

Tony Walton - Australian Outback Imports - April 21st 2004

Reviewed by Geoffrey Vicars (photos Gregory Moreton)

Tony demonstrates with an Aussie burl and runs us through the working properties of these woods. For more details check out their web site at www.ozoutbackimports.com

Tony chose a burl (Brown Malle) from the selection that he had brought from Simon Hope for whom he was standing in as demonstrator.

He then proceeded as under: -



1. The majority of the bark was removed.

2. The centre of balance was established by placing the burl flat on the lathe bed and edging it off until it was about to topple. At that point a line was drawn on the underside of the burl along the straight edge of the lathe bed over which the burl was about to topple. The process was repeated several times (each time with the burl in a slightly different position). The intersection of the lines was taken as the centre of balance.

3. A screw chuck was then used and with the lathe running at around 600 revs (for safety although at home Tony said he would be using nearer 1200 revs) a chucking grip was created for the base and the outside of the bowl was shaped, using a swept back gouge. Particular care was taken when cutting near the natural edge.

4. Once the outside shape was established a beading was cut at the meeting of the curves. For this decoration the edge of a skew chisel was used in a scraping mode!



5. The thickness of the flange of the bowl was checked and reduced from the top side with the swept back gouge, illustrating at least one of the benefits of being ambidextrous.

6. At this stage, normally, the beauty of the natural edge would be brought out with the use of a wire brush. The lack of such an implement to hand prevented this occurring.

7. The outside was then sanded with grits up to 600 (usually 1200). Particular care was demonstrated

in sanding the underside of the edge with double folded sandpaper, allowing the job to be completed whilst retaining a full compliment of digits. The sanding was finished by hand.

8. An air line would normally have been used to extract any dust from the burr but Tony demonstrated that reversed sandpaper worked fairly well.

9. The base was then oiled (Chestnut finishing oil) and friction dried. A high gloss finish could be obtained with ¾ applications of oil, the final coat being applied as if French polishing.

10. The burr was then re-chucked and the edge was finished to the required thickness.

11. The bowl was roughly shaped using the swept back gouge and a beading was made at the join of the flange and bowl (as in 4).

12. The bowl shaping was completed.

13. Sanding and oiling was then undertaken (as in 7&9)

Tony indicated that he would normally then turn off the base and regard the item as finished. He also said that such an item would usually take no more than an hour and a half to complete and would sell at not less than £60

In summary a very interesting evening was had and several practical tips were picked up.

