



Dublin Chapter Newsletter

Irish Woodturners Guild

March 2022



Meetings back on track and spring has sprung.

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

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Time passes unhindered. When we make mistakes, we cannot turn the clock back and try again. All we can do is use the present well.” – Dalai Lama

Lockdowns behind us and we hope to never to revisit them, time to enjoy the world again.

We are restarting our monthly meetings and getting back to where we left off in 2020.

The past two years have had a huge impact on everyone, old and young.

It now feels like its time to get back out there (while still taking utmost care of ourselves and others). It takes time for full opening up, events have to be planned in advance so it may take a few months before we see the full benefit of reopening of society.

Woodturners had the option of going out to the shed during lockdown and getting stuck into a project. But most people need to see and experience the work of others and this allows them to develop their skills futher, technically called observational learning. How many times have you been at a workshop or demo, seen how someone dio something and quietly said to oneself "ah thats how its done". The old saying ' every days a school day' probably says it best. Looking forward to our meetings/demos and other woodturning workshops coming back.

If anyone hears of an event which might be of interest to the members please let me know and I will put it on the website.

John O'Neill

Woodturning finishes, health & safety? by John O'Neill

We all have our favourite finishes, sanding sealer, friction polish, wax and a range of oils. How often have we read the 'rubbish' on the back of the can? For this article I have just read the small print on the back of the can for the finishes which I have in da shed and googled the additives listed. Not naming any brands or products, except in one positive case.

A few common finishes.

- Linseed oil
- Tung Oil
- Lemon Oil
- Wax/shellac finishes

Note, All oils are flammable so keep away from naked flame!

Linseed Oil

Linseed oil is derived from the flax plant, can be used in cooking and as a food supplement.

Raw linseed oil takes a long time to dry/cure, weeks to months. In the past it was mixed with saw dust to produce flooring called linoleum, replaced in 20th century with a PVC based product but still called linoleum.

Linseed oil is boiled in a sealed container for many hours to produce boiled linseed oil which has shorter drying time. Linseed oil reacts with oxygen and polymerizes. It can auto ignite on rags, in 1991 the 'One meridian plaza' in Philadelphia was burn down, a 38 story block, the cause of the fire was linseed oil soaked rags left by workmen.

It soaks into the wood and darkens with age.

Conclusion, very safe finish in pure form but don't leave the rags lying around.

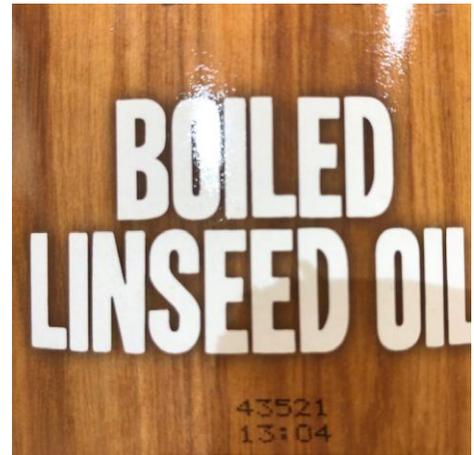
Tung Oil (processed & quick drying)

Comes from the tung nut so beware of nut allergies, when cured it is apparently OK.

Woodturners mainly use a tung oil which has been processed by adding chemicals to facilitate quicker drying. There are lots of warnings on the back of the can, the scariest one is "may be fatal if swallowed and enters airways. May cause drowsiness or dizziness. Causes damage to organs through prolonged or repeated exposure". It does also say to wear protective gloves and eye or face protection.

Whats in it thats of concern.

- Hydrocarbons c9-c11, used in glue, paints and pesticides
- n-alkanes, isoalkanes, cyclics, similar stuff to hydrocarbons
- Hydrocarbons, C9-C12, n-alkanes, isoalkanes, cyclics, aromatics (2-25%), this is



mainly what we call white spirit. Dangerous if breathed in, ingested or by skin contact. Can auto ignite. There is now a safer alternative to white spirit available in most hardware stores.

..... VOC, volatile organic compounds, dangerous to the environment and hazardous to health. Most VOCs in the atmosphere are actually natural and emitted by plants. The artificial variety is main cause of problems.

..... 2-butanone oxime, used as a solvent, its a VOC and used in lacquer, varnishes, paint remover, model cement. It is a constituent of tobacco smoke. Not too dangerous at the low levels which woodturners come into contact with.

Conclusion, use gloves, do it outside, keep the piece on the shelf for a month before using it or giving it to a customer and dispose of rags carefully. Use 100% pure tung oil and be prepared to wait for it to dry?

Lemon oil

Derived from the lemongrass plant this oil soaks into the wood to provide a matt finish. It is quiet safe although rare skin reactions have occurred and pregnant women are advised against using or having contact with the oil. If taken in larger amounts it may have an impact on the liver, woodturners with liver issues beware, use gloves and use it outside. It is used in deodorants, soaps, cosmetics and herbal teas.

It won't change the colour of the wood, soaks in, seals the surface and provides a partial water barrier.

The additives that the woodturning product is mixed with include hydrocarbons, C9-C12 (white spirit), dangerous if breathed in, ingested or if skin contact occurs. Another additive is white mineral oil (liquid paraffin) which comes from the petroleum industry, widely used in cosmetics and food industries. No evidence of risk associated with topical exposure but would you want to drink the stuff!

The small print on that can advises the use of gloves in well ventilated area (i.e. Outside), it may cause skin irritation and dangerous if swallowed.

Conclusion, use gloves, do it outside and dispose of rags carefully.

Wax/shellac finishes

I grouped these together because I thought that they were all the same and that it would be simple. Then I read the back of the containers!

..... A shellac based friction polish which looked harmless enough. The shellac component being the least harmful. The warnings indicate that it is 'harmful by inhalation, these effects may be irreversible, in contact with skin or if swallowed. Harmful to aquatic organisms and causes long term adverse effects to aquatic environments'. Also labelled as quick drying which might mean that it contains similar agents to those used for the quick drying tung oils. Gloves a must with this product, use it outside and proper disposal of contaminated materials a problem, highly inflammable.

..... A finishing wax labelled as a blend of natural waxes , it turns out that it contains the C9-C11 hydrocarbons (white spirit), already mentioned and harmful to skin and the respiratory

system. Very harmful to aquatic environments with long lasting effects. High in VOCs which have long term adverse health affects. May cause drowsiness and dizziness. Wear gloves, eye protection and do not inhale fumes when burnishing.

..... A natural beeswax polish, a blend of natural beeswax and oils. Labelled as having 'aliphatic hydrocarbons', these compounds come from crude oil. There are many aliphatic hydrocarbons and it doesn't say which particular ones are used but none of them are good for the body.

Also contains 'benzyl benzoate', still used in treatment of scabies in poorer parts of the world, and toxic to cats and dogs, can cause contact dermatitis.

!!!!!!!!!!!!Pregnant women advised to avoid contact with the substance. !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The last substance in the polish is linalool, this is a scent which is found in many flowers and fruit, it is used to reduce the effects of stress. Can cause adverse reactions in some people but is listed as a food safe substance by the FDA in the US.



One product I have used which can be named and its an Irish one. Malones furniture wax polish with beeswax, made in Dublin. It is endorsed by the asthma society of Ireland and was developed to be a natural alternative which is allergy free. It is scented with natural lavender and can be used as a general furniture polish. No drying agents so takes a bit of time to dry before buffing. And no requirement for warning signs in small print on back of tin.

it was a surprise to see what was in some of these wax/shellac finishes, use them with protection & caution. Just because a product is labelled 'food safe' does not mean that its safe for the crafts person applying it.

The results of the analysis of all these finishes surprised me, some having shocking constituents. Most of the suspect stuff are there to reduce drying time. It is advised that everyone should read the warnings on the packaging and follow the guidelines, they're not there for nothing!

One could always consider safer alternatives.



Saw this lime burl recently (location kept secret!), looks like its just asking to become a bowl.

On the right is a hawthorn coming into leaf, its taking advantage of the lenghtening days and a real sign of better days coming.



Sequoiadendron giganteum & Douglas Fir by John O'Neill

In 1852 the plant hunter William Lobb heard of giant trees in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Knowing that there was an eager market for a tree of an extraordinary character, he sought them out and collected seeds and specimen trees. On returning to England they sold out quickly and were distributed all around the UK. Then the race began to categorize and name these wonder trees, the Americans wanted them named Washingtonia after their man but the English registered the name first and the tree became 'Wellingtonia gigantea', the scientific name allocated was 'Sequoiadendron giganteum', giant redwood to the rest of us.



redwood on left and
douglas fir on right

It was called after Sequoyah, a member of the Cherokee nation who created their written language.

These magnificent trees are now on the endangered list and suffered badly during the recent Californian fires of 2020 & 2021, these fires are attributed to climate change.

There are redwoods all over Ireland on the land of the great houses, their great height results in a tendency to suffer lightning damage. These trees tend to grow faster in Ireland than they do in their native Californian mountains. They really suck up the water and moisture readings of +50% not uncommon, they can double in height within 10 years.

Check <http://www.redwoodworld.co.uk> for all things redwood.

Douglas Fir are not just for Christmas!

They are native to North America and were brought to England by the botanist David Douglas. Its Latin name 'Pseudotsuga menziesii' pays homage to Archibald Menzies who discovered the tree in the late 1700s, he is also the man who brought back the monkey puzzle (Chilean pine). The Douglas fir is actually a member of the pine family.

The trees can live for over 500 years and the tallest tree recorded in Ireland is a Douglas-fir. It is growing in Powerscourt, Co. Wicklow and measures fifty-six metres in height, the tallest trees in Washington state are several times this height. The oldest known tree is believed to be over 1400 years old. They are found throughout Ireland, these trees account for around 4% of Coillte's tree planting program.

The leaves have that pleasant citrus smell. In America it just loses out to the redwood for 'tallest in the forest' title.

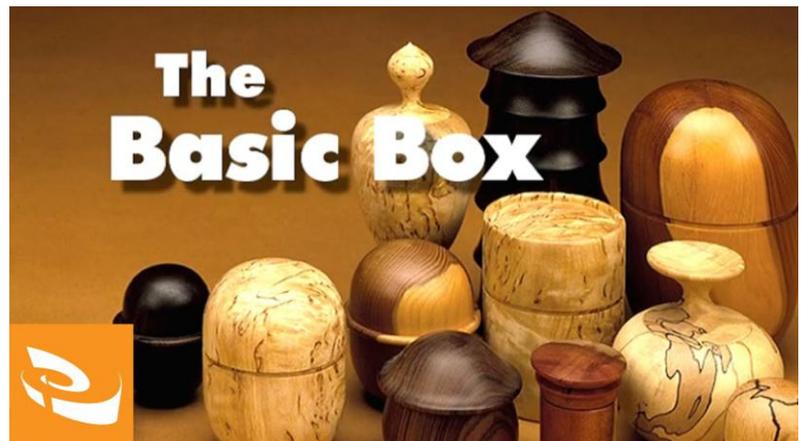
Uses of the wood include beams, cladding, decking, flooring and boats.



The basic box according to Ray Key
by John O'Neill, all pics of Rays work

The late Ray Key has a video on the basic box which gives a great insight into what he considers is good box design. This article is an appreciation of what Ray considered in turning a box.

The box should be well designed and all the elements in proportion. Boxes should have the grain running through them, look like they were one piece of wood without obvious grain



disruption between the base and lid.

The lid fit was one of the most important feature for Ray, the test is to turn the box upside down without the lid falling off. The lid should simply pop off the base without undue strength required. Rays formula for the optimum proportions for a box is 2/5s lid and 3/5s base height. For a finial box he recommends 1/3 in lid & finial and 2/3 in base height.

The timber he recommended is dense close grained

hardwoods, very dry with less than 10% moisture content. Avoid open grained, fast growing timbers, good timber makes a good box. Avoid wood with complex grain features, makes it harder to avoid obvious grain mismatch between base and lid.

To ensure tight fitting snap on lid Ray advises that both intersection surfaces be straight, without curves or any complex/concave surfaces where lid sanps into base. Other woodturners advise putting more complex structure on the lid fitting.



To turn the inside of the box Ray used a spindle gouge with his own unique design. The nose angle is about 60°, the left wing is fairly short, and the wing on the right looks like it goes back between 1.5 and 2 inches. There are many references to this grind on the net, many people having difficulty trying to achieve it. He appears to use 3/8" or 1/2" inch spindle gouge, packardwoodworks in USA sell this gouge as well as other Ray Key tools, don't know of anyone in Ireland who sells them



He also uses a modified scraper for his box work. The end is slightly off square for cleaning up box bottoms and has a long bevel on the left edge for cleaning up box sides. His box toolset was completed with skew with a longer cutting edge on it with a curve and measures 1/2" wide by 1/4" thick. Ray was a master at box making and design and this article only touches on what he knew about box making.

Competition Table
continues from where we left it in 2020

Competition Table

	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Totals
Beginners													
John O'Neill	15	15											30
Ronnie Butler			15										15
Experienced													
Brendan Kelly	15	13	15										43
Vincent Whelan		15	13										28
Advanced													
Brendan Phelan	15	15	15										45
Tony Hartney	13	13	7										33
Paddy Finn	11	6	9										26
Tommy Hartnett	9	11	11										31
Willie Edwards	7	5											12
David Sweeney		9	13										22
Cecil Barron		7											7
Frank Maguire		5											5
John Duff		5											5
Artistic													
Colum Murphy	15	13	15										43
Brendan Phelan	13	15	13										41
Cecil Barron	11												11
Seamus O'Reilly	9												9
Tommy Hartnett	7	11	9										27
Frank Maguire	6												6
Rich Varney			11										11

Interesting items from the web.....

Temple Bar designer mart on Saturdays 10:30 to 17:00, crafts fair.
<https://www.templebarmarkets.com/designermart>

Barry Lewis, National Woodcrafts Ireland based in Limerick,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=taKUKb9TLK4>

Martin Saban Smith new series in March on the tools he uses.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wN4rkuCG5RA>

Peretti family in Italy, wood crafts family.
<https://www.fraperlegno.it/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEDbxNT52jE>



I still need articles for the newsletter. It's difficult to find interesting content every month so I need some help.

Not looking for novels but if you have learned or figured out something or skill that may be useful to others, share it with us!

So can some of you go on Google and research a topic of interest to wood turners.

Woodturners are always interested in how the other guy turns his pieces so if you have something that you think may be unique or novel jot down a few notes, take a few pictures and send them on.

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