

# Shavings No 28 March 2017

## The Ulster Chapter Newsletter

By Peter Lyons and Brendan McAreavy

Welcome to the March Shavings of 2017. If you have anything that will add interest to this newsletter, please let me have it by email.

### For Sales or Wanted

Ricky McDonald has a SIP Planer Thicknesser for sale. It is a 6" x 4". There are photos on the web site. In working order for £50. Looks like a good buy to me.

### Membership

Our Treasurer, Mark McGranahan, is

accepting membership dues for 2017. If you haven't rejoined yet, please do so.

## Announcements

### Cork Seminar

The Cork Chapter 1 day Seminar will take place in the Scout Centre, Togher on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April:

Registration commencing at 9am, Demonstration commencing at 9.30am.

The well-known Scottish Woodturner, **Richard Kennedy** will be the Demonstrator.

Cost of Seminar is €40,  
That includes tea and coffee.

There will be at least one Trade Stand at the Seminar.

There will be an Open Competition on the day.

Richard will hold a Masterclass on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April in Tony Farrell's Workshop, Ballinora, Waterfall.

Places will be available for Cork Chapter members initially but there may be places for members from other Chapters. Fee for the Masterclass is €25.

Bookings with Mick Bouchier by email or text, please. Mick Bouchier, Secretary Cork Chapter IWG 086-8520542

### Very important

Our Seminar in June is coming up. It is important you notify us if intend to come. **At the March demo we had close to a full house.** The Down Chapter have asked that they be allowed to send some members to our June Seminar. This permission has been given and they have it in their programme. We need to know how many of our own members intend to come so I can let the Down members know how many we can accommodate. Email me on receipt of this Shavings :-

[gaffer.lyons@btinternet.com](mailto:gaffer.lyons@btinternet.com)

### Our Ulster competition

Prizes are awarded each month to 3 persons in each category. 1st prize will be £15, 2nd £10 and 3rd £5. If someone wins in Category 1 three times, that person will automatically move to Category 2. They will be given a one off payment of £10 for achieving that improvement. Jack Chapman is the competition co-ordinator.

### More things to do for you

Have you any other ideas as to how we could help you to enjoy your woodturning experience more. Please let us have a response to these ideas, either by email or by talking to us at the next demo.

### Raffle tickets available

The IWG 2017 raffle is up and running. There are tickets available to buy. £10 or €10 per ticket. If you have any Euros lying about the place you could spend them on this chance of winning great prizes.

Eugene asks me to thank the members of the Chapter for their continued support for the Children's Hospital, the efforts made by you all is a very special one. Thank you all for your efforts.

Jenne has suggested boats and bird boxes again for their summer activities. You could add that this is a purely voluntary activity and, maybe, considering the tree installation Stephen is planning at Omagh we could/should aim to finish this for the May meeting (even if Jenne can't come until June).

## Calendar of Demos for 2017

Each demo is £5 unless otherwise stated.

- April 8<sup>th</sup> Philip Mahon  
The competition for April is a multi axis piece.  
May 13<sup>th</sup> Pat Walsh  
June 10<sup>th</sup> Richard Findley £25  
**BBQ is confirmed as 12th August.**  
September 9<sup>th</sup> Robert O'Connor  
October 7<sup>th</sup>, a change from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup>  
**Saturday in the month.** Demo TBA  
November 11<sup>th</sup> Sally Burnett £20  
December 9<sup>th</sup> Peter Lyons

## 2018

June 9th 2018 Joss Naigon for our Seminar

## Shavings - March 2017

by Brendan McAreevy

Seamus Cassidy's demonstration for the Ulster Chapter of the IWG on Saturday 11th March 2017 was pure gold... literally.

The project for the day was an elevated bowl that was ebonised and finished inside with gold leaf. Seamus started making the stem using a length of American Oak that would leave the stem approximately 240mm and explained that a critical dimension was the joint between the stem and the bowl because that had to be seamless and able to accommodate a steel pin to strengthen it. The first task was to drill a hole to take the pin which was a piece of threaded steel bar. Seamus uses threaded bar because the threads allow for a greater glue area within a confined space. After the hole was drilled it was used to allow the tailstock centre to square the blank for the rest of the cutting process so that the final piece is concentric. A tenon was cut on the opposite end of the blank to the hole and the piece was mounted in a chuck, again, using the tailstock centre to square the blank before the chuck was tightened.

In order to ensure a clean joint between the stem and the bowl Seamus dished the top of the blank slightly to allow the bowl to seat squarely on it. It is easier to do this before shaping the blank. After this he measured 240mm and cut a parting line to set the length of the stem. It is a very useful technique to cut a dimension on any blank because it helps us visualise exactly where the

piece ends in order to shape it appropriately. Before shaping the blank Seamus reduced the diameter of the top of the stem to his desired dimension so that he had a target to aim at as he cut. He wanted to leave the piece with a very slight concave curve rather than a straight taper. When the stem was finished it was sanded with P180 and P240 with the lathe running more slowly than when cutting and then the piece was hand sanded, with the grain, using P240 to remove any sanding rings as these will show up after the wood is ebonised.

The ebonising was done with a mixture of malt vinegar and old bolts and nails. The secret is to leave the mixture in a container (plastic milk bottle) with the top OFF to allow the chemical process to take place. Seamus uses brown malt vinegar but white malt vinegar will do the same thing. He said it takes a two to three weeks for the mixture to cure but, after that, it's just a matter of topping up the bottle as the liquid is used. It is possible to use vinegar and steel wool but a problem with this is that tiny fragments of disintegrated steel wool get into the grain of the wood being ebonised and leave an unpleasant effect on the wood. Woods that respond best to this treatment are those with high tannin contents like Oak, Chestnut and Walnut. Irish Oak works particularly well. The process leaves wood looking almost identical to Bog Oak and is Seamus' preferred process. If time is an issue he uses Ebonising Lacquer but would rather use the liquid because it gives a more natural effect.

The process for application of the ebonising liquid couldn't be simpler... just paint it on and wait for the magic to happen. As the wood darkens apply more coats but don't rush this process as two or three coats are usually enough. A hair drier or heat gun can be used to speed things up but take care not to burn the wood if using a heat gun.

The second part of the project was to make the bowl that would sit on top of the stem. Seamus used a piece of Irish Burr Oak and started by cutting a tenon for reversing the bowl and then drilling a deep hole for the metal rod. He told us that if the hole is too shallow the burr could break around the pin but not to worry about drilling too deep because, if we expose the hole when cutting the bowl, it can easily be filled with body filler when we are preparing the inside of the bowl for gold leaf. A tip we got was that when we are cutting a tenon, especially on irregular wood,

to make a pencil line with the lathe running and examine it with the lathe off. If there are gaps the tenon is not true. The base was slightly undercut to help match the stem later so that the bowl will sit true. Then the base was shaped before turning the blank to work on the top. At this stage the base is not finished but the blank will be turned again later to do that.

The bowl was turned to allow the top to be worked on. The first thing Seamus did was to clean the face of the blank and finish it with a shear cut. The surface was then sanded before hollowing the bowl in order to avoid rounding over the edges on the bowl by sanding later. After sanding, starting with P180 to P400 and then jumping up to P1000, the bowl was cut but not sanded because it was going to be treated with wood filler to smooth the surface. Seamus used SiaAir 7940 sanding pads which are available up to P4000. Abralon pads are an alternative.

After sanding the top Seamus cut 'V' grooves around the edge of the bowl to frame it using an old scraper he had re-ground for the task. At this stage he couldn't go back and sand but used a toothbrush to clean the grooves out. If you decide to use your Significant Other's toothbrush make sure you put in back before the big fight. When the sanding was complete Seamus made sure the rim was true because he would use a jam chuck later to finish the bottom. When cutting the edge work from the top back so that the tool didn't pull any burr off the edge. In order to sand a square edge Seamus recommended using a parting tool with sandpaper wrapped around it. This prevents your fingers from making the paper roll the edge.

The inside of the bowl was filled with a two-part wood filler and scraped to leave a smooth finish. Then the inside was sanded with a strip of P180 that Seamus folded over the tip of his finger to prevent the paper contacting the edge of the central bowl. He wanted a nice, crisp, line where the gold would meet the wood.

The top of the bowl was next finished with Danish Oil. Seamus recommended using a compressor to blow dust out of the burr Oak beforehand so that the oil finish wasn't compromised with particles of dust. It doesn't matter if the Danish Oil gets into the bowl and 'V'-grooves can be cleaned out later with the toothbrush (maybe you should give it a wee rinse before putting it back in the glass). The top was set aside to allow the

fillers to dry and work commenced on the stem again.

The stem was denibbed with P1000 going with the grain and a jam chuck was made to hold the top of the piece to let Seamus work on the bottom. He used the tailstock to hold the bowl in place and then removed the tenon, leaving a 3mm deep 'neck' to match the stem. Seamus removed the tailstock support and taped the bowl into the jam chuck in case it might come out. The stem was lined up with the base and the two meeting surfaces trued until seamless and the base was sanded and oiled.

To fit the threaded bar Seamus first measured the bar in the bowl and marked where it exited the hole. This gave him the depth of the hole he needed in the stem. Then the marked bar was inserted in the stem to determine if the stem needed to be drilled further. In this case the hole was too deep so Seamus simply added sawdust to the hole to bring the threaded bar up to the required mark. Having already established that the fit between the stem and bowl section of the piece was good, Seamus mixed a two-part epoxy and coated the bar completely so that there was no reaction later with the Oak. The threaded bar, coated with epoxy, was inserted in the bowl and the stem was pushed onto the bar with the tailstock using the original hold in the stem blank, ensuring that the alignment was perfect. Danish oil, around the joint, will help stop staining from any glue squeeze-out.

Now we were ready to add the gold leaf. Seamus uses size from Coo-var and told us one small tin will last for many generations. (If anyone is interested in doing work with gold leaf there is a member willing to share a tin of size with others to save cost and waste, ask Brendan, or Peter, if you are interested and he will guide you to the person concerned).

At this stage the bowl is dry and ready for gold leaf. Seamus recommended Wrights of Lymm (<http://www.stonehouses.co.uk/>) for their service and prices and uses books of their transfer gold. He painted the size onto the surface of the small bowl with a finger to give him more control over the application and allowed it to go sticky, like some other adhesives we use. When that stage arrived Seamus cut the gold into small strips because they are easier to handle than sheets and simply pressed each sheet onto the glue, removing the backing paper to leave the gold

behind. If any small pieces of gold flake off or overlap leave them alone because they can be rubbed off later with P1000. Press the gold down gently, overlapping each time with previous strips. When the bowl is finished and covered with gold you leave it for at least 24 hours before returning to it so Do Not Touch... however tempting it may be. If you wish to save time you could use triple thickness gold but Seamus prefers the regular sheets. After 24 hours the excess gold will fall off.

After the piece is finished the final coat of oil can be added. Three coats of oil is adequate and, when adding oil, keep wiping the surface to prevent 'runs' that will show up in the finish.

The resulting piece was elegant and attractive and has given the members of the Ulster chapter another lovely project to try. We thank Seamus for a very interesting, and enjoyable, demonstration and hope we will see him again in The Woodshed.

### **IWG Ulster Chapter Competition Results**

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2017  
Competition was for a box  
Category 1

1st Brendan Thompson, an earring holder box



2nd John McClenahan, a Finial box



3rd Vernon Robinson, a Spalted box with a screw lid.



Category 2  
1st Dermot Doherty, a Teardrop Box polished



2nd Terence Aston, a Spalted and textured Teardrop box



3rd Brendan McAreavy, a small walnut box



Category 1 table



Seamus Cassidy



