

Acorns for Gateposts

By Mick McCabe



Two large blanks of pine were glued up, Jim Towers kindly planed them up to be glued for me. The project is to make two large acorns for the top of gateposts with the bottom cup section to have the criss cross pattern carved into them.



The blanks are turned into cylinders with large spigot for a secure grip.



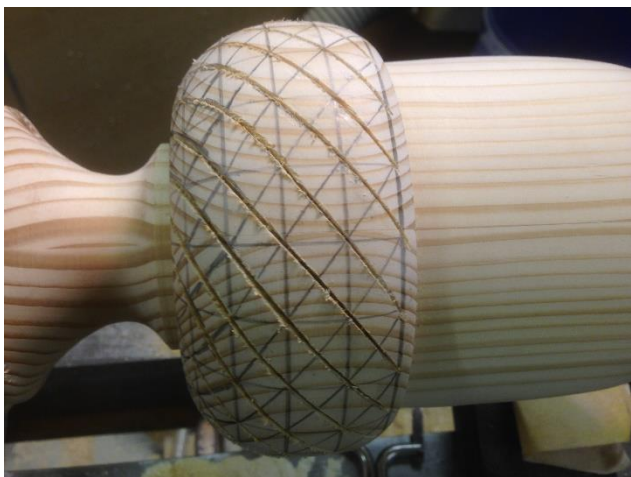
Acorn shape turned until I am happy with it, the first one is the easiest to do and the second one more tricky to get to match up, they will be about ten feet apart when installed so nothing too critical anyway.



Can you spot the mistake ? I had a catch and the bottom rim above the base ended up too small, I had to make a new section for under the cup and glue it on. The second acorn was then turned to match the first again.



The bottom acorn is the one with the repaired and re turned base. They have both been marked out for the cup texture pattern. The spigot that holds it in the chuck will be what attaches them to the gate posts, they are held between this and an inverted cone centre on the 'nipple' end. I know exactly what Stan will be thinking looking at the top acorn, calm down Stan lol.



Starting to do the pattern, I tried a sharp V carving tool and then other carving tools but found the pine too soft and the grain direction changing to leave the wood torn out. So decided to do them the same way as a Stuart Mortimer spiral. First a saw with a hacksaw so I cut in just deep enough to reach the back of the blade so it acts as a depth gauge.



After doing all the saw cuts in one direction I found a triangle file worked best to follow in each saw cut and create a shallow vee in each groove. Tedious work! I repeated the process going the other way around doing the opposite marks , first with the saw , then first pass of the triangle file. Being right-handed one way flowed but the other didn't and using left hand didn't work either.



Starting to get the effect showing now, looking ok. I found that each Vee needed three passes with the file deepening them each pass, then repeating trying to keep things even by eye as they got deeper. I think it was 24 grooves each direction on the layout so 48 per acorn, two acorns so 96 grooves in total , then one saw cut and three passes around with the file

making them deeper each pass, so 384 times around them! hard to believe but it certainly felt like it when I was doing them making a mental note to never do them again.



The finished pattern, Things were tricky at each end of the vee's as they has to taper off and not spoil the base or nut part of the acorn. You can imagine how sick I was by the time I had finished acorn 1 , then knew I had to start the groove process again for the second acorn. It turned out exactly like I had pictured in my mind anyway and I liked the look of it.



Here are the finished pair, slight differences in the two when they are right next to each other like this but nothing that could be noticed once they are mounted on opposing gateposts. The spigots are sticking down through between the lathe bed and you can see the corresponding hole in the post top plate one the bed the spigots were going to be glued and screwed into these holes. The only reason I said I would do the job is they were for an old guy in his 80's and his garden in South Shields was his pride and joy, he had won best garden award and thought that his bland gateposts were letting the garden down. So they have gone to a good home and will be stained every six months. I was more than glad to see the back of them but glad he loved them.