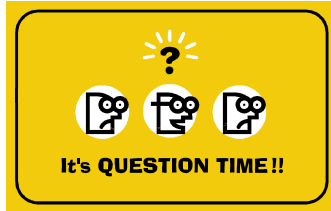




Dublin Chapter Newsletter

June 2010 Volume 3 Issue 16



The newsletter this month is a little smaller than usual and has been put together in some haste. So my apologies for any errors and the lack of competition standings (I'll make sure they are in the next newsletter).

The main reason for this may not be immediately obvious. The Seminar only being a few weeks ago and the

long awaited summer weather are all handy excuses. However most of my time since the seminar has been taken up contemplating one of the great questions of our age.

This question does not concern the meaning of life, whether the Universe is infinite or indeed who Fabio Capello would be taking to the World Cup. (*I had other worries with my beloved Crystal Palace on the verge of going out of existence. Besides many will be glad to know that whoever plays for England in South Africa, they will, as usual, disappoint and return empty handed*)

Instead the question on my mind has been "What the hell was I thinking when I put myself forward for that demonstration?!"

I still don't have an answer, but while contemplating it have come up with some other thoughts. I may share these on Saturday in a futile effort to take the spotlight off of my turning.

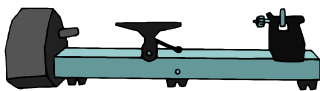
Thanks go to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter and as usual I make a request for material for the next one. My contact details are on the back page.

*Enjoy the summer while it lasts,
Varrn.*

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Dublin Chapter at the Terenure College Fun Day



Coming Soon

Wednesday 9 June - Workshop (Scout Hall)

Saturday 3 July - (Scout Hall)

Demonstrator: Nick Annull

Competition: Box

Wednesday 7 July - Workshop (Scout Hall)

Saturday 7 August - (Scout Hall)

Demonstrator: Colm Hyland

Competition: Pair of Candlestick Holders
(One only for Beginners)



The Dublin Chapter were invited to take part in Terenure Colleges 150th Anniversary Family Fun Day in the college grounds on 23 May. The afternoon was a great success with Chris Lawlor, Adrian Finlay, Frank Gallagher, Vincent Whelan and Rich Varney in attendance. The exhibition of turned items attracted great interest, and the chapter's Nova lathe was brought round for some demonstrations. The afternoon ended with the presentation of the plaque made by Chris Lawlor on behalf of the chapter, to the college Prior, Fr Michael Troy.

A Platter of Fact

Pacelli O'Rourke gives the lowdown on Michael Fay's compelling demonstration at April's meeting.

Before he began, Michael made some comments on respiratory protection, and its very great importance. He uses the Air Ace Safety Respirator (supplied by Trend?)

Michael used a piece of kiln dried sycamore [approx 250mm x 50mm (10" x 2")] for this project. He had already cut it to circular shape on the bandsaw. I cannot find a note to remind me of his initial method of mounting the blank. A variety of methods is possible e.g.: face plate, hot glue or screw cluck. I think he used the latter.

Firstly, a spigot was formed to suit the chuck jaws for reverse – holding.

Mostly the tool action on the outside was a pull-cut from the base in shear-scrape mode i.e. no bevel rubbing. He used a 1/2 bowl gouge with fingernail grind for forming the outside profile. This was a gentle ogee or 'S' form, going smoothly from centre to rim. A foot was incorporated which would raise the piece slightly from its display surface. Michael advises to always look at the top of the stock, **NOT** at the point of the cut, for the sense of form and visual balance

Michael used a specially constructed router-table which is held in the banjo and is height-adjustable.

No less than five times I noted that he made reference to lightness of cut and a general attitude of un rushed ease. All his actions indeed bore out his adherence to these principles. Refining the outer profile produced 'feathers' rather than shavings. The concluding cuts were done with a 45° shear-scrape using a 3/4" curved scraper fashioned from a skew chisel.

The outside was now ready for sanding. For this purpose, again emphasising lightness of touch, Michael used 150 grit abrasive, having first applied a coat of liquid paraffin to soften the fibres and assist in achieving a silky smooth finish. He suggests always marking the centre before reversing. Whether you use it or not, it's a good piece of best workshop practice.

The piece was now reversed. Michael tightened all key-points on the chuck for the truest hold.

His design incorporated a 45mm rim with

a gentle convex profile.

At this point there were many admonitions concerning lightness of approach! ("a nice, slow, even cut very light touch on the rim" etc). As with the outside, any slight ripples on the rim are removed with the lightest of shear-scrapes using a dome-scraper. For reasons to be mentioned later, Michael did not use liquid paraffin at this point. The inner edge of the rim needs to be firmly defined now. This can be done with the long point of the skew. Some stock may be taken out of the plate section at this point but it is as well for stability to deal fully with the rim before completing the centre of the platter.



Michael chose to rout a number of shallow, parallel grooves across the rim: 3 on either side, 2mm wide and 6mm apart. For this process it is necessary that the lathe-spindle be locked. It would be a wise precaution to switch off the lathe. Michael used a specially constructed router-table which is held in the banjo and is height-adjustable. The cutter was of parallel profile. The piece was aligned so that the router traversed in line with the grain. Any breakout was cleaned up with a 'lollipop-stick' emery board.

Now comes the filling of the grooves. Michael used *Leakfix*, black in colour, available at all good motor factors.. Like *Isopon* or *Plastic Padding*, it involves the introduction of a hardener to set off the process of curing. Masking tape carefully applied along the groove-edges protects the wood from being stained. It is advisable to fill the grooves slightly proud as the filler tends to shrink during curing. Any suitable knife or spatula can be used to paste it in. *Isopon* can be very effectively used with pastel colours. This is obviously an area for experimentation! Sanding off can be

done with a suitable sanding block, rasp, 'dreadnought' file or microplane. Once again, wise council suggests patience and a light touch.

The rim-surface can now be finished. Michael generally uses 3 coats of Woodoc.

Next comes the completion of the plate section. Again Michael used the finger nail bowl gouge. Care needs to be taken here as to how deep (or shallow!) this section needs to be. It is wise to use some form of depth-gauge, so that the thunder clouds don't gather over your head!

Most of the hollowing involves pushing the gouge in an arc toward the centre, keeping the bevel rubbing. 'Listen to the cut. If you hear a shrieking noise you know you're tearing the grain'. Again the mantra "don't force the cut!" It is advisable to create a slight shoulder to the left of the cut so as to prevent 'skating'.

These are the moments when you know you are watching someone working to the highest standards of excellence.

Michael had 'softened' the heel of the gouge on the grind stone to assist in getting around the bottom of the curve sweetly. A short bevelled tool is best to achieve this. It is very well worth trying to create an undercut at the start of the plate section. It really does enhance the visual feel of the piece. The gouge handle needs to be well to the right and well down if possible. A very very light shear-scrape works well for taking the dimple out of the centre, and refining the flow of the plate-up-to-rim.

Sanding was done with 240 grit. Michael used a sanding block to discourage the abrasive from undulating into little depressions in the wood. (These are the moments when you know you are watching someone working to the highest standards of excellence.)

Finish the inside to your preference e.g. Woodoc, liquid paraffin, Danish oil etc.

The last operation is the removal of the spigot from the foot. For this purpose the platter needs to be re-reversed. It is not essential at this point for the piece to

Continued on page 6

Competition News

April's competition item was a puzzle and saw Fran Lavelle, Frank Maguire and John Owens winning the advanced, experienced and beginners categories respectively.



Fran Lavelle



Frank Maguire



John Owens

Photos by Hugh Flynn.



John Owens

The chapter competition at **May's** seminar was for anything. The judges were kept busy as the standard was excellent despite the disappointing turnout in entries. The winners were Frank Gallagher (advanced), Tony Hartney (experienced) and John Owens (beginners).



Tony Hartney



Frank Gallagher

Seminar Competition

Our guests from Gorey swept the board in the open competition at the seminar. Congratulations to the winners!

Overall First Place - Kirk Nuzum



Third Place - Brendan Tracey



Second Place - Pat Carroll



People's Choice - Pat Carroll

Turning And Learning with Gerry Ryan

Escape from the Sun

Who would have thought that late May 2010 would bring such beautiful weather that some anti-social old fogies would be seeking escape FROM the sun - while most want to escape TO the sun.

Maybe its something in the Irish psyche, but many people I know seek sanctuary from good weather in a gloomy pub or snooker hall. I am glad to say that those of my acquaintance are of nobler stuff - instead we hide away in dust-laden workshops or sheds and recycle old wood into old shavings. And quite often we emerge from our self imposed drudgery to take part in public displays of our abnormality!!! No closets for us!!!

And so it is that we can be found flaunting our strange ways at Demonstrations and even mass Seminars!!! Since the last Newsletter of the Dublin Chapter we have had a wonderful demonstration of platter making from Michael Fay, our Annual One-day Seminar, and two of those smaller working groups which follow our monthly meetings - you can recognise those who attend the latter by their peculiar handshakes and secret exchanges of "fids and mallets".

Platters Matter

Michael Fay's demonstration in April was very well attended. This was only partly due to his well deserved reputation - and partly because the task set for our June competition is to make a platter; why not learn from an expert? The demonstration is described elsewhere, but I was struck by the fact that we had quite a discussion on what the differences are between a plate, a platter and a shallow bowl. (Are turners naturally seekers after truth - or are we just contrary and stropy by nature?)

Michael was so clear in his step-by-step demo that I for one went home and very quickly completed my entry for the platter competition two months early instead of the usual last minute rush. The valuable tips he gave us on decorative inlay will no doubt tempt most of us to have a go. The amount of information he imparted was remarkable, because on this occasion we had no camera on the lathe, and the tripod-mounted camera was not transmitting to the two TV monitors - as a result about half the audience saw very little. Maybe we are

spoiled and expect too much, but full marks to Michael.

Banksia Revisited

Within a few days we were back in a smaller group to watch and wonder as Owen Furniss gave a demonstration on turning various shapes and decorative objects from banksia nuts.



Owen had given a very tricky demonstration some years ago when he melted pewter into one of these nuts and produced a wonderful condiment set - so a number of us prevailed on him to give us some basic tips on how to use these odd-looking fruits of this tree from Down Under (named after Sir Joseph Banks 1744-1820. Now don't say you never hear anything new, and for your next class look him up on the net, and produce a 500 word essay on his life and times)

Owen had brought many samples of elegant items based on banksias - some combined with buffalo horn - as well as some miniature puzzles he had made over the years.

Some of the basic steps involved slicing a small piece from each end of the nut, using the band-saw, so as to mount between centres. As the nuts are not always symmetrical it is necessary to find a balance which may mean mounting on other than the "natural" centres.

It is usually possible to make two items from one nut so a wide spigot is turned at the centre which is then parted centrally so each half has a spigot. Owen advises leaving these large enough in case a hole coincides with the chucking area. Using a long-jawed chuck, extending the "quill" and using the tailstock for support for as long as possible, all facilitate the shaping process. The early roughing down is always quite dirty and dusty and a mask is advisable. Owen drilled and hollowed one half and made a joint (similar to a box/lid joint) with a piece of buffalo horn which he also shaped and hollowed using some home-made scrapers which

he passed round.

When these were superglued together and given a final sanding, Owen cleaned out the holes in the nut which he said often contained some very odd rubbish. He then used two coats of melamine lacquer and a burnishing cream to finish off the stylish miniature weed pot he had made. Cotton buds were used to get the melamine into the holes.

Following coffee and a lively and informative brainstorming Owen then produced a Christmas decoration from the second half of the nut, and did so in such effortless style that his audience all determined to have-a-go at cracking this particular nut.

Seminar Time

We must all join in offering up thanks to our Chapter President. It is at times like this that we should acknowledge the selfless actions of those of our leaders who make sacrifices for the good of the greater community - and do so quietly and with no thought of thanks. Let us turn to Our President's message in the programme for our 2010 seminar, (Joseph 21, ii, 6) "My stint in Utah will be over by now and I am back at base camp in San Diego with the wood turners there at their annual picnic". And all this time the other officers of chapter are frolicking about joyously sweeping, cleaning toilets, washing up, handling abusive comments from people with the wrong coloured raffle tickets, and generally gadding about enjoying themselves.



On a more serious note Joe's wish in the programme was that we would pick up a good few woodturning hints and make a few more friends. Well I can say that both these wishes came true in my case. It is great to spend the day meeting new people and getting to know old friends better. Also, thanks to some clever programming it was possible to sample the work of all four demonstrators. ▶



Paddy Lynch, as always, entertains and educates simultaneously. In the first session of the day he was supposed to demonstrate making a clock. He demonstrated so naturally - and turned so expertly - that he in fact made two clocks. He still had so much time left that he also made one of his own special barrel lamps - and this lamp was supposed to have been the subject of a one and a half hour session after coffee break. So we got the benefit of two sessions in one!



The fact that he moved so fast did not mean that he was short-changing us on content. In fact on the following Monday I made the best clock I ever managed, and this was by following Paddy's very clear instructions and tips to the letter. I completed the clock using a face I got from Paddy. This bore the arms and motto of my grandson's favourite football team. He is delighted, and may not think much of his granddad's turning, but thinks Paddy Lynch is a man of great culture and discernment. And of course he's right.



Christy Glynn demonstrated to Chapter quite recently, but I for one was looking forward to learning a bit more from him

- and about him. I was not disappointed. At the session I attended he was due to demonstrate carving a rosette. This took him about five minutes and then he was off. Nothing was too much for him and his enthusiasm for his craft is infectious. He worked in quick succession on a flower, a harp, a rope-edge for a table, an urn carved in relief for a wall panel, and a cabriole leg he had started in a previous session. While all this was at a very expert level, he gave us very good basic tips for the beginner, showing the difference between removal of wood and the actual carving, and demonstrating the importance of watching the grain all the time so as not to remove too-large a section or splinter. He advised some woods for learners, including, I think, poplar, lime and pine, but he himself made a piece of walnut look like butter as it yielded to his expert touch



Albert Harrison showed us a range of techniques as he turned a very thin square bowl, which he then textured, pierced, sprayed and finished. Luckily the programmers had Albert repeat the whole process in three different sessions, so most of those attending the seminar had a chance to see the full performance. And performance is the appropriate word, as he mixed conjuring tricks, jokes, and some complex turning with fending off the helpful interventions of Tony Lally and Adrian Finlay (obviously they had crossed friendly swords in the past, but Albert definitely won this round!)

I for one found his shaping of the thin square bowl just fascinating, and I will try it some day, but the "flying shadows" were fearsome and I admire his courage. A very useful tip of Albert's was to put a distinct mark on the toolrest to show the outer limit of the invisible edge of the work piece. Even with this precaution I couldn't help checking to see if this guy still had all his fingers intact. Thanks are also due for the many tips on texturing and piercing which we may all try sometime.



Joe Balmer during the day had demonstrated making a number of puzzle boxes, and in the session I caught he made a most elegant small (almost miniature) decorated box with a threaded lid. The threading was apparently what most of us had come to learn about, and Albert was most helpful and tried to simplify some of the mysteries. He had been using a 16tpi threader but recommended 32 tpi for beginners. I have to confess that I had always been on the lookout for an affordable set of threaders of 8tpi, assuming that the bigger and fewer the physical cuts the simpler the process would be. I still don't understand, but am grateful to Albert for saving me a lot of frustration, not to mention the investment. He recommended some woods suitable for the learner with anjan (Indian) being the cheapest, pine being easier and boxwood being best. Old yew is both possible and good and holly is OK. A good speed for threading would be about 400rpm.



Thanks to everyone who worked so hard to give the rest of us a great day of learning and sharing. What a treat it is too, to have the Trade Stands chock a block with goodies, and hopefully to have a few bob in our pockets.

Thanks to Joe Balmer for the definition of an Expert

EX is a has-been, and SPURT is a drip under pressure.

Gerry Ryan, May 2010

Photos by Hugh Flynn, Vincent Whelan and Rich Varney

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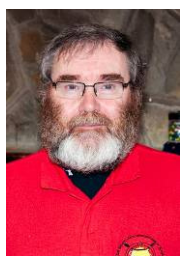
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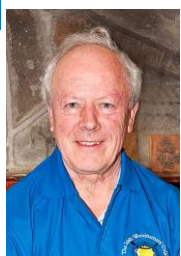
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A Platter of Fact

Continued from page 2.

be accurately centred as long as it is close. Any type of disc, covered with soft material (e.g. a piece of carpet) between the inside of the platter and the chuck will suffice.

Bring the tailstock up. Michael prefers the spindle gouge for removing the spigot.

Be very careful not to let the tool come in contact with the foot during this operation. Just before the spigot detaches, take the piece from the lathe and remove the remaining nib with any sharp tool, such as a Stanley knife, skew chisel or gouge. Finally, lightly sand and finish the bottom of the foot.

In the light of the methodical, unhurried and brilliantly focused demonstration we had just witnessed, while everyone appreciated the stunning nature of the result, no one was surprised. Thanks Michael!

Pacelli O'Rourke

Photos by Hugh Flynn

Woodturning Classes

Joe O'Neill offers classes on Tuesday and Wednesday A.M. & Thursday nights.

Ph: 087 623 0162
Email: rudyperudy@yahoo.com

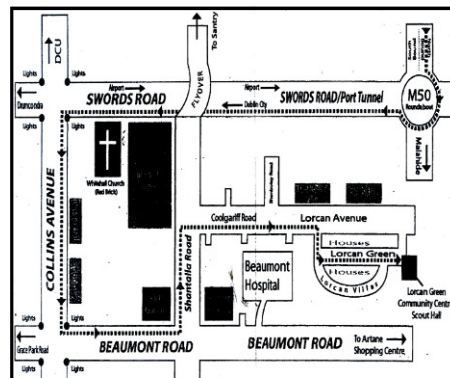
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Ph: 01 825 8079 / 087 269 8027
www.joelairdwoodturning.com



Dublin East Central Chapter meet on the second Saturday of each month in Lozans Green Community Centre / Scout Hall from 2.00 pm.
Tel: 086 8241470



Dublin 15 Chapter meet on the 3rd Thursday of every month, 7:30pm to 10pm, at the BRACE Centre, Main St, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15.
www.craobhcuigdeag.org