

January 2019 - Paul Sweet

With George laid low by the "there's a lot of it about" cold, Paul kindly agreed to step in at 24hrs notice and provide the evenings demonstration - thanks to Paul, and get well soon George.

Paul demonstrated the making of a large platter out of a piece of Oak Burr, a relatively expensive piece of wood but with very attractive figuring. However, the piece of wood Paul used was very dry and presented quite a challenge not only in terms of the constant resharpening of gouges but also the umph available from the club's Axminster AT1416VS lathe - but Paul won through!

With the piece mounted on a screw chuck and supported by the tailstock, Paul used a bowl gouge at a relatively low speed to flatten off the base end, and then turned to round, at which point the piece was much more stable but still slightly unbalanced by the misshape of the top end.

The next step was to create a tenon to fit the chuck jaws with a progressive pull cut from the outer edge to the tenon mark and shaping where the platter foot would ultimately be created.

Top Tip 1 - when marking a 50mm tenon set pointers at 25mm and then with the toolrest at centre height and the right hand point in the centre hole, mark the tenon circle using the left hand point.



Having shaped the bottom of the platter a scraper was used to create a smooth surface, sanding being left until the top of the platter had been shaped.

Mounting the platter on the tenon, pull cuts were used to flatten the top surface at which point the piece was in perfect balance and the shaping of the top surface could begin.

There are various opinions on the shaping of a platter but Paul's preference is that 2/3 of the diameter should be for the middle section and 1/3 for the rim - this makes the platter a useable piece rather than just a decorative piece.

Top Tip 2 - shaping of the piece should begin from the outside leaving as much material in the middle for as long as possible as this gives good support.

Firstly, the inside and outside of the bead dividing the rim and middle was marked using a skew.



The outer edge was then shaped before cutting in, starting at the bead, to complete the shape of the outer 1/3.

Some of the middle section was removed and then, a bit at a time, material was removed using a pull cut starting at the bead and then push cut to make the final shape before repeating progressively towards the centre, before finishing off with a scraper.

The top and bottom were then sanded at 600rpm from 120grit to 240grit using a Simon Hope sander system.

The piece was then reversed and supported by the tailstock against a circular board covered in "router map" type material so that the tenon could be carefully removed and the minimal foot shaped concave to ensure the piece sat stably on a surface.

Paul uses several coats of Chestnut Hard Wax Oil to treat his burr platters followed by a wax polish.



Again, thanks to Paul for standing in at the last minute and providing us with an interesting demo using a wood that very few of us have had experience of turning or, by the sound of it, could afford to buy?!

David Langan