

## Observations Joondalup/Wanneroo WEWS

The first demonstration for the day - **Graham Turner**.

Graham introduced himself and how he first got into woodturning. He passed around a few samples of burls that he had turned previously and then explained how he was going to demonstrate turning a burl collected from the Goldfields area.

Graham indicated that he turns almost all of his burls when they are still green and usually only recently having been taken from the tree. He has found through turning many burls that he gets best results by firstly turning it to a rough shape, then wrapping it in plastic and leaving it for a few months to dry slowly by itself.

A question was asked regarding cracking of the burl using this method and he stated that only about 1 in 50 of his burls had cracked. Prior to turning the burl Graham reminded us of the need to exercise caution when turning burls and ensuring that a good method of securing the burl to the lathe was used.

Graham also advised that when buying burls to ensure you buy them only from licensed collectors.

Graham then showed a home-made aluminium faceplate which he uses to secure the face of the burl to the lathe. He has found that this holds the work very well and allows him to shape the base of the bowl. Graham advised he almost always uses a Vicmarc 'Shark Jaws' chuck when turning burls and that he uses the tailstock to provide additional support.

After mounting the burl, Graham went through some simple safety procedures which included hand spinning the work to ensure clearance from the tool rest. Graham then wound down the speed of the lathe and proceeded to shape the base of the burl into a bowl and create a spigot at the bottom of the burl. The speed was wound down to assist in the balance of the burl. Graham initially used a bowl gauge to roughly shape the base of the burl. Then he used a scraper and was able to demonstrate how he achieved fine shavings even on such hard timber.

Graham explained the process he had to go through to obtain a license to collect burls and how the process to obtain the license took twelve months. He said he was not happy with collectors who did not hold licenses. Graham also went on to explain how every time he cuts a burl from a tree it must be weighed and identified. All in all, a lengthy process.

Graham then produced a burl which he had rough turned several months ago and then put away to dry slowly. He mounted the face of the burl onto a piece of MDF and then applied pressure with the tail stock to hold the burl firmly in place. He explained the use of matting on the face plate which helped to grip the burl. He then proceeded to tidy up the spigot using a detail gouge with a 'RAG' edge which means 'Rough as Guts'. He uses this type of edge because, as we all know, burls do cause most tools to quickly lose their sharpness.



Graham also demonstrated how he works on the very edge of the bowl. He closely watches the ghosting effect that is developed as the burl spins around. He moves the tool slowly in towards the wood and is very mindful of just how sharp the edges of the burl can be if you get your fingers too close to it. He went onto to demonstrate the method he uses for sanding

the edges of the burl. He uses a small pedestal drill with a sanding disc attached. He demonstrated how he uses an old, converted hole saw cutting bit to make the circular sanding discs. A very interesting demonstration.

Below: bowl by Graham Turner



Graham Turner brought in a thin turned bowl in Salmon Gum Burl. It was roughed out about twelve months ago and allowed to dry. The bowl is about 350mm diameter and is finished in spray lacquer. A beautiful piece indeed.

**Observations Joondalup/Wanneroo WEWS October 2017**



The first demonstrator was Mr Burl himself, **Graham Turner**, showing the production of a grinder with a crush-grind mechanism. Graham recommended watching the Brendan Stemp YouTube video for further advice on making this no-screws version of a salt or pepper grinder. The size of the blank obviously depends on the mechanism to be housed. Graham started with a piece of about 330 > 350mm long and 240mm diameter for the barrel. After mounting in a chuck, Graham used a 45mm forstner bit to drill a 15mm deep hole for the first cut. He reminded us to use a slow speed for using a forstner bit, particularly on a hard piece of wood such as he was using.

All the bits Graham used in this demo were pre-marked for the job. Using a Robert Sorby tool especially designed for making grooves inside such a piece, Graham made grooves to seat the mechanism. The interior of the base was sanded then a long augur bit was used for the deep boring of the chamber.

Graham showed a split finished piece (supplied by Frank Evans, I believe) to show how the crush-grind mechanism should fit into the grooves. Graham recommends making a jam chuck to fit the base for turning the reversed piece and proceeded to use a forstner bit to complete the barrel chamber. He then placed the top piece in the chuck and tidied the end to receive the top of the mechanism. A forstner bit was used to create the receptacle for the rod and cap piece. Graham earlier recommended having an extra bit of length in the top .... and proceeded to show us why when he mistakenly used the wrong forstner bit and was able to trim away the over-sized hole without spoiling the overall design. After sorting that out, he turned a spigot roughly to size to fit the lower part then used callipers to get the exact size, checking the fit often as he went. Once satisfied with the fit, the barrel was put back into the chuck with the top part fitted and brought up the tailstock to shape the whole piece. Using an extraordinarily delicate skew followed by a bowl gouge, he took the piece down to a simple but elegant shape that displayed the grain of the wood. With everything fitted together, it was a very nice result. Graham said there is a story that someone tested the guarantee of the life of the mechanism by putting through 15 kg each of salt and pepper and the mechanism remained as new. He briefly discussed the importance of sharp tools in general but specifically for when using hard wood.

A well-presented demonstration.

### **Observations Wandî WEWS March 2018**

**Graham Turner** was the next demonstrator, giving tips on turning odd shaped burls to show them to the best of their grain, colour and shape. He started by passing round a tin of Yorkshire Grit and a bottle of Hampshire Sheen, both of which he recommends for finishing burl items. Graham mounted a rounded burl blank in his usual meticulous way, using one of his custom-made spike chucks and a hammer. The first cuts were to get it in the round then to get it into a pleasing shape that suited the burl. A couple of examples were passed around. He then reversed the piece and cut a spigot for his large scroll chuck and set the piece in the chuck. Graham suggests that it is simple good sense to use the tailstock for stability when turning odd shaped or unbalanced pieces of wood. He started working outer edge to centre using a large bowl gouge and took care to preserve the natural edge. Following this, he used a large, rounded scraper at a 45° cutting angle then, removing the tailstock as a support, took out the remaining spigot with a forstner bit then used a scraper, again at 45°, to get a smooth finish. Graham left plenty of thickness in the wall of the bowl due to the burl still being quite green. Graham then auctioned the piece with the money to go to a charity – brisk bidding stopped at \$50.

Questions were asked about the drying process and period for green burls. Graham recommends roughly turning to shape then weigh, store and weigh again every three months and when it stops losing weight, it's as dry as that burl will get.

Thank you, Graham, for another interesting and informative demo based on your knowledge of burl.