



IWG News

The Newsletter of the Island Woodturners Guild

March 2023



About the IWG:

The [Island Woodturners Guild](#) meets from 1:00 - 4:00 PM on the 4th Saturday of each month (except for July/Aug) at the Central Saanich Senior Citizens' Centre, [1229 Clarke Road](#), Brentwood Bay, BC.

Visitors are welcome.

Executive Committee

President:
Tim Karpiak

Vice President:
Don Robinson

Treasurer:
Peter Pardee

Secretary:
Michael McEwan

Members at Large:
Hovan Baghdassarian
Virginia Lee
Marlene Speckert

Past President:
Steve Werner

Newsletter Editor:
John Kilcoyne

The IWG gratefully acknowledges the support of the following companies:

[Artisan Wood to Works](#)
[Chipping Away](#)
[Industrial Plastics & Paints](#)
[Island Blue Print](#)
[KMS Tools](#)
[PJ White Hardwoods](#)
[Richelieu Hardware](#)

THE PRESIDENT'S TURN

As most of you know I'm making a move to Calgary. It comes with much trepidation but also a certain amount of excitement. I'll get a bigger shop so that's nice!

And this necessitates the Guild finding replacements for the president and, coincidentally, the treasurer for next year.

I won't restate what's already in this newsletter about the situation we're in, but I will talk on the role of the president. When I started in this role I was, and continue to be, very excited about our group of talented and skilled woodturners. Both experienced and novice. It was great watching people grow in their skills and creativity and see their creations. I've always told outsiders that our group makes amazing turnings!

The job of president doesn't require a full-time commitment, but you do get to be front and center in all things Guild related. You don't have to be the best turner (I mean, obviously). Or the oldest member. But you do need to have a desire to see the Guild thrive. I will always be available to pass along anything I've learned the last few years. I plan to be a Guild member as long as I'm turning. So, if you think you would like to give it a shot or if you have questions, please call me. I would be more than happy to discuss the position.

This Saturday will be a fun meeting. We'll be looking at the various jigs our members use in the shop. And I suspect there will be a flurry of jig making in the days to follow.

Once again, we will meet in person at the hall as well as on Zoom. If you have anything for the show and tell and you won't be there in person, please send Virginia a picture or two and she'll make up a slideshow.

I'll see everyone on Saturday.

Tim Karpiak

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE

As noted in our March 8th email, with the imminent retirement of Tim Karpiak and Peter Pardee, we need to find replacements for the position of President and Treasurer. We also need to find a replacement for Tim as A/V co-ordinator and, as discussed below, a member willing to serve as Membership Co-ordinator. The following is an update on where we stand.

THE GOOD NEWS

Audio/Visual/Computer Operations

We are very pleased to report that Hovan Baghdassarian has volunteered to assume primary responsibility for these operations next year and Don Costello has volunteered to assist him in this regard.

(We would note that their willingness to serve is particularly impressive since unlike the vast majority of our members, they are both still working in senior positions with the Provincial Government and have significant “family” responsibilities: Hovan is father to 2 young boys while Don and his wife host UVIC exchange students which involves a near constant succession of students living in their home.)

In addition, we have just received a note from Ken Halstead indicating that he is also willing to help out. Both Don and Ken will attend the March meeting where Tim will acquaint them with the ins and outs of the various systems.

On behalf of all members, we would like to express our sincere thanks for their willingness to help out. We also hope that other members will also step up with a view to minimizing the workload on these three. *(Detailed knowledge of A/V/Computer operations is not necessary.)*

THE BAD NEWS

Treasurer, President and Membership Coordinator

No one has volunteered to serve in any of these positions. Members should be aware that the Guild cannot operate legally or practically without both a Treasurer and a President.

Accordingly, if these positions are not filled at the AGM in May, we will be forced to suspend all operations of the Guild effective June 2023.

In an attempt to avoid this, we have taken the following steps.

Treasurer

To guard against finding ourselves without a Treasurer in May, we have taken the extraordinary step of exploring whether we could find a volunteer from outside the membership to act as Treasurer. (*Our Constitution and AAW Charter require that this person would have to join both organizations and we would obviously pay their dues.*) While nothing has been confirmed, we believe that we may be able to find someone if needed.

President

Historically, the duties of the President involved chairing Executive meetings, co-signing cheques and acting as the general contact person for the Guild. The last of these included responding to infrequent enquiries from the AAW, other Guilds and members of the public as well as forwarding member's emails regarding such things as availability of wood, requests for help and so on.

Over the past few years, the workload of the President has expanded well beyond these limited tasks, the most time-consuming additions being those related to A/V and Membership.

With respect to A/V issues, the developments noted above mean that the President will no longer have any responsibility for these matters.

As for the latter task, we need a member who is willing to act as a Membership Co-ordinator (MC). Historically this position involved 3 tasks: receipt and storage of membership application forms, receipt of dues payments (cheques or cash) which were then forwarded to the Treasurer for deposit and distribution of membership cards.

However, the emergence of e-filing and e-transfer, has significantly reduced the workload.

This year we received 116 applications for membership (new and renewal). Virtually every one of these applications was filed electronically which means it is no longer necessary to print and store hardcopy applications. They can simply be saved in a computer file.

As for payment of dues, 108 of the 116 members paid their dues by e-transfer which are automatically deposited in our account. As this reflects a growing trend, we propose that responsibility for payment by e-transfer should be removed from the MC and transferred to the Treasurer. While the MC would still be involved in receipt of dues by cheque or cash, to do so for approximately 8 members each year would require minimal effort, most of which would take place in September and October.

If you are willing to volunteer for this position, please contact a member of the Executive.

Summary

Assuming that someone will volunteer for the MC position, the critical issue is to find a member willing to serve as President. If you are willing to do so, or wish more information on this position, please contact a member of the Executive.

If no one volunteers by the middle of April, we will begin to identify the steps needed to prepare for a suspension of the Guild's operations.

NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY MARCH 25TH: 1:00 p.m.

Our next meeting, which is a hybrid one, will involve demonstrations or presentations by members of the jigs, including tools and instruments, that they find useful in their turning. The Guild lathe will be available for those who require it to show their inspirations. As is our practice, there is no fixed agenda: we will simply go by row asking members to come forward.



As for those items that are too large to transport, please send photos to Virginia (webmaster@islandwoodturners.ca) no later than Wednesday March 22nd.

PS. Rumour has it that some years ago, one member who shall remain nameless (initials T and S), brought enough jigs to eat up over an hour. Accordingly, it may be necessary to impose a time limit.



FEBRUARY RECAP: JOHN BEAVER

In a clear and comprehensive demonstration, John showed how to make two forms of his iconic wave bowls: one with a wave that is flush with the bowl and one which sits proud.

The following are the highlights. *(Some of the photos are taken from on-line sources)*



Introduction: Form

While over the years he has produced a wide variety of sophisticated and stunning bowls, most of them share a shape which has a slightly closed rim. With the wave centred approximately 1/3 from the rim, he finds this is the best form for highlighting the wave.

I. WAVE: FLUSH

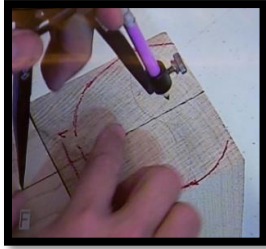
1. Layout

He began with a square block of hard maple (5" x 5" x 4"), He noted that the block should be as square as possible. He then and marked the centre of each end.

Note: *If you have a 14" bandsaw without a riser, the maximum height of your blank for this project will be approximately 5.75".*



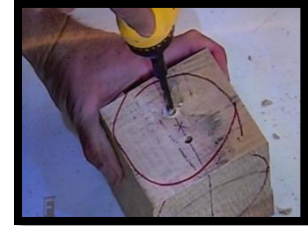
He then checked the wood grain to ensure that the rings aligned with the turning which will minimize the stress as the wood moves.



On the side of the blank, he makes a straight line at the $\frac{1}{3}$ mark and then using a compass draws an arc. The radius of the arc should match the diameter of the intended bowl and should equally straddle the $\frac{1}{3}$ line.

2. Alignment Pins

On the top of the blank, he drills two $\frac{1}{4}$ " holes for the alignment pins. The holes are drilled to a depth $\frac{1}{2}$ " below the lowest point of the intended wave. The holes must be perpendicular so you should use a drill press if you have one.



Using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " dowel, he makes two pins which should fit snugly in the holes. (*Do not insert these at this point.*)

3. Cut the Curve

He mounts a $\frac{1}{4}$ " blade in the bandsaw. For a clean cut, he recommends using a new (or nearly new) 10 – 14 tpi blade. You should check that the blade is perpendicular to the table. The cut is made along the marked curve in a single, slow movement.

Caution: Do not stop mid-stream as this will introduce a noticeable “bump” in the finished product. And you should never attempt to smooth the cut surfaces after the fact as this will introduce a void when the parts are reassembled.

4. The Wave Insert

For the insert he selects a piece of wood, $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick, that offers an attractive contrast with the bowl. He recommends using North American hardwoods rather than exotic woods which can pose a problem. He then steams this piece using a microwave.

Steam softens the wood's lignans (the polymers that hold the cellulose fibres together) which renders it pliable enough to be bent. When the wood cools, the lignans harden again and the wood will hold the bent shape. Air-dried wood will bend far easier than kiln dried.

He wraps the insert in paper towel and places it in a container. The towel is then saturated with water on both sides.



While the time will obviously vary depending upon the wattage of the microwave. for the demonstration he heated the insert at maximum power for 1 minute and 15 seconds.

The steamed insert is then inserted between the two bowl pieces with the grain of the insert aligned with that of the bowl. (**Gloves are strongly recommended!**) It is then clamped and allowed to dry for at least 4 hours.

He estimates that you have approximately 45 seconds working time, so the clamps and bowl pieces should be readied in advance.

Using the alignment pin holes, he drills through the insert being careful not to crack it.

Veneer Option?

Rather than using solid wood for the wave, some turners opt to use layers of unbacked veneer which may not need steaming. However, there are a few concerns.

The glue-up process will be challenging to say the least. Assuming you are using standard veneer which is 1/50" thick, you would need to glue up at least 12 sheets to obtain a wave that is 1/4" thick. However, as you apply glue to a piece of veneer, the water content will cause it to immediately curl. Trying to apply glue and hold down 12 curling sheets of veneer will provide you with a unique "keystone cops" experience.

In addition, it is possible that the edges of the multiple veneers will be visible once the project is completed.

Unless you are only using 1 or 2 layers, you should probably stick to solid wood.

5. Glue Up

He glues the pieces together using the alignment pins for positioning and then clamps the assembly letting it sit overnight. The blank is then turned to final shape.



To minimize the chance of tear out, you may want to use the bandsaw to cut off the overhang of the wave insert before turning.

6. Sanding: Caution

As noted above, most turners will use a piece of wood for the wave which contrasts with that of the bowl wood. For example, walnut may be used for the wave in a maple bowl. However, when sanding, the darker dust from the walnut will embed itself in the lighter maple. To minimize this, it is recommended that before you do any sanding, apply one or more coats of sanding sealer such as Zinnser's Bull's Eye SealCoat to the lighter wood. An alcohol-based, wax-free shellac, it will penetrate well and dry very quickly. You will likely need to reapply coats as the sanding progresses.



II. WAVE: PROUD

The second form he demonstrated was a bowl where the wave stands proud of the exterior.



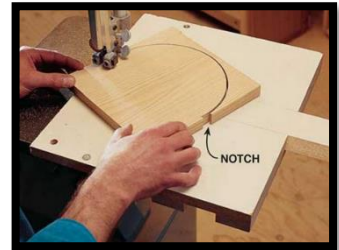
1. Bowl Cutting Jigs

The first step is to make 2 jigs for the bandsaw which will be used to cut the wave form.

Note: If you have a 14" bandsaw without a riser, the maximum height of your blank for this project will be approximately 5.75" less the thickness of the 3 base pieces of the jig. If you use ½" plywood, this will mean a maximum blank height of 4.25"!

a. Circle Cutting Jig

The first piece is a simple circle cutting jig. A centre hole in the blank fits on a pin in an adjustable arm. The platform is advanced into the saw blade and the blank is rotated to produce a circle form.



You can make a simple plate using a piece of plywood with a runner which fits in the slot of the bandsaw table. In the centre of the plywood drill a series of 1/4" holes in a straight line approximately 1" apart which will hold a pivot pin. (right) The platform will need to be clamped to the bandsaw table with the centre of the holes aligned with the front edge of the bandsaw blade. An internet search will reveal dozens of variations.

b. The Holding Jig

The jig John uses has two parts: the top assembly and a base (white melamine).

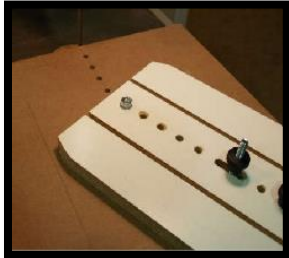


The top part consists of vertical and horizontal pieces of plywood glued at right angles and strengthened by two braces.

The chuck is secured to the vertical arm using an appropriately sized bolt. John's bolt is epoxied into a wooden handle for ease of tightening.

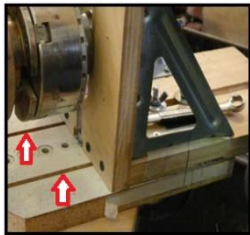


Multiple holes are drilled in the vertical portion to accommodate different bowl diameters.



The base has two parallel grooves and a set of holes in the centre which are used as pivot points on the circle cutting jig for different radii cuts.

A bolt and wing nut are used to join the base and top assembly. This requires a slot in the centre of the horizontal portion of the top piece (right arrow).



To stabilize the assembly, two wooden runners are glued on the underside of the horizontal portion (not shown) which will fit in the two grooves in the base (left arrows).

Alternatives: As is obvious, this mildly “complicated” jig is designed to allow one to make a variety of wave bowls of different forms and dimensions.



A simpler but equally versatile version of this jig was made by Mike Neal. If your metal working skills are limited, you could use ½” plywood and spray it with aluminum paint. No one will know the difference!

(Mike has agreed to bring his jig to the March meeting.)



Finally, if you only intend to do one or two “proud” wave bowls, all you need is a rough version of the top part to hold the chuck and a circle cutting jig.

2. Process

a. Step 1

For your first effort, John recommended using a blank which is 4" - 6" in diameter and least 3" – 4" high. If the cutting capacity of your bandsaw is less than 6" reduce the diameter of the blank accordingly.

With the blank mounted between centres, turn the outside of the bowl with a slightly closed top/inward curve at the rim. Add a tenon and mount the form in a 4-jaw chuck.



Rough hollow the blank ensuring that you leave **relatively thick sides** (approx. 3/4") and **leave the bowl mounted in the chuck** when you are done.

Note: As discussed in the next step, you will need to glue in two support posts which will receive the alignment pins. To simplify their making and installation, you may want to hollow the form with straight sides for the time being since you will need to do more hollowing anyway after installing the wave.

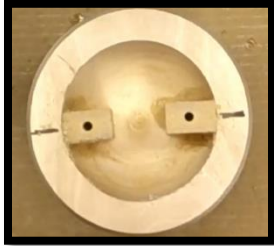
Step 2

As was the case with the Flush Wave Bowl, it will be necessary to align the grain on the 2 cut pieces when they are glued back together with the contrasting wave in between. To accomplish this, two small "posts" are glued on opposite sides of the inside of the bowl (right) prior to cutting the "wave" and a 1/4" vertical hole is drilled through them.



The two "posts" should be approximately 3/4" wide and long enough to reach from the rim of the bowl to below the bottom of the intended wave.

To obtain a good glue joint, the edges of the posts need to match the inside profile of the bowl. If it is curved, you could use a profile gauge or alternatively scribe a line using a compass and sand to the required curve.



He uses hot melt glue to secure the 2 posts and takes care to add a heavy bead of glue around the edges of the posts where they meet the bowl. Once the glue has dried, drill 1/4" holes in each post as vertical as possible. Cut two lengths of 1/4" dowel and check that they are a snug fit in the post holes.

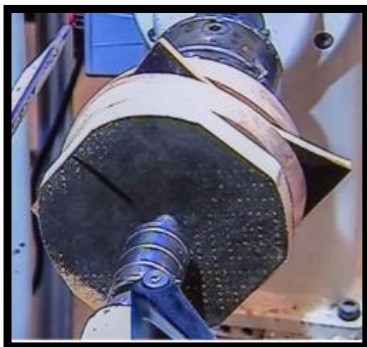
Step 3

The next step is to remove a slice or “wavy doughnut” of wood from the bowl which will serve as the wave.

Following the directions for the Flush Wave bowl, the “top” portion of the bowl is cut off. Relying upon 2 pencil marks on the side of the jig that are approximately 1/4" apart, the jig is advanced, and a second cut is made producing the doughnut. (Photo: right)



Step 4



The outside of the bowl needs to be reduced to allow the wave to stand proud. To minimize tear out, a filler piece the same thickness as the “doughnut” is inserted between the bottom and top pieces of the bowl. Holes are drilled through the filler and the alignment pins are inserted. A piece of flat stock which is larger than the rim is applied, and the tailstock is engaged.

John drills a series of shallow pilot holes of the same depth along a line from the bottom to the top of the bowl. These are used to determine how much wood to remove and thus the desired reveal of the wave.

Step 5

The 3 components of the bowl are then temporarily assembled, and a light pencil line is drawn marking the reveal of the wave. This portion of the wave is then sanded by hand including rounding over the outside edges of the wave.

To highlight the wave, he commonly colours the “reveal portion” of the wave. To avoid getting any colourant on the area to be glued, he uses a Q-tip to apply the colour to the edge and lets it “drift” inwards. Care must be taken on the end grain portion to avoid the colour seeping through to the inside. Air brushing or texturing are alternative measures which could be taken.



Step 6

Glue is then applied to the 3 pieces and the alignment pins, and they are clamped together. Before the glue has set, he uses a popsicle cut to a sharp point to remove glue squeeze-out. He follows this up with a damp Q-tip to remove any remaining glue. For this reason, you should avoid applying an excessive amount of glue.

Step 7

Once the glue has set, he carefully removes the alignment posts. The piece is then mounted on the lathe and the interior, turning to completion.



POST-SCRIPT: RECESSED WAVE

If you wish to make a bowl with a recessed wave (which is much simpler) after completing Step 3 above, use a compass to mark the desired inset on the edge of the doughnut. Attach this to a small piece of scrap wood using shims and hot melt glue, and then remove the perimeter using a bandsaw or better yet, by sanding. The completed edge face should be coloured to highlight the wave.



A film finish should be applied to the coloured edge and the exposed sides of the original bowl before glue-up as it will make it much easier to remove any squeeze out.

HINT: TIME TO SHARPEN?

Consider a 10-inch bowl blank rotating on the lathe at a modest 600 RPM. The rim of the blank travels at 1570 feet per minute, or about 18 miles per hour. Modern tool steel is amazingly tough and durable, but that's the same as powering the sharp edge of a gouge through almost quarter-mile of wood, every minute. No steel could stay sharp for very long.

(AAW, *Sharpening Turning Tools*)

A TALE OF TWO TOOLS

1. EASY SKEW: OXYMORON?

I tried using a skew once. Quickly decided that once was enough! However, Harvey P recently alerted me to a form of a skew that might enable me to keep my heart rate under control.

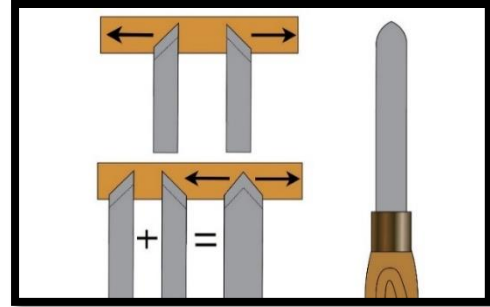


It is called a V-skew and was developed by noted turner and instructor Keith Tompkins. (Packard: US\$52)



Like most turners he spent a great deal of learning to use a traditional skew and then more time trying to understand why it is so prone to catches and spiralling out of control. His conclusion was that its double bevel was a major factor. As he notes, *"The reason a conventional skew has two bevels is that just one tool is needed for right and left cuts. The two angles of the conventional skew are a compromise...the tendency to catch unexpectedly is the downside."*

Accordingly, he experimented with a number of single bevel forms before settling on a configuration which allows the tool to be used in both directions. He finds that he can make planning cuts and roll beads and coves with far less chance of a catch.



While his primary goal was to provide a “beginners” tool which would allow one to graduate to a traditional skew, users report that the V-Skew does an impressive job on its own.

John Lucas reports that it is almost as easy to use as a spindle gouge but leaves a finish like a skew. You can find his demonstration of this tool at the following site:

https://www.google.com/search?q=keith+tompkins++v-skew&client=firefox-b-d&source=Inms&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjpyf3g6K_9AhWPHjQIHVltBN0Q_AUoAHoECAEQAg&biw=1271&bih=545&dpr=1.5#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:d300ff91,vid:KOW7KXL51zw

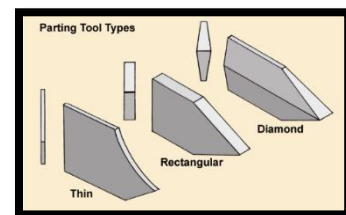
2. THE (OFT-MALIGNED) PARTING TOOL

Alas, in the pantheon of turning tools, the parting tool is the “poor cousin”. As it is used primarily to separate a turning from waste wood, there are some that claim it should not even be considered a true turning tool. With a simple bevel set perpendicular to the blade, there is no need for fancy sharpening jigs and the technique for using it requires little practice or analysis. In the words of one old timer – *“you simply push the damn thing into the wood”*.

The following note represents a modest attempt to rehabilitate the reputation of this versatile tool.

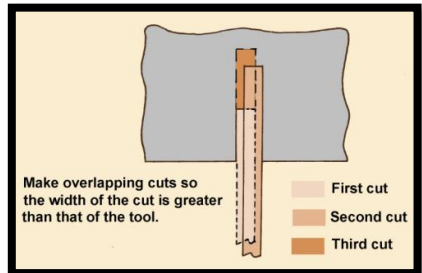
1. TYPES

While parting tools are available in a variety of configurations including those with a fluted bevel or a carbide tip, the vast majority are made from high-speed steel and come in one of 3 shapes.



a. Rectangular

This traditional shape is typically 1/8" thick and has a wide "blade" to provide the strength to make a deep cut.

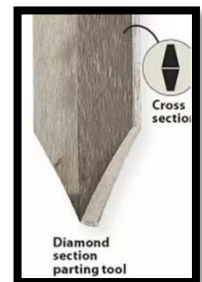


Doc Green's Woodturning Site

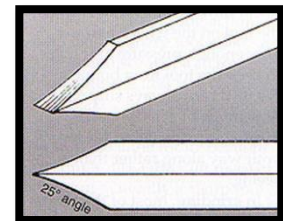
While the tool works very well for shallow cuts, deeper cuts raise the potential for burning due to friction on the sides, or more seriously, binding which can rip the tool from your hands. In response, the standard recommendation is to widen the kerf beyond the thickness of blade by making a series of parallel cuts (left)

b. Diamond

As the name implies, this shape has a flattened-diamond cross section. This shape minimizes friction on the sides of the tool and thus *reduces* the risks of burning or binding. As it does not eliminate these risks, many professionals recommend widening the cut as is done with a rectangular tool.



Unlike the rectangular form, sharpening a diamond tool requires slightly more care. In order to reap the benefit of reduced friction, the bevel should be located as close as possible at the wide centre line.



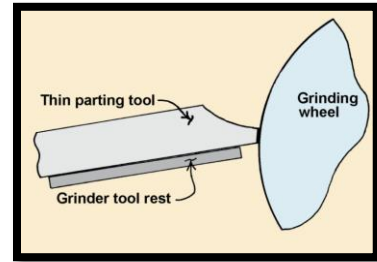
c. Thin

Typically 1/16" thick, these are used in situations where you want to remove as little wood as possible. A common situation is where one wants to maintain the grain match on a box and lid turned from a single blank.



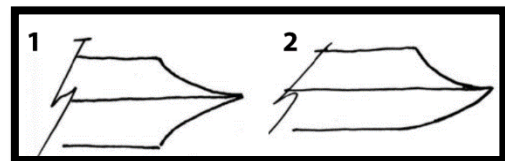
Caution: These tools usually come with a very short handle which means less control. And since their use presumes that you want to avoid widening the cut as discussed above, you must avoid making deep cuts.

While there are different “nose” shapes, one of the most common ones is shown in the diagram at right.



The rationale for this shape is that it provides more weight under the cutting edge which reduces vibration and chatter.

This rationale prompted David Ellsworth to adopt a variation in the shape of a diamond or rectangular parting tool as shown in figure 2.



He explains: “...by grinding a convex shape under the tip, I have introduced a small amount of mass to support the edge...it works better because it doesn’t vibrate on the wood or burnish as quickly. The result is that it stays sharper longer.”

2. TECHNIQUE

You might want to consider a slightly less robust approach to simply “*shoving the damn tool into the wood*”.

All sources agree that the tool rest should be set far enough back that the flat of the tool – not the lower bevel - is resting on it.

From this starting point, some on-line sources suggest that you should lower the handle and advance the tool until the lower bevel makes contact. Then slowly raise the handle to engage the tip and continue until the tool is parallel (roughly on the centre line).

This is not recommended. It is an aggressive cut which not only will tear the fibres producing extensive fraying on the edge (right) but can also be very “grabby” which may lead to a catch.



In fact, most professionals recommend the exact opposite. An initial entry cut should be made with the tool parallel and then the handle should be lowered (and the tip raised) to produce a peeling cut. This will produce a much cleaner surface and as it is more stable, will show little tendency to grab.

You can find a short video on this technique at:

<https://guidetowoodturning.weebly.com/parting-tool.html>

3. APPLICATIONS

Beyond its commonplace use to remove a turning from waste wood, the following are some other possible uses.

a. Turning a Tenon

If your chuck uses straight jaws (as opposed to dovetailed), a standard 1/8" tool can be used to quickly turn a tenon.



b. Sizing: Establishing a Diameter

Used in conjunction with calipers, a parting tool is commonly used in spindle turning to establish precise diameters.



c. Making Grooves

If you do not own a skew or 3-point tool, a parting tool can be placed flat on the tool rest and the tip used to create a groove.





This may be done for decorative purposes, as a first step in turning beads and coves, or simply to provide engagement for wire or plastic laminate when burning a line.

d. Recesses

The tool can be used to make a recess which is frequently required in box making.



e. Squaring Off



It can also be used to square off the end of a spindle.



f. Decorative Uses



Finally, a parting tool is frequently used in turning such items as honey dippers and Christmas trees.



PARTING OFF (Pretty Appropriate Eh!)

A lot of people to acknowledge this month. Thanks to Harvey P for continuing to provide ideas for the Newsletter and as previously noted, to Hovan, Don and Ken for volunteering to take over A/V responsibilities. Thanks to the members of the Executive are also warranted as they attempt to keep the Guild alive and well in challenging times. Finally, special thanks are due to Tim K and Peter P for their years of invaluable service to the Guild – especially considering the obstacles we faced due to COVID. We owe both of them a huge debt of thanx.

CONCLUDING THOT

