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Chipping Along the Fjords

by Bob Neill

The Woodturning Cruise is a truly extraordinary experience as we travel along the Western Coast of Norway – the land of the Midnight Sun and the Northern Lights.

Aboard the MS GANN nearly 200 passengers, including over 20 demonstrators, from 15 different countries, enjoyed a close relationship in a journey which started on 11th August 2008 in Stavanger.



MS GANN in Stavanger before the cruise

The journey took us up into the Arctic Circle, calling in at a different port every day, before returning almost 2 weeks later.

The ship is a floating shop, exhibition and workshop – providing master classes in different woodworking skills ranging from relief carving, pole-lathe turning, routing, chip carving, pyrography, scroll saw work, rosemaling painting*, power carving and, of course, woodturning.

* Rosemaling (Norwegian rose painting) is a form of decorative flower painting that developed in rural areas of Norway during the late 18th century. The designs use C and S strokes and feather scroll and flowing lines, and are traditionally used to embellish home furnishings and accessories.



The Workshop

We were very fortunate in having Wayne Barton (USA) with his chip carving and Jostein Tvedt (Norway) with his relief carving, on board. Demonstrating the Merlin power carver was Arthur Aveling (USA), Kjell Musland (Norway) and Rune Hjelen (Norway) and working in conjunction with the Guinevere sanding and polishing system was Peter Bowman (Sweden).

Classes were available for the passengers in chip carving, relief carving and rosemaling painting. Sessions lasted about 3 hours each morning with many of the participants being absolute beginners in these crafts.

Some had a go in the pyrography workshop using the Razertip machine, which is made in Canada and proving to be very popular in North America. It is very similar to the Pintail machine, using ready-made nibs which are ideal for feathering, burning scales outlines, and for shading.

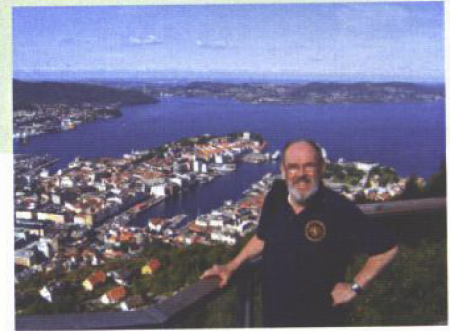


Cam Merkle from Razertip demonstrating his pyrography machine by drawing a feather

While at sea, the cruise passengers can watch the master classes or have individual tuition from the demonstrators, sometimes well into the night! In port, the local enthusiasts are welcomed on board to see the activities and displays, and purchase the many tools and machinery on sale.

A new feature on this cruise was pole lathe turning, with Gavin Phillips and Clare Bannister creating a lot of interest as they displayed this old skill on the quayside every day.

At each port, passengers had the opportunity to visit the local town or join an organised trip to places of interest.



The author looking down at Bergen from Mount Floyen, and below an example of his work incorporating Pyrography and colour



The Cruise was organised by Odd Erik Thjomoe, who is the Managing Director of the Woodturning Centre in Stavanger.

For details of the next cruise – scheduled for August 2011 – visit the website - www.woodturningcruise.com – email post@verktoyas.no or telephone +47 51 88 68 00.

Editor's Note:-

Bob Neill is based in Derbyshire and demonstrates and teaches pyrography throughout the UK and further abroad. He enjoys encouraging people of all ages to try this decorative craft – you may have seen his children's classes at some of the woodworking and craft fairs – and is a staunch supporter and promoter of all forms of woodcraft, and of the BDWCA!

See more information on his website – www.bobneillpyrography.co.uk – email him at bob.neill1@btinternet.com or telephone 01332 792036.



Pyrography Workshop



Norwegian Scenery



Gavin Phillips Pole Lathe demonstration on the Dock, and below the Captain 'has a go'

Pictures from the Cruise



Chip Carving Workshop and below example of work by Wayne Barton



Nick Agar - Work in Progress



Unni Marie Lien demonstrates Rosemaling, and below an example of her work



Alesund, above and Bergen, below



Jostein Tvedt demonstrates Relief Carving, and below an example of his work

