

Willow Weaving with Ane Lyngsgard

In January 2016 I had a very special week at West Dean College with Danish teacher Ane Lyngsgaard.

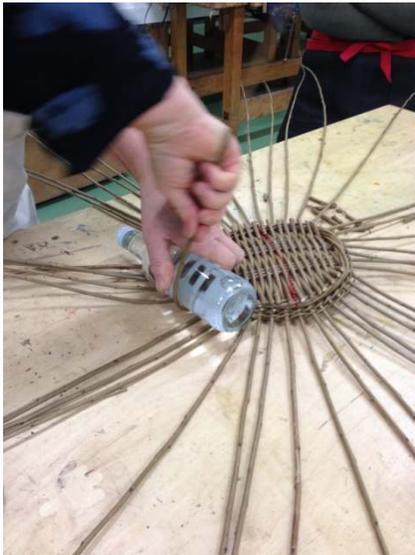
The course covered functional or sculptural asymmetric shaped baskets from willow. The tight weave used produces beautiful baskets with a textile-based, organic appearance making precise shapes and accurate weaves.

I arrived on the Monday evening for dinner with everyone on the course, including Ane; we then had a short introduction to her work and the possibilities for our creations during the week.

We started the next morning and had the pleasure of four days of weaving in our sights and the amazing facilities of West Dean College.

The techniques were ones I knew but had never used them in this way.

We began making a Catalan base edged with a very fine four rod whale and used the base sticks for the uprights, replacing the butt ends with new uprights.



These were bent around a bottle to create the curve at the bottom of the basket, then tied together and held in place with a piece of coated wire. To set the spacings of the uprights we did a few rounds of pairing.

Then on to the main weave: french randing. Something we were all familiar with but never in the context in which it was to be used for these baskets.

We inserted four rods with the butts on the outside and then 2 more on top of the weave with the butts on the inside.

So 2 outside and 2 inside was the pattern to insert all the rods around the base of the basket.

With 62 uprights I had 124 weavers inserted.



By manipulating the weave to create large spaces (we had 4 rods out of many spaces in a row) to insert a flame. (The term Ane used for adding more rods to the basket)

This could be in the same willow already used or as shown above in a contrasting colour. Other materials such as bark, paper, rope, wool or even spaces could be created giving the pod like baskets endless possibilities and everyone could use their own creative ideas.

The baskets were so individual who would have thought we had all started with the same materials. As one of the lovely ladies pointed out, the pods reflected our personalities.

As we wove up the weave became tighter and tighter, many had masking tape wrapped around their fingers to protect them. Finishing off meant more choices, some of us made handles from willow, others used wood or a simple border (some of the uprights were removed) which could be covered with bark.



The importance of choosing the right material for the basket was very important as is the need for very fine willow in these constructions. It was a very inspiring course, the variety of work created was wonderful and it was especially beneficial for transferring the weaving skills to my other baskets. I am really looking forward to creating the next one.

Thank you so much to the Basketmakers' Association for awarding me the Joy Viall bursary for this wonderful opportunity.

Nicki Rowling
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