

March Meeting - Mark Baker



Mark is well known to many as the Editor of Woodturning magazine and he stated that in his travels the 3 most common topics he is asked about are how to sharpen tools, how to use them and from where do you get your ideas. He is also an accomplished demonstrator.

For his demonstration he intended to make a bowl from a piece of Sycamore and to show some ways of decorating it and variations. He mounted the blank on a screw chuck and brought the tailstock up for added support. The tailstock was fitted with a ring centre. With a swept back grind on a bowl gouge and with the flute open at 2 o'clock an aggressive pull cut can be made across the face of the blank. After this first cut Mark stopped the lathe to inspect the cut to check for any faults, cracks, splits, etc.. He then defines the area for the spigot and proceeded to rough shape the bowl with pull cuts. He refreshed the edge of the bowl gouge with a credit card diamond hone before taking fine cuts to finalise the shape which was in the form of a "mazer". (A mazer is a shallow bowl with an outward curving top rim and usually has a slightly raised boss in the centre of the bowl.) The finishing cuts to clean up the surface were made with the handle held very low so very fine cuts are made.

He formed a break between the curve of the bowl and the start of the curve of the rim using a 3-point tool. Then, with a 3mm beading tool he cut 3 beads; the tool is used by starting with the handle low, then slowly raising it as the cut progresses. He used a 3M abrasive bristle disc in a drill to clean up the beads. The external shape can be seen in the photo.



He reversed the bowl into the chuck and cleaned up the face. He then hollowed the bowl out, initially following the curve of the rim and at the point where the rim meets the bottom curve he left a lip. Mark turned a bead on this lip with the 3mm beading tool and then continued the hollowing out of the bowl. To get a better cut across the base and to keep the bevel rubbing he switched to a gouge ground square across and to ensure there was no "pip" left in the centre he showed the technique of approaching the centre in a curving motion. He said you must be careful not to cut beyond the centre.

To remove the spigot and form the foot Mark again reversed the bowl using a wooden support in the chuck and some tissue between the bowl and the wooden support, the tailstock was brought up to hold the bowl firm while the spigot was turned away. For the foot he turned a deep ring and shaped the inside so that it followed the curve of the bowl. As a variation he then marked three points 120° apart and carved away the foot rim between them to leave a bowl with three short legs. Another alternative was to remove the feet altogether leaving a round bottomed bowl.



Mark then showed how you could spray the piece with an ebonising lacquer and then carve a pattern through it so you get the contrast of the black and the light wood.

Mark talked about various ways you can support round bottomed bowls and the photos show some of his ideas.



The evening proved very informative and Mark would be welcome back anytime.