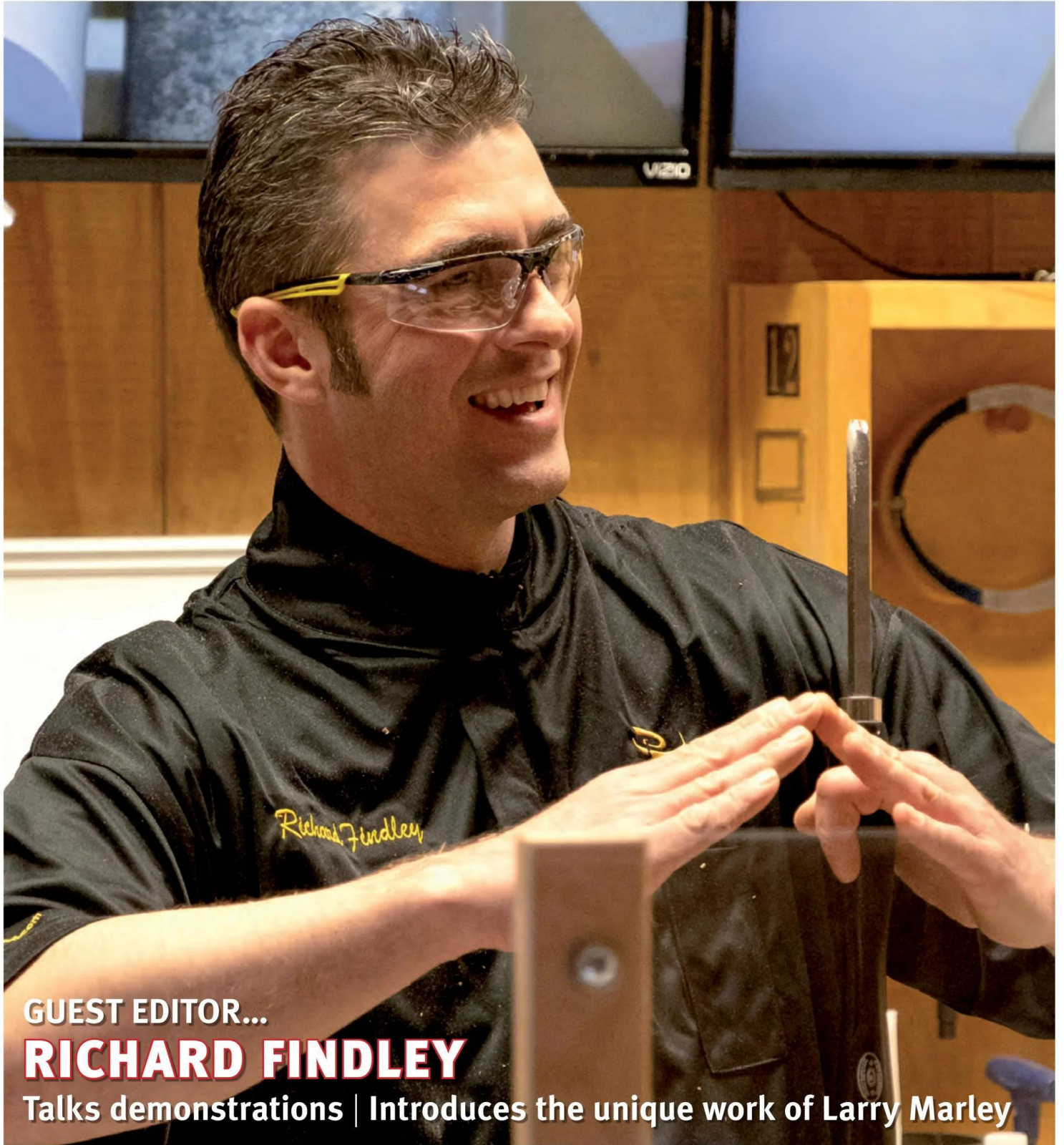


Woodturning

THE WORLD'S LEADING MAGAZINE FOR WOODTURNERS



GUEST EDITOR...

RICHARD FINDLEY

Talks demonstrations | Introduces the unique work of Larry Marley

PROJECTS Art Nouveau jug • Hinged lidded pot
• Gilded dolphin tazza • Tankard • Back scratcher

TECHNICAL Turning from branches • Adhesives

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Encontro Internacional de Torneiros da Madeira XXIII



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Stewart Furini, who demonstrated at Spain's longest running and largest annual woodturning event, The Encontro, reports back on the three-day extravaganza

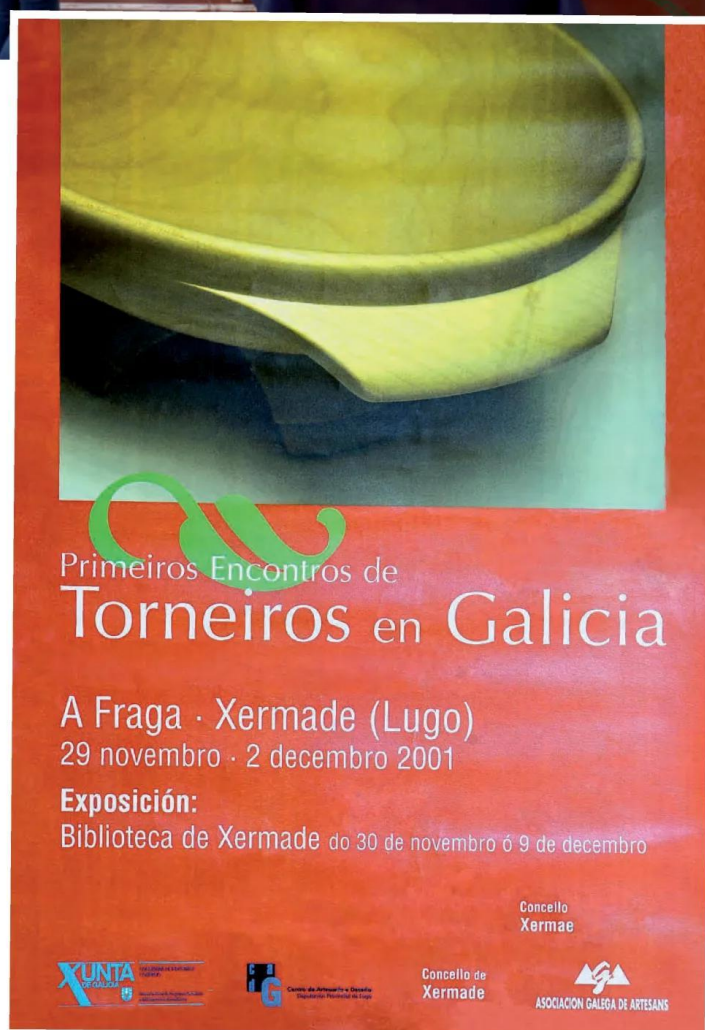
In September 2023 I was fortunate enough to take part in the 23rd Encontro Internacional de Torneiros in Xermade in Galicia, Spain. The event has been running since the start of the century, growing in size and popularity, but I am not sure how well known the Encontro is outside of Spain and Portugal.

We are all probably familiar with the many events, seminars and symposia run under the auspices of the AWGB, the RPT, The Worshipful Company of Turners, and the AAW, where national organisations are able to promote woodturning to a wide audience. In Spain there is no national organisation for woodturners, so events like the Encontro are a great draw to turners across the whole of Spain and Portugal, as well as other European countries and further afield, with a turner from Argentina attending the event for the past couple of years. The Encontro has featured skilled turners from around the world coming to demonstrate at the three-day event, but it is also a place for turners of all levels to exhibit their work, meet and exchange ideas, buy some new equipment and tools, and immerse themselves in the heady atmosphere of like-minded people sharing their passion.

Beginnings

The first Encontro took place in 2001 in the small hamlet of Fraga, near the town of Xermade in Galicia, where the Encontro is now hosted. It was organised by two Spanish turners, Vicente Ledo Pena, nicknamed Tito, and Fernando Verez Tojeiro, with support from Manuel Castro Romero, nicknamed Lolo. The Encontro was designed to bring woodturning back to public awareness. Even though woodturning was a traditional craft, it was in grave danger of falling into obscurity. The organisers of the first Encontro were determined to bring woodturning back to a wider audience, making the knowledge of tools and techniques, machinery and materials known to as many people as possible.

Stewart Furini — Stewart spends his workshop time turning and colouring bowls and platters, boxes and pots. He demonstrates at woodturning clubs and events, and makes YouTube videos. He has been known to leave some wood uncoloured.
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Above: Poster for the first Encontro de Torneiros



ENCONTRODETORNEIROS.ORG

CHRIS DURHAM

Amigos da Madeira As Pontes Asociación

The organisation and running of the Encontro is largely the responsibility of the Amigos da Madeira As Pontes Asociación. I believe this is the only woodturning club outside Great Britain that is associated with the AWGB. Woodturning clubs in Spain are rare but the dedication and commitment to spreading interest and knowledge of woodturning is very evident from the members of this club under their president Alfonso Franco, third from the right in the picture of some of their members. I'm sure they would welcome any links with British clubs.



Members of the Friends of Wood of As Pontes Club

There are some images from the first meeting on the Encontro's website which show the passion and enthusiasm that was there at that first gathering. Since this inaugural meeting, the event has grown from a regional one to an international one that can no longer be contained by Tito's workshop, hence the move into the town of Xermade and a bigger venue. The first event had only a handful of turners present, but over the next five years, numbers and interest grew. Alongside the Encontro at Tito's workshop, a free exhibition of woodturned items in Xermade helped to spread knowledge and appreciation of the craft. By 2006, as well as local turners taking part, turners from across Spain were drawn to the event and there were professional turners from France and Britain appearing as demonstrators, including Colin Simpson, a former editor and contributor to *Woodturning* magazine. In 2008, the whole event moved to Xermade to contain the much larger number of visitors.

The aim of bringing woodturning back into public consciousness has clearly been successful with more people taking up woodturning and more people visiting each year. The Encontro is a free event, being funded by the Provincial Government of Galicia with input from the local area councils. The opening and closing ceremonies show the importance of the event, as well as the gratitude and regard felt towards the organisers and participants. This perhaps makes it rather different to the type of symposium or seminar that many of us are familiar with attending. It brings in a much wider range of people, and is a popular event for families and school children to attend. I think we all know that any way of reaching young people to allow them to find out about woodturning is a good thing.



A Fraga Aldea Artesán

Aldea Artesán de A Fraga

The first Encontro took place in Tito's workshop, part of a collection of buildings called Aldea Artesán de A Fraga, an artisanal village complete with accommodation and restaurant. It is a delightful rural base to stay in during the Encontro. The international demonstrators stay there and accommodation is available for anyone visiting the event. As well as offering accommodation during the Encontro, there are residential courses offered during the year. There is also a wonderful collection of woodturning on display featuring work from many world-renowned turners who have visited A Fraga, including Benoît Averly, Pascal Oudet, Yann Marot, Elisabeth Mezières, Nikos Siragas, Alain Maillard, Jean François Escoulen, Jacques Vesery, Phil Irons, Margaret Garrard and Hans Weissflog. Find out more about A Fraga from the website: <https://casadafraga.com/>



Manuel Castro Romero (AKA Lolo)

Lolo Castro — Manuel Castro Romero, also known as Lolo, is a regular demonstrator at the Encontro. He was brought up learning how to turn from his grandfather and his speciality is in the sole use of the hook tool, known locally as the llerga. He forges his own cutting hooks which are brazed on to his tools, many of which are several generations old.

Ron Wicks — Ron Wicks, a member of West Sussex Woodturners, is a good friend of the Encontro, having been involved with the event for nearly 20 years. This year he was honoured with a presentation from the Mayor of Xermade for his support and championing of the Encontro. Now in his nineties, Ron is something of a celebrity at the event.



Ron Wicks presentation



Above: Examples of work on display

be of the highest quality against other pieces are selected. I like that the event is designed to encourage people to improve their skills; knowing that a piece of your work will be on display for the year is a great incentive to continue to develop your technical and artistic understanding of woodturning.

The third section of the event is the travelling exhibition from the previous year, which is shown at various locations in Spain through the year. The collection is very nicely curated with information about the turnings and turners and well-designed display cases to hold the work. What better way to encourage you to do better work than to see a piece you have made shown in such a professional manner?

The final element of the event is the trade stands. Woodturning suppliers in Spain have played a large part in helping the craft to develop. Certainly in the UK and USA we are spoiled with the number of tool and equipment suppliers. In Spain there are two main suppliers, Torn y Fusta based in Mallorca, and Commercial Pazos from Madrid. The increase in woodturning in Spain owes a debt to Miguel Lopez, the founder of Torn y Fusta, who expanded the availability of woodturning supplies, sponsored the formation of various woodturning clubs and taught woodturning.

There is a closing ceremony at the end of every Encontro with presentations and speeches of thanks. This is followed by a meal and the Galician tradition of the *quemada*, the heating of some very strong alcohol blended with fruit, sugar and coffee to toast the end of the event. Sadly, in 2023 it wasn't possible to have an incantation from a witch, which is also part of the tradition.

The future

Plans are already underway for the next two Encontro de Torneiros events for 2024 (20th-22nd September) and 2025 (19-21 September). You can keep up with information about the Encontro at the website: <https://encontrodetorneiros.org>. The event in 2025 will be the 25th anniversary of the first Encontro. A measure of continued success will not just be the growth of attendees at the Encontro, but an increased appreciation of woodturning reflected in wider sales and exhibitions of woodturning in museums and art galleries. I hope to be able to visit future Encontros – especially the 25th anniversary one. It helps having a son living in Portugal as it's only a seven-hour drive from his home.

I hope that many of you will be able to visit this wonderful event as well. If combined with visits to Lugo, Santiago de Compostela and A Coruña, it makes for a great holiday if you are travelling with non-woodturning companions.



6 The Mayor of Xermade at the closing ceremony 7 Alfonso overseeing Lolo getting started on the celebratory drink at the end of the Encontro



XXIII Encontro Internacional de Torneiros

There are a number of elements to the Encontro. Live demonstrations take place throughout the day, there is an exhibition of work selected from the previous year's Encontro, and a display of work brought by turners to the event. There are also trade stands to cater for the need to buy new tools or equipment. Needless to say, there are many opportunities to discuss woodturning, tools, techniques and the work that has been displayed. Being able to speak Spanish, Gallego or Portuguese is an advantage, but I managed to have many conversations in English during the weekend.

Each year there is a mix of demonstrators from Spain and at least two international turners. This year's demonstrators were Jean Claude Charpignon from France, and Francisco Boyero and Lolo Castro from Spain, with me taking the fourth slot. All the demonstrators have their own booth with audio visual equipment. The audience have a great view of each turner from banked seating in front of the booths. The demonstrators turn for all of the sessions, with a leisurely two-hour, three-course lunch between morning and afternoon sessions. Questions from the audience usually come thick and fast and during the course of each day there is a steady turnover of audience members. There is definitely a warm and enjoyable atmosphere for the whole event, and the ease with which the audience can interact with the demonstrators is a definite advantage – language isn't a barrier as interpreters are provided for the non-Spanish speaking demonstrators.

The middle section of the venue holds several rows of long tables for visitors to exhibit examples of their woodturning. I liked that this was a central feature of the event. It provided not just an opportunity to see the range of work produced, and there were many examples of excellent work, but it was also an easy way to talk to the makers, many of whom were present for the whole event. There was a wonderful array of work on show. It's clear that woodturning in all its forms is appreciated and one aspect I especially liked was that every turner who brought work to show had a piece chosen for the new travelling exhibition. At the Encontro, the visiting demonstrators have to choose a piece from every turner who has submitted work. This has a quite different flavour to those events where only the pieces deemed to



2023 demonstrators; **1** Jean Claude Charpignon

2 Francisco Boyero **3** Lolo Castro **4** Stewart Furini

5 Part of the travelling exhibition from XXII Encontro 2022

Previous Encontro de Torneiros demonstrators

2016: Nikos Siragas, Jason Smith, Lolo Castro, Rafa Saigí,

2017: Margaret Garrad, Jérôme Blanc, Adrián Pena, Lolo Castro

2018: Toni Porto, Lolo Castro, Elisabeth Mezières, Rod Page

2019: Alain Mailland, Bernard Azema, Lolo Castro, Quique Frades

2020: Not in person (Covid – global pandemic disruption)

2021: Lolo Castro, Adrián Pena, Carlos Morales, Fran Ferrer

2022: Paul Hannaby, Patrick Arlot, Georges Baudot, Lolo Castro