

## **Graeme Mackay - For the Tree**

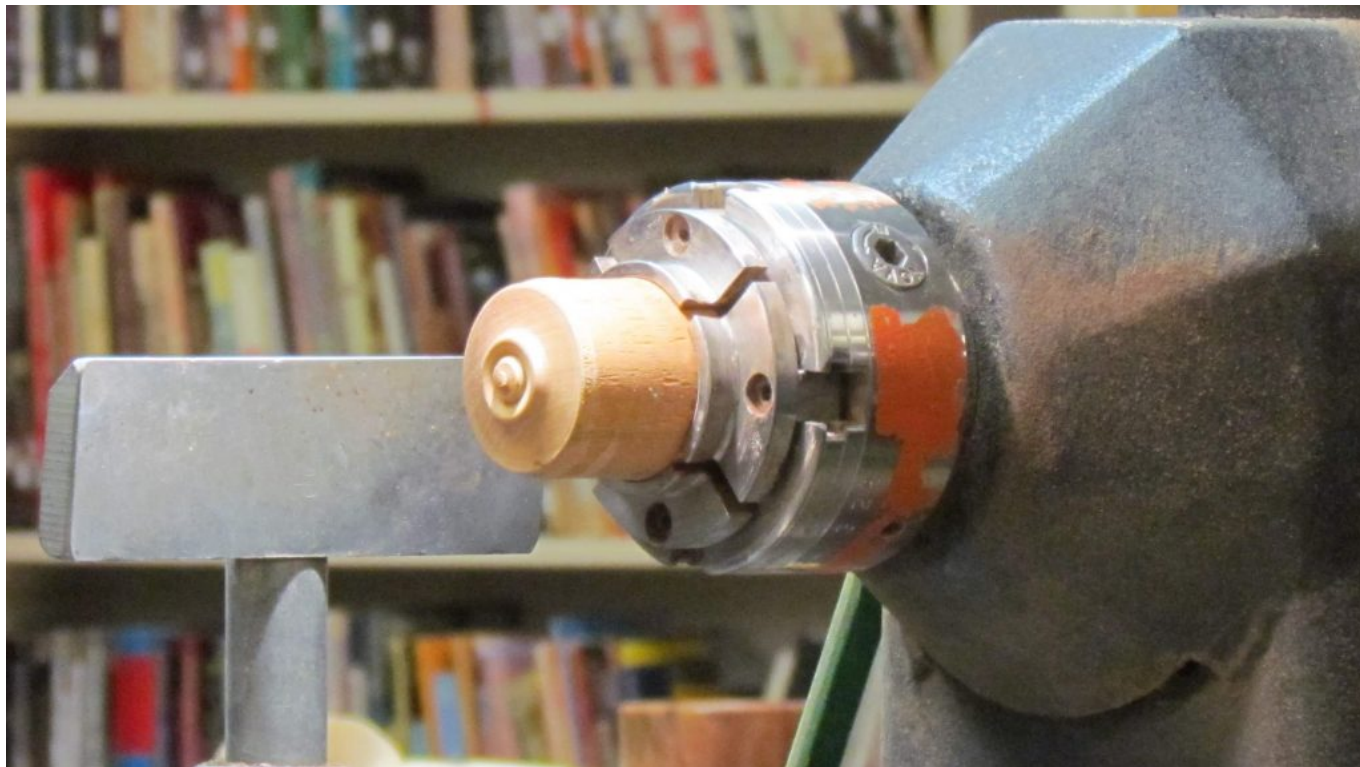
by Webmaster - Monday, October 21, 2019

<https://sawg.org.nz/graeme-mackay-for-the-tree/>



As blustery gales threatened to rip the plastic cladding off the roof, Graeme Mackay eased feather-like shavings off a tiny wooden bell.

The theme was Gifts and Christmas, and Graeme demonstrated that if it's possible to mount on the lathe, it's possible to make something pretty out of it. This was great inspiration for our term project of making small gifts for those in hospital over Christmas.



Graeme started with a small cylindrical blank gripped between 50mm jaws, no tail stock, and quickly rounded off. The resulting round could have been made into a small sphere, a wooden egg, a mini bowl, a tiny finial, or a spinning top, but he decided the first one would be a Christmas Tree Bauble.

Favoured tools included 10mm bowl gouge, mini skew, 'deceased' woodcut chisel reground to a point, modified spindle gouge chisel, mini parting tool, and Dame Edna Everage glasses.

While technically adept, Graeme's approach to this small turning was more playful and flexible than outcome driven. Consideration was given to how it would hang in the tree. His advise was to "keep it simple" and "enjoy the process". Mini turning is good practice for skew, texturing and decorative techniques.



A jacobs chuck with a brad point bit was used in the tail stock to make a hole in the bauble for a bamboo skewer. This bamboo stick could be hung down as a decorative feature, or pierced and hung up to the tree. Still spinning on the lathe, the bauble was quickly coloured with a felt pen, 'framed' with lines made with a skew, and just 'touched up' with 240 or 300 grit sandpaper.

The trinket was parted off the lathe with Graeme's right hand surrounding the piece to catch it as it came off. Graeme showed us that pyrography could make effective embellishments with scorching patterns. He used a mini 'stylo' dremel with dentist drill bits to etch decorations into the surface. Acrylic, water colour or other paint could also be used to decorate.





Having turned a bauble, then a mini bell, Graeme finished by showing us that even the spigot left in the lathe after part off can be utilised. He used the wood remaining within the jaws to make a tiny stage to place the wooden bell on.