



Dublin Chapter Newsletter

Irish Woodturners Guild

November 2020 (Another Lockdown Edition)



As you are probably aware, due to the outbreak of Covid-19 all meetings of the Dublin Woodturners Chapter have been cancelled until further notice.

Please check both your email and the Chapter website (<http://www.dublinwoodturners.com>) regularly for updates.

The AGM for 2020 will not take place in November as planned and the current Executive Committee will remain in place until such a time as we can have an AGM. Please stay safe and keep in touch with each other.

Signed on behalf of the Executive Committee. Tommy Hartnett (Secretary)

The Online Competition Is Back.

The monthly competition will again be held online in November.

This will be an open competition with all entrants submitting a photograph of their piece for judging. So get out to the workshop and make something.

Points awarded will NOT count towards the annual awards however all items entered WILL be eligible to be entered in the normal monthly competitions when they resume.

Send a photo of your work by email to Mark Daly at mark@eninserv.com by Saturday 7th of November. Include the category (Advanced, Experienced, Beginners or Artistic). Also include something in the photo to show scale (possibly a ruler or pen).



The virus Continues

October Competition Results.

October already..... so who was it said we would be bored senseless during the COVID lockdown. It seems like the spring and summer have passed in the blink of an eye, although I have missed the banter and learning from the monthly get togethers. I do hope that the restrictions haven't been too hard on our community.

period, our competition entry levels have dropped off a bit, however I am confident that we will see an increase again as we head into the autumn.

In the beginners category we have five pieces.

John O'Neill has turned a lovely natural edge bowl with great warmth of colour.

As it looks like the virus numbers are on the increase, I strongly recommend retreating to the sheds and workshops to steepen the productivity curves and stem the dreaded virus. As can be expected during a typical summer

Ronnie Butler has been busy, proving small is beautiful with a selection of pinch bowls and open boxes. Laburnum is one of my favourite woods for warmth and contrasting colours, so the strong contrast between the

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white almost grain-less sapwood and dark glow and stretched rings of the heartwood always tickles my fancy.

Mike Sims, hits the top spot for me again with his twisted beech box. As can be expected from Mike, he has let the wood do the talking. The spalt lines on this piece of beech are crisp and clean. Mike has ensured that they continue uninterrupted from the box to the lid. He has even managed to make sure the finial retains the black thread. The whole piece is so well aligned, I almost thought a black pen was used to impart the pattern.



1st Place: Mike Sims.



Ronnie Butler



John O'Neill



Ronnie Butler

Where have all the experienced entries gone? This month sees only one, however Brendan Kelly presents a two-in-one (at least if you include the finely turned pen used to demonstrate size). His actual entry is the Spalted Hazel Bowl. Apart from the fine tool finish, I really like the multiple colour tones of the hazel, even before the black zone lines take over. Did you know that the black lines are the battlefronts between the fungal colonies that give us this wonderful spalt.



Brendan Kelly

Six entries for the advanced section. Joe O'Neill has turned a lamp (seen here without the brass and wiring). I'm not sure what wood was used. It reminds me of boxwood, however boxwood normally comes in smaller sections. Cecil Barron has turned a square edged vase from pine. Standing at

approx. 7 inches it would make a nice bud vase for the table. Meanwhile, Paddy Finn has gone off center with a walnut artists proportional mannequin (thing a ma jig). Whatever they are called, it is a really nice piece to hone skills from cuts, to proportions, to tool finishing. The choice of walnut may add difficulty due to its hardness, but the end result is very

pleasant to both eye and touch. Sean Earls has been working doubly hard, offering a choice of shallow or deep bowls. Both appear to be beech and display a lovely grain. Brendan Phelan and Michael Fay are trying to make my life hard, by having to choose between two exquisite pieces.



Joe O'Neill



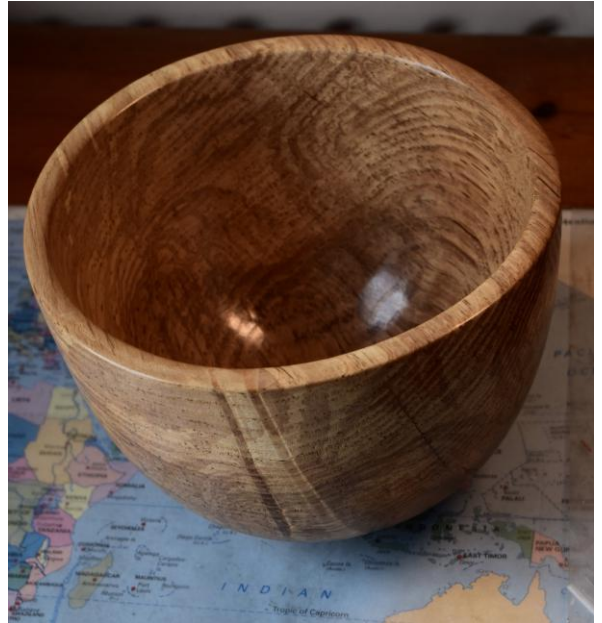
Cecil Barron



Paddy Finn



Two Pieces by Sean Earls



The lamp turned by Brendan has a fine finish. It has an architectural appeal to it, due to the proportions all the way from bottom to top. The squared base, long column, beadings and ogee finish all combine to make a beautiful piece of turning.

Michael Fay's piece is very

different. While it also has beads and droplets, it has a highly decorative combination of wood species and even some pewter. The body of this hollow form is Burr Elm with an eye catching, (pun intended) birds-eye pattern. The lid finial is ebonized maple with a boxwood collar. I think that the pewter provides a crisp and clear

separation between body and lid that no choice of wood would equally achieve. This piece takes my first place nomination due to a combination of fine turning and a certain timelessness.



1st: Michael Fay



Brendan Phelan

In the artistic section we have six entries. Oh Ronnie Yew spoil us. Ronnie Butler has turned three magnificent (actually I think they might be laburnum) hollow forms. Both from a tooling and a treatment perspective, these have real appeal.

Brendan Kelly's goblet is certainly Laburnum. While it has the contrasting sapwood, it also has the unmistakable closely bunched rings.

Cecil Barron demonstrates his steady hand with this offset vase. The wobbly effect reminds me of clay turnings in pottery.

In contrast, Mike Sims has turned an evenly proportioned bowl. The lower section is American Black Walnut and the rim is beech. I think this form has a clean and modern appeal.



Ronnie Butler



Mike Sims



Brendan Kelly



Cecil Barron

It's the same problem but in a different category and at least one of the culprits is the same. This time it's Colum Murphy joining Brendan Phelan in presenting me with a hard decision. Well actually, it's a wonderful problem to have such great pieces to choose from. Colum has turned a very Celtic looking bowl. Something about the design reminds me of the Ardagh Chalice. There is fine detail inside and out, top and bottom. I also love the contrast between the pewter-like outer and furnace red inner. On the other hand Brendan Phelan presents a hollow form with a beautiful opening at the mouth and a complex and unforgiving repeated pattern around the collar that must have taken hours, nay weeks to complete.

I hate sitting on the fence, so I'm putting my head on the block and I know that this decision will see a fair share of objectors. My first place goes to Colum, it has a particularly antique appeal with fantastic colouring. The tough choice just makes me yearn for the return of monthly workshops, as I would love to see both these pieces, demonstrated and explained.

Another month down and another great selection of pieces to admire and challenge us. Now that the evenings are closing in, I would encourage everyone to get out to the lathe and turn something new or maybe dig into the archives and try your hand at a project you haven't tried in years.

Stay safe & happy turning.

Mark.



Brendan Phelan



1st Colum Murphy



Colum Murphy: Other View

I've had no articles or any other item for that matter submitted for this months newsletter.



Come on, someone must have come across something of interest in the past month.

Go out on Google and research a topic of interest to wood turners. Here are a few possible candidates.

- Hard Vs Softwood
- Best Irish wood for turning
- Great trees of the world
- The Labanese Cedar
- Wood turning through the ages.
- The Californian Redwood
- African Woodturning
- Georgian stair spindles
- Glues and their uses in wood turning
- Gouge sharpening techniques.

You can probably come up with many more.

I don't expect the Gettysburg address, just a couple of paragraphs will do. I need your support.

While working on the 2008 archive for the website I came across two intetesting articles from the February and July newsletters. As I need to fill some space and no one is going to remember anyway I have included them in this months newsletter.

Places you won't find with your Sat Nav ...



Withdrawal Symptoms

Is it only me, or do others suffer when holidays take them away from their beloved lathe and shavings? Now, a break from home and the daily routine can be just what we need to restore the batteries, but there is something pathetic about a grown man lovingly patting his headstock, his grindstone and his belts and pulleys as the moment of parting approaches.

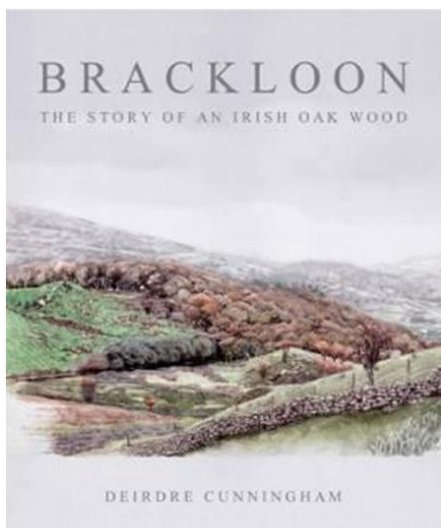
On the positive side, you will find that you are never too far away from “wood related” connections. Recently we found ourselves in Clonmacnoise, and one piece of text in the interpretive centre caught my eye. The yew tree of St Ciaran struck by lightning in 1149. 113 sheep were killed under it. As it happened I had left a piece of partly turned yew at home on my lathe, so this reference caught my interest. A BBC series on trees¹ had referred to the great age and size of many yews, and the prevalence of the yew tree in places of religious worship. Here was a great example. As St Ciaran had died in 548 it seemed that the tree named after him was indeed quite old. It certainly must have been huge if 113 sheep had been killed under its shelter. (And we know the monks wouldn't have exaggerated.)



Not many hours later we were on the little railway that runs across Blackwater bog beside Shannonbridge peat-burning power station in Co Offaly. Among the many trees excavated from the bog, the yew was again mentioned. Maybe some day some lucky Guild member will get hold of a nice piece of “bog yew” and let us know about it. I can recommend this rail trip across the bog, although the flatland, made up of the ancient remains of forestry, may cause you to be struck by the horrific prospect of a future without trees - ‘Cad a dhéanfaimid feasta gan adhmaid?/ Tá deireadh na gcoillte ar lár. (What will we do without wood/Now that the forests are destroyed.)

Old Irish Tree list.

While still thinking about the heritage of Irish trees and forests, I came across a reference to a hierarchy or “class system” of trees that might make us think differently about the lump of timber in our lathe the next time we tackle a job.



‘In ancient Ireland trees were classified into various categories with a series of laws governing their use, and fines for damaging or cutting trees without the landowner’s permission. These laws are found in the 8th century law tract, Bretha Comaithcheasa, or the Laws of Neighbourhood, and give the importance of various trees in the landscape.’

‘The laws recognise a hierarchy of trees or bushes, arranged in four classes according to their economic value; the airing fedo or nobles of the wood, aithig fedo or commoners of the wood, fodla fedo or lower divisions of the wood and losa fedo or bushes of the wood.

1. Airig Fedo

Nobles of the wood

oak
hazel
holly
yew
ash
pine
apple

2. Aithig Fedo

Commoners of the wood

alder
willow
hawthorn
rowan
birch
elm
cherry

3. Fodla Fedo

Lower Divisions of the wood

blackthorn
elder
spindle
whitebeam
arbutus
apsen
juniper

4. Iosa Fedo

Bushes of the wood

bracken
bog myrtle
gorse
bramble
heather
broom
gooseberry

Apart from the curiosity value of this class system, and some of the changes we might be forced to make in our ranking of the importance of the bits and pieces in our wood piles, the book from which these extracts are taken makes fascinating reading.

Michael Viney, in his Preface to Deirdre Cunningham's very detailed work, says,

'The story of Brackloon is a fascinating and important one. Deirdre Cunningham has told it in a way that will appeal to ecologists and ordinary nature-lovers, and to the community of the Westport-Louisburgh area, for whom the oakwood must be reckoned a rediscovered treasure'.

As a simple-minded wood-lover a couple of thoughts occurred on looking at the lists. I am sure the mighty Elm had its nose put out of joint to find itself deemed a Commoner while the humble Apple is considered a Noble. And the owners of hotels and guesthouses who have the posh-sounding Arbutus in the name of their establishment would be devastated to find they had chosen from the Lower Divisions of trees!

Do try to get hold of this book and enjoy a ramble - on paper - through Brackloon - 'The story of an Irish oak wood.

Reference

Cunningham, Deirdre. 2005, Brackloon - 'The story of an Irish oak wood.
COFORD, Dublin. ISBN 1 902696 39 5

Gerry Ryan.

Shavings

I have often been asked about source of nitrogen to flourish, but material, turn the compost heap using shavings in the garden as a they will not rob much from the regularly and do not let it get too mulch or on the compost heap. soil below if the mulch is kept as a wet or too dry. Turning a compost

Well I use most of my sawdust and shavings on the compost heap provided it is well mixed in with plenty of green material and a little Sulphate of Ammonia. However I came across an article in a magazine recently on this subject which I would like to share with you. It says the following. "A 1 to 2 inch layer of shavings or sawdust is an excellent mulch. It holds moisture well and prevents weeds from sprouting. Cedar, walnut and treated timber, however, contains



chemicals that plants do not like so you should avoid these. Contrary to popular belief, sawdust will not leach nitrogen from the soil as long as it is left on the surface. It is true that the microbes feasting on the sawdust will seek an additional separate layer. A year or so later is the time to dig it in around your plants you should then add some fertiliser and all should be well." A last word from me to say it is most important to mix sawdust and shavings very well with the green heap is most important as it aerates and loosens it up this speeds up the process of making good compost.

Barry Dunne.

Chapter Contacts.

Chairman: John Doran
087 6393081
DWT.Chair@gmail.com

Secretary: Tommy Hartnett
086-8284178
DWT.Secretary@gmail.com

Treasurer: Vincent Whelan
087 760 4918
DWT.Treasurer@gmail.com

Vice-Chairman: J. McCloughlin
087 2610803

Membership: Mark Daly
087 9484051
DWT.Membership@gmail.com

Competitions: Brigie DeCourcy
087 9258766
DWT.Competitions@gmail.com

Books & Video: Frank Maguire
01 8346854
DWT.Library@gmail.com

Exhibitions: Paul Murtagh
087 1331292

Audio/Visual: Tony Hartney

Wednesday Demos: Brendan Phelan

Newsletter / Web Master: Brendan Kelly
086 3748183
DWT.Newsletter@gmail.com