

January 2018 - George Foweraker

George kicked off the new year with an excellent demonstration of the use of water based colours. One of George's main skills is the production of decorated bowls and up until now he has used spirit based colours and you will find several examples of these in the galleries section of this website. The advantages of water based colours is that they allow the grain patterns to show through even after several successive applications of different colours and additionally, in the more eco conscious environment in which we now live, water based colours are more eco friendly.

The colours George used were from the Martin Saban-Smith Intrinsic range and with the interest shown at the meeting he has kindly offered to obtain a number of smaller volume sets (same colour range) for [members to purchase](#).

George came prepared with 2 part turned bowl blanks and starting with the nicely grained sycamore blank he first covered the basics of bowl turning. The blank had been part turned a year ago when at 30% moisture content which had subsequently reduced to about 18%.

Top Tip 1 - firstly, always mark wood with the name (you think you will recognise it a year later but ...) Next, check the moisture content regularly and mark the result together with the date to give a good idea of the drying rate for that wood in the conditions in which it is being stored

Top Tip 2 - since part turning the blank the spigot may well have changed shape slightly and therefore the first task was to gently return the spigot to round. George also recommends that even when turning the bowl in one go that after the underside has been finished it is worth rechecking the spigot before reverse mounting into the chuck to ensure a secure and safe grip.



Mounting the blank in the chuck the first task was to level and finish the top flat surface using a pull cut with a bowl gouge, then sharp scraper and finally with abrasive after turning the lathe speed down to reduce heat.



Top Tip 3 - Sand to 320grit maximum as anything finer and the water based colour will 'slide off'

Top Tip 4 - always cut on or above centre to avoid catches

Time to apply the first water based colour. In both demonstrations this evening George used black as the first colour which as we saw enhanced the grain and ensured that this enhancement was maintained through to the finished piece. After completely covering with black colour, dry with a hair dryer, wipe over and use 320grit again to retain all but the required bits of black enhancement. Note that unlike spirit based colour, water based colour tends not to bleed into end grain.



Top Tip 5 - Don't put sealer on before colour and shake the bottle to ensure no sediment.

It was then a matter of adding and blending the join between different colours as required, hair drying and sanding intermediate stages when necessary. Finally, on this piece, George added a honey colour on the grainy part of the surface as a highlight.



To finish the piece George wiped over danish oil, then neat cellulose sealer, and finally polish.



The second bowl that George demonstrated with was a beech blank and using the same techniques but with black, forest green, plum and flame red and omitting the danish oil.



Thanks to George for a very interesting demonstration - I think many of us will be trying out water based colours in the future. Having done some watercolour painting in the past though I think I shall hold back from overlaying too many different colours otherwise the effect will likely become 'muddy' and lose it's vibrancy.

Apologies for the colour quality of the photos - the lathe light didn't do them justice!

David Langan