



# LETS CUT DOWN THE TREES

SHOLTO MURRAY

## *CONTENTS*

CONTEXT	I
RESEARCH	4
CONCEPT	16
DEVELOPMENT	17
RESOLUTION	27



LEFT: *COPPED SYCAMORE TREES, STANMER PARK*

## CONTEXT

ACROSS THE SUMMER I VISITED THE **ONE TREE PROJECT**, WHERE THE WORK OF TEN **BRITISH** DESIGNERS WAS EXHIBITED. THE WOOD THEY USED WAS HARVESTED FROM AN **ASH** TREE THAT HAD TO BE FELLED DUE TO **DIEBACK**, A DISEASE SLOWLY WIPING OUT THE VAST MAJORITY OF OUR **ASH** TREES.

FOLLOWING ON FROM THIS, I AIMED TO DESIGN ITEMS USING MATERIALS THAT ARE CONSIDERED WASTE OR LOW-GRADE, WHILE ALSO DEVELOPING MY ABILITY TO TURN VESSELS AND CONSTRUCT FURNITURE.

Modern life from wilder land  
A manifesto for nature-first land and resource use



By Sebastian and Brogan Cox  
London, 2019


**MODERN LIFE FROM WILDER LAND**  
BY SEBASTIAN AND BROGAN COX

ACCORDING TO THEIR MANIFESTO, TIMBER SHOULD BE USED MORE WIDELY ACROSS A VARIETY OF INDUSTRIES.

CONSCIOUS WOODLAND MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES, SUCH AS COPPING, WOULD ACT TO INCREASE THE BIODIVERSITY OF OUR WOODLANDS. THIS WOULD ALSO ALLOW US A SUSTAINABLE SOURCE OF TIMBER THAT WOULD RAPIDLY SEQUESTER MORE CARBON THAN OUR CURRENT ANCIENT WOODLAND.



ABOVE: MAP OF SUSSEX, MATERIAL LOCATIONS IN RED



## RESEARCH

THROUGH MY RESEARCH, I DECIDED WHERE I SOURCED THE MATERIAL WOULD BE ONE OF MY MAIN FOCUSES. REACTING TO THE MATERIAL AS IT CHANGED, RATHER THAN FIGHTING TO CREATE SOMETHING 'PERFECT' I WOULD ACCEPT THE IMPERFECTION AND THE BEAUTY IT BRINGS. I WOULD ALSO LOOK INTO TECHNIQUES USED TO 'MEND' ITEMS, CONTINUING TO ADD VALUE AS WELL AS IMPROVE FUNCTION.



LEFT: *COPPICED SYCAMORE TREES, STANMER PARK*

## **STANMER PARK**

THE STANMER ESTATE HAS CREATED A LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN AS PART OF ITS ONGOING CONSERVATION EFFORTS. THEY WILL BE COPPICING SELECT AREAS ON A 25-YEAR CYCLE TO ALLOW FOR TIMBER PRODUCTION; THIS WILL IN TURN DEVELOP THE BIODIVERSITY OF THE LAND.

TAKING PART IN COPPICING EFFORTS WITHIN STANMER PARK, WE WERE GIVEN ACCESS TO GREEN TIMBER OF VARYING SIZES.



THE COPPICING PROCESS



RIGHT: LOGS AT THE TOOL SHED, NEW ENGLAND WOODLAND

## NEW ENGLAND WOODLAND

RUN BY RETIRED TUTOR AND WOODWORKER PATRICK LETSCHKA, NEW ENGLAND WOODLAND IS COMMUNITY-OWNED, BASED OUTSIDE OF CUCKSFIELD, EAST SUSSEX.

AS PART OF CONSERVATION AND DISEASE CONTROL EFFORTS, OVER 600 ASH TREES ARE GRADUALLY BEING FELLED.

DUE TO THE LOCATION, THIS TIMBER IS DIFFICULT TO REMOVE, MOST OF IT WILL BE KEPT AND USED WITHIN THE WOODLAND.



## BENTLEY WOODS

THE TIMBER SOURCED FROM BENTLEY WOODS WAS FELLED FOR WOOD TOOL DEMONSTRATIONS, HOWEVER THERE WAS AN EXCESS. IT WAS LEFT AS WASTE AND THEN TAKEN FOR FIREWOOD.



## COPFORD SAWMILL

A FAMILY-RUN SAWMILL BASED NEAR HEATHFIELD, SUSSEX. CUTTING TIMBER THAT HAS BEEN FELLED BY TREE SURGEONS FROM AROUND SUSSEX.



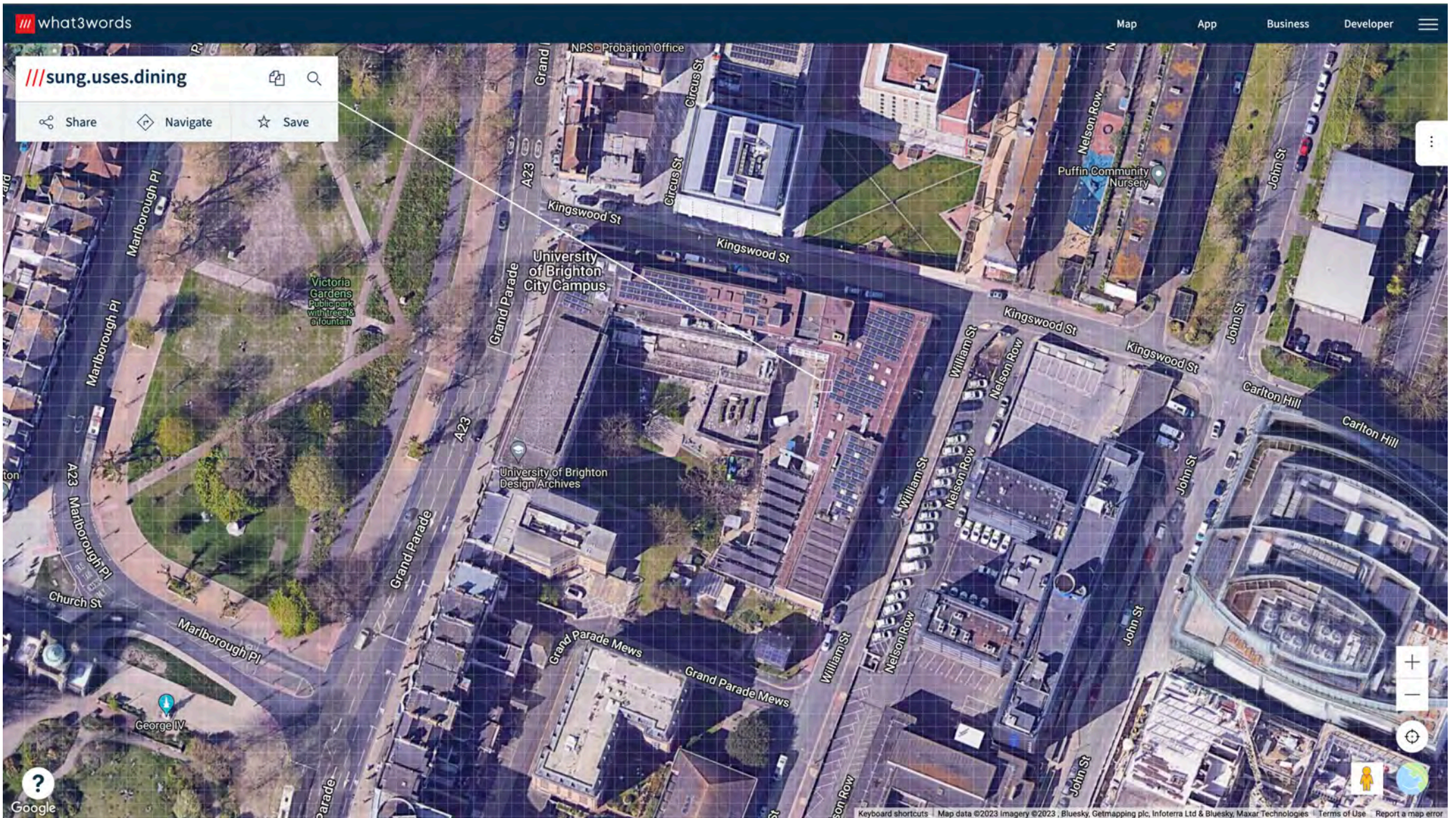


## WEALD AND DOWNLAND MUSEUM

LEFT & ABOVE: *THE FLOORBOARDS OF THE FLOUR MILL HAD YEARS OF FLOUR PUSHED INTO THE GRAIN, MAKING IT MORE PROMINENT.*

BELOW: *ALL TIMBER WAS USED, NO MATTER THE IMPERFECTIONS*





## WHAT3WORDS

USING WHAT3WORDS, I AIM TO CREATE A SERIES OF TAGS FOR MY WORK SO INDIVIDUALS CAN TRACK WHERE THE MATERIAL CAME FROM.



ABOVE & RIGHT: A COLLECTION OF WOOD FIRED VESSELS



## BRIGHTON MUSEUM

I VISITED BRIGHTON MUSEUM TO FIND INSPIRATION FOR BOTH FORM AND MAKING TECHNIQUES. THROUGHOUT HISTORY IMPERFECTION HAS BEEN A PART OF CRAFT, OFTEN EMBRACED BY THE MAKER THROUGH VARIOUS WAYS OF MENDING.

binding the wood together. This could be done with an iron staple, natural fibre, bronze wire or, on a few finely turned and highly prized bowls, with silver wire. Many old bowls show signs of years of wear after repair. It was only the introduction of cheaper mass-produced glazed pottery across the whole social spectrum which hastened the decline of domestic woodware.



A repaired burr maple mazer. Museum of Canterbury.

The historical evidence of wooden bowls is a little like the fossil record with some periods well represented, while others provide little or no evidence at all. Until 1600 AD,

*The tool marks inside this Freiburg bowl are one continuous spiral, yet the "stop" on the inside edge of the rim shows it was made on a pole lathe.*



LEFT - 'THE WOODEN BOWL'  
ABOVE - 'THE WOODEN BOWL'  
RIGHT - 'TURNING GREEN WOOD'

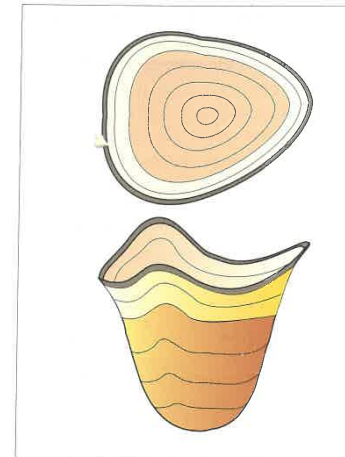


Fig 2.21 Natural-edge end-grain bowl made from a branch of triangular section: this gives a rim with three peaks

## Shrinkage, stress and distortion of bowls

As wood loses moisture it shrinks, on average, 0.1% longitudinally, 4% radially and 8% circumferentially (as we saw in Chapter 1). At the same time, internal stresses are introduced. These different shrinkage rates cause distortions in the drying timber, and therefore distortion is inevitable when bowls are turned green and then dried. The extent of shrinkage and distortion depends on the shape of the bowl and how it is positioned and orientated in the tree. If we take another look at bowls A, B, C, D and E (from Figs 2.2 and 2.3), with an even thickness of 1/4in (6mm), we can see what happens to the bowls as they dry slowly and evenly.

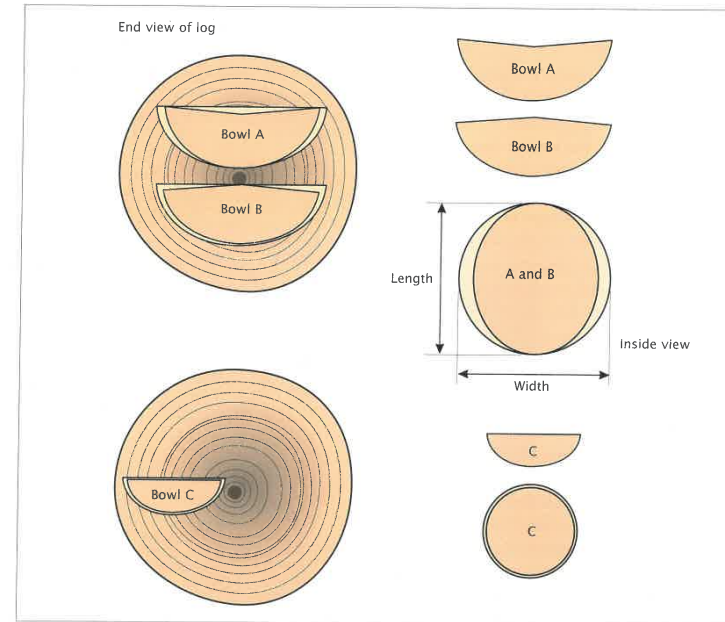
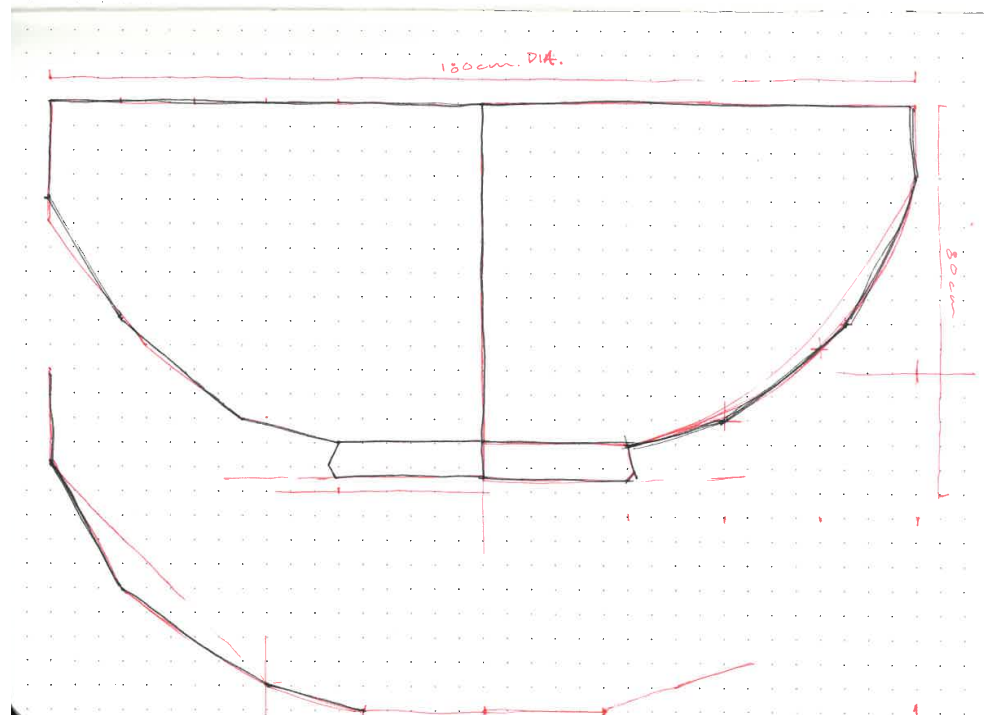
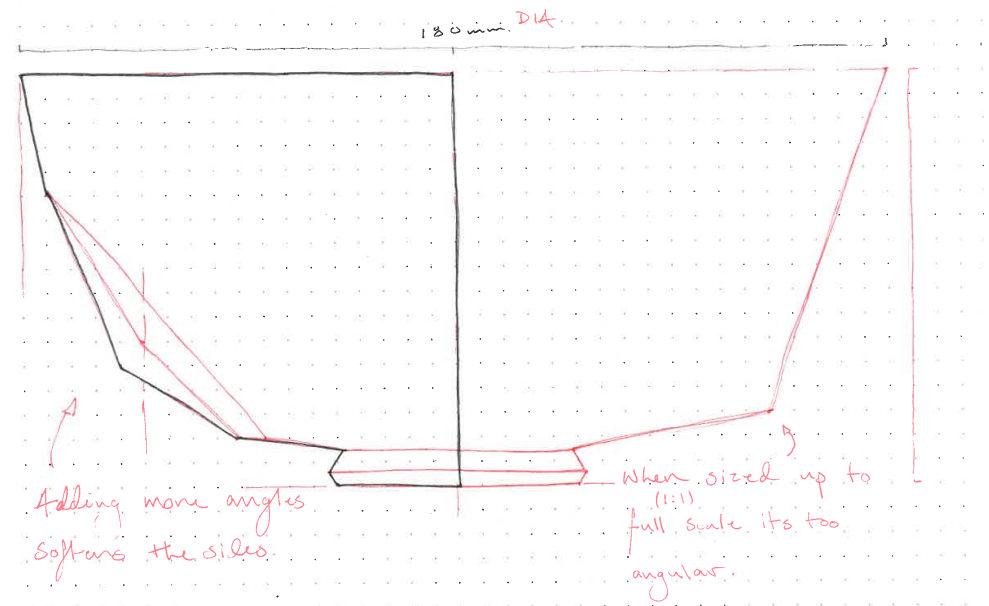
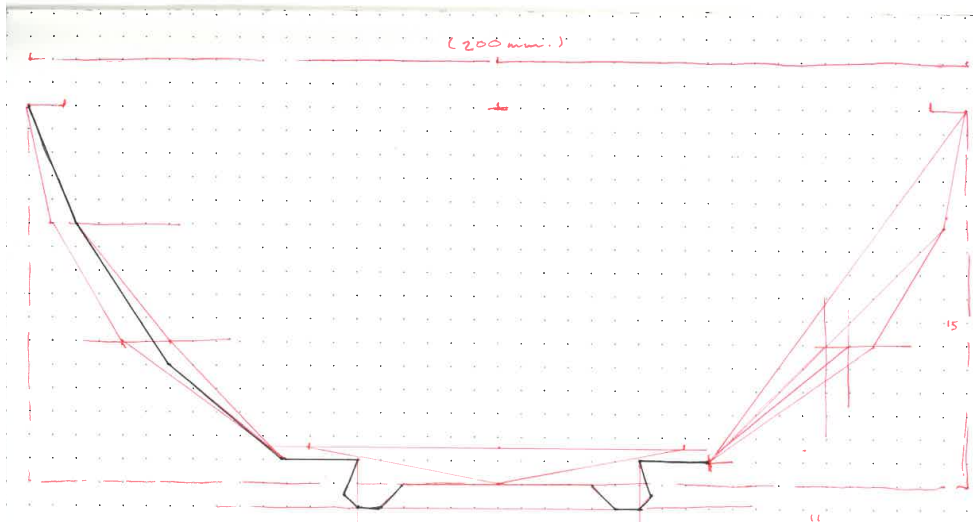
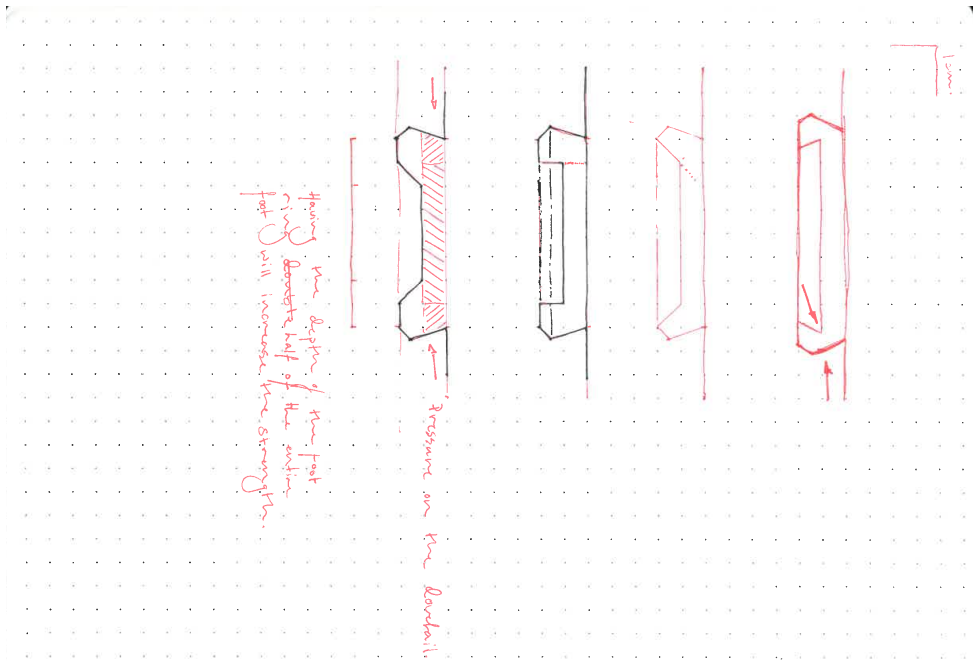
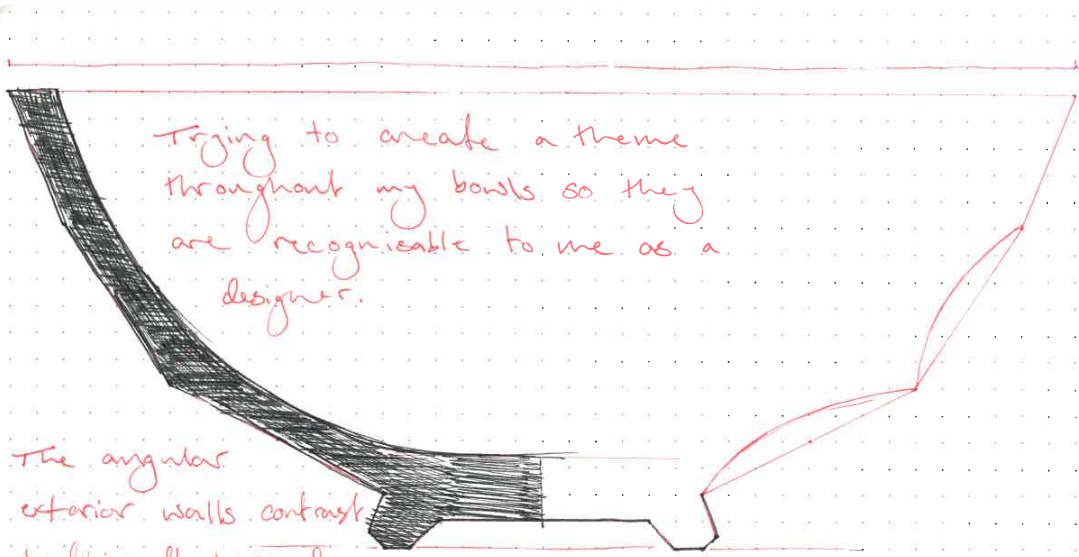


Fig 2.22 Shrinkage and distortion of the cross-grain bowls shown in Fig 2.2



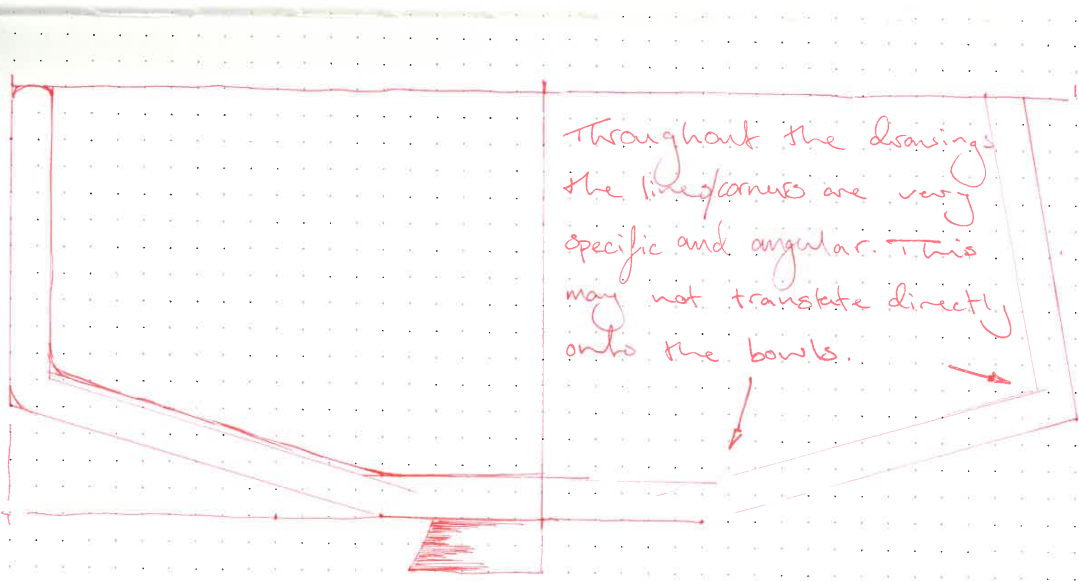
ABOVE: FOOTING CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT  
 RIGHT: FORM DEVELOPMENT





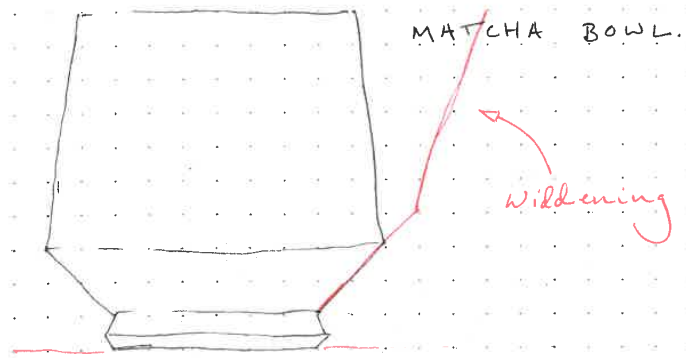
Trying to create a theme throughout my bowls so they are recognisable to me as a designer.

The angular exterior walls contrast traditionally turned bowls where they were more plain and simple, picking function highly over form. However this is also due to the limitations makers had.



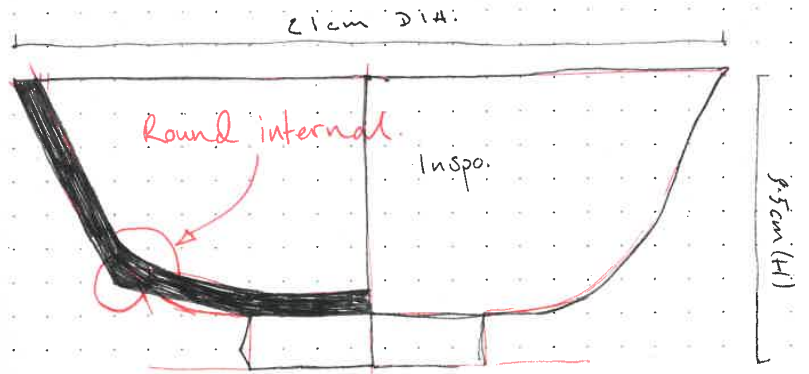
Throughout the drawings the line/curves are very specific and angular. This may not translate directly onto the bowls.

JAPANESE HOMEWARE INSPO.



MATCHA BOWL.

Widening



21cm DIA.

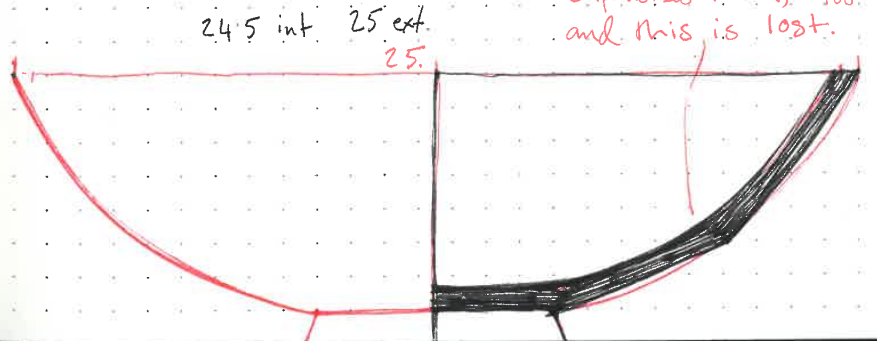
Round internal.

Inspo.

system (H)

Excentuate angle of external wall.

Keeping the angles minimal emphasises them, too many and this is lost.



24.5 int 25 ext 25.

ABOVE & LEFT: CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF FORM



LEFT: COPPiced SYCAMORE VESSEL

## CONCEPT

AS I CONTINUED MY RESEARCH I BEGAN TO FOCUS ON DESIGNING ITEMS THAT EMBRACED IMPERFECTION AND UTILISE LOW-GRADE OR WASTE TIMBER. TO MINIMIZE CARBON EMISSIONS, I TRIED TO SOURCE THE MAJORITY OF MY MATERIALS FROM SUSSEX-BASED SOURCES, SUCH AS STANMER PARK AND COPFORD SAWMILL.



## DEVELOPMENT

HAVING CONSIDERED THE VARIOUS DIFFERENT ROUTES I WANTED TO TAKE MY PROJECT, I DECIDED TO CREATE A SERIES OF VESSELS FOR EACH OF THE LOCATIONS I SOURCED MATERIALS. MY WORK WOULD ROTATE AROUND REACTING TO THE MATERIAL AND HOW IT CHANGES AS IT DRIES. I WOULD TRY TO USE ALL OF THE MATERIALS AS FAR AS I COULD TAKE THEM, AS TO MINIMISE MY WASTE.



TOP LEFT: *ASH VESSEL, WOOD WORKSHOP*  
BOTTOM LEFT: *ASH VESSEL, WOOD WORKSHOP*  
CENTRAL: *DRYING ASH VESSEL, WOOD WORKSHOP*



LEFT: *PLANNING BRASS PLATE TO VISUALLY 'FIX'*



RIGHT: *FIG. SPLIT ASH VESSEL, WOOD WORKSHOP*

BELOW: *VESSEL ON THE STEAMER, WOOD WORKSHOP*

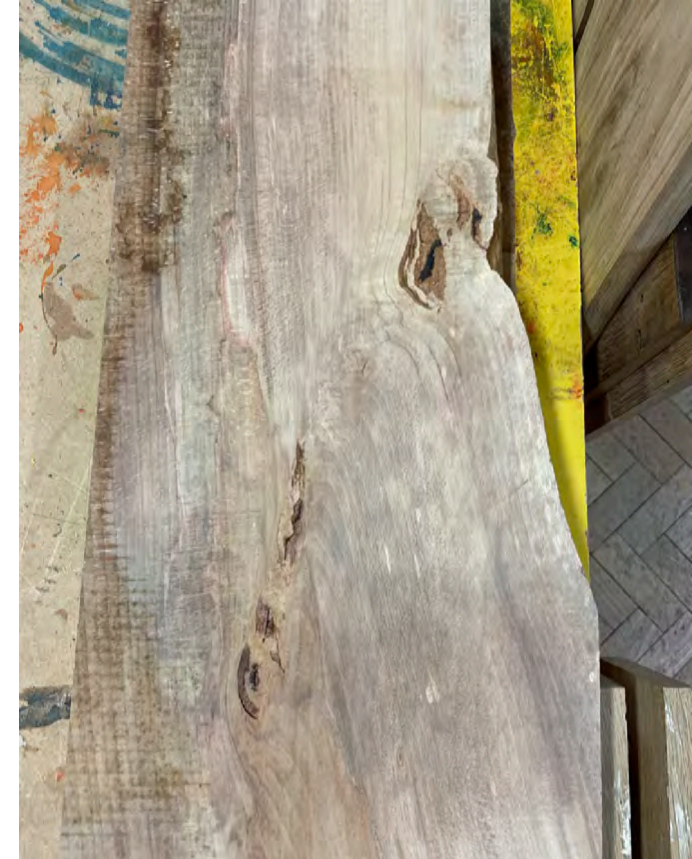
RIGHT: *FORCING THE WOOD TO WARP, WOOD WORKSHOP*

ADDING STEAM, WATER AND HEAT TO THE VESSELS FORCED THEM TO DRY AND WARP, HOWEVER CAUSED THE GRAIN TO BECOME MORE PROMINENT OR DISCOLOURED IN PLACES.





RIGHT: *CLEANED UP TIMBER, LEAVING IN SOME OF THE CUT MARKS*  
BOTTOM: *CHONKY BENCH, USING WASTE TIMBER FROM COPFORD SAWMILL*



## UTILISING WASTE TIMBER FOR FURNITURE

MY AIM WAS TO USE THE MATERIAL TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY TO CONSTRUCT FURNITURE, ACCEPTING IMPERFECTIONS AND FLAWS.



TOP LEFT: *ONE OF JJ'S TABLES FOR INSPIRATION*  
TOP RIGHT: *GIFTED TIMBER FROM JJ*  
ABOVE: *OAK LEAVES PLANED FLAT, WOOD WORKSHOP*





ABOVE: *EXPERIMENTING WITH EXHIBITING, WOOD WORKSHOP*

TOP RIGHT: *PLAYING WITH FORM, WOOD WORKSHOP*

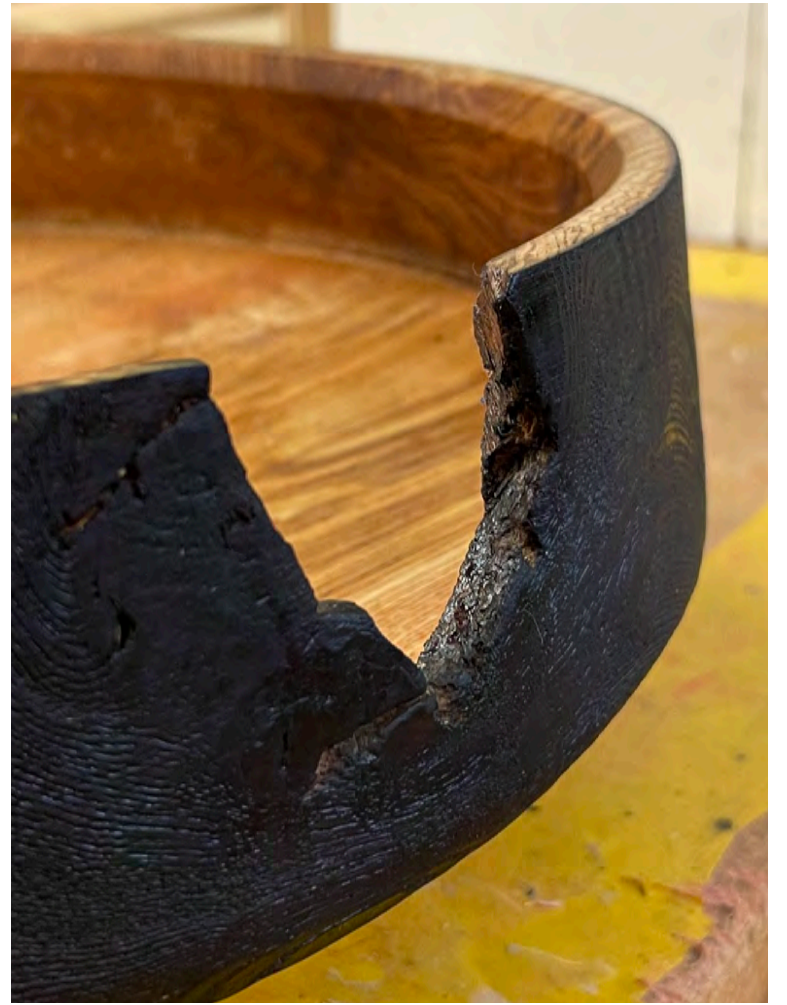
RIGHT: *PLAYING WITH FORM, WOOD WORKSHOP*





BELOW: *ORGANIC ASPECTS LEFT BEHIND, WOOD WORKSHOP*  
RIGHT: *ROUGHED OUT SYCAMORE VESSEL, WOOD WORKSHOP*





LEFT: SCORTCHED VESSEL, WOOD WORKSHOP  
ABOVE: SCORTCHED VESSEL, WOOD WORKSHOP



LEFT: SAGGAR FIRED SLIPCAST FORMS, CERAMICS WORKSHOP  
ABOVE: SAGGAR POT WITH SYCAMORE SHAVINGS, CERAMICS WORKSHOP

RIGHT: *TURNING, WOOD WORKSHOP*  
BELOW: *TURNING, WOOD WORKSHOP*  
BOTTOM RIGHT: *TURNING TOOLS, WOOD WORKSHOP*





LEFT: *THE TRILOGIES, WOOD WORKSHOP*

## RESOLUTION

I HAVE CREATED A VARYING BODY OF WORK THAT EMBRACES THE ORGANIC NATURE OF THE MATERIALS USED. THE TIMBER IS ALLOWED TO WARP AND CRACK, WITH IT BEING 'FIXED' WHERE APPROPRIATE. THE CERAMICS USE THE WASTE SHAVINGS TO BE FIRED. THE WASTE TIMBER FROM COPFORD SAWMILL HAS BEEN USED TO CREATE MY EXHIBITION FURNITURE.

IT IS MORE COMPLICATED USING WASTE MATERIAL AS YOU HAVE TO DESIGN TO FIT IT, HOWEVER THIS THEN LIMITS YOUR WASTE AS WELL AS CREATES SNIPPETS OF ORGANIC BEAUTY.



ABOVE: *IMPERFECTION, WOOD WORKSHOP*

RIGHT: *NEW ENGLAND WOODLAND VESSEL, WOOD WORKSHOP*





ABOVE: *DANCING SYCAMORE*, WOOD WORKSHOP  
LEFT: *THE COPPICED COLLECTION*, WOOD WORKSHOP



TOP LEFT: *COLLECTION OF VESSELS, WOOD WORKSHOP*  
ABOVE: *THE FIREWOOD COLLECTION, WOOD WORKSHOP*  
LEFT: *ASH VESSEL, WOOD WORKSHOP*