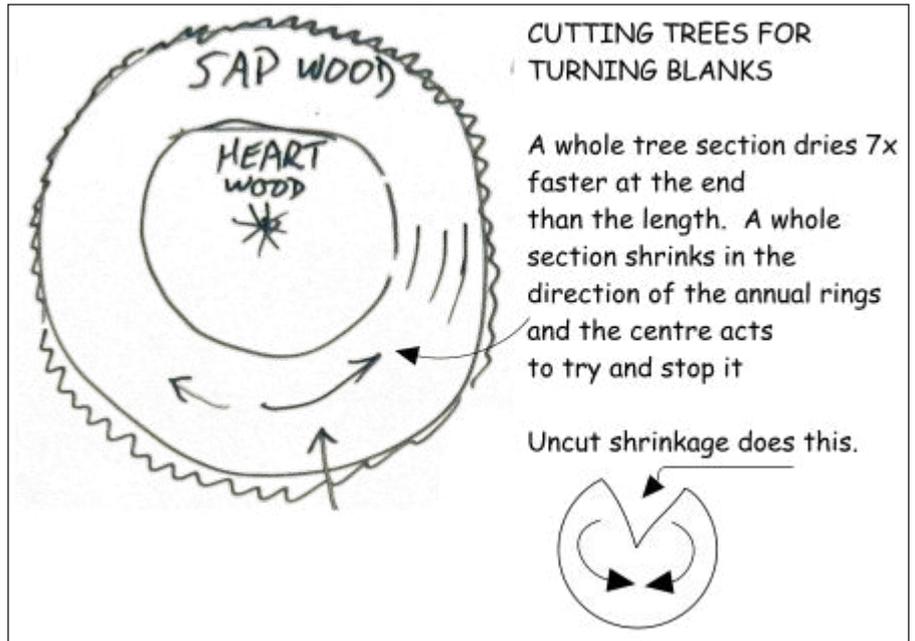


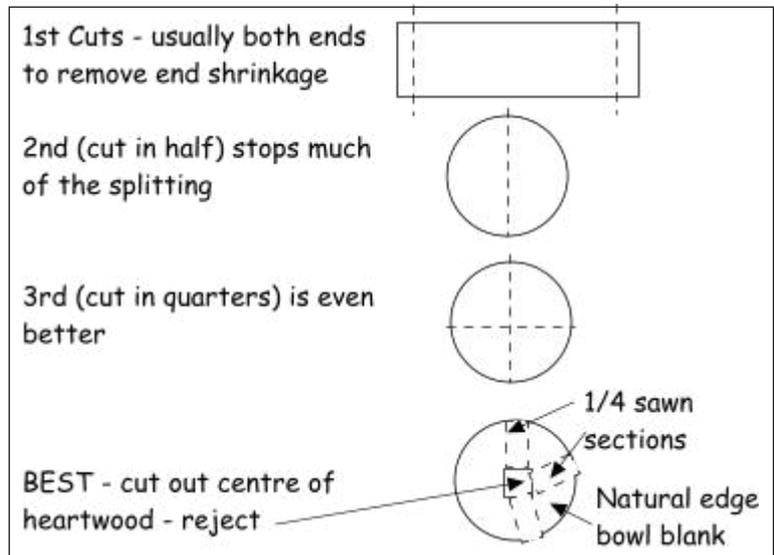
July was a club evening, where we welcomed Tim Lawson back to give us a lesson in how to cut up a large log during the first part of the evening, followed by Jeff Cordery using one of the blanks produced to demonstrate his bowl saver. We were very grateful to Jon Paine for providing 2 extremely large pieces of cherry and also bringing more timber to sell.

Tim started by cutting 3" off the ends of the large log to remove the cracking produced by end shrinkage. He provided diagrams to show the approach to cutting a log.

His demonstration did not go into the details of safety issues but of course the usual precautions should always be taken when using a chainsaw.



Tim marked out the log to indicate how best to remove the pith in the centre of the log – if left in the wood will split from that point.



The log should be cut in multiples of the diameter in order to produce pieces that are effectively 'square' to start with and will produce a full circle when turned (i.e. if the log is 15" in diameter it would be cut in 15" lengths). It is always easier to cut down the length of the timber from the side, not into the endgrain. Tim used wedges each side of the log to hold it in place on it's side. He mentioned that a metal detector is always useful to check the wood for nails etc before cutting.



Tim then drew a rough circle in the wood and took off the corners to produce a roughly circular blank – this would be done on a bandsaw in a workshop.



He demonstrated options for cutting the log to produce different sizes of blank and removing the central pith:



¼ sawn log – removing the pith from the centre of the log



Alternative way to remove the pith to produce 2 large blanks



When Tim cuts logs that aren't going to be used immediately he wraps the ends with plastic bags, sealed with tape to prevent the ends drying out.

Tim finished by demonstrating crotch flitching. This is a way of cutting a log at the point where it splits into branches in order to get the best markings. He mentioned that it is important to clear away any earth that may be in the gaps as this will quickly blunt the saw.



In the second part of the evening we had a demonstration by Jeff Cordery of his bowl saver. This is a way of cutting more than one bowl out of a blank, making a nested set. In this case he used the blank previously cut by Tim. Whilst it is possible to work with dried wood with the bowl saver it is much harder work and will take much longer so it is preferable to use wet wood.



Jeff started by mounting a faceplate onto the blank and turning it to a bowl shape with a spigot. It was then turned round and held in the chuck, the faceplate was left in place as it would be required later on.



Jeff used the Woodcut system (cost £250), although he also has a McNaughton system which is more versatile but also more difficult to use. The bowl saver works with a curved blade which is gradually worked into the blank until it reaches the point where the inner bowl can be removed. A video of the Woodcut system in use can be seen on the Phil Irons website (although he claims it is easy to set up and use, which was not the impression of our members when watching the demonstration!) - http://www.philirons.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=70



The system will produce bowls up to about 16" diameter. The Woodcut system has a set curve so the bowls will always be the same shape. The McNaughton system can be adjusted to produce a different shape of bowl but Jeff found it very much a trial and error process to get it working successfully and there seems to be more danger of damaging the lathe in the process.



A template is provided to help you set up the mechanism correctly. The cut is on the centre line and it is important to get it precisely set up. Cutting support is provided by the tool post and tail stock

The lathe was started at around 450 rpm although the speed is not critical. The handle is used to bore the curved blade into the blank (very carefully), it is a good idea to use a brush to remove the shavings frequently as otherwise the blade will get stuck and will be extremely difficult to remove.



When the first bowl is removed the centre of the bowl remaining on the chuck is cleaned up and the blank is remounted with the faceplate in order to cut a new spigot. The spigot should be substantial as it can easily be ripped off.

It is important to remember to mark the centre point to allow for movement and remounting later on.

The blade is changed over as the bowls get smaller and a smaller template used to line everything up.

Compression jaws should be used on wet wood and Jeff reminded us that all the machinery should be cleaned up immediately after use as when using wet wood it will all be rusty by the following morning.

When completed Jeff waxes the ends of the bowls and keeps them until dry before finishing. He dries his bowls in a home-made kiln, created from an old refrigerator with a heater and external thermostat. He leaves the bowls in the kiln and in this way he can dry his bowls in 4 months instead of the 18 months it would be likely to take otherwise.

This was a fascinating demonstration but there was a feeling that you would want to be making a lot of bowls to make the investment in both the mechanism and learning curve worthwhile!

Many thanks to Tim and Jeff for sharing their expertise with us.

