



Editor's Comments

In this issue, I am indebted to the Editor of the newsletter of Cheam Woodturners Association for permission to reproduce the article on Banksia Pods, originally contributed by Gordon Cookson. You should take a look at the web page for Cheam Woodturners Association. It is beautifully produced, and a mine of information about the Cheam Association, and all matters woodturning. Visit www.cheamturners.co.uk and I guarantee that you will be impressed.

Well, it is AGM time again. It comes around very quickly, and I can hardly believe that I have held the post of Chairman for four busy and very productive years. I am expecting some changes in the set up of the Committee after this AGM, and will report the details in a December Special newsletter.

The December Meeting will be something different from what we usually do. **The first part** will be devoted to the Instant Gallery, for which we invite members of all abilities to enter. This is a non competitive event, and an opportunity for us all to appraise our own and each other's work, compare notes, and get ideas. **The second part at 8.30 pm** will be a get together with guests invited from other local clubs to enjoy finger food and chat. As always there will be mince pies, tea/coffee etc. and the Bar downstairs. Enjoy!

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Tips for Banksia

At a recent Seminar, Gordon Cookson attended a lecture/demo by Cindy Drozda, featuring the use of Banksia pods as unique turning material. Gordon's notes of salient points were originally published in the Newsletter of Cheam Woodturners Association. He wrote: "I was interested to see two different boxes made from Banksia which I hadn't seen before. One was like space station on a very thin stem, and the other was mushroom shaped".

Cindy gave some advice on choosing and using Banksia pods:

- A worn greyish look means that they are not

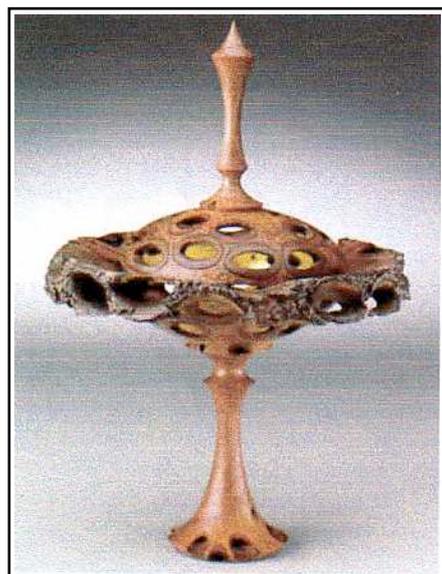
as hard and as sound as they should be.

- If the lips are proud and a solid brown colour, then the nuts are better for hollowing.
- Grey/white on the outside, and yellow at the end means that the pod is likely to be rotten inside, but gives a better colour variation, suitable for weed pots or solid mushrooms.
- Cracks on the end means that the pod is not suitable for making boxes.
- If the lips are to be part of a natural edge, it

Banksia Pod Tips contd.

it looks better if you choose a part of the pod where the lips are evenly spaced around the natural edge.

- Beware! - a natural edge is like a saw blade. Use a 2 inch sanding pad to save your fingers.
- Chucking should be inside the fur layer to ensure a secure grip.
- The so called negative edge scraper works very well on Banksia. This is where a small part of the top edge of the scraper is ground back to produce a bigger angle at the cutting edge. (See Mark Baker's article in Woodturning issue 135 for more details.)
- Turn the outside from larger to smaller diameter as this gives the best finish.
- For finishing cheaper items, Cindy sands to 600 grit, and uses an acrylic lacquer. For more expensive pieces, she sands to 4000 grit and finishes with one coat of salad oil. (Reproduced from the September 2005 issue of the Cheam Newsletter by permission of its Editor, Ron Grace.)



This beautiful box is one of the two which caught Gordon's eye.

Fun with Stuart King.

In September, Stuart King stood in at short notice for Simon Hope, who was unable to come because of illness in his family. Stuart's theme was the production of an antique affect on a simple weed pot, combined with the making of something suitable to put in it.

The weed pot began as a piece of oak branch wood, fairly dry, but not fully seasoned. First he donned his trademark battered old straw hat, and turning between centres, removed the bark with a spindle roughing gouge. Still using the roughing gouge he began shaping the embryo vase, and cutting a chucking spigot. As he worked, he gave a continuous running commentary on what he was doing, and the tools he was using. Stuart's roughing gouge is modified so that he can cut spigots with it, saving the need to change tools. Re-chucked on the spigot, the shaping continued with the roughing gouge until the cove became too sharp for it, and the spindle gouge took over. The spindle gouge was used to bore the blank so that the top could be shaped. The finish left

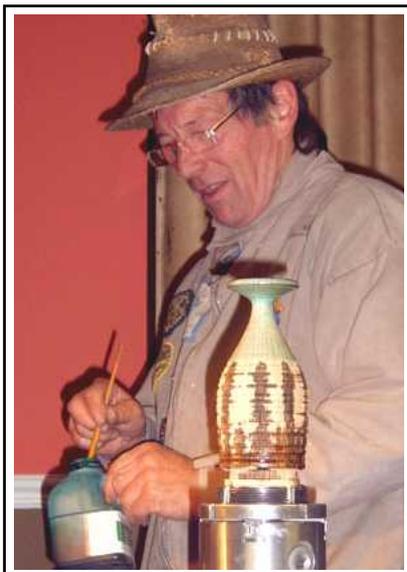


from the tool needed only minimal sanding. At this stage the neck and top of the vase were stained dark green, sealed and burnished.

Instead of finishing the body of the vase, Stuart began to texture it, first by cutting assorted grooves in a random fashion, and then attacking them with a stiff wire brush, followed by sanding to remove whiskers. Both his hat and our new remote controlled dust extractor were called upon!

Next, the part finished vase was removed from the lathe, and stood on end so that the antiquing process could begin. Vertical stripes of of a foul smelling mixture made by dissolving steel wool in vinegar were applied over the roughened area, followed by similar stripes of dark green stain. The vinegar mix contains iron salts, and iron reacts with the tannin content of oak to make dense black stains. The effect was heightened as the fluid spread sideways around the vase in the grooves made earlier. Once enough had been applied, Stuart dried the surface with a heat gun, applied highlights with a light touch of abrasive and a

Fun with Stuart contd.



couple of coats of sealer. When dry these were burnished. As always Stuart continued his running commentary on what he was doing.

Back in the lathe, all that remained was to part off the vase

with a concave bottom, and the job was done. It was time for the tea break.

Stuart's wooden flowers have been described before in the Newsletter (No 77 April 05). They provided an ideal filler for the vase. This time however they were mounted on a branching twig to form a 'flower tree'. Colouring was done with fibre tipped "brush pens" which allow denser colouring than standard felt tips. Stuart showed how different flower shapes could be made, including tulips, hyacinths and daffodils. Asked about the tool shape for turning flowers, Stuart said that any skew would do, without special shaping. To illustrate the point, he produced a sharpened garden trowel and used it to turn yet another flower!

This brought us to the end of the evening, and Stuart kindly signed the piece and left it to be raffled at a future meeting. As usual, Stuart had brought us his unique combination of



entertainment and instruction. His rustic style of wood turning is always a refreshing change from the sometimes too serious stuff we see, and never fails to introduce us to less conventional methods.

Also on display during the evening were some of Stuart's beautifully made turned and carved plaques. These showed off Stuart's artistic ability and his versatility to great effect.



September with Jason Breach

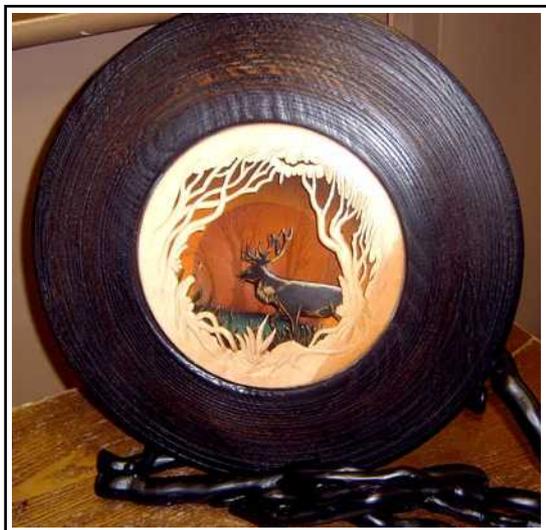
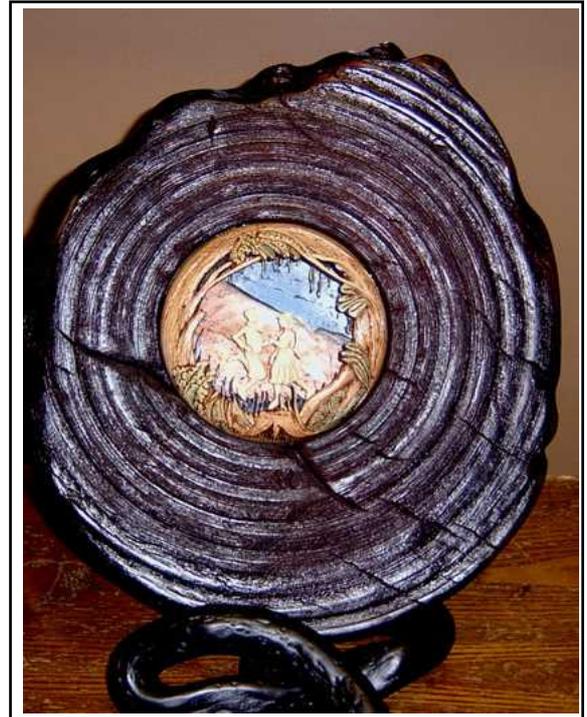
I was not present for this meeting. My spies tell me that Jason delivered a workmanlike demonstration, which went down well with the audience, but that is all I have. I should have asked someone to deputise for me.

This prompts me to say that I welcome contributions by members. They save me some quite hard work, and offer to the readers a welcome change of style. It is not necessary for minute detail to be presented, and does not require great literary skill. Reading the Editor's comment in the Cheam Newsletter made me quite envious, as he was apologising for not having been able to include everybody's' submissions because of lack of space!

I can accept submissions on paper, typed, or hand written. I welcome submissions via e-mail. A Word document is ideal. Please don't be tempted to send PDF files - I have to retype them! If you send pictures, use jpeg files, and keep the size down and the resolution not more than 150 dpi if you can, otherwise they take for ever to download. Most submissions are processed for the first available and suitable slot in the newsletter. Why not have a go? Become famous and make your Editor happy! Alan (spargo73@waitrose.com)

GALLERY

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On this page.

Three of a series of stunning platters by Stuart King. Black & White pictures cannot do them justice. Take a look at the MWA web site to see them and other pictures from this Newsletter in full colour.

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