

Club meeting – February 19th 2024

Demonstrator: Darren Breeze

Darren explained that he is on the Register of Professional Turners (RPT) and also an assessor for the RPT.

He has a shop/workshop in Lowestoft, and offers tuition there.

For the demonstration, Darren was going to turn a footed bowl. He had an example he had made previously to show us. The wood Darren was using for the demo bowl was Kiaat but is sometimes known by other names: Umbila, Mukwa and Muninga. It originates from South Africa. For the foot he will use a contrasting wood, e.g. Sycamore, Maple, Beech.

The bowl blank was mounted onto the lathe using a Screw Chuck. In this instance, he used a spacer to limit the depth of the screw into the blank.

Darren then roughed down the outside to balance it up using an 1/2" swept-back bowl gouge (1/2" bowl gouge refers to the flute width. The steel is actually 5/8" diameter).

Darren emphasized the motion to use the gouge is: **ABCM (Anchor, Bevel, Cut, Move)**.

'Anchor' the gouge onto the tool rest, Align the **Bevel** with the direction of cut. Bring the gouge into the wood to start the **Cut**, then **Move** to continue the cut. Hold the gouge and move your body.

Darren also emphasized the use of a face mask for safety.

He then cleaned off the face/base of the blank.

To mark out for a recess (for chuck mount and subsequent future use as a recess to mount the foot) Darren used a simple compass (spike & pencil type) with the wood stationary. Darren does not use dividers or a vernier with the wood spinning, and explained the dangers of that practice.

A recess was created using a Bedan/parting/round skew tool and a dovetail formed using a reground/repurposed gouge specifically angled for the dovetail.

Then the outside of the bowl was shaped, still using the bowl gouge, demonstrating the 'pull cut' and the 'push cut'.

The bowl gouge Darren was using had a long grind, Darren explained the angles with a novel 'Bevel Indicating Device' (a magnet attached to a pencil).

To refine the outside of the bowl, Darren used a 'negative-rake' scraper, again explaining the angles of this scraper i.e. a grind on the top and the bottom giving an approximate angle of 70-80°. The sharp edge on this lasts for approx.. 2 minutes at best before it needs to be restored. The negative rake scraper just needs a light touch to use. Treat it as a refining tool just to clean up after other shaping cuts.

The outside was then sanded using an inertia sander working through the grits 180, 240, 320, 400, with a mineral oil/beeswax mix applied to control the dust (the oil/wax mixture sticks to the dust making it heavier than air, so falls down rather than getting airborne). The oil/wax was applied using a lint-free safety cloth, but Darren also uses Torx branded paper. He advised not to use the blue paper towels or kitchen roll.

The bowl was then reversed onto standard chuck jaws, emphasizing the need to check the tightness using all the chuck key sockets. This ensures that the 'scroll' does not give a false 'tight spot'.

Hollowing out started with the 1/2" bowl gouge, then progressing to a 3/8" bowl gouge to give a more controlled cut. Matching the internal shape to the external shape. Another 3/8" bowl gouge, with a standard grind was used for the bottom as the angle is better suited for that purpose, and able to deal with 'dimples' and 'pimples'.

Use a freshly sharpened tool for a finishing cut.



Darren explained how a bevel cuts using a knife and a pencil. Acute angle cutting with the grain, not against the grain. Also, not an obtuse angle.

If a gouge 'bounces' when you cut, this can be caused by knots or tight grain. Similarly, out of balance wood may cause the lathe to shake. To deal with these problems, use a sharp gouge, hold the gouge tight onto the toolrest and take light cuts. Choosing an optimum speed also helps, but not to the detriment of safety or enjoyment.



Darren then proceeded to make a foot for this bowl using a square piece of beech. This piece was salvaged from an obsolete piece of furniture.

This was mounted on the lathe using 'Steb' drives. These have a serrated drive face and sprung-loaded tip. A relatively safe drive to use. The blank was rounded off using a Spindle Roughing Gouge. Darren emphasized that a SRG must only be used for spindle work (grain running in the direction of the lathe bed). The tang on a SRG is its weak point. If used on cross-grain (faceplate) work, there is a risk that the tang will either bend or break and cause a danger to the user.

Darren then created chucking spigot at one end again using the Bedan/parting/round skew tool. This tool is basically a 3/8" round bar with a bevel. The spigot is then inserted into the chuck. A spigot is then created at the other end to fit into the recess in the bowl. The rest of the foot is then shaped to 'flow' from the underside of the bowl, then flare out to provide a stable base. It was then parted-off from the chuck, then reversed mounted into the chuck to finish off the bottom of the foot.

The foot would be glued into the bowl recess and the whole thing finished with oil. Darren will be completing this back in his workshop.



The finished bowl with foot attached



Another example of Darren's footed bowl technique



Above: painted version of Darren's footed bowl

A good talk and demonstration, thank you Darren.

Members Table



Malcolm Keer - selection of bowls



Peter Thurston - Elm bowl with blackwood 'bridge' over inclusion



Mick Favager - Priest