

May 2012 Meeting - Chris/Rita Norton



It is some time since Chris and Rita have given us a demonstration so it was good to get a refresher of their skills. Chris started by putting a Yew blank onto a homemade screw chuck held in the jaws of a standard chuck. The screw chuck consists of a screw through a slightly dished disc. The screw is held in place with epoxy adhesive.



The blank was first roughed to a cylinder then the “flower” end was shaped using a spindle gouge, turning a shallow dimple. Define the size of the apple and start the turning of the “stalk” end, again using the spindle gouge. Chris then sanded the turned part, working through the grits to 600 grit. He then applied friction polish with a cloth and turning the lathe speed up brought up the shine. He then applied Carnauba Wax and buffed that up to a high gloss being careful not to apply too much and get lines as the wax melts when buffed.

The apple was reversed on the screw chuck, the waste turned away and the top of the apple rounded and the dimple formed for the stalk. This was then sanded through the grits and polished as before. Chris makes the stalks by cutting the shape out of a piece of hardwood sheet and then he shapes them round on a sander. He claims this gives better strength than using a piece of twig. The stalk is then glued into the hole and a clove is glued into the flower end.



Chris explained that an alternative finish would be acrylic gloss lacquer on top of cellulose sanding sealer.



The second piece turned was a pear, again the Yew blank was mounted on the screw chuck, roughed to a cylinder and then the base turned and a dimple made in the base. The pear shape was formed by narrowing the part near the screw chuck. The turned part was sanded through the grits, friction polish applied and finally carnauba wax. The piece was reversed on the screw chuck and the top of the pear shaped, sanded and polished. A stalk was glued into the top and a clove in the base.

The third piece demonstrated was an orange. With a piece of sycamore mounted on the screw chuck, shape the top and make a small dimple. With a parting tool form a short stalk and then turn the base down, leaving a spigot. The next step is to use a Sorby texturing tool to make random indentations in the surface, keep the tool moving all the time. To texture the inaccessible parts near the stalk use a pointed object to “stab” the wood to simulate the effect of the texturing tool. Finally, turn down the spigot to finish off the base, again texturing with a pointed tool. The orange would then be painted with acrylic paint and a lacquer finish applied.



Rita then demonstrated her colouring techniques. Fruits turned from sycamore are ideal for colouring. On pears and apples she applies a very dilute wash of green and yellow standard acrylic paints (use plenty of water). She then applies a blush of red using a dry brush and just the tips of the bristles. This is not diluted but straight from the tube. When the paint is fully dry the fruit is remounted on a screw chuck and friction polish and carnauba wax are applied.



The final demonstration was Chris turning an onion and Rita showing how she arranges 8 of the onions into a plait. About 4 strands of garden raffia are pulled through each onion, a knot tied and the excess shredded with a wire brush to simulate the roots. A large bunch of raffia is knotted at one end then a 3 plait started for about 1½ inches then the onion positioned and plait 4 turns, then the 2nd onion on the opposite side, plait 4 turns and so on.

