

Extract from the Waveney and District Woodturners' May 2014 Newsletter

Turning in the Sun

(An article from David Ritchie on his experiences in Crete)

Sun, Sea and Siragas, not the original quotation but seems an appropriate opener for the holiday that Margaret and I have just enjoyed on the Island of Crete, nestling between the Aegean and Libyan sea, Crete is inhabited by the most friendly people we have ever met. We stayed in the resort of Rethymnon the home town of Nikos Siragas. The town itself is split into two parts, the standard new town is the same as most other Greek towns but the Old Town is incredible. It is the cleanest place I have ever been, no litter or Tesco bags here but scrubbed narrow streets, painted white and covered in 'Bougainvillea' in multiple colours. It was in such a street that we found the studio of Nikos Siragas, with whom I had booked a three day course to introduce me to the art of incorporating 'carving' with 'turning.' He is ably assisted by his wife Frances, who does most of the admin and directed us to places of interest on the island. The course itself was held in his workshop which takes up the ground floor of his beautiful house, it's surprising I was able to concentrate on anything with the views from the open window looking out over the town and sea with 'Golden Eagles' flying by.

Although Nikos uses a variety of woods, Olive being readily available was our choice. Nikos proved to be passionate about his work and pays great detail to his finish prior to applying wax or oil. Many of his tools he has designed himself, particularly his scraper which produces long shavings when hollowing out, where I would have used a bowl gouge on the inside of a bowl Nikos could hollow it out in half the time and achieve a superb finish.

He had patience to spare, he needed it with me, but nothing was too much trouble, his explanation regarding marking out prior to carving, and his insight into possible problems were clearly born from a vast experience of his trade and dealing with people at various skill levels. Whilst ensuring you completed your target in learning new skills, he recognised that your holiday was top priority, and catered for other interests your partner may choose, with a number of 'bolt on' activities, including walking, photography and painting, my wife completed a 3 day course in oils at the same time I was turning.

For us this was a perfect combination, however we booked the holiday first and then the bolt on courses to fit. Nikos is well known and respected in Crete as he has been turning and carving on this beautiful Island all his life. He has also demonstrated in the USA, Belgium and France. He is equally well known in the UK where he has demonstrated at Alexander Palace and a number of Club demonstrations. We are very fortunate to be able to play host to Nikos who has agreed to do an evening demonstration on Thursday 20th

November 2014. This is an extra event to our club fixtures for this year.

Further information may be had from me or by visiting his web site at:- www.siragas.gr. Or email:- nsiragas@yahoo.com

Other News

As David mentioned in his article Nikos has very kindly agreed to visit our club on Thursday 20th November, an exciting additional meeting to our programme so please keep this date free in your diary.

Happy Turning.