



IWG News

The Newsletter of the Island Woodturners Guild

January 2024



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:
Don Costello

Vice President:
Don Robinson

Treasurer:
Bonnie Hallas

Secretary:
Michael McEwan

Members at Large:
Hovan Baghdassarian
John Kilcoyne
Virginia Lee

Past President:
Tim Karpiak

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](#)
[William Wood-Write](#)

THE PRESIDENT'S TURN

Good day Island Woodturners!

This month we are trying a new approach to our demonstrations. I hope that it is successful and want to thank Steve Werner for being courageous enough to be the first to agree to be recorded in his workshop. He will also be at the meeting to add commentary and answer any questions. Steve, thank you! I really enjoyed the morning in your workshop and getting to know you a bit more. Between you walking me through the process and John Kilcoyne kitting me up for turning pens, you have sparked a new addiction and I have started turning pens like mad. Here is a photo of some that I did as Christmas gifts for friends.



The idea behind this approach is NOT to replace live demos in the hall but rather to create an opportunity to demonstrate things we can't do in the hall like sanding, epoxy, or pyro work. I am also hoping that it will open the door to those who may consider a demo but be intimidated by doing so in front of a large group with likes of John Kilcoyne heckling from the bleachers. *[Ed. Note: He is confusing me with Barrie Baptie!]* During the demonstration, please feel free to ask questions as this is meant to be an interactive session. As it is pre-recorded, we can easily pause the video and have a discussion before continuing on.

Let me close this note by asking you to consider volunteering to perform an in-your-shop demonstration which can be recorded for a future meeting.

Don Costello

NEXT MEETING: SATURDAY JANUARY 27TH: 1:00 P.M.

Our first meeting of the New Year will feature a demonstration by Steve Werner on Pen Turning in which he will address turning techniques, tools, and finishing.

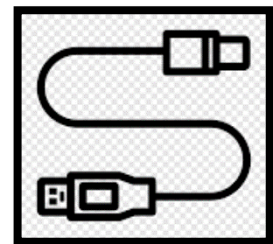


As this is one of the many topics that do not lend themselves to a live demonstration in our meeting place, it was decided that we would try out the new format discussed in a previous newsletter. Accordingly, Don Costello recorded Steve's efforts in his own shop and then edited this for the meeting. Steve (and Don) will be in attendance to provide commentary and to answer questions.

Following this there will be a Q&A session which is intended to provide answers to questions that have been raised by new turners.

AUDIO-VISUAL UPDATE

In light of the difficulties experienced at the November meeting, the Executive has decided to revert to the former equipment in the hope that members will be willing to assist in the setup.



Members of the Executive (including Tim Karpiak who will fly in from Calgary) will take care of the setup for the January meeting in the morning. In the course of doing so, the various cables will be colour-coded and labelled indicating their connections and notes/photos will be taken in order to produce a simple instruction sheet.

There will be a sign-up sheet for volunteers at the January meeting. No knowledge of computer stuff is required! If you can plug in an extension cord, you are more than qualified. Please consider adding your name. The more people who volunteer, the fewer times you will be called upon.

MARK THE DATE: MARCH 23, 2024

The Executive is pleased to announce that our meeting on Saturday March 23rd, 2024 (1:00 – 3:00 p.m.) will feature an in-person demonstration by Elizabeth Weber.



A resident of Seattle, Elizabeth received the 2023 AAW's *POP Artist Award* which recognizes turners who have shown exceptional development in their careers as artists and whose artworks have directly influenced or had a significant impact on other artists within the field of woodturning. She was also selected by Glenn Lucas to be one of 9 turners at *The International Women's Woodturning Exhibition* in Ireland.

Her demonstration will focus on creating wave/leaf motifs on turned pieces.

You can see more of her work at her website:
<https://icosawood.work/>



The session is **only open to Guild members and there will be a fee of \$10 to attend or view remotely.**

The fee can be paid:

- a. at the January or February meetings (cash or cheque payable to *IWG*);
 - b. by e-transfer to treasurer@islandwoodturners.ca; or
 - c. by cheque payable to "Island Woodturners Guild" and mailed to our Treasurer at: Bonnie Hallas, Treasurer, 5101 Wildview Crescent, Victoria, B.C. V9E1J5.
-

NOVEMBER RECAP

Barrie Baptie gave a remarkably detailed demonstration on turning an inside-outside (I/O) ornament with a Xmas tree inside that can be rotated. The following are only some of the many highlights!



A. PREPARING THE BLANK

While the blank can consist of anywhere from 2 to 8 pieces, he noted that the most common form consists of 4 pieces of wood.

If grain matching is desired, the pieces can be cut from a single large piece. Otherwise, they can simply be cut from a board. For a first effort, Barrie suggested using 4 pieces that are 1" square and approximately 6" long which will produce an ornament which is 4" long. Needless to say, the wood should be free of any knots or inclusions.

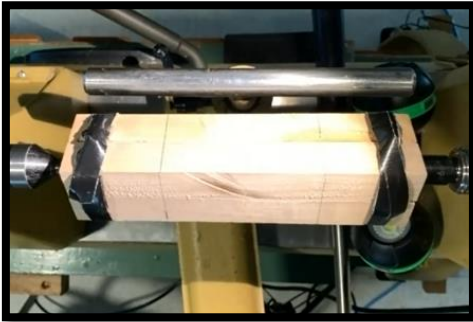
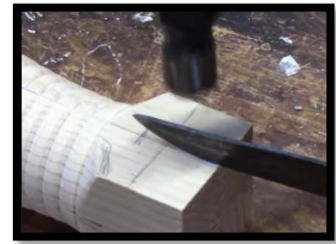
Note: It is crucial that the 4 pieces are dimensionally identical. While you can use a bandsaw to cut these, a table saw offers greater accuracy. Before cutting, check that the blade is set at 90 degrees and the fence is parallel to the blade. If possible, use a fine-tooth blade to obtain a smooth(er) surface for the subsequent glue up. **Also use a push stick (and stay out of the line of fire)**



Holding the pieces together with elastic band or hose clamps, number the ends and put a dot or arrow on the outside corner edge. This will make it easy to get the proper arrangement when the pieces are reversed.

Barrie also recommends cutting a tiny nick in the centre of each end which will help to orient the drive and live centres.

For assembly, some turners opt to glue the 4 pieces together using CA glue or standard PVA glue (*Titebond*). However, you must be careful to only apply glue to the ends of the pieces, clean off any squeeze out immediately and exercise caution when later separating the pieces.



Barrie avoids these potential problems by using hose clamps at either end of the blanks taking care to ensure that the pieces are properly aligned at right angles to one another.

He noted that the emerging “tail” of the clamp should be pointing away from you when you are turning and recommends covering the clamps with tape to protect your hands.

B. MOUNTING THE BLANK

If you use a conventional spur drive (headstock) and live centre (tailstock), the fixed points will be located on the centre glue line which may act as a wedge and split the blank.

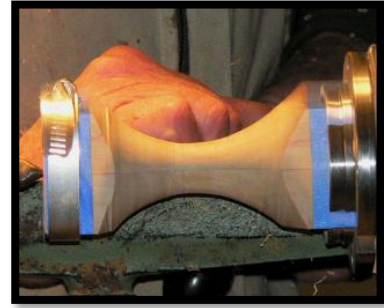


Accordingly, Barrie prefers to use steb centres (left). The centre points are spring loaded which means that as pressure is applied, the point will retract, and the serrated ring will engage the wood.

While Sorby steb centres are expensive (Drive centre LV: \$95/Live centre Amaz: \$180), much less expensive knockoffs can be found online.

C. TURNING THE “INSIDE”

While there are many different “interior” forms, the most common one is egg-shaped which means turning a simple concave form (right).



However, for this project, Barrie decided that the outside form would be a cone which meant that the interior cut was a straight line.



The entry cut on the end of the blank should be angled so that the centre of the ornament (which is currently on the outside of the blank) is deeper than the outside (which is currently on the inside of the blank).

The turning of the inside completed and sanded.



Barrie cautioned that your inside form must leave enough wood to complete turning the outside and you must ensure that there is enough space for the Xmas tree to fit inside without rubbing.



Before removing the blank from the lathe, he makes a very small cut on the edge of the outside corners (left) which will mark the location of the tree trunk.

He then sands the pieces and applies a coat of dewaxed shellac (*Zinssers Sealcoat*) to what will be the inside surfaces, being careful to avoid getting any on what will be the subsequent glue surfaces. He then applies the desired finish.



As the interior will be visible, you should consider what is the best finish to highlight the inside ornament. While some turners opt for paint, Barrie prefers to use glitter which is available in a wide range of colours from a dollar store or Michaels.



D. TURNING THE INSIDE DECORATION

Barrie turns the tree with the bottom sized to fit the inside diameter of the ornament which was previously recorded.



Once the outside shape is formed, “branches” are added using the tip of a skew on an angled cut which produces a raised “fuzzy ring”.

The piece is removed from the chuck, and sprayed with green paint taking care to ensure that the entire surface is covered. A second coat of paint is then applied and before drying, he sprinkles a mix of glitter colours. Once dry, a clear sealer (Krylon or Rustoleum) is applied.

Note: If you want a more textured finish, you may want to apply green flock to the outside of the tree. (Michaels: \$10).





If the tree is to be fixed in place, a short “trunk” portion is turned. However, for a rotating tree, the bottom is cut straight across, and a hole is drill in the bottom which will receive a dowel mounted in a “turning” base pot (left).

E. MOUNTING THE INSIDE DECORATION

Using the reference marks made at the outset, 2 sets of blanks are sanded and glued together. Once again, the pieces must fit together precisely, and you should immediately remove any glue squeeze out.

In each set, he uses a rotary cutter and burr to cut a slot for the “tree trunk” or “rotating” dowel. In the latter case, the slot should be at least ½” deep.



He inserts the tree into one set of blanks and checks that it has clearance for subsequent rotation.

He then glues the two sets together. Once again, precise alignment is crucial. He purposely misaligned the pieces to show what to avoid. (right)



F. TURNING THE OUTSIDE

As this final stage involves turning a very thin vessel at a high RPM, it is essential that you wear a faceshield and follow the precautions set out here:

<https://www.woodturner.org/Woodturner/Woodturner/Resources/Safety-Materials/Safety.aspx>

The piece is remounted between centres for final turning. While Barrie opts for a final thickness of 1/8", you may prefer the peace of mind offered by a thickness of 1/4".

The goal is to have the outside angle match that of the inside angle as represented by the tree while ensuring that sufficient wood remains at the joins.



Go slow and stop frequently to check on your progress.

Once the desired thickness is reached, he turns a slight convex surface on the base before parting it off.



CA glue is used to join the dowel in the "turning pot" to the tree. If the tree is rubbing on the inside of the ornament, he uses Japanese finger file (LV: \$9.50) to sand away the edges of the "struts". This can also be used to equalize their width for aesthetic reasons.

The final step is to apply a coat of clear sealant and install a small hanging hook.



G. OTHER DESIGNS

Noting that there are innumerable designs, Barrie shared some of his recent efforts.



...including this modest effort!!!



EDITOR'S CHOICE: MEMBER TURNINGS

CINDY LOZZA

This recent turning by Cindy was a house warming gift for her sister. The hollow form was turned from a mimosa tree that she was forced to take down and she fashioned the “bonsai tree” top from 30-gauge silver floral wire.



Her initial inclination was to colour the form a solid colour – either black or grey. In the spirit of experimentation, she started with Rit dye but found the colour too weak. A subsequent coat of iron acetate (vinegar/iron solution) did little to improve the result. Accordingly, she finally resorted to black shoe polish to achieve the desired colour.



The differential absorption of these finishes in the early wood versus late wood left the latter with a lighter “silver-like” colour which is an excellent complement to the silver wire sculpture.

NOTES

1. RIT Dyes

While these are commonly used to dye fabrics, the experiences of turners who have used them echo Cindy's, namely that they are very weak at colouring. Moreover, they are not very lightfast and will fade when exposed to sunlight. Accordingly, most turners opt for metal-complex dyes which are very lightfast and can be mixed with water or denatured alcohol for better penetration. The best Canadian source is *Wood Essence* which sells ColourFX dyes (right).



2. Iron Acetate

This solution has been used for centuries to ebonize wood and works particularly well on woods with a high tannin content such as mimosa (as well as oak and cherry). Today, it is typically made by immersing a pad of steel wool (non-oiled from LV) in a glass jar filled with white vinegar. You need to wait at least a few days for these materials to react; periodically stirring the contents will speed up the process. It then needs to be drained through fine cloth to remove undissolved iron particles.



As the solution has a high water- content which will raise the grain, you may want to apply a coat of water in advance and then re-sand.

Safety: The chemical reaction produces hydrogen gas and if the solution is in a sealed glass container such as a Mason jar, there is a risk it will explode. Accordingly, you should punch a few vent holes in the lid or leave the jar partially unsealed while the reaction occurs.

3. Shoe Polish

There are two coloured waxes typically used by turners. White wax, which is referred to as liming wax, is used to highlight variations in the grain (sapwood vs heartwood) (right) while black wax, which is referred to as patinating wax, is usually used to colour an entire turning.



As commercial versions of these waxes are relatively expensive, a common alternative is shoe polish (\$6: Amaz) which of course is available in a much wider variety of colours.

The differences between these two products appear to be minimal. Both consist of a combination of wax, colourant (dyes or pigments), and a solvent (turpentine or mineral spirits).

For a good note on applying white wax, albeit a commercial product, check out this source:
<https://edswoodturning.com/2011/01/01/its-time-to-lime-but-not-your-lawn/>

GIL HEISE

Very glad to report that Gil is on the road to recovery and is back in the shop exploring some new designs.

One of these was prompted by an article in a recent edition of the *American Woodturner* on turning *Etui*-inspired boxes. Originally designed to hold sewing needles, by the 16th century, their use in Europe had expanded to include such items as scissors, a thimble, a tiny knife, a pencil, or an ivory writing tablet. Typically they were made of silver, ivory, bone, or enamel and were heavily ornamented.



Gil decided that these would be a good project for the small pieces of unique woods that he had been saving. The photo shows some of these which he turned from lilac, laurel and holly using a variety of attractive forms with “suction fitted” lids.

He was also busy turning his annual Xmas tree decorations. This past year, he departed from his usual design to create disk ornaments using his amazing homemade jig that he demonstrated last year (photo below)



He notes that the ornaments can serve a dual purpose, as they can also be worn to a New Year's party!

VIRGINIA LEE

A weaver for many years, Virginia was recently invited to participate in *Weaving Together: A Celebration of Métis Sashes* which was organized by the Métis Nation British Columbia's Ministry of Culture, Heritage and Language. The photo at right shows her stunning entry.



While a decorative symbol of Métis people today, historically the sashes were an essential multi-purpose tool for *voyageurs* of the fur trade. They were used for many purposes including as a back support during portages, tourniquets for injuries, a carrier bag (knives, pipe, tobacco, flint, steel), an emergency sewing kit (fringe), saddle blanket, towel/washcloth, and makeshift trumpet line markers left on buffalo carcasses to mark ownership.



Produced by finger weaving, each of the colours has a symbolic meaning attached to it such as green for fertility, white for connection to the earth and creator and yellow for prosperity.

She recently completed a classic *L'Assomption Sash*, whose design dates to the 1700's and has been invited to conduct a workshop on sash weaving for a local Métis group.



In 2019, she made her first effort at integrating the art forms of weaving and turning as shown in the photos below.



With the enthusiastic encouragement of members of Groups 5 and 2, she has recently completed the following piece which incorporates beadwork, weavings and leather.



We look forward to seeing her future efforts!

ANDRÉ ROBIN

In 2013, André took a week-long course at the internationally renowned *Ecole Escoulen* in France. The class was tailored to allow each participant to pursue their own turning interests. While André opted to focus on multi-axis turning, he was intrigued by the project of one of his classmates which involved turning a *trembleur*.

Many years later, he decided to tackle this project and since then has turned 4 *trembleurs*. His latest and most ambitious one (photo: far right) which he brought to the October *Show and Tell* is discussed below.



Introduction



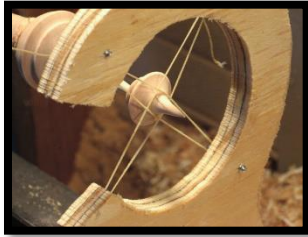
A *trembleur* consists of a series of small ornamental forms that are separated by very thin sections of consistent diameter. The name derives from the fact that the turning will vibrate or “tremble” at the slightest touch. It is essentially spindle turning on steroids and is not for the faint of heart!

Originating in France in the 18th century, these spindle forms were initially turned from ivory which was sufficiently strong to allow very narrow spindle diameters (left). While originally embraced as works of art, over time the incredibly demanding nature of their creation in wood became a “badge of honour” that the creator had achieved the rank of master turner. They remain a popular project in France and are even the subject of turning competitions.

2. Steady and String Rests

Similar to turning a (very, very, very long) finial, a *trembleur* is turned from the top-down beginning at the tail stock end. Initially, André uses a conventional steady rest to support the cylinder as the first ornament and spindle are turned.

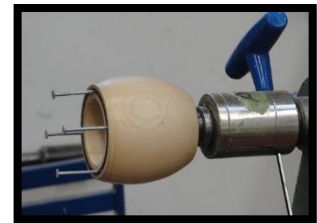




However, as the turning proceeds, it becomes necessary to provide support at the narrow spindle areas. For this purpose, a set of string steady rests are required in which the piece is stabilised by string as opposed to wheels.

While there are many different styles, André relies on two types of string steadies.

The first of these which is mounted in the tailstock is used to secure the turning once the topmost ornament has been turned. (Photo right)



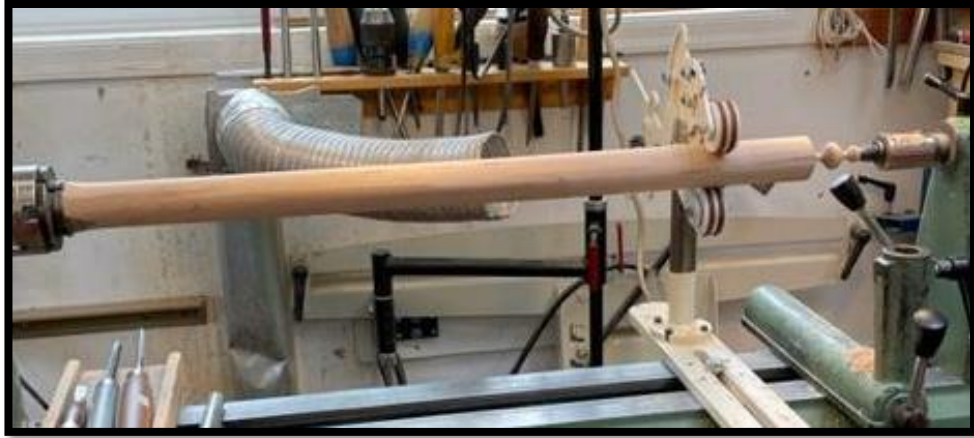
Akin to a jam chuck, it is sized to allow the top ornament to fit inside such that the string wrapped around the nails will support the narrow spindle just below it. The string is waxed to minimize friction which would otherwise, burn through the wood.

The other type of string rest is used to support the turning at various points along its length. André made three of these which are fully adjustable depending upon the circumstances.

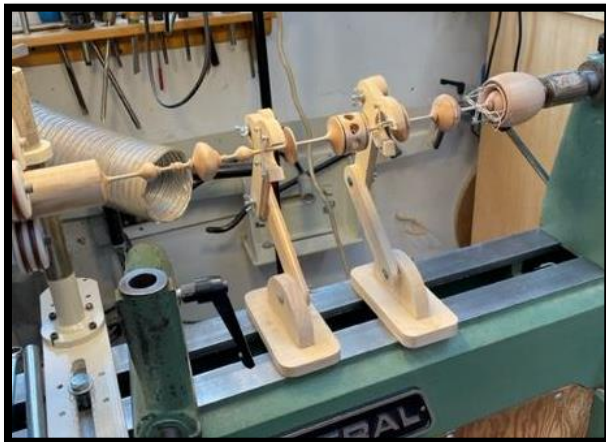
Four rare earth magnets recessed in the base of each hold them securely to the lathe bed.



The following photos show a few stages of the turning of his latest creation.



With a *Oneway* steady rest in place, the top ornament has been turned and is ready to be secured in the spring steady rest in the tailstock.



Not for the Faint of Heart: Ready to turn the last ornament. One catch and

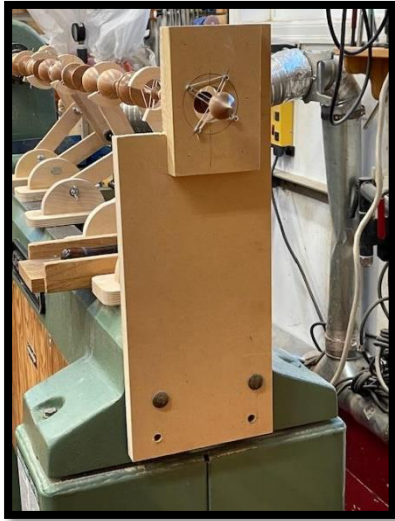
The completed piece which measures 34" and has a variety of ornaments including a captive ring.



UPDATE

The ultimate challenge for professional turners is to turn a *trembleur* that is over a metre in length (39.4"). However, André's lathe has a maximum of 34" between centres.

Undeterred, he bolted a "tailstock extension" to his lathe which added 10" of capacity.



And in short order (2 weeks of turning!), he completed his 5th *trembleur* which is 47.5" long!!!!

POSTSCRIPT

At the risk of appearing to be an enabler of André's ~~fixation~~ hobby, I think he should consider purchasing the following lathe!



RECORD POWER LIVE SESSIONS

Record Power is a U.K. manufacturer of lathes and related equipment. They sponsor **free**, live turning demonstrations that are available to over 50,000 turners throughout the world.



To sign up for these demonstrations, go to: <https://recordpowertv.com/demonstrations/>

You will receive emails indicating the date and time of subsequent demonstrations. As they are live demonstrations, the access times vary across the globe. While viewing for the poor folks in Western Australia are usually set for 3:30 a.m., we can usually enjoy watching these at a more civilized time of 11:30 a.m. PST.

PARTING OFF

Thanks to Cindy, Gil, Virginia and André for help with this edition and to the Executive for their continued work to keep the Guild operating.

A richly deserved, special thanks to Barrie Baptie for his November demonstration. It was clear that he devoted an immense amount of time preparing for this and we are all the beneficiaries of his effort.

PS. As Barrie indicated that he had some trouble seeing, he might want to consider purchasing these.



CONCLUDING THOT

