

## Session 4

### Faceplate or Side Grain Turning



#### Introduction:

This session moves into faceplate work or side grain turning. I like to start the session by repeating the practice session on the Facing cut, Convex Cut, Concave Cut exercise, but this time we will be using a bowl gouge. Part of the reasoning behind repeating this exercise is to give the students the opportunity to do some practice cuts on scrap wood before working on their projects. It is also a way to subtly show them that spindle work and faceplate work are based on some of the same principles and that a bowl gouge is used in much the same way as a spindle gouge. We still roll the flute through the cut to maintain a supported cutting edge. We still rotate the handle through the cut. Body position and body movement are still important. It also doesn't hurt to practice doing the ogee cuts that are so much a part of good faceplate work and can make the difference between a well turned platter or bowl and an ordinary one. This is the session that most would be turners have been waiting for, as most folks are attracted to the bowl side of turning. After the short 15 minute to 30 minute practice exercise, the class will move on to turning a platter or shallow bowl from dry wood. Students will get the feel for shaping and dishing out a platter. I prefer to use a screw mounted in the chuck to hold the platter on the lathe, while I turn a foot for mounting in the jaws of the

chuck. It is easy to size the foot to the jaws as they are in easy view. I have found that using the chuck to expand into the foot of the platter is a very efficient way to mount my platters as I can completely finish the bottom before mounting it in the chuck. One other benefit of using an expansion grip, is that I can almost always remount the piece if I need to touch it up a bit. Using the chuck to expand into the foot teaches yet one more technique. This would be a good time to show the many benefits of the point tool for doing detail work and various other decorative techniques in faceplate turning.

### **Tools & Materials:**

#### **FACE SHEILD**

3" x 3" x 4 1/2" Block of poplar, green or dry (for waste block exercise)  
2" x 9" x 9" plus or minus (depending on size of lathes), preferably dry  
3/8" Bowl Gouge with Side Grind  
3/8" Bowl Gouge with Traditional Grind (optional)  
3/4" Round Nose Scraper  
Parting Tool  
Point Tool

### **Demonstration:**

1. Quickly repeat the face cut, convex cut, concave cut exercise with a bowl gouge.
2. Once the students have had time to do the practice exercise it is time to demonstrate the turning of a platter or shallow bowl.

### **Project:**

**Turning and Detailing a Platter:** please refer to the handout.

*Note: In this exercise the open stance or holding of the tool away from the body is introduced. Two methods for hollowing the inside of the platter should be presented.*

*A. The power method for fast removal of wood. Keeping the tool handle in the horizontal position and hogging out wood using a rowing action while moving the tool handle towards you and feeding the tool from the outside down to the inside of the platter (the Mike Mahoney method)*

*B. Or the more subtle controlled removal of wood starting by riding or gliding along the bevel in the horizontal position and rolling through the cut by dropping the handle and rotating the flute as in the Batty method. This method enables you to practice the final cut throughout the hollowing process. As you cut from the outside (top) of the bowl or platter to the bottom of the platter, the cut will proceed in an arch across the inside of the platter as the flute rotates to keep a clean cut and to prevent catching on an unsupported edge. This cut is similar to cutting a cove in spindle work. One of the benefits of using this method is that you get to practice your final cut over and over again until you have hollowed the platter to its final thickness. The bevel angle on your gouge can be changed to enable it to match the angle needed to turn the bottom of the platter or bowl. Bowl gouge bevels vary from 40*

*degrees to approximately 65 degrees according to the depth and style of the platter or bowl that you are turning.*

1. Demonstrate how to take a square blank and find its center and using a compass draw a circle for cutting out on a band saw. Then drill a hole for mounting in a screw chuck. For shallow bowls or platters I sometimes use a spacer in the chuck to minimize the depth of the hole. Once the blank has been cut into a circle on the band saw go ahead and mount it on the lathe.

*\* This would be a good time to discuss Band Saw safety procedures\**

Rough shape the piece and establish the foot. I prefer an expansion type foot. Finish turning the backside. Stop at this point and let the students mount and turn a foot on their blanks. It is a good idea to point out to the students that the bevel is pointed in the direction of the cut and is used as a guide and that it is gently sliding across the surface of the work in the direction of the cut.

2. When the majority of the students are ready, discuss sanding techniques then unscrew the blank from the screw chuck and remount in the chuck jaws by expanding into the foot.

3. Face off the blank and demonstrate how to hollow out the inner bowl or platter shape. Once again the bevel points in the direction of the cut and is sliding along the surface using the bevel as a guide. Remember there is bevel contact but there is no pressure on the bevel as it glides along the surface of the wood. If they are getting a lot of vibration then they may be putting too much pressure onto the bevel or they may be getting off the bevel and may need to bring the handle back towards them, in order to use the bevel as a guide to support the cutting edge. Remember to remind the students to establish the outer rim and completely finish turning it before they remove too much wood from the inside as the platter will tend to go out of round as it is hollowed. I sometimes use a scraper to round over the outside rim to avoid the nasty catch that is possible if the flute of the gouge is not in just the right position when rounding over the rim. Also remind them to check on the thickness so as not to go through the bottom of the piece.

4. Finish turning the inside. Once again, discuss sanding and finishing techniques. Check with the students to see if they have any questions or ideas that they would like to share with the class.

### **Project:**

#### **Turning a Platter or Shallow Bowl Using Dry Wood**

Refer to the following project handouts in project section of lab manual:

*“Tool Techniques for Bowl Turning or Bowl Turning Fundamentals”*, or provide your own handout.

*“Turning Platters & Shallow Bowls”*

## **Suggestions For Further Study**

### **Books:**

**The Art Of Turned Bowls**, by Richard Raffan

**Turning Greenwood**, by Micheal O'Donnell

**Carving On Turning**, by Chris Pye

### **Videos/DVDs:**

**Decorative Utility Bowls**, by Trent Bosch

**Bowl Basics**, with Mike Mahoney

**Mastering Woodturning: Bowl Turning Techniques**, Glen Lucas

**Turning Bowls-DVD** with Richard Raffan

**Turning For Food-DVD**, with Nick Cook

**Bowl Turning-DVD**, with John Jordan