

MAKING STUFF

Arts and crafts made at
Bedales in the 1960s and
still used 50 years later

Nick Wates

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Introduction

My mother Joanna Wates died in 2020 and my three siblings (Oliver, Jeremy and Roz) and I had the joyous task of sorting out all the stuff she had accumulated living for 50 years in the same family home in Cumbria.

It was intriguing to discover a large number of items made by me at Bedales School, almost all of which were still in use.

As a contribution to debate about the value of the School, here are some recent photographs of things I made there. They are not particularly special in terms of design or quality, although some are not bad. The point is that they were made by a teenager both in timetabled classes and during free time.

In those days premises in the school grounds were mostly left unlocked. I remember getting up at 6am in the morning, walking through an apple orchard to a historic timbered barn and weaving on a loom until it was time for breakfast. After breakfast I headed to a well equipped workshop where I spent most of the day making stuff out of wood and metal.

Privileged indeed.

Belt - copper

Interesting design but there is a good reason why belts are mostly made from leather. Worn occasionally by Joanna and by some slimmer members of the family.



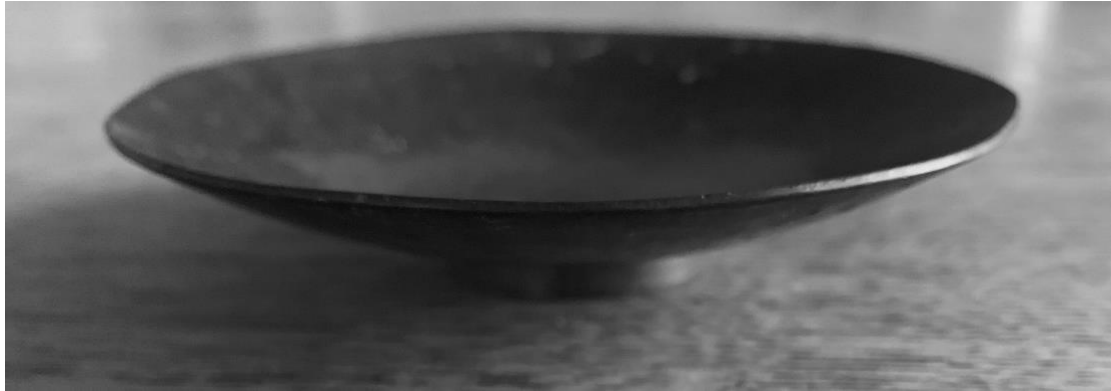
Bowl - china

Glazed china bowl, mottled green and white design. Used by Joanna throughout her life.



Bowl - Copper

Small flattish bowl in beaten copper.



Bowl - wood

Bowl turned in walnut. Used by Joanna throughout her life.



Bracelet - copper

Joanna wore it often and swore it helped with arthritis.



Brooch – oval copper

Beaten copper oval brooch.



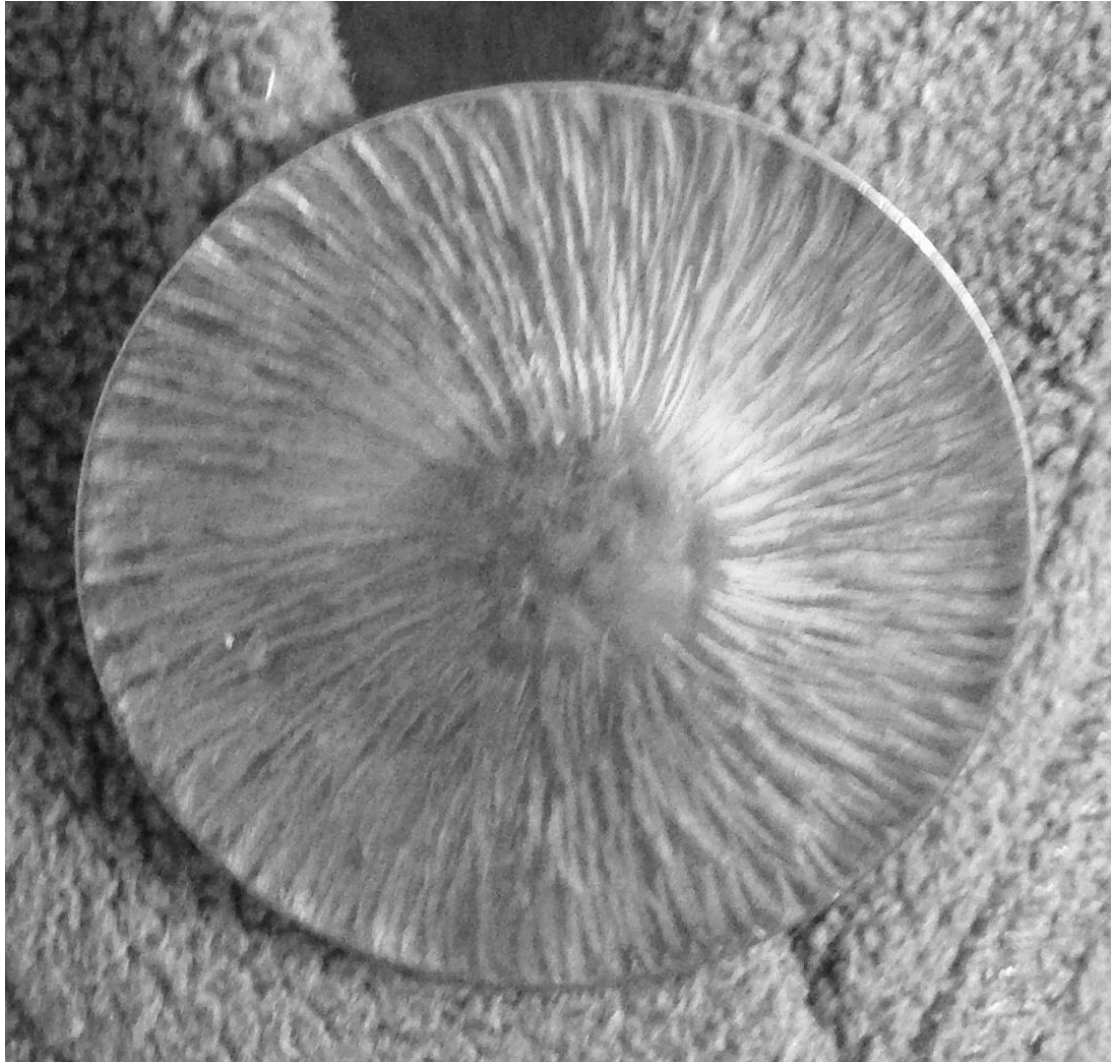
Brooch – round copper mottled

Beaten copper brooch with pin fixing.



Brooch – round, copper streaked

Beaten copper brooch with clasp. Below: being worn by Joanna



Chair

Chair made from walnut with blue padded seat. Used by Joanna as a bedroom chair.



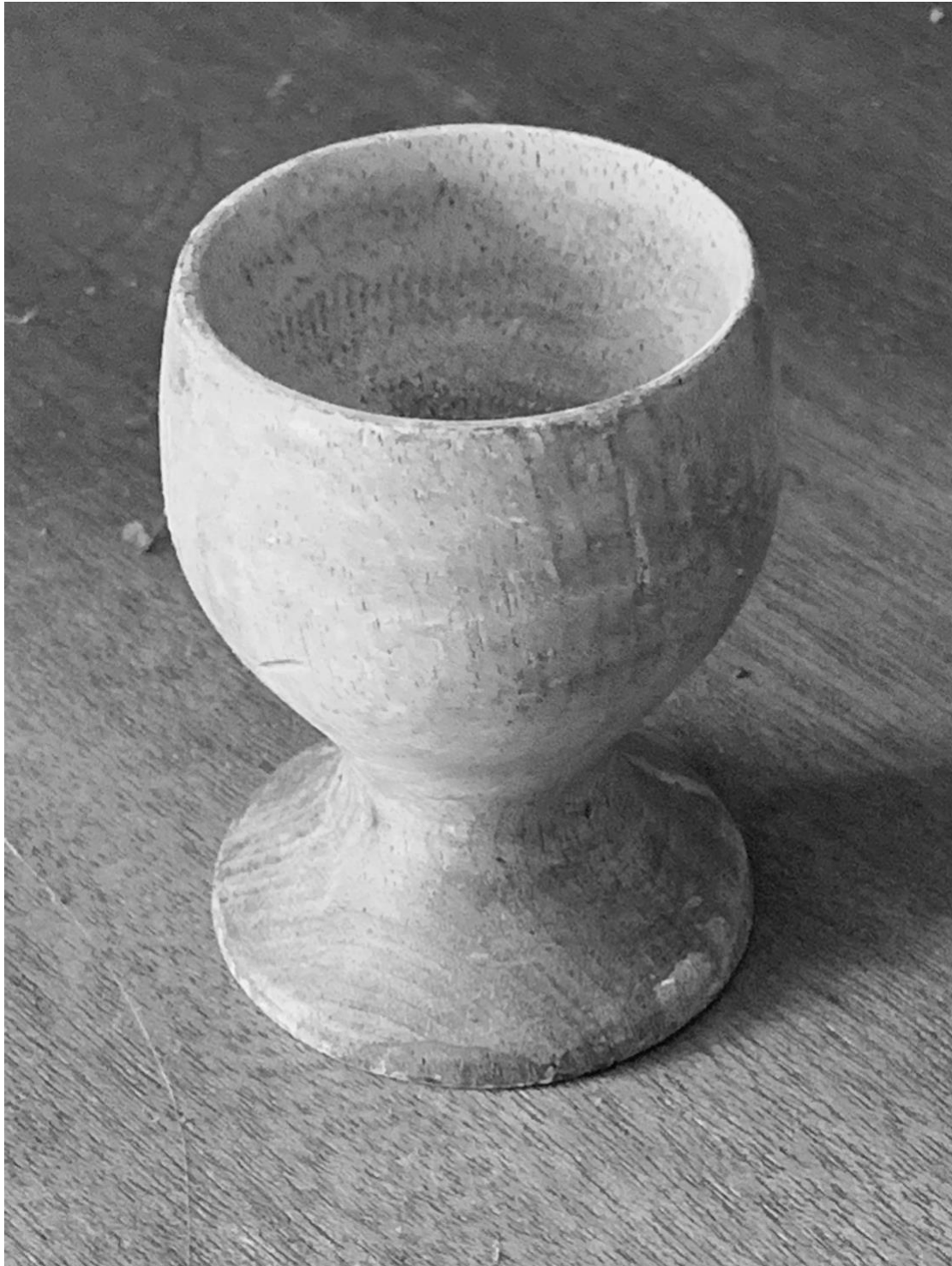
Dressing table

Mahogany dressing table with two drawers and central upper compartment with sliding doors.



Egg cup

Egg cup turned in walnut.



Guitar - acoustic

Looks better than it sounds. Prototype for better one made later.



Guitar - electric

Oak body, mahogany arm, walnut fret board, leather strap. Used by the Circulation school band in the 1960s and sometimes since. Still working but professionally made ones are easier to play.



Painting

Oil painting of Kendal's Aynam Bridge. Hung in Joanna's stairway.



Stereo cabinet

Stereo cabinet with record deck, radio, amplifier and speakers, all in light oak. Worked well for years until the technology moved on when it was stored in the barn.



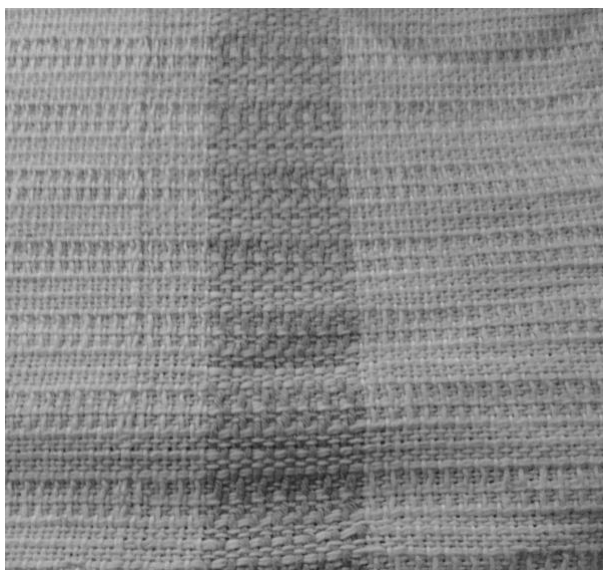
Table with chess board

Mahogany coffee table with drawer. Inlaid chess board of walnut and beech.
In constant use.



Tablecloth

Off-white woven tablecloth with red stripes. Used for many years for special family lunches and then as a picnic blanket by my daughter.



Workbench

Beech workbench with vice. In constant use for 50 years and now a bit worse for wear.



Notes

<https://www.bedales.org.uk/>

<https://www.nickwates.com/>