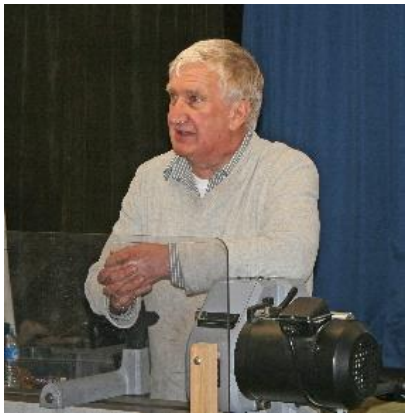
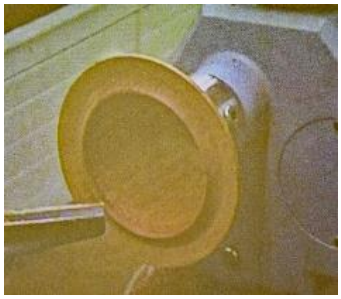
March 2016 Meeting - Tom Kittle



Tom began his presentation by saying that he would not take a project through to completion but would concentrate on various techniques and some basic work holding techniques.

He then talked about screw chucks saying that when using a screw chuck you should have a flat surface for the holder to butt up against. It is possible to turn a bowl up to 20" diameter on a screw chuck but, for safety, he said that he would always use the tailstock for added security. There are various types of screw chucks, some with parallel machined threads and the more basic home-made one using a wood screw. The latter is very useful when production turning small items such as drawer knobs.

Tom had a piece of Oak ready to turn, he had drilled the hole for the screw. He tries to ensure the screw hole is drilled to the depth that he wants to turn the bowl. That way he will not turn away too much material and go through the bottom of the bowl! He mounted it on the screw chuck and trued up the edge and the face. He then cut a recess to fit the chuck and in doing so he noticed some tear out and gave a hint as to how to cover it up. He uses what he called a "Bill Jones" scraper (a piece of round rod with one end ground obliquely to give a scraping edge) to form small decorative coves to cover the torn grain.



When the bottom of the bowl was complete he reversed it onto a four jaw chuck and started to hollow out the bowl. A common problem that turner's can encounter when hollowing out a bowl is that the gouge skates backwards across the surface. This occurs because the bevel initially does not have a surface on which to rub. To overcome this Tom recommends using a point tool to make a series of grooves across the surface and these will give a surface for the bevel to rub against.

To finish the foot of the bowl and remove evidence of chucking Tom has a board with a piece of carpet stuck onto the surface which he mounts in the chuck. The bowl is sandwiched between the carpet surface and the tailstock. The carpet covered board acts as a friction drive. The foot can then be tidied up.

Next he said he would show how to make an off-centre mirror or picture frame. For this he mounted a piece of Burr Oak on the screw chuck. The piece had two holes drilled through it, one in the centre and the other offset by about 10 mm. With the piece mounted on the central hole, the edge was trued up and a concave shape was formed on the edge of the rim. A small bevel was formed on the rear of the rim to give a sharp edge on the side of the rim.

Then Tom unscrewed the blank, turned it over and remounted it on the central hole and trued up the surface. He then mounted it in the offset hole and marked the mirror/picture diameter on the surface. He then cut from inside the marked line out to the line to a depth that would accommodate both the mirror/picture plus the backing piece. He then opened this a bit more to give a bit of "wobble" room for the mirror (allows for any contraction or expansion of wood or mirror). The recess for the backing plate was cut. A small hole was drilled through just inside the central waste area.

Tom then removed it from the screw chuck and reversed it onto a four jaw chuck, expanding the jaws into the backing plate recess. The small hole that had been drilled now showed where the cut to remove the centre should go. Using the point of a skew chisel the central part was removed. The edge of the hole was cleaned up. The rim was now shaped by taking gentle cuts from the inside to the outer part to give a dished appearance. Care should be taken as on some parts you will be turning air due to the piece being off-centre.

An interesting evening, thank you Tom.