

The Challenge of the Three Sided Bowl

It has a lot going for it in that it challenges turning skills, in particular the holy grail of even wall thickness and because of a possible irregular blank, turning “fresh air”. It challenges designing skills of pencil and paper or making a mock up. There is a lot of opportunity for a standard hollowed bowl design or for a more sculptural piece. It could be extended further by lidding the bowl. That might involve knobs and finials. Maybe it is me but it is difficult to picture an outcome in the mind’s eye. It might, depending on the chosen design for the bowl, present a challenge of sourcing a blank. Some methods are quite “wasteful” of timber and a large blank might only result in a small piece of work.



My challenge is to find elements which will support a less capable/confident woodturner and yet interest a more capable/confident woodturner. As it is beyond my direct control I cannot accept any responsibility for any outcome after following advice I offer !

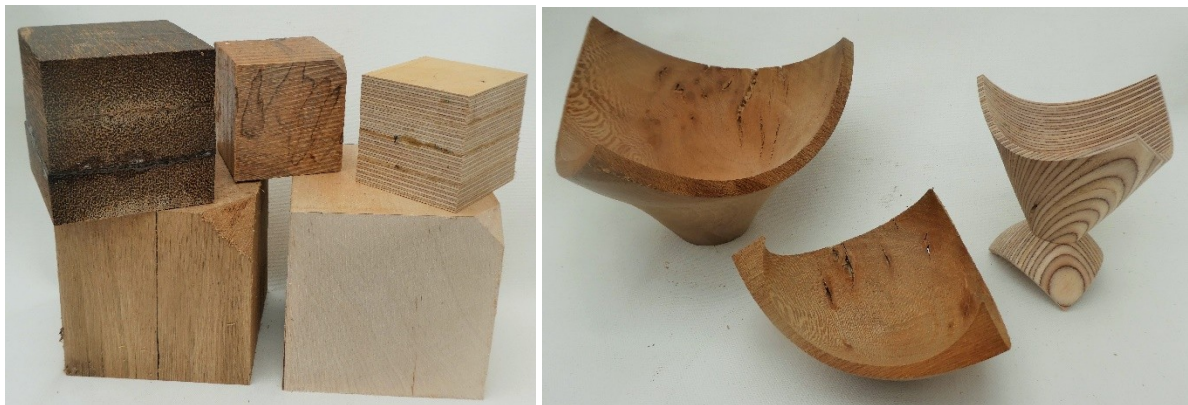
At its most simple, a circular bowl could be hollowed from a “regular” bowl blank and then three segments could be cut away from the outside to leave a three sided bowl. There are lots of opportunities within this method for a striking design maybe with “wings” which curve down to the table top.





It might be possible to turn a bowl from a triangular blank which will leave a three sided bowl automatically. Sharp tools, correct presentation and a fast lathe speed are ideal to prevent the trailing edge breaking away. Watch out for short grain which might crumble.

The traditional three sided bowl is turned from a cube of material, mounted between centres initially. A lot of material might be wasted though there are opportunities to core the piece. Cubes of timber might not be easy to come by but might be built up possibly using contrasting timbers and veneers of different thicknesses. If you do this remember that glued together pieces always have a potential for coming apart during turning. I prepare these blanks by cutting off opposite corners with the bandsaw set to 36°. This has not been properly worked out but done first by eye ! Turn between centres to produce a chucking spigot and possibly core the hollowed part to maximise the use of timber.



All of the demonstration pieces are unfinished, many are from scrap material used to try out ideas. If one chooses to factor in further embellishments such as colour, texturing, pyrography, cast resin or added items/objet trouvé, the possibilities are hindered only by your imagination !

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