

Snainton Woodturners' Club Newsletter

Issue

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June 2010

Meeting held at Snainton Woodworking Supplies, Barkers Lane, Snainton,
North Yorkshire YO13 9BG

Something Out of a Log – or As It Turned Out by Simon Whitehead



Background

Simon's original title was *Something Round* – our Secretary, Ron Robinson, thought this might be a first for Simon! Thus the scene was set for the evening's entertainment ... Simon continued the theme and gave an apology to start with – 'I'm sorry I came!'

Simon has been turning for a number of years, many of which he has spent as a professional. Initially self-taught, Simon met Harry Middleton and had a series of lessons that lead to a thorough grounding in woodturning techniques and a real love for the craft.

He firmly believes that turning ought to be fun and enjoyable. He attempts to instill this into everyone he meets, either at woodturning associations or at shows. He says that if he ever

stops enjoying turning he'll give up and get a proper job! Well, he now claims to be a 'failed professional', who still 'does all right', ie he turns professionally, but only part-time now, either at demonstrations or giving private tuition: we all remember his humorous articles for *Woodturning* magazine.

'At some point', he said, 'something will go wrong: it happens at home, so it could happen here. But if it does and no one gets hurt, then that is a bonus – and we might all learn something as well!'

Simon stammers, so he warned the front row that it could get showered. He asked the audience to finish a stammered sentence for him; he has to keep trying, and so this helps to stop him turning blue.



Snainton Woodturners' Club

Demonstration at Snainton
Woodworking Supplies on

Thursday

3 June 2010

Snainton Woodturners' Club

Meets on the first
Thursday of each
Month at 1930 hr:

1 July 2010. Alan Soulsby,
Earring Tree with a difference

5 August 2010. Annual General
Meeting, Bring-and-Tell

2 September 2010. Andy Lodge,
New Ideas

7 October 2010. Sue Harker,
Back-to-Back Turning

Simon showed off his shaven head, previously adorned by long hair that was swept back into a ponytail. His wife left him alone for four days and he got bored – until he found a Lady Shave. His wife nearly killed him on her return: she thought he was a burglar!

Ash Burr Bowl

Simon had demonstrated here previously and had made a box, a hollow form, and two bowls. Members of the audience decided they would be patient (and that they didn't mind blood), so Simon agreed to make an ash burr bowl.

Bowl's Underside

The burr, about 30 to 35 cm (12-14 in) in diameter and around 10 cm (four in) thick, was mounted on a screw chuck. Simon makes his own using a coach bolt, with the hexagonal head turned to round.

A hole was drilled in the flat face of the burr's centre and it was screwed onto the thread held in the chuck.



The piece was slightly too large and caught on the lathe bed. A skew chisel was used to hack off an edge of the burr until it turned without hitting the lathe bars.

The burr was eccentric, heavier at one side, and so was supported by bringing up a revolving centre in the tailstock. Loose bark was pulled off by hand, to minimise chances that it would fly off when turning. The rest was brought up to a height at which the cutting tip of the chisel was near the centre-height.

Simon stepped to one side and started the lathe at its slowest speed. He then turned up the speed to 'just past the point where it appeared to be safe'. A freshly sharpened gouge was used, and it was supported on the rest, with end of the handle pressed against Simon's right hip.

Because the piece was lumpy, he started off gently, cutting gradually into the bark. At first, the gouge was used to cut up-hill, from the tailstock to outer rim. When about 30 mm from outer edge, Simon cut through the bark to the wood and left a flat underside of the rim (about 20 mm, deep) with a natural edge of bark.



The top of the bowl (facing the headstock) was uneven, so it was to be re-shaped later to the thickness of the narrowest part of the rim (ie around 12 mm, 0.5 in).

Simon then worked up the piece to remove more bark and started to shape the wood at the base of the bowl. The finishing cuts were made by moving downhill, from outside to the centre. Some bark was still present in cracks on the underside of the burr. Simon decided to leave this and perhaps decide later whether to pick the bark out to leave a pattern or even a hole.

Quote: 'A 'nice hole' adds a bit to the price! And, if the item is useless, you can charge even more!'

The bark, down to about 25 mm (one inch) from the rotating centre, was removed and the base was roughly shaped to join the outer curve of bowl. The tailstock was removed as the piece was now better balanced and was held firmly in the screw chuck. The bark was gently removed from the foot of the bowl and turned off to reach the wood underneath.

Normally, Simon prefers to mount a piece this size in a contraction hold in the chuck. But the bark inclusion here could weaken the grip, so he decided that it would be stronger with an expansion grip, although a gouge 'catch' could still rip the piece out of the jaws. Simon used a parting tool to cut a ring into the burr's base to accommodate the chuck jaws. It was tapered inwards at the centre and outwards at the outer surface of the ring.



Once the dovetails had been cut, Simon re-shaped the underneath of the bowl, cutting from the outer edge to the foot. Simon likes to take waste off by working uphill first; it is quicker, even though it can tear the wood.

To finish off, he takes a finer cut, and works downhill, towards the tailpiece. The finished item will stop above the recessed chucking point: the spigot base will be removed later. A skew chisel was used to scrape and smooth the region round the chucking point.

Quote: 'If you like the shape, it is right! We get obsessive, though, and forget that this is a hobby, so it doesn't matter if it is as 'rough as a bear's behind', as long as you have enjoyed making it! For a competition, though, things are different'

Scrapers Simon gets a new one that is ground at an 80° angle. He then grinds it at 90° and eventually gets to a square end. He can then use either edge, with a fine burr on the top edge and a coarse burr underneath. He

scraped the base of the bowl, very, very gently, barely holding the chisel against the wood to avoid tearing the surface. Lines on the underside of rim were removed using the scraper, taking care not to drop off the edge of the rest! This wood was very dry, but fortunately, it didn't have any tearing of the wood surface.

Tip: To eliminate tears, Simon said to wet the wood so that the fibres stand up from the surface and they will then come off easily and leave a smooth surface.

Before sanding, it is important to use an extractor or helmet with a filter. The underside of the bowl was sanded, using 120 through to 320 grit papers, being careful to keep fingers clear of the bowl edge. Alternatively, finish sanding by hand while the piece is stationary.

Finishing Simon likes oil. He used to like Lemon Oil, but it doesn't shine although it smells great: customers prefer to buy a shiny item. He oiled the base of the piece while it was stationary, coating it using a pad, and while still wet, it was sanded – this fills the sanding paper grain, but it will shine. (It should be left overnight to dry before re-coating.)

When dry the same old (320 grit) paper was used to re-sand. If sanding produces dust, oil the piece again, as it will be too dry. Finally, wipe excess oil from the piece with a cloth or tissue. When finished, the piece was removed from the screw chuck.



Note: When dry and hard, oil doesn't mark, while waxes and other finishes will mark when wet.

Gouges Simon said that new gouges need to be re-sharpened, as they are usually not ground by the manufacturer as 'ready to use' – for him, at least. He grinds off the tips of the wings to minimise the chances of a catch on the wingtip.

Bowl's Top

The burr was mounted in the chuck, and the tailpiece was brought up to support it: he advised not to get complacent – that's when bad things can happen! He checked that the piece still rotated freely, and that the speed was set to slow. Simon then started turning the outer edge of the face to flat, aiming for a rim-width of about 12 mm (0.5 in).



He started at the outside edge and took only a little wood off at a time, approaching the surface very gently with the gouge. He held the gouge handle firmly against his hip to minimise 'bounce' against the wood. He stopped and checked progress periodically, and continued to remove the wood standing up from the surface to achieve a flat top to the bowl rim. He left the central portion of the bowl until the rim was turned to the appropriate thickness and any gouge-rings were removed.

Ooops!

At this point, the expansion joint failed as a piece of bark came away. The chuck was tightened to grip the spigot in contraction, but the piece wasn't centred. The jaws were loosened and the piece was moved by a

quarter-turn before re-tightening the jaws. This gave a smooth rotation and the surface of the rim was re-turned before it was scraped to yield a smooth surface.

Unfortunately, the piece was still loose and the jaws were re-tightened. Simon removed the tailstock and started turning the central portion away to hollow the bowl, but leaving a central island. Unfortunately, the piece moved again, on two occasions. Simon continued gently to turn down into the bowl, hollowing from the rim to the foot of the central island, then down the latter column until he had shaped the inside of the bowl near to the centre.



A sticky solution

Once again, the grip in the chuck slipped. The bowl was removed and a piece of bark was found in the dove-tail spigot (see above). Cyanoacrylate glue was used to strengthen the bark by levering it up and sticking it to the wood in the spigot.

Note: If you have time, you should really return the piece to the screw chuck and re-turn the spigot to eliminate bark that weakens the surface.

Simon returned the glued spigot into the jaws and brought up the tailstock to support the bowl on the central column. He checked the rotation and alignment, then the wood thickness of the bowl, and started to hollow the bowl. Checking the wall thickness periodically, Simon progressed gently until most of the inside had been hollowed and he was satisfied with the wall thickness and the finish.

The top edge of the bowl was rounded to flow round and into the rim, then it was scraped smooth. Simon checked the rounding of the inside of the bowl to get a uniform thickness and skimmed the surface smooth. To take off the central stalk supported by the tailpiece (see below), Simon used a parting tool, cutting as near

to the bowl base as possible, opening up a gap. When almost through the stalk, Simon removed it by twisting it off by hand.



The tailpiece was removed and the inside base of the bowl was carefully and gently turned to shape. Fine finishing cuts were then made to the bowl interior. The bowl was scraped with a round-nosed scraper, raising the rest above centre and holding the scraper angled down towards the wood. The bowl interior was carefully sanded.

Unfortunately, Simon applied too much pressure when sandpapering the rim; the bowl came off the chuck, again – 'because it was finished!' said Simon. It was then oiled in the same way as the bowl underside. Later, the spigot dovetail was to be removed.



Lesson Even though things go wrong, it is still possible to try and correct the problem: perseverance can win out in the end. Ron concluded: 'But it is still not something round'! [Laughter and applause] ●
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Club Member's Pieces

David Lowe produced the two superb pieces below, inspired by Joey Richardson's demonstration last month.



Pieces made by Tony Wilson at Snainton Woodworking Supplies on 19 June 2010



NOTICE Terry Taylor is doing demonstrations on 4 July at Pickering for Marie Curie Foundation. Anyone with items for sale to raise money for this charity should give them to Terry before this date.

Snainton Woodworking Supplies

Tel 01723 859545

Free Admission Demonstrations 1000 to 1600 hr:

Fri 30 & Sat 31 Jul 2010: **Record Power, Brimarc** & Woodturning
Sat 21 Aug 2010: **Chris Pouncy** of R Sorby, Woodturning Demonstration
Sat 25 Sep 2010: **Simon Whitehead**, Woodturning Demonstration

Join the Wood Club: Pay £15 a year and receive a 25 per cent discount on British turning/carving timbers when spending £20 or more. Contact the shop or get a form from the web site.

Current Deals: Ask at the shop or see the web site.

<http://snaintonwoodworking.com>

Product Review: Customers regularly ask for reviews on our products. Please help customers to make the right purchase by sharing your views on the items you have used, and write a review on our on-line shop. It's very quick and simple to do: create an account; select the product to review; click 'write a review'; select the star rating and review; click on 'submit'.

Newsletter Edited by Gordon Malan

Comments, copy, and suggestions or additions to the e-mail list to: mobile: 07809605969, tel: 01944 758287; pgmalan@biotech-is.co.uk
Thanks to Stephen Fearnley for kindly arranging the printing. A special thanks this month to the super reporters, Ron Rogers (notes and images), and Brian Wrigglesworth (expert video cameraman), without whose contributions production of this newsletter would not have been possible [I was on holiday].