



Turnaround

February 2005

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Newsletter of the Association of Woodturners of South Africa

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Have you Registered for Congress yet?

If not, then please send your form to Eddie Marchio ASAP.

From the Editor

Herewith the article by Peter Nicole on Gilding as promised. Also included is more info on the 2005 Congress – the provisional program, our main speaker, and a map to the venue.

Dennis Laidler is asking for local turners to use the Yahoo SA Woodturning group. He has made a couple of posts recently to try to get the ball rolling. Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SAwoodturning/> and sign on.

For those living in Gauteng, **Butch Smuts** is having an **exhibition** at the Everard Read Gallery (6 Jellicoe Avenue, Rosebank, Jo'burg) on Sunday 6th March (15h00 to 17h00), and Monday 7th to Wednesday 9th March (09h00 to 18h00). The glossy brochure is most impressive. Butch, as one of our leading turners, will welcome your support.

Trevor Pope

From the Chair

Well once again the congress is upon us. Amazing how time flies even faster than wet Jacaranda shavings!!

Arrangements for the congress are at last starting to come together nicely, with no doubt a lot of last minute scrambling ahead.

The program promises to be quite interesting, and we attach a sampling of this to peak your interest. We still have a few open slots, so if

there is something you would desperately like to see, give me a shout, and we'll see what we can do.

We have tried to create a decent mix of beginners, intermediate and advanced topics, with a couple of panel discussions thrown in, so that we can cater for a wide range of tastes.

As has become the norm, we will have suppliers active at the conference, and this year promises to be a bumper crop. So far, we have secured Hardware Centre (also the main sponsor), Country Woods (a generous second), Lionel Soekoe (him of many jigs) and Strand Hardware (with some chisels no doubt). Hardware Centre will also host many of their suppliers like Triton, Festo, etc, so much to be seen.

Bookings are also starting to come in thick and fast, but I would like to still urge you to register as soon as possible. We are starting to advertise widely in Gauteng, and it looks like we may just end up with a lot more new members this year.

NOW FOR A MAJOR DRAWCARD!! With the very generous donation from Hardware Centre, we will have a brand new Nova 3000 lathe up for raffle. So for those still drooling – make sure you are there!

That's it for now; hope to see you in March.

Chris O'Connell

The 2005 AWSA Committee

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2005 National Congress

The 2005 programme at the moment includes the following:

Multiple Centre & Other Large Bowls	Butch Smuts
Pyrography	Alan Ferguson
Starting from Scratch	Trevor Pope
Small Vessel in David Elsworth Style	Dennis Laidler
Deep Hollowing	Wally Rossini
Small Hole Hollow Vessels	John Speedy
Chainsaw / Preparing your Wood	At Smit
Cut-out and Inlay Bowls	Butch Smuts
Pepper Mill / Production Turning	Peter Middleton
Segmented Turning	Bert Parker
Life and Times of a Production Turner	Schalk van Niekerk
Metal Inlay and Texturing	Mike Kaplan
Photographing your Works	Mike Van Niekerk
Bandsaw - Setting Up	At Smit

In addition to these, there will obviously be the plenary sessions with Rolly Munro, as well as panel discussions on Tool making as well as Marketing your Work.



Here is some biographical info on Rolly Munro from his web site, which can be found at <http://www.rollymunro.co.nz/index.html>

1978 - Graduated from Otago Art School.
1986 - Graduated from Teachers' College.
1990 - Artist in Residence and tutor of sculpture Otago Art School. Guest sculptor, Wanganui Wood Symposium.
1994 - Demonstrating woodturning techniques and design, UK. Adjudicator, woodturning show, Mole. Challenge V Exhibition, Philadelphia.
1997 - Demonstrations in England, USA and Belgium.
1998 - Demonstrations and exhibitions USA, demonstrations in England and Germany.

2000 - ITE resident, Woodturning Center, Philadelphia, demonstrations in USA, demonstrations in Western Australia.

Plus a wide variety of awards, commissions and exhibitions.

Selected worldwide collections:

Robert Bohlen, Michigan USA ◇ Irving Lipton, Van Nys, California, USA

Matthew and Elizabeth Oram, Hong Kong ◇ Kawerau District Council, NZ

Lee A Baumgarten, Winnetka, IL, USA ◇ Nelson Mandela, South. Africa

Myrna Seale, Tulsa, OK, USA ◇ Hans Schweissing, Lichtenstein, Germany

Okamoto, Kumamoto, Japan ◇ South Waikato District Council,

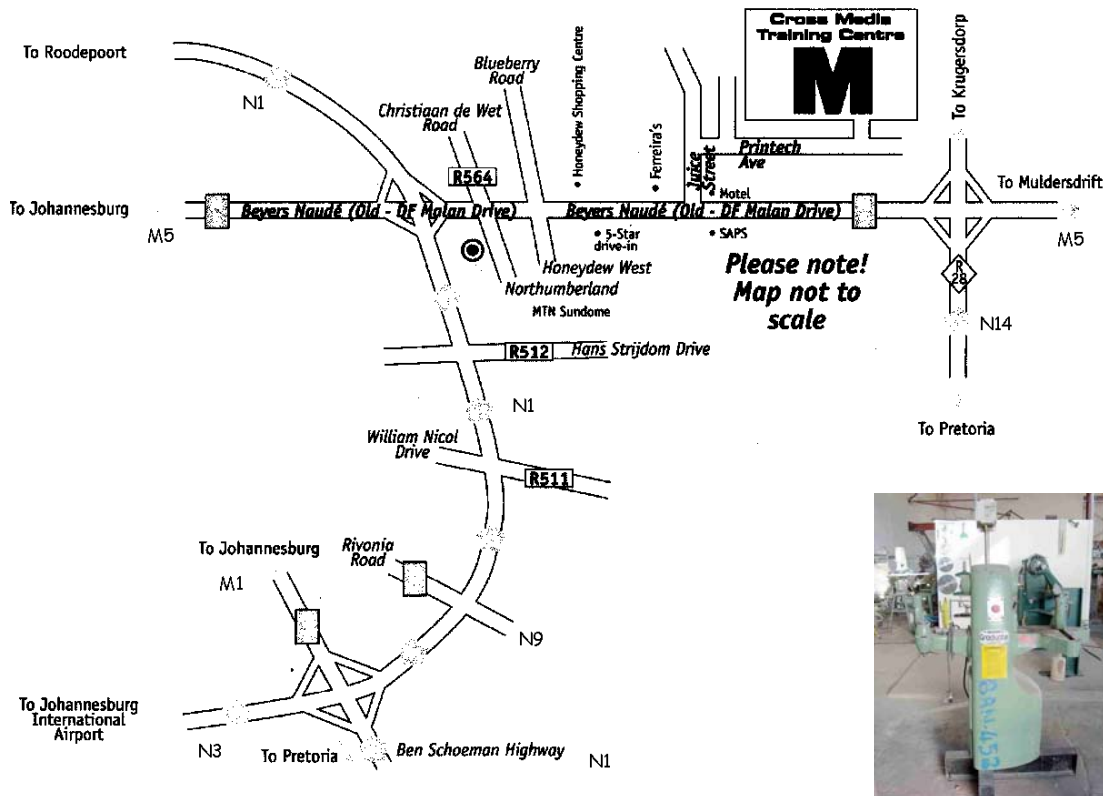
NZ Ministry of Forestry, ◇ NZ Carter Holt Harvey,

NZ Detroit Institute of Fine Arts, USA ◇ Fleur Bresler ◇ Robyn Horn

Also represented by Del Mano Gallery, Los Angeles, USA (check out their website:

<http://www.delmano.com>)

Here is a map to the Printer's College. It is now called the Cross Media Training Centre in recognition of the fact that they are keeping up with technology. The map doesn't show the relative distances, but the venue is easy to find, so there is no cause for worry. The N1 is also called the concrete highway.



Schalk still has his Union Graduate for sale; so he asked me include a picture. In the background, you can see the VB36 that he bought to replace it. If you are travelling to the congress, it may be an opportunity to go and look at it. Schalk's contact details are in the committee list above.

A GOLDEN TURN

Peter Nicolle - September 2004

History

Gold leaf has been used for centuries and its manufacture changed little until the 1920's, when a machine was constructed to replace the hand-wielded hammer.

Gold was cast and passed through rollers to form a paper-thin ribbon. This was cut into 1" squares and 150 of these were interleaved between pieces of goldbeaters skin (vellum made from calves' skin or ox-gut). This is known as a 'cutch'

The vellum leaves were 75-100mm (3-4") square, and the gold was beaten until it was the same size as the vellum. The pieces of gold were then cut into four and interlaid between vellum 125mm (5") square to make a cutch of 600 leaves. This process was repeated another two times.

Today a larger gold ingot is cast than in the 18th century. It is rolled into a continuous ribbon 40m long x 50mm wide and cut into 5cm squares. It is now beaten mechanically four times between plastic instead of skins.

The skins are still rubbed with plaster of paris, the leaves are cut into 83mm (3 $\frac{1}{4}$ ") squares on a leather cushion using a cane-bladed knife. They are then placed on rouged paper using boxwood tweezers. Each book contains 25 leaves.

Types of gold leaf

The purity of gold is expressed in "carat". This is the number of parts of pure gold in a metal made up of 24 parts. The other metals are added to gold to increase its hardness.

- 'Fine' gold contains 24 parts gold - 24 carat.
- 'Regular' gold is 22 ct.

Coloured golds assay between 12 and 22ct. e.g. reddish shades are made by adding copper; white gold is made by adding silver.

Regular and 23 $\frac{1}{4}$ ct gold are the grades used most often by professional gilders.

Apart from differences in weight (thickness) and colour, gold leaf is supplied in two forms: 'loose' and 'transfer' leaf.

Loose gold is in a book between rouged sheets and are very delicate, one can even see light through them. They can slide out or become creased quite easily.

Transfer leaf is stuck to sheets of wax tissue paper, so is only suitable for oil gilding. It is also used out of doors where a breeze may blow loose leaf away.

It is easier to handle but will be slightly less shiny than loose leaf.

Other Metal Leaves

Silver is beaten out into slightly larger leaves than gold - 95mm (3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ") and is also sold in books of 25.

Once laid it must be varnished to prevent tarnishing.

Imitation gold leaf, aluminum, copper and variegated metal leaf can be obtained - these are obviously cheaper. They also need to be varnished to prevent tarnishing.

Platinum and Palladium are available and are more expensive than gold leaf.

Variegated leaf has a 'watermark' appearance; it is available in red, green or blue and is an alloy of 80% zinc and 20% copper.

Schlag leaf or Dutch metal is a thick leaf made of an alloy of copper and zinc. It is available in copper-red and yellow shades. It also tarnishes.

These leaves can be patinated using various chemicals and weak acids.

Gold and other metal powders can also be used for different effects, usually combined with a varnish or resin. They can be very effective for filling cracks or defects in wood.

Gilding Methods

1. Mordant (Etching or fixing) Gilding, or Oil Gilding.
2. Water gilding.

Oil Gilding is a simple and effective method and easy to pick up. The resultant gilding is not as highly polished and not suitable for burnishing.

Water gilding is a more complicated form, which requires patience, and timing is critical. Only loose leaf is suitable and it can be burnished to a high gloss using various shapes of agate burnishers. I will not discuss this method as I have no experience with it, and it is too time consuming for the average turner like myself who is champing after the finished product.

Method

1. Turning

The turned item must be finished completely and sanded to a fine finish. The area to be gilded must be perfectly smooth and flawless. If there are scratch marks or flaws these will show up even more through the leaf.

Leave a spigot or dovetail so that the piece can be remounted. Remember to make a register mark so remounting is accurate.

A bead of 1.5 to 2.5 mm at the edge of the area to be gilded is advisable as it makes a definite ridge to gild up to, and gives a nice framed effect to the gold leaf.

2. Preparation of the wood surface

Cellulose sanding sealer or shellac can be applied to seal the porous wood surface if a clear background is wanted.

Acrylic or casein-based paint (e.g. 'Plaka' paint) can be used after a coat of sanding sealer.

Sanding sealer and casein paint are cut back with 0000 steel wool.

Applying these layers with the lathe revolving at a slow speed gives a smoother surface.

Red ochre or yellow ochre casein colour are the traditional colours and complement the gold well if cracks appear in the gilding, or if you wish to distress through the gilding with wire wool.

Black casein colour gives a nice background to silver leaf, especially leaving small irregular gaps between the pieces of leaf.

3. Applying gold size

Gold size (or glue for gilding) is either an acrylic-based water-soluble product or an oil-based size.

Acrylic size is quick and easy to use. It becomes tacky after 10 to 20 minutes and remains open for 1-2 days, giving plenty of time to lay the leaf. The size must be left until it becomes tacky like sellotape but not wet. Test a bit on a neighboring area so as not to get fingerprints on the area to be gilded. The acrylic size does not level, so may show the brush strokes. You can use a sable or very fine-haired brush to apply size. The size of the brush depends on the area to be covered. Using the tool rest to steady your hand, apply the size, as accurately and smoothly as possible as any brush marks will be visible. I find applying it with a small piece of sponge held in forceps while the item is rotating slowly gives a smoother finish.

The leaf will stick wherever you have glue. If any overlap occurs onto your bead this can easily be sanded off later.

Oil-based size is stronger and dries to a hard flat finish.

Choices of different drying rates are available eg 1-2 hour, 3-hour, 12-hour, and 24-hour.

4. Applying the leaf

Be warned that once the leaf has touched a glued surface it has to stay there!

To apply leaf to a hollow, start with a piece of leaf in the middle and work your way outwards.

Tearing the leaf rather than cutting a straight edge gives a more pleasing effect. Overlap the pieces by 2-3mm.

Loose leaf is very fragile. Use a pair of tweezers to hold it and a soft squirrel brush to tamp down the pieces.

If using transfer leaf, place with gold side facing down and apply gentle pressure to the backing paper. The gold will come away from the backing quite easily.

Brush away the overlapping leaf in the line of the overlap with a soft squirrel brush. Save the flakes (called 'skewings') as they can be used on another project.

If the leaf splits or there are any hairline cracks, patch them by applying more size and leaf over the top.

Flatten the leaf gently with a soft cloth or squirrel mop brush, bearing in mind that the surface will scratch easily.

Let it dry for 24 hours.

5. Finishing

Sand off any gold leaf overlapped onto unwanted places using 600-grit sandpaper with the lathe running.

Imitation gold leaf will tarnish with time, so a coat of varnish will be required. I have tried various varnishes such as " Heritage - Seal-skin ", " Dala Deco-Varnish ", but they do dull the sheen considerably.

Clear Shellac is slightly better.

" Vernis a Bronzer " made by Sennelier (obtainable from L.Cornelissen) seems to work best, but still needs two coats. The more coats one uses, the more one loses the luster.

Genuine gold leaf does not require any varnish, as it does not tarnish.

Reference

1. Practical gilding - Peter and Ann Mactaggart
2. " An Old Leaf " - Jimmy Clewes - Woodturning April 2001
3. L. Cornelissen and Son Ltd. - Gilding

Suppliers

1. L. Cornelissen and Son, Ltd. (Worldwide mail order service.)
105 Great Russell Str., London. WC1B 3RY U.K.
Phone : 0944-20-7636 1045
Fax : 0944-20-7636 3655
Email : info@cornelissen.com
Website: www.cornelissen.com
2. The Deckle Edge
88 Upper Roodebloem Rd, Woodstock, Cape
Phone : 021-4486800
Website : www.deckleedge.co.za
3. Le Papier du Port
39a Gardens Centre, Mill Str., Gardens, Cape.
Phone : 021-4624796

Editor's note: In Gauteng, Herbert Evans may also keep gilding supplies.