

Shavings No 47 December 2018

The Ulster Chapter Newsletter

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A Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all our readers

December 2018

Saturday 11th December 2018 was a busy day in The Woodshed because the Ulster Chapter of the IWG had their AGM and Nick Agar visiting for an all-day demonstration... which was superb. We were very fortunate to be able to have Nick with us because he is in constant demand throughout the World so this was something really special and Nick did not disappoint us.

The AGM was held with a full house of members. Peter Lyons was elected as Chairman, Brendan McAreavy as Hon. Secretary, Paul Finlay as Hon. Treasurer. Robin Graham, Stephen Dowie stood down from the committee.

The meeting finished at 1.10pm.

Nick Agar Report A Decorated Bowl

In his first demo Nick made a decorated bowl. He mounted a Sycamore blank, shaped the exterior of the bowl and made a tenon to hold it in a chuck. While working Nick offered lots of tips and one of the first was that he hones a tool to sharpen it and polishes the inside of the flute to produce a clean cutting edge. He uses 'Autosol' as an abrasive paste on leather to hone the tool. After shaping the bowl Nick shear cut the surface for the finishing cut and



advised us to be careful to maintain the angle



for the shear cut and not to allow it to become a scraping cut as we rounded the bowl exterior. Before removing the blank to turn it around Nick tidied up the base to prevent problems later when he would have problems accessing it.

The bowl was turned and the top trued up. Nick then experimented with various cutting angles and directions to determine which would give him the best cut on that particular piece of wood. He left a wide rim and a bowl shape that looked like a sphere had been taken out of the wood. Nick then textured the rim with an 'Orbicut' ([Orbicut](#)) powered by a Foredom flexi-drive ([Foredom](#)). He said a die grinder could be used but would possibly be too fast unless it has a speed control. Before starting to texture Nick locked the lathe headstock and anchored himself in a comfortable position from which he did not move until the texturing was finished. Instead, he rotated the bowl rim into the 'texturing zone' where he felt comfortable so that the style and shape of the texture pattern remained constant around the rim. He cut small scars into the rim and mentioned another cutter called a 'Saburr Tooth' which is not so aggressive ([Saburr Tooth Cutters](#)).

After finishing the texturing Nick cleaned it with a plastic coated abrasive by 3M in order to preserve the texture and avoid rounding over the edges of the scars. Nyweb ([Nyweb](#)) or Scotch-Brite ([Scotch-Brite](#)) would be similar products. Nick then coloured the bowl by spraying alcohol based blue wood dye on it with the lathe running and then black to frame the edge of the rim. The dyes Nick used throughout the day were all by Chestnut ([Chestnut Spirit Stains](#)) and available in



sample packs and bottles in The Woodshed. Having finished with the dyes Nick then used [Gilt Cream](#)), which is wax based and good on open-grained wood to accent the texture, also available in The Woodshed. The dye will migrate into the wax so use sealer before applying it. Nick uses 'Milkers Gloves' ([Here](#)) to apply the silver cream with a finger. It takes



about half a day to dry so more can be applied later to achieve a stronger effect.

Whenever Nick was satisfied with the colouring he took a final cut to remove the overspray from the inside of the bowl. This is a much more elegant way to deal with overspray than trying to mask the inside off.

A Bracelet

Nick mounted a piece of Sycamore on the lathe and flattened the face before bringing up the tailstock for support to prevent it from twisting the blank. He removed the edge of the blank to start making the bracelet shape and cut from the back of the blank to establish the true face of the rear of the blank. He then cut uphill from both sides to get the best finish on the wood because this is a small bowl blank, not a spindle blank so cutting uphill meant Nick was cutting 'with the grain'. When satisfied with the shape he made a shear cut to refine the finish before sanding. Using a Sorby Beading Tool ([Sorby Beading Tools](#)) Nick cut three beads on the bracelet and then used a homemade modified nail punch to start texturing it. He used three different tools to make texture and burned lines before applying colour. He then used the Sorby Mini Texturing Tool ([Micro Tool](#)) with the double-sided wheel to texture in the grooves and the single-sided wheel to texture the top of the beads. Afterwards Nick used shavings to clean the texture but also said a hog-hair brush would be good as well.

Nick uses Tombow ABT ([Tombow ABT](#)) colouring pens to apply colour to specific areas along with Chroma Craft colours ([Chroma Craft USA](#)). He used a toothbrush to apply verdigris and wiped the excess off with a soft cloth, not a paper towel or tissue as those will leave paper in the texture. He then put Antique Brass and Nordic Bronze on top of the verdigris. If you want to start to further develop colouring Nick recommended museums and historical attractions for inspiration... something we are certainly not short of in Ireland.

To remove the bracelet Nick hollowed it like a bowl and cut in to just over half way, about two-thirds of the thickness of the blank. He then sanded the outside edge and inside of the bracelet before using a Forstner bit to cut a recess for the chuck jaws when he turned the bracelet around. He drilled slowly so that the bit didn't get hot. Having turned the blank around Nick set the bracelet thickness and finished the wall. He sanded and finished as

much as he could and then, after starting to cut the bracelet off, he listened to the wood getting thinner and slowed the lathe down for the final part of the cutting. Before parting through completely Nick airbrushed the edge of the bracelet and then slowly parted off. Now there was a thick ridge inside the bracelet to take care of so Nick put a drill chuck in the headstock with an inflatable 2" abrasive drum ([Kirjes Sanding Drums](#)) and carefully sanded the ridge off. A cylinder with sandpaper on it in a regular drill would do the same job.

A Hollowform

In the afternoon Nick started by making a hollowform. He mounted a piece of wet Sycamore between centres using a safety spur drive ([Oneway Drives](#)) in the headstock and a ring centre ([Axminster Ring Centre](#)) in the tailstock. Safety drives and steb centres ([Steb Centres](#)) are safer options to drive wet wood than regular drives because they take a better bite in the wood and make it harder for it to come off the lathe (Steb centres available in The Woodshed). When Nick was setting the drive he used the knock-out bar in the headstock spindle to drive the centre into the wood while tightening the tailstock. He explained that a two-prong drive ([2-prong drive](#)) gets a better hold of the wood than the standard four-prong so he routinely removes two teeth from the standard drive. A ring centre is safer than a standard revolving centre in the tailstock.

When satisfied that the blank was secure Nick started taking the corners off using a bowl gouge. He rounded the blank taking 'bites' along it's length rather than traversing the full length of the blank with each pass, this is easier on you and the tools. He cut a tenon and turned the blank around into a chuck. Before bringing the tailstock up for support Nick trued the centre of the blank so that the hole made by the drive didn't throw the centre off. Because the tenon is true the blank is true to the lathe when in the chuck.

Before shaping the blank Nick told us that vessels are like eggs so use one third/two thirds proportions to achieve a pleasing shape. He recommended making eggs for practice and to help consider shape and form... which are everything. The 'egg' he was going to cut would be fat on the bottom with the top removed. While cutting the egg-shape Nick kept assessing the shape and refining it.

Remember, you can take wood off but not put it back on so don't be rushing.

In order to hollow the blank Nick started by using a small Forstner bit to make a true 'square' hole that a standard twist bit could go into. This helps eliminate the possibility of a twist drill or brad point drill following grain and going off-centre. Starting with a small Forstner bit followed by a twist drill will be a lot more stable than with just a twist drill.

Nick used a carbide scraper to hollow the blank. Some clearance behind the cutter allows for better access to the blank and cuts. A covered cutter is safer but makes shavings so it's necessary to clean the piece out often because he shavings can accumulate quickly. Essentially, small cutters are safer than big ones because there's less contact if things go wrong. When hollowing Nick worked from the hole he had drilled in the centre and, when about half way down started thinking about setting the thickness of the vessel wall. In order to assist with this he cut a shape in the outside wall from the top to near the base that would allow him to see how thick the wall was as he proceeded. When the piece was complete he would cut a matching shape on the opposite side but not at the same time as the first because then he would have two wings flying around that could let go as the vessel became weaker. When the vessel was complete Nick used a jigsaw to make the second cut in the wall. When the piece was finished it was coloured with spirit dyes, as before, and stencils used to paint butterflies. (The stencils are not available here yet but, when they are we will post the information in a future 'Shavings'. However, they are available from Chroma Craft in USA ([Stencils](#)))

A Platter

The final demo was a decorated platter. Nick mounted a Hard Maple blank on the lathe, cut a tenon and turned it around onto a chuck, once again truing the centre of the blank before engaging the tailstock for support. He removed the bulk of the wood before cutting from the centre to the rim to achieve a good finish. Nick suggested sanding to about P400 before spraying and to use a tack cloth or air line to remove all the dust from the surface of the wood so that the stencils would stick properly.

Nick was using spirit dyes so didn't use sanding sealer. Before spraying he masked off the area around the stencil to avoid overspray with low-tack masking tape. He recommended 3M

Edgelock ([Screwfix](#)) and Frog Tape Green or Yellow ([Screwfix Frog Tape](#)). When spraying Nick started with light colour, yellow, and sprayed heaviest in the centre of the stencil, easing off towards the edges. He then used red around the outside of the shape and added red spots inside. The difficult part is getting the spots symmetrical on the wings of the butterfly. Then, using black dye, he went around the outside to give an edge to the wings. A Mylar sheet ([Mylar Sheet](#)) used over the stencil and sprayed through will give a textured effect.

In a beginners air brush set you should look for a No3, 0.3m to 0.35mm nozzle. Nick recommended going for a double-action trigger (down for air, back for paint). The Sparmax SP35 is a good starter nozzle ([Sparmax SP35](#) one of many sites) but a nozzle that feeds from glass bottles is very versatile for switching colours ([like this](#)). The Neo for Iwata Eclipse is a good airbrush ([here](#)). There are many complete beginners sets available online, too many to link to but Amazon could be a good starting point ([Amazon Airbrush Sets](#)) The final piece of advice Nick gave us was to avoid coiled airlines.

We thank Nick for a very interesting, informative, and entertaining day and hope he will come to visit us again.

Calendar of Demos for 2019

January	David O'Neill
February	Margaret Garrard, all day demo
March	Donal Ryan
April	Charlie Ryan
May	Seamus Cassidy
June Seminar	Mick Hanbury, all day demo
September	Emmet Kane
October	Gary Rance, all day demo
November	Pat Carroll
December	Max Brosi

The 3 all day demos will cost more than the normal £5 entry, we will let you know in good time what the cost and the eating arrangements will be

December Competition

The Category 1 competition was for a mirror. There were two entries and won by

Patsy Cassidy.



Second, name unknown at present



Category 1 competition was for an artistic piece, won by Jim Stevens

3rd was Jim McClenahan



Second was Liam Gilmore



The Competitions for 2019

Month

Category 1

- January Covered container
- February Pestle and Mortar
- March Gavel & Base
- April Thimble and Needle case
- May Kitchen Item
- June Seminar Open Competition
- September A pair of serviette rings
- October A pot stand
- November A set of coasters and stand
- December A Candlestick

Category 2

- January Standard Lamp
- February Black and White
- March A Square Bowl
- April A Sundial
- May A One piece scoop
- June Seminar Open Competition
- September A set of four serviette rings
- October A delicate piece
- November A decorated plate up to 250mm
- December A pair of candlesticks