

September 2016 - Mark Sanger

Mark conjured up a demonstration full of eastern promise based on a double-lidded Japanese Tea Box. This special box consists of 3 parts - the main base and lid, plus inside another recessed lid to keep the tea dry and fresh.



The size of the box was much reduced from the genuine Japanese tea box, purely to demonstrate the techniques involved and was all turned from a single spindle of seasoned sycamore. The process results in a box where the grain of the main lid and bottom do not match, which is not an issue, as the genuine boxes would normally be lacquered.

The initial steps were all conventional in that the spindle was turned to round, a spigot turned on one end and then remounted into the chuck and the end squared off.

The first component to be made was the lid and this was hollowed out using a spindle gouge noting that for this design the overlap with the base is particularly long and therefore it is vital that the internal sides are exactly parallel.

Top Tip 1 - use callipers to ensure the sides are completely parallel and do not proceed to the next stage until this is achieved

The lid was then parted off and set aside.

The next step was to turn the base by first cleaning up the face of the remaining blank and then, using the internal diameter measurement of the lid, transfer this to external callipers to mark the diameter of the base spigot.

Top Tip 2 - mark the depth of the base spigot as the length of lid recess minus a bit so that the lid fully seats onto the spigot when closed.

Top Tip 3 - turn the spigot to be slightly tapered from the top to the bottom and then when the lid fits on the top of the spigot spin it to mark this position on the spigot and then gradually take the rest of the spigot down using a parting tool.

The spigot was then lightly sanded until the lid fit was a very snug fit, but tight for the moment.

The inside of the base was then hollowed out to an appropriate shape making sure that the recess for the inside was again perfectly parallel.

At this stage the lid could be jammed on to the base to allow the top of the box to be cleaned up and/or decorated as required. The top and sides of the lid and base were sanded and the final light sand of the base spigot completed until the lid was a perfect fit. The box base was then parted off.

The next step was to make the internal lid, firstly by cleaning up the front face of the remaining blank (which will become the underside of the internal lid) and then marking up the diameter of the inner lid recess and using a parting tool to reduce the spindle to this size, checking for a comfortable fit into the base inner recess, and finally the lid was parted off.

A jamb chuck was then made to hold the inner lid so that the top of the inner lid could be finished off with any decoration required, as well as a small button to enable easy removal.

Top Tip 4 - when making a jamb chuck to hold such an item drill a hole through the jamb chuck to assist in removal of the piece after completion.



Finally, another jamb chuck was made to hold the base while the bottom of the base was cleaned up and made slightly concave so that the box sits firmly on a solid surface.



The completed box was then assembled and to the delight of the audience the lid slowly settled down of its own accord onto the base - "and that's magic"!

Mark's second demonstration of the evening was a hollow form vase. Normally Mark prefers to use wet wood turning techniques for his hollow form work but in this case to vase was to be made out of a piece of dry spalted beech.



As normal, the blank was turned to round, a spigot formed and the piece remounted and the front face cleaned and squared off.

Top Tip 5 - when shaping, do not sacrifice the form for the wood i.e. if necessary make the piece smaller than originally intended in order to get the form right.

Force a spindle gouge or forstner bit as appropriate down the centre before opening out the interior using a hollowing tool (e.g. Crown Revolution) and/or a fingernail scraper.

Top Tip 6 - clean out shavings regularly to stop the tool jamming with potentially dangerous consequences!

Top Tip 7 - consistent wall thickness is not as important for seasoned wood but with wet wood hollowing it is vital that the wall thickness is consistent and ideally between 3mm and 6mm

Finally, a scraper was used to smooth off the interior before sanding and then a jamb chuck made to hold the vase to allow the base to be finished.



Thanks to Mark for yet again an entertaining, instructional and motivating demonstration.

David Langan