



The Greenwood Chair Project

I designed and made this rocking chair as my final piece for the BBC 2 series *Mastercrafts* aired during the spring of 2010. The programme focused on greenwood working with Guy Mallinson who introduced me to this fantastic craft at his woodland workshop, just two miles up the road from here. The programme was filmed there too, using timber sourced from the woodland at Forde Abbey.

The three trainees, me included, were given the brief of designing and making 'something' from greenwood, to demonstrate the skills we learnt during the training programme. I chose to make a rocking chair, although I didn't finish it in time for the end of the programme, and as you can see I have since added the rockers. In hindsight, setting out to design and make a rocking chair in the eight days we were given was a little ambitious. This resulted in a few long days and one very long night before the final. At sunset on the last day I only had the side frames of the chair assembled! As a result this chair is nowhere near the standard I am striving for, although I am very pleased with it considering the context in which it was made. I learnt a huge amount and thoroughly enjoyed the whole process.

For me the beauty of greenwood working is using the predictable natural shrinkage of green or unseasoned timber to create incredibly strong joins, without the need for glue. I applied this principle to all the seat rails and lower rung joints in this chair. I shaped the components using a drawknife, spoke shave and shave horse, using the pole lathe to turn the tenons on the rungs and rails. For the leg posts and back spindles I followed the grain of the timber to maximise the strength. This has resulted in the individual curves and waves in each of these components. The Ash tree selected for this chair had a lovely S shaped curve towards the top of the main stem, which you can now see in the rockers and arm rests by following the continuous grain lines.

I had a great time working on the *Mastercrafts* project, and this brilliant opportunity has given me a love of creating functional and beautiful greenwood chairs by hand, using recently felled, locally sourced, round hardwood timber.

If you would like to find out more about what I'm doing with my new found passion for greenwood working, then please take a look at my website. You can also find contact details there if you would like to send me your thoughts and feelings about this piece. I would very much appreciate any feedback.

Many thanks

Tom Vaughan

www.thegreenwoodchairproject.co.uk