

Woodturners Worldwide Virtual Symposium



An appreciation by Robin Goodman

The 5-day Woodturners Worldwide symposium ran from 22 to 26th September and included 45 demonstrations from more than 30 demonstrators. Some were live demos, others were pre-recorded. The pre-recorded demos had the demonstrator live on the chat box during the demo and nearly all demos had a separate live question and answer session immediately following.

Matthew Deighton from Utah has spent several years building the Woodturners Worldwide Instagram page with over 125,000 followers. The arrival of covid was all he needed to inspire him to organise this impressive event, which attracted a large number of participants on line.

The first day consisted of a variety of pre-recorded demos and videos from around the world, varying from a few minutes to over an hour. Cindy Drozda had the shortest demo about how she sharpens her bandsaw blades with a Dremel and there were several demos on how to use tools such as skew and hook tool.



Richard Kennedy from the UK had a short interesting video showing how he makes his signature pierced tree bowls, **photo 1**. Part pierced bowl is shown in **photo 2**



Alan Stratton had a demo of inside-out turning, **photo 3**.

Cindy Pei-si Young from Taiwan showed how to make her unusual tripod box, **photo 4**.

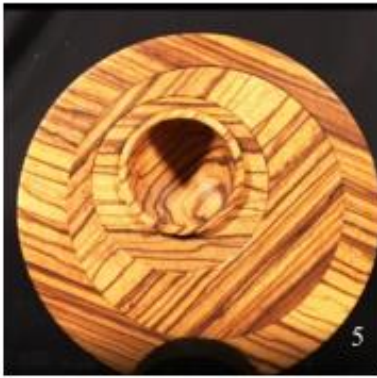
The next day was a series of networking sessions, where participants could network with other turners about various subjects including pens, miniature turning and hollow forms. Along the lines of speed-dating, there was also an opportunity to have 5 minute individual sessions with 6 other turners, either for a specific interest group or for general interests.

For the 3 main demo days, there were 3 simultaneous demos for each of 5 time slots each day. All demos were available for viewing at a later date and time - particularly useful in view of different time zones.

The event was based on US Pacific time, which is 8 hours behind the UK, so the last demo of the day started at 2am UK time! Conveniently, the organisers had arranged for everybody's personal programme to be adjusted to their own time zone. However, there were a few hiccups; one demonstrator I saw had mistaken the time zones and thought he had another 2 hours to prepare for his live demo!

Demonstrators were mostly from the USA, but there also 3 from the UK – Emma Cook (the Tiny Turner) Andrew Hall and Phil Irons, plus a few other nationalities. The demos covered a large number of subjects and techniques, including texturing, airbrushing and colouring. Many showed how to make their signature pieces or specialities and a few of these are briefly described below.





Jason Clark's Saturn bowl intrigued me, **photo 5**. The wide but thin rim had cleverly been transformed into several rings that could rotate independently and could be offset. He originally picked up the idea from Hans Weisslog, who made a bowl, where the rim was free to rotate separately around the inner bowl. To make the additional rings free to rotate, Jason had to overcome several problems such as: how to mount the bowl off-centre, how to stop flexing of a thin rim and how to exactly match the diameter of ring cuts from top and bottom.



His solution was to make 2 cuts through the rim to form a v shape on its side and to arrange to have a guide corner on top and bottom at exactly the same diameter, **photo 6**. I have since tried to make such a bowl and found it more difficult than it looks. I prepared a special very narrow parting tool only 0.4 mm wide, which needed to be positioned at exactly 45 degrees to cut into the 3mm thick ring to a depth of about 2.7 mm, before

repeating the same cut from the other side to break through into the first cut. This precision - tolerance on depth of cut is less than 0.5mm - is extremely difficult to achieve and my first attempt was not successful; the rim fell off the bowl. However, I intend to try again, with some modifications to thicknesses and technique and also consider different ways of decorating the rotatable rings.



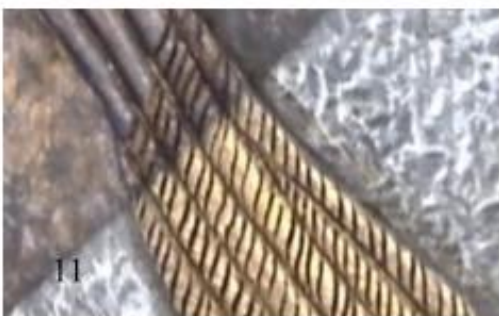
If using natural wood finish as Jason does, then zebrano is one of the best woods to use because of its very strong straight contrasting grain. After cutting the rim into several rings, the rings can be individually rotated to produce the best effect and altered whenever you want.



New Zealander **Graeme Priddle** made a couple of interesting pre-recorded joint presentations with his partner **Melissa Engler**, **photo 7**. From a room in the house with a table and recliner chair, in which they normally sit to carry



out most of their decoration, they showed how they texture a traditional Koru bowl and an ammonite bowl, using pyrography on the bowl as shown in **photo 8**. Some carving detail is shown in **photo 9**.



Frenchman **Laurent Niclot** also showed how to use pyrography and burning to great effect. The realistic metal plate effect in **photo 10** is all done by burning, as is his rope-like texture in **photo 11**. He also uses gilding waxes and dry-brushed acrylics to enhance his burning.



Michael Alguire's Wheels of Delicacy looked interesting, **photo 12**. He went through the stages of making them, starting with 2 identical bowls, rectangular in section and only 3mm thick, that were carefully glued together, **photo 13**. For shapes such as butterflies, he photocopies directly onto self-adhesive paper that is then stuck onto the wheel prior to piercing. He uses high speed piercing tools and to work on the inside rim of the wheel he uses a handpiece with an angled head, since the normal straight tool will not fit. The piercing is very extensive and time consuming, but the overall effect is impressive.



12

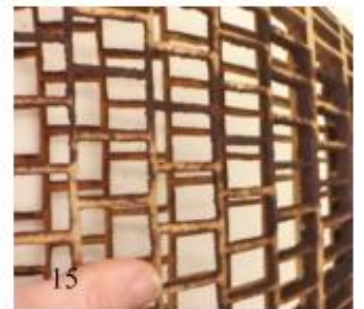


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14

Irishman Pat Carroll also uses extensive piercing for his Erosion Series, **photo 14**. The voids are very geometric and particularly time consuming, **photo 15**. These pieces typically take him 60-100 hours !



15

I liked the look of Rebecca Degroot's whimsical Walking Mushrooms, **photo 16**. Although not difficult to make, they take a lot longer to make than our more usual simple mushrooms. She impressed me with her detail of the underside of the mushrooms, **photo 17**, formed by a knife tip in a pyrography hand piece.



16

The above is just a sample of some of the interesting demos at the event. There was also a trade exhibitors' 'area', where 30 manufacturers and suppliers could show off their products, including with the use of videos, and where participants could chat directly with them on line. I believe the organiser set up his own channel. It was broadly similar to Zoom, but seen. Question and answer sessions plus chat during



17

participants could not be the demos worked well.

At just over £50 for 5 days, I thought it excellent value, providing a great opportunity to see so many demos on such a variety of subjects and find out how to make some of the more challenging pieces that turners have come up with. I believe there was only one other club member attending, so the opportunity was obviously not taken up by most members. The organiser already has plans to hold another event in 2021, so it is worth considering next time.