

Club News

Weird and Wonderful Wood

The club had a very successful prescience at the recent show held at Haughley park near Stowmarket. There were many visitors to the club tent who saw live turning demonstrations and examples of our craft. The tombola was very busy and fortunately we had enough prizes. We are grateful to all members who volunteered to set up and be present on the stand for both days of the weekend show. A full report and pictures should follow shortly.

Last meeting

Our own Tic Challis provided an entertaining and informative talk and demonstration where she described the techniques she uses to make her multi-media characters. Tic has a very creative and imaginative mind and often looks at a piece of timber and 'sees' what it wants to be turned into. She uses scraps of material, leather and recovered hardware to add features to her often simply turned shapes. The results are colourful playful and delightful individual pieces. A full report is in this newsletter.



Next meeting

The next meeting will be on June 17th and will be a demonstration by Nikki Wheetman. Nikki last visited our club in March 2023 and her demonstration is fully documented in the newsletter report, available from the West Suffolk Woodturning Website. Nikki is a member of the Diss Woodturning club and has developed a love of resin casting for decoration or saving and using pretty pieces of faulty timber that would otherwise not be able to be turned. Nikki takes the use of resin further than just repairing and filling holes and faults as she often fully encases pieces under pressure and then turns them into spectacular objects. The meeting is for 7.30 pm start at the Village Hall.

Programme update

John Woods has confirmed that he has booked Colin Spencer for our September demo to complete this years programme. Colin will be demonstrating Ornamental turning. Colin lives and works in Lincolnshire having previously lived in Orba on the Costa Blanca, Spain for 18 years. It will be interesting to see what Colin has to show us and his take on turning.

That's all for now,
Neil (Newsletter and website)

Members table

There was only one item shown at the last meeting from Richard Court who had made a natural edge bowl from a yew branch.



Meeting report

Tic started by talking about her grandfather and how he influenced her love of creativity and turning when she was eight. She said she later developed an interest in multi-media creations where she repurposes unwanted used hardware and materials into creating her individual colourfully decorated character pieces based around a simple turned body or interesting piece of wood.

Tic is extremely creative and her imagination comes up with some fantastic ideas, she said she makes things that amuse her, and this is very evident.



One of Tic's earliest pieces made for her Auntie that shows many of the ideas that she continues to use



Tic started her demonstration by creating a basic turned shape from a piece of Oak roughly 50mm by 250mm.

The wood was brought to round between centres and marked to create a character body at one end. A semi-hemisphere shape was formed at one end and the shape refined until it resembled one that tic had made previously. This was then cut through at an angle as shown. This will form the bottom of a simple bird character.



She often uses colour with her pieces and this time it was to be a dark brown / black.

Tic described a concoction made by soaking wire wool in vinegar. After leaving it to 'develop' in a jar this produces a dye which can be brushed on to stain the wood. This works well with oak's natural tannins and produces a good variation of colour. It is then left to dry overnight.



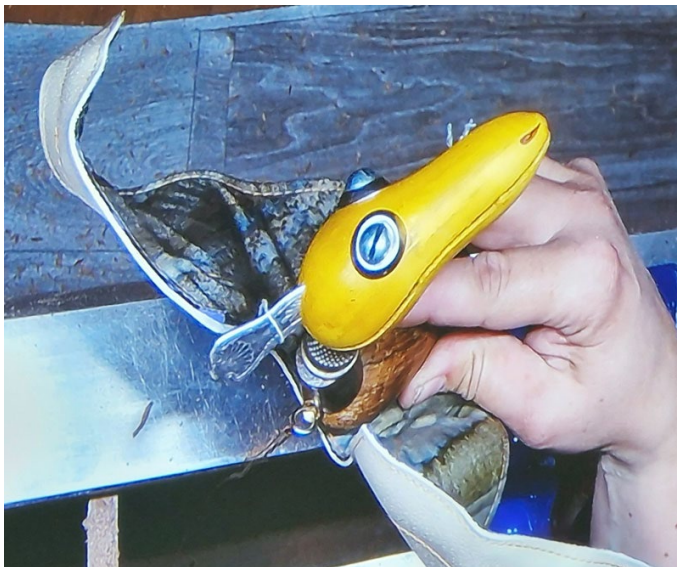
Once it is fully dry the two pieces are then reversed and glued together to form an angled head. Masking tape is used to hold it together while the glue cures.

It is now time to create some life to the piece by adding eyes. Tic has several methods to do this. The first uses screws and cup washers.

A bradawl marked out the eye location and angled pilot holes were drilled into the beak and head section.



The screw is wound into the wood and finally the slot is painted black as it gives it an extra feature.



Shown left is a finished example of 'Barney' the Pterodactyl showing the paint slot effect.

The second method uses resin eyes which Tic makes herself, in fact she has an eyeball kit and often makes them while socialising!

The Resin eyes are cast in ice moulds, a screw is added to allow easy location on the piece and fixing. Reflective material or sweet wrappers are used within the resin to create a reflective inner eyeball texture.





Other items such as buttons may be used to make eyes. Shown left is one of Tic's 'eyeball' kits.

She uses a Dremel with a fishtail bit to create a slot to accommodate the fork handle, these are then bent 90 degrees to form the foot.

Tic favours to make her feet from old forks but has recently added a twisted wire method.



Making the wings, tails and other features uses reclaimed leather and material from old bags and clothing. These are often stitched and Tic uses an antique Singer hand powered sewing machine dating from 1910. Tic explained that being manual it gives more control than an electric machine and it is cheap to obtain.



To demonstrate how to make a wing a shape was drawn out on some previously used paper in true Tic fashion.

The shape was cut out and a piece of leather from a handbag was selected and presented together to the sewing machine.





A stitch was created for the outline and detail.

A piece of old shirt fabric was selected to line the inside of the wing, this was then stitched to the leather following the previous stitch lines.



Card can be sandwiched between the lining to create stiffer wings and is often used with mobiles or animated figures. Wire can also be stitched in to further stiffen and create firm shapes.

The edge of the fabric can be 'sealed' with glue to stop them fraying.

Tic said she often uses Melamine to finish the bodies.

Finished wings and tails are attached to the body using tacks or screws.

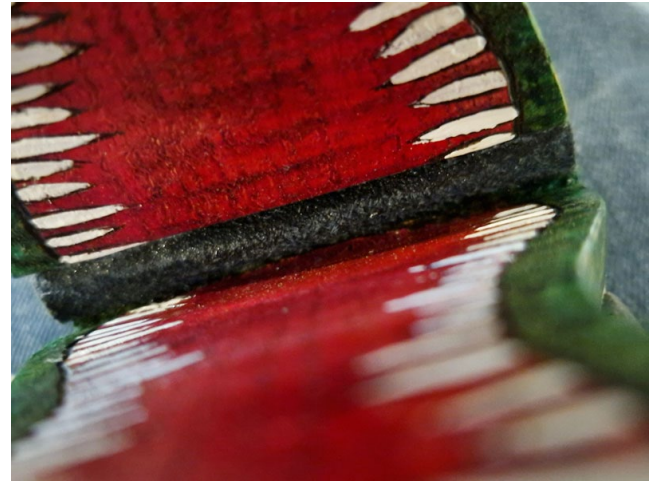


The next demonstration showed how leather can be used to create a simple hinge for animated items such as puppets.

The items to be joined are glued and taped to the leather on its unfinished side. When dry they are simply trimmed to create the hinge.



An example is shown on the dragon head below. Note: the opaque resin eyes with painted slit which have been further enhanced by mounting them onto a button.



Tic finished by explaining that she keeps a notebook close by at most times and finds she sketches or makes many notes of ideas for later reference.

This was a very entertaining demonstration and we all agreed that your characters are all very amusing. Thank you, Tic.

