

# Shavings No 53- June 2019

by Brendan McAreavy and Peter Lyons

The Ulster Chapter of the IWG had it's annual Seminar on Saturday 8th June 2019 with guest demonstrator Phil Irons



who began by giving an overview of the many superb competition entries and some advice on how a piece might be improved or how a particular feature made a piece stand out.

Phil's theme for the day was based on a funeral urn and he described the processes involved in making a hollowform... the roughing, hollowing, drying and finishing. He started by mounting an Elder blank between centres using a cup centre at the tailstock to grip the wood rather than bore into it like a regular revolving centre and a large step centre to drive the blank. He explained that the cup centre is safer than a single point in the wood as the cup gives better support to the wood fibres. The particular cup centre he used is by Robust.

When Phil started roughing the bowl he used a 5/8" bowl gouge with a parabolic flute and said that the length of the wing should not be longer than the diameter of the tool. He also reminded us that the finish on the tool will be the finish on the wood and, when asked about the angle of the bevel, said it was about 50/55 degrees and not to get too hung up on exact angles. While cutting the blank Phil advised using a relaxed grip on the tool and tool rest and not to fight the gouge because if we push of the tool it will push back at us. He also told us to use the time roughing down a blank to practice cuts and



experiment with a gouge to learn what it will do if held at different angles.

In order to set the chuck for the blank Phil measured the jaws when they were slightly open and cut a tenon to match so that the whole of the surface of the tenon was enclosed by the chuck which made it impossible for it to fly out of the chuck. When cutting the tenon Phil used a scraper he had ground to match the profile

of the chuck jaws and when mounting the blank in the chuck he took the chuck off the lathe and set it on the lathe bed to allow gravity to help seat the blank properly. If the tenon is hitting the back of the chuck and needs to be adjusted remount the blank and cut a little facet on the tenon to let you see where you want to cut towards so that you don't cut too much off. If you crush the tenon you will make it weaker so pay attention to getting a snug, but secure, hold. A true tenon will run the piece true.

"Chucking with accurate spigots is fundamental to turning" - Phil Irons.



With the blank now secure in the chuck it was remounted and the tailstock end removed to make a slight cone-shaped hollow to remove the hard wood in the centre and make a space for the cup centre to support the wood (a bit of pipe over a regular cone centre will do the same thing).

While Phil was shaping the piece he was adhering to the 'The Rule of Thirds' that suggests making the foot of a bowl one-

third the diameter of the widest part. Having established a pleasing shape Phil refined it with a freshly sharpened gouge and then took it off the lathe to assess the shape in a vertical aspect because it's hard to do so while trying to manoeuvre



yourself over the horizontal piece on the lathe. Having satisfied himself with the shape Phil remounted it and shear scraped it with a new signature tool he has developed with Woodcut and that is going through appraisal with Axminster Tools now (whenever it is for sale it will be announced in 'Shavings').

When the outside was finished Phil started hollowing. The cone-shaped depression



that was cut for the cup centre now acts as a guide for a Forstner bit or spindle gouge. Phil used a spindle gouge to 'drill' a hole through the centre of the hollowform with the flute at 45 degrees, undercutting slightly to widen the hole as he went in.

The [GloForce](#) rechargeable light Phil was using attracted a lot of attention so here it is (and cheapest available right now, normally over £70).

To hollow the blank Phil demonstrated a few different tools. He used the Woodcut Pro-Forme Flexi Hollower (Axminster) and a John Jordan style scraper with a 3/16" cutter (John Jordan Tools).

When hollowing, Phil recommended putting a chamfer on the rim that draws the eye into the hollowform. As he hollowed, Phil checked the wall thickness with Veritas thickness calipers (Axminster). While hollowing Phil turned the headstock away from the bed to allow more comfortable access to the blank and braced the gouge under his arm to control the cut. The roughed out urn has a wall thickness between 5/8" - 1" because it has to be trued after drying and this isn't a delicate, fine art, piece... it has to withstand years of use, handling and exposure.

After hollowing the piece should be wrapped in paper to absorb moisture (not kitchen paper as it will absorb moisture too quickly) or microwaved until dry. This is a multi-stage process but very effective if done carefully and patiently. If there are any faults or voids in the wood these can be filled with epoxy and various additives may be mixed in for effect like bronze dust (available in The Wood Shed). Phil uses bronze on any pieces that have voids.

In the second part of the demo Phil showed us how he finished an urn and, for this, he used a previously turned and dried blank. He mounted the vessel using a 'Rubber Chucky' (Website, there is no UK outlet) and the ring centre for support at

the tailstock end. The first job was to clean up and true the tenon at the tailstock end



for remounting in the chuck because it may have moved slightly during the drying process. Satisfied with the fit, Phil remounted the hollowform in the chuck using the new tenon and cleaned up the opening to the hollowform so that a large cone centre could be used to steady the piece while the exterior was trued up (remember leaving the walls a bit thick while shaping?) Phil mentioned that if the walls are left at least 10mm thick when shaping it will allow for movement in drying and, in this particular case, the movement was about 4mm.

When the shape was refined on the outside Phil used the triangular shear



scraper (being developed) to remove the tiny ridges left by the bowl gouge. He said it was important to get these little ridges off because they will show up later if applying colour (which he does) and that would mean scraping again. Sanding tears fibres

and fills the little depressions left behind so you are sealing the pores up which affects colour application.

In order to clean up the inside Phil again angled the headstock away from the lathe bed and used the John Jordan style 3/16" cutter to gently remove any high spots.

After the final shaping and refining was finished Phil started colouring the piece. He used Chestnut Spirit Stains, available from The Wood Shed in small sample packs and large bottles. These spirit stains go a long way so are very good value. Phil started with Royal Blue which he brushed



on liberally. He wants to use colour to enhance natural figure in the wood and pick out the grain. He dried the piece by setting alight with a lighter.

Phil mounted a second piece, the original from the demo, which was very wet and applied yellow to it. Yellow is very strong so he usually dilutes it with cellulose thinners or ethanol but, in this case, used it at full strength.

Don't mix primary colours because they will produce secondary colours (remember the colour chart in Primary School?)

When applying colours try to get as even a coat as possible with the brush... spraying,

using an air brush, doesn't give the same colour penetration as brushing.

After applying yellow to the wet piece Phil remounted the Royal Blue one and sanded it with an inertia sander, Viermec Inertia Sander. If there are voids and natural edges he would use an angle grinder with sanding pad. With the lathe going backwards Phil sanded with P120 and removed most of the stain to leave the grain highlighted. He painted the Royal Blue spirit stain on again, dried it with a torch, and sanded the surface with P180.

Then, Phil returned the wet, yellow, piece to the lathe and reverse sanded it with P120. After sanding there was more colour



removed than desired so Phil just applied more yellow and dried it.

The original, Royal Blue piece went back on the lathe and was sanded with P120. Some scratch marks that were exposed so they were sanded off, a coat of Royal Blue applied, and the piece was set aside.

The Yellow piece was then remounted and sanded to P180. The yellow looked too strong so Phil sanded with P240 to remove some of the colour. When satisfied with the intensity of the yellow, using a new brush, Phil painted red spirit stain on top of the yellow. and set it aside.

The Royal Blue piece was remounted, sanded with P240 and painted with blue spirit stain. Phil recommended going from dark to light colours when applying them.

The yellow/red piece was remounted and was still a bit sticky so a hot air gun (used gently) or hairdryer is useful to speed up drying. Damp stain will clog up the sandpaper so it's worth taking time to dry



the surface properly. The piece was sanded with P320 and P400.

Sanding sealer is then applied mixed 50/50 with cellulose thinners. Phil puts on



two coats and then 2 to 3 coats of satin lacquer followed by 1 to 2 coats of gloss lacquer.

The blue piece was returned to the lathe and was also sprayed with sealer, denibbing between coats. Phil uses a hard wax oil (available in The Wood Shed) to finish a lot of his work.

Phil sprays his pieces black on the inside which disguises any 'bleed-through' from the outside. He said "The finish is pride in your work" which is very true. Another turner once advised us to spend at least as much time finishing as we did cutting.

With the piece finished it was time to remove the foot. Phil used a homemade measuring device which is just a piece of



wood with a threaded bar running through it and a spirit level on top of the wood to measure the depth and then transfers that to the outside bottom to see how much thickness of wood is left in the base.

Phil used a jam chuck with a rubber insert to support the neck of the vessel and a ring centre on the bottom to support the tailstock end before using a spindle gouge to gently cut the tenon off and undercut the

base. He advised cutting forwards during this operation so as not to pull the piece off the ring centre when the wood got thinner.

We thank Phil for his very enjoyable and informative demonstration.

## The Shanes Castle Game Fair

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The Fair is supported by

E: [Irishgamefair@btinternet.com](mailto:Irishgamefair@btinternet.com)

For info: call 028 44839167

Shanes Castle Game Fair is going ahead on 29th and 30th June. Brendan has been on the ball and has finalised our stand. It will be similar to what we did last year, so if you can get involved, please contact Brendan.

[brendan.mcareavy@googlemail.com](mailto:brendan.mcareavy@googlemail.com)

## Bangor Exhibition

The Exhibition from Saturday 27th July to Saturday 1st September is going ahead. If you have anything you want to put in this exhibition please let Peter know. [gaffer.lyons@btinternet.com](mailto:gaffer.lyons@btinternet.com)

We are doing a demo afternoon in Bangor on 6th August, at the museum. Woodturning with Paul Finlay, Sam and David Faulkner, Woodcarving with Philip Steele. Chainsaw carving with Owen Crawford and Pole Lathe Turning with Alexey Janes. This is a free to watch event and you are all welcome from 1200 to 1600

We are also going back to Parkanaur on 17th August. If you want to know more details, please email Brendan [brendan.mcareavy@googlemail.com](mailto:brendan.mcareavy@googlemail.com)

Put the 10th August in your diary as the date of our BBQ. We hope to have a stall at which you can sell, swap or donate "stuff" to others.

## Thanks

I would like to personally thank everyone who worked to make the Seminar a great success. Brendan, Ricky and Paul need special mention. Malachy works silently on the ballot each month, thanks. Sam and Linda need special mention as well as sous chef Eugene.

Jim Johnston, a past member of Ulster deserves our thanks, he picked up Phil at the airport, put him up for two nights and dropped him back to the airport.

Peter

I hope you all have a great Summer and hope you can all make it back to the Wood Shed in September.

## Ulster Chapter Seminar 2019 Prize Winners

Cat 1

Spindle  
1 Francis McHugh



Prize Sponsored by Hamlet Craft Tools

**2 Robby Hughes**



**Prize sponsored by Woodturning Magazine**



**Gerry Leddy**



**Prize Sponsored by Keith Barrow**

**Cat 1 Faceplate**

**No Entries**

**Artistic**

**1 Robby Hughes**



**Prize sponsored by Record Power**

**2 Gerry Leddy**



**Prize Sponsored by Simon Hope Tools**

**Cat 2**

**Spindle**

**1 Liam Gilmore**



**Prize Sponsored by Crown Hand Tools**

## 2 Dermot Doherty



**Prize Sponsored by Peter Lyons and Keith Barrow**

### 3 Jim Stevens



**Prize Sponsored by Ulster**

## Faceplate

### 1 Peter Lyons



**Prize Sponsored by Crown Hand Tools**

## 2 Jim Neil



**Prize Sponsored by Hamlet Craft Tools**



### 3 Dermot Doherty



**Prize Sponsored by Ulster**

Artistic

1 Jim Stevens



Prize Sponsored by the The Wood Shed

**2 Liam Gilmore**



**Prize Sponsored by Robert Sorby Tools**

### 3 Hugh Young



Prize Sponsored by Peter Lyons and Keith Barrow

## Our Competition entries



This is a photo of all entries

Here a few other photos

Phil and Sam

Phil's measuring the depth device



**Phil's jig for removing the tenon**

**A dusty job**



**Tom McCosh's entry and Keith Hyland's segmented bowl**

**If you want to put anything into Shavings, send it to me, Peter.**