



Irish Woodturners' Guild Dublin Chapter

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April-May 2002 issue

Editorial

What a great day we had on Saturday 27th in Ballymun Comprehensive School! It was the occasion of our Chapter seminar, of course, and by any standards it was a resounding success. A record turnout by our own members, a really tasty roast beef lunch, a proliferation of trade stands, and five different demonstrators instructing and entertaining all day, what more could one want? To cap it all we had great number of items donated by suppliers and businesses and individuals which were raffled at the end of the day. There may have been less entries than usual in the open competition but the standard was satisfyingly high. I think we owe many thanks to the school management and staff for giving us the use of the premises for the day and going out of their way to make things run smoothly. Our committee, headed by *Seamus Carter* deserve our appreciation for such hard work spent ensuring that you, the members, would have an enjoyable day. Don't forget to thank them at the next meeting.

Amongst the attendance I was both startled and delighted to see *Peadar McArdle* who has had a very difficult time in hospital during the past months and is still not finished with his treatment. That's dedication for you! We wish him well and a speedy return to the lathe.—*Chris Hayes, editor.*

Guild AGM 2002

This took place in the Aisling Hotel on March 23 last, with a mere 50 attending, including about 15 from the Dublin Chapter.

Not surprisingly last years committee was returned unopposed with Emmet Kane as president and Vice Chairman, Felix McCoy as Chairman, Ambrose O'Halloran as Secretary, Brian McAdoo as Treasurer.

Jim Johnston (Ulster), Francis Morrin (NorthEast) and Joe O'Neill (Dublin) were elected from five candidates to fill the remaining seats.



Guild President Emmet Kane
At Terenure, April last
Photo —Hugh Flynn

The April Demo

Making, ebonising and gilding an ornamental vessel.

by Emmet Kane.

As Emmet loomed loftily behind the little lathe, he explained in that naturally relaxed manner of his what he intended to do;- produce an ebonised vessel with some gilding included- from a piece of wet oak branch, approx. 250mm. Long and approx. 170mm. Dia. which he had mounted using a faceplate, (but he would normally use
(Continued on page 2)

The amendments to the proposed constitution were carried with some changes from the floor.

Most importantly the Guild Council consisting of one representative from each Chapter was accepted. They will meet (normally) twice yearly, chaired by the president, to monitor the goals and programme of the Executive. It is hoped that this innovation will help to keep us all more in touch with Guild affairs.

Inside this issue:

April demo -cont'd 2
Workshop visit

Questions and answers 3
From January

Q and A cont'd 4

Competition results 5

Committee and
ads 6

Special points of interest:

• Future demos include
June-Felix McCoy-tba

Next competitions are:

June-pair of salt and pepper pots for beginners;
And a condiment set comprising salt and pepper and mustard pot all on a tray- for all others.

July- A 3 legged stool for all levels

April demo- *continued from page 1*

Axminster gripper jaws). Using a multipurpose gouge (Emmet's description) the outside was shaped, and a hollow formed at the top (A) for the gilded area, which was finished smooth as any blemish, roughness, etc. would show through the gold leaf. With a 3mm. parting tool the leaves were cut at approx. 10 deg. downward inclination to the desired depth and this required tool sharpening a couple of times.

The ebonising was next done. The solution-white vinegar with steel nails or steel wool left immersed in it-was painted on and left for 3 to 4 mins. before washing off with water. (Immersion in the solution may be easier sometimes)

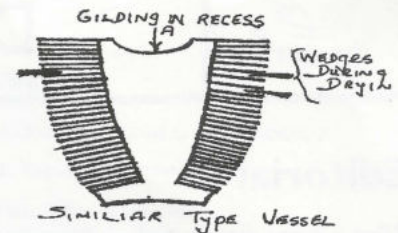
Emmet puts wedges between the leaves at appropriate points for added effect before drying which he does in his kiln for 4/5 weeks at 20 deg.C. He continued the demo. by using a similar ornament previously seasoned, by rechucking, cleaning up, and smoothing as necessary, and slightly sanding. Artists red paint was then applied to the surface to be gilded. The finish was next applied to the outside, this was a mixture of 1 part Danish oil and 2 parts Liquid paraffin, (which for proper penetration between the leaves is best sprayed on), then buffed with a polishing brush.

Emmet then sat down to carry out the gilding. Blackfriars oil based size was brushed over the artists paint, allowed to dry till tacky, then gold leaf delicately applied and gently rubbed down with those big fingers, section by section until all gaps were covered and two coats applied. He emphasised that the surface for application must be dead smooth and atmosphere free from dust for best results. To complete the process, the gilding is left for 1 or 2 days, then brushed over with a camel or mohair fine brush.

Finally he suggested that those starting on gilding should practise with false gold or copper leaf which is less expensive.

So sincere thanks to Emmet for this well planned, entertaining, informative and wide ranging demonstration of his skills, and his entrepreneurial approach to turning.

M.Forde



Emmet recommends that those starting on gilding should practise with false gold or copper leaf which is less expensive'

**Workshop visit to William Stedmond in Gorey, 9th March 2002.**

As a newcomer to wood turning I did not know what to expect from this visit to Gorey. The early start meant we missed the snow which came down in very large flakes around the city. I traveled with Peter Mulvaney and we picked up two of his friends on the way. After a stop for coffee in Gorey we found Willie's house. Firstly Willie showed us his "monster lathe", on which he turned ornate gateposts and newel posts, etc. It was about 20 ft. between centers and he gave us a demonstration on it with a very large lump of wood, which he turned with great dexterity. In his younger days he could turn 20 posts in an hour, one every three minutes. Tea and cakes soon arrived and was much appreciated on such a cold morning. About 22 had traveled and listened with interest as Willie told us about his various lathes, how he came to buy them and modify them, fit new motors, bearings, etc. as required. He has about 7 lathes of various sizes! He also told us about his hobby, making sea going canoes. He would show us later. Before lunch Willie demonstrated his tool sharpening skills on the grinder, using no jigs or tool rest, just freehand, and with a practiced eye he achieved great results. Hot soup and sandwiches, followed by apple pie and cream, went down a treat for lunch and soon we were admiring the beautiful craftsmanship of Willie's sea canoes, made from long strips of wood and coated both inside and out with fiberglass. These sturdy waterproof canoes take 300 hours to make and Willie estimates the cost at about £5,000 each. Willie answered many questions on the process of canoe making and we also learned of his rescue from the sea by a fishing trawler with Cecil Barron on board but that's another story. Back in the workshop Willie went on to turn a bowl from sycamore, I think. Willie's natural skill and ease of communication impressed this beginner and I was sorry when we had to take our leave. Many thanks to Willie for a very informative day and thanks to Peter for the lift.

J,D Cashin.

Questions and Answers 5th January 2002

(Editor's note: I missed this meeting so when I read what William O'Callaghan had so carefully recorded I thought it was worth printing here in its entirety. I hope you agree.)

In this first meeting of the New Year we enjoyed an informative question and answers session during which Henry East, Des McMahon, Mick Healy, Harry Kampff, Hugh Flynn and Joe O'Neill allowed their brains to be picked.

The topic of drying/seasoning timber for turning is one of enduring practical interest and the panel all had useful advice to offer.

If timber is to be dried naturally then according to Des McMahon the most important thing is to avoid exposure to the sun. The ideal arrangement is an open airy shed; leave the bark on and seal the cut ends with wax, paint, Polybond etc. – the object being to slow down the evaporation of moisture. Mick Healy added that timber should be stored in the dark and that ideally timber should be stored on end for as long as possible – one is talking about a year for each inch of thickness. Joe O'Neill recommended that logs should be split on a diameter as soon as possible after felling and the cut surfaces sealed.

As an alternative to traditional seasoning methods one might consider artificial drying. Des McMahon described having had some success with a home-made kiln. This consisted of a 5 cu. ft. box made from ¾ inch chipboard, insulated with 1 inch Aeroboard and kitchen foil and with an air vent. The box is equipped with a 50 watt heater and the temperature is controlled at 90 deg. F by a thermostat from a fish tank. Des found timber will dry to a satisfactory state in 3 or 4 weeks. One can judge the drying progress by weighing the timber at the start and keep drying until there is no further weight loss. He mentioned that drying should not be taken too far as the timber will become too hard and this makes it prone to splitting and turning could be hazardous.

One can also use a microwave oven to dry timber. Mick Healy would only use a microwave for rough-turned items as solid timber will crack. He advises putting a cup of water in the oven, operate at maximum power for 2 mins and then let the item rest for 10 mins. As there will be further moisture loss in this period, one should weigh the item before drying and continue drying until the weight stabilises. Des McMahon reckons that items rough-turned to about ¼ inch thick can be dried in a microwave at 'defrost' in about 3 mins. – it being advisable to change the position of the item from time to time. Joe O'Neill warned against over-drying which can result in cracking or even disintegration while turning.

Mick Healy suggested one could try boiling the timber or placing it in flowing water in order to wash out the sap which is quite viscous.

Des McMahon pointed out that it is quite difficult to avoid twisting and cracking as timber dries and that as an alternative to drying timber one can turn timber while still wet. If, for example, a bowl is rough-turned to a wall thickness substantially greater than the finished thickness – say 1 to 1¼ inches- the rough-turned bowl may twist and distort but cracking is avoided and when the moisture content has stabilised it can be finished-turned.

Joe O'Neill thinks it is best to rough-turn wood quickly and both he and Henry East mentioned that one needs to give some thought as to how the rough-turned bowl can be re-chucked for finish-turning.

Changing topics - one does not have to use a chuck when turning a bowl, it is often better to mount the workpiece on a faceplate as it is more stable and there is less vibration. —*continued on page 4*

Hugh Flynn suggested gluing a sacrificial block to a faced surface which will ultimately become the base of the bowl. One can use hot-melt or super glue. If using hot-melt glue one should warm the block and the blank — (hair drier is good but ask her first, for the sake of safety) before applying the glue and then clamp them together for the 2 or 3 mins. The glue needs to set. He had used this technique after the outside of the bowl had been finished with Danish oil and had found the glue adhered quite satisfactorily to the oiled surface.

Finishing is a topic which always arises at a questions and answers session. Hugh Flynn said that ideally one should try to get the best finish one can from the tool and this means that tools must be really sharp. His usual practice is to start sanding with 80 grit [occasionally 60 grit] and then continue with finer grits: 120, 180, 240 and sometimes 400. His preferred finish for bowls is Danish oil; for small items he prefers cellulose sanding sealer followed by wax.

Finishing end grain on the insides of bowls can present problems. Possible solutions are to use shear scraping to remove ridges and it is worth trying an application of paste wax when turning and sanding. Hugh prefers Liberon to Briwax for this purpose. Mick Healy suggested applying sanding sealer before the last cut with the tool and follow with a further application of sanding sealer before finishing. In his experience end grain can be finished very quickly with power sanding.

With regard to power sanding Joe O'Neill gave a useful tip for a DIY sander. From an old inner tube cut a disc of the reinforced rubber from around the valve, the disc can be held in a drill chuck by the valve tube.

Henry East, referring mainly to finishing bowls, uses Danish oil almost exclusively. His method is to apply the oil generously to the stationary workpiece so that it is saturated. After 2 or 3 mins. the surface is dried off with a dry cloth [preferably a paper cloth] using light pressure and with the lathe at a low speed, say 450 rpm. When the surface is almost dry stop the lathe and leave the work for 24 hours to dry off completely. Henry then repeats the above process but runs the lathe at higher speed and applies the dry cloth with greater pressure and for a longer time. He will usually repeat the process once more and he finds 3 coats are usually satisfactory.

In his experience Henry says some timbers [e.g. yew] will not absorb Danish oil easily and for these he prefers to use liquid paraffin using the same technique as with Danish oil. A useful tip: cheapest source for liquid paraffin is a veterinary supplier.

Henry says he does not usually sand between coats but may, with the lathe stopped, 'polish' the surface with 0000 grade wire wool using a figure-of-eight pattern as in French polishing.

Joe O'Neill said that sharp tools were essential and that some timbers particularly exotic timbers, yew and laburnum needed little further finishing. It is possible to stabilise soft areas with super glue but it is expensive and he would only use it for repairs. Joe advises application of 50/50 sanding sealer prior to sanding and he would start with 80 grit. He mentioned the importance of keeping the paper moving all the time.

If using spalted beech Mick Healy advises using sanding sealer all over in order to deal with soft spots and as a further refinement Henry East suggests allowing the sanding sealer to dry off and harden before applying oil etc. as this prevents the spalling bleeding into the surrounding timber.

Turners selling their wares at craft fairs will be relieved to hear from Des McMahon that the items that have been traditionally sold at craft fairs seem to be as popular as ever and that he has noticed no radical change in customers' taste.

Our many thanks to the panel and to the members who participated in the discussions.

—William O'Callaghan

Monthly Competition results 2001-2002

<u>Advanced</u>	<u>score</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>
Des McMahon	73	15	15	15	15	15	13					
Albert Sloane	35			11	13	11						
Cecil Barron	29	11			9	9						
Michael McGee	24		13		11							
Philip Kerr	19			13		6						
Henry East	15					15						
Eddie O'Reilly	15			9	6							
John Wetherall	13	13										
Tony Lally	7					7						
Seamus Carter	7				7							

0
0
0
0

Experienced

Pat Walsh	59	9	15	13	13	9						
Martin Fitzpatrick	45			15	15	15						
Tom McKeon	35	13	13	9								
Seamus O'Rielly	35	14		7	9	5						
John Holmes	28	6		5	11	6						
Frank Gallagher	24	7	11	6								
William O'Callaghan	22				<u>22</u>							
Gary Forrester	18			11		7						
Geoff Cronin	13					13						
Jim Molloy	11	11										
James Nolan	11					11						
Billy Kellagha	5					5						
Donal Browne	5					5						

0

score

<u>Beginners</u>	<u>score</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>
Niall Cahill	55	9	15	13	11	7						
Theo Elliot	45	15		11	6	13						
Norman Bannister	35	6		9	9	11						
Sean Ryan	30				15	15						
Paddy Finn	24	7		6	5	6						
Janete Mulkern	22				13	9						
Pat Lambert	11	11										
Dermot Hill	7			7								
Eugene Colgan	7				7							
Kevin Dowling	0					5						

Irish Woodturners' Guild

CHAPTER COMMITTEE 2002

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Reflections on the seminar in Ballymun

Paddy from Cork (not the whiskey) was in vintage form during his demonstrations. So much so that some people stayed with him for several sessions. His tongue moved faster than the lathe and the stories flowed ad lib.

But his skill was also very evident and the practical no-nonsense way he approached his craft was well received by all present.

He demonstrated making wine tables from what he called scrap timber which he sells for £50 (Paddy doesn't like euros or metric measurement)

The demand is terrific. Its easy to believe so when you see the finished article. A class act and worth watching anytime.

Cecil Barron on Paddy Lynch from Cork

