

Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 75 dated April/May 1998

Waiting to Turn - Thoughts on The Demonstrators Workshop.

Arrived well ahead of the starting time for my first demonstration 'to fellow woodturners, all of whom have to be vastly better than me.

Many fellow sufferers were there before me, but I am obviously the only one the slightest bit more nervous than most, for some strange reason were pacing about and the toilet was always occupied.

I checked my tool bag one more time, even though I had packed it days before and checked it regularly since, panicked a bit until I found my chuck key, relax Barry, they said it would be fun.

The organisers, led by Peter Dessant did all they could to put us at ease, a hopeless task. I could see the stage with the lathe set so high in the background, an instrument of torture, relax Barry.

Were given notes and lists, I seem to recall, and listen to talks on how easy it is, but damn, I feel worse, what did he say? Another mental check of my tool bag, dare I use the skew? Oh, hell listen Barry, relax.

First class lectures on technique by experienced demonstrators followed. Each demonstrating one of the items to be turned by us, in my case on egg cup. I have never watched the turning of an egg cup so intently. Damm. I can't remember, what did he say? I can't possibly do that, it looks so easy, I shouldn't have volunteered. Can't remember putting the parting tool in my bag, stop it Barry, relax.

Well, it's my turn. I checked my tool bag, I had forgotten my very carefully made sample egg cup done with so much loving care, to show I could do it even after my audience had watched the demo piece shatter as the bloody skew (or spiralling tool) dug in again. Dare I use the skew? Oh hell, relax Barry.

The demo's suddenly on, but I'm not ready! Need more lime, what was it I was going to do? The plan, oh yes, an egg cup.

Right, rough to a cylinder, what size? Where is the plan, should have set the callipers? Damn, the bloody thing has gone off centre, wobbling a bit, chuck's come loose somehow. Stop the lathe and discuss how to fix it.

Suddenly worrying about the chuck, I've forgotten to be nervous and I am in front of friends, things start to go quite well. I even dare to try the dreaded skew... the egg cup looks quite good, I'm sure they can't see the little faults that I can see, anyhow they did say the plan was only a guide.

Wow! It's over, I made an egg cup on stage, can't remember the first part of the demo, just hope it was okay. Gosh but I feel good. Could do it all again. Piece of coke really. Don't know what all the fuss was about. Pity the poor sods who have to follow that..... You know something strange; I can remember almost every word that was said AFTER the demo, but before, well that's a blur.

BARRY SPENCER