

## Shavings No 54 - August 2019

The Ulster Chapter's annual barbeque was held on Saturday 10th August 2019 and, despite inclement weather, was well attended with the rain holding off until the outside element of the event was complete. We thank Peter for his chefmanship and the quality of his work was evident when a great silence descended on our happy band as they munched their way through half a cow.

As seems traditional on barbeque day we had two new demonstrators, David Faulkner and Robby Hughes, who are to be applauded for their courage because standing in front of a group of such experienced and skilled turners as we have in the Ulster Chapter can be nerve-racking. However, in saying that, if there is anyone who would like to have a go or has something they would like to share with the members please say because the stage could be your's.

David started his demo by making a pocket watch case using a box hinge (available in the Woodshed [here](#)). He started by mounting a piece of Yew branch in a chuck, holding it with a small tenon, and truing it to round on the outside and flat on the face. This will become the base of the box. Next David used a 35mm Forstner bit to drill a hole in the base to accept the clock, this needs to be a snug fit so check your fit on scrap wood first in case you need to use a slightly smaller bit and work up to the correct dimension with a tool. There is no need to remove the mark made by the point of the Forstner bit because the clock will conceal that but, if you wish to, just drill the appropriate depth less and finish with a tool to get a flat base. Alternatively, just put a small cove where the point is and leave a little feature to delight whoever is changing the battery every 5 years.

When the hole for the clock was finished David reduced the rim to 52mm/53mm for

the hinge. Before cutting the rim David explained that he preferred to leave the wood slightly proud of the hinge to make opening the watch easier. When sizing the rim for the hinge it is a 'cut and try' process to sneak up on the fit. David held the hinge against the rim to determine if there were any gaps or spaces and, satisfied that there were none, he sanded the work and reversed the blank using the jaws in expansion in the watch recess to hold the work. He then proceeded to shape the exterior

of the base and, when satisfied with the profile sanded to finish. He did warn us to be careful sanding Yew because it doesn't like heat and can develop micro-cracks.

Now that the base was complete David started on the top of the box. He mounted a Yew blank in the chuck on a small tenon, as before, and trued the outside of the blank to match the overall diameter of the base and faced of the blank before cutting the recess on the rim to accept the hinge. Once again, this is a 'cut and fit' process, using the hinge to check for gaps around the fit. There is no need to work on the face of the top but David likes to cut a 2mm/3mm recess to dress it up a bit. This is a good point because a small box in a competition we had got particular praise from a judge as the maker had shown work on every surface.

Now that the top was complete David sanded to finish. He normally applies a coat of hard wax oil (in Woodshed [here](#)) to the top and base and then WoodWax22 (in Woodshed [here](#)) buffed on the Chestnut buffing system (in Woodshed [here](#)).

In order to glue the top and base to the hinge David used superglue or, his preferred glue, Mitre Bond but he doesn't use the accelerant because that can make the bond brittle.

Having completed the watch case David gave us some insight into how he turns his miniatures. Firstly he turned a tiny goblet using a regular 6mm or 1/4" spindle gouge and reduced a small branch wood blank to approximately 8mm in diameter. He then cut and shaped the bowl of the goblet before reducing the stem because, if he started to reduce the stem first, the goblet would break when he shaped the bowl due to the forces applied at the end of the blank. David said turning miniatures "is not so much about the tools as your control of the tools". The process for making a miniature is exactly the same as for any regular piece.

After the bowl was cut, David worked on the stem and base of the goblet before parting off. He sanded the little nub off the base by running it across some sandpaper on the table.

The second miniature goblet was turned using a set of Sorby pen turning tools. These are double-ended tools but David tends to use the same four all the time. He said that specialised miniature tools tend to leave a better finish on the wood than regular tools but, again, with the proviso that finish also depends on how well the tools are sharpened and the skill of the turner. David was showing that we don't need to go rushing out to buy specialised tools but, if we do, they are more effective when used properly.

When the second goblet was complete we were then shown yet another set of miniature turning tools but with a difference... these were made out of dental tools and obo nails! David told us that the old obo nails are better steel than the new ones so it might be worth visiting that old-fashioned hardware shop every town seems to have (like Danny Doran's in Lurgan) where those old obos might be hiding in a corner somewhere. The dental tools can be bought easily on Ebay and Amazon but, if you ask your dentist for tools they don't need or have finished with, you could get a lot of high quality, brand new,

tools because the sets they buy have all



sorts of weird ends for hoking about in peoples' mouths and they never use them so those are surplus to requirements. The writer asked his dentist for tools and was given loads so it's worth a try.

David turned a third miniature goblet using some of the tools he showed and the obo nail tool was particularly impressive in his



hand because it acted like a gouge and a skew. He then started with some of the dental picks and the camera magnification was barely able to capture the image.

However, we saw the process and were very impressed with David's skill.

This was a superb first appearance and we



thank David for a very interesting and entertaining demo.

After the break we had raffled sausages and donkey's lugs before Robby Hughes stepped up to show us how he prepares pen blanks for Celtic knots.

Robby started by laying out the blank. First he determined where he wanted the knot to be and this will be influenced by the type of pen and the position of the clip. Once the boundaries of the knot were set he used a square to scribe the lines on all four sides of the blank and then drew a diagonal in each square. It is also possible to use a rectangle and this will elongate the Celtic knot. When the diagonals were drawn Robby numbered the sides in sequence around the blank to keep the structure of the knot in the correct orientation.

The next step is to cut along the diagonal lines and insert a piece of veneer that will become the outline of the knot. It is important that the veneer thickness matches the width of the kerf of the blade being used. If it is too thin there will be

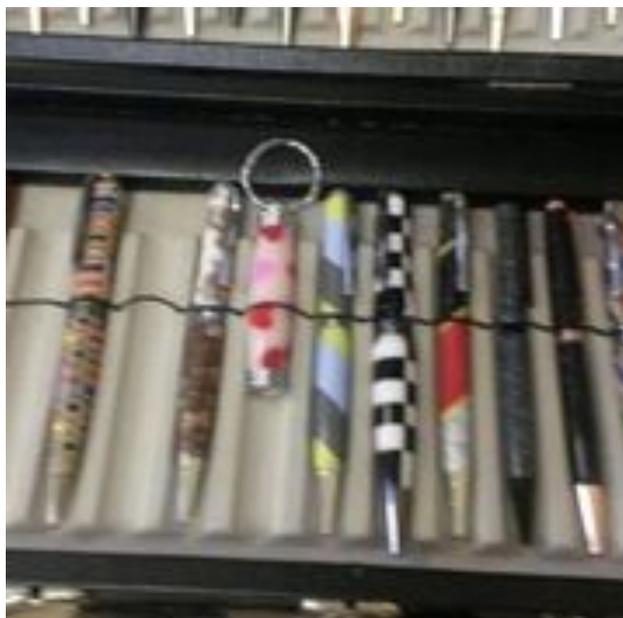
gaps in the knot later and if too thick it may bend the blank out of shape.

Robby used a bandsaw but he started off making Celtic knots with a regular tenon saw. The cuts are made almost all the way through the blank because leaving the blank intact makes gluing up a lot easier than trying to glue a diagonal joint back together again.



After the diagonal was cut Robby glued in a veneer he had made by gluing aluminium strip to wood veneer. The aluminium came from a drinks can and is ideal because the thickness is constant. In order to glue the aluminium to the wood it is necessary to roughen both surfaces with sandpaper to make a key. Robby uses Mitre Bond for all his gluing but seldom uses the activator. Mitre Bond is available in B&Q, Screwfix and many other outlets and is often on offer. When actually gluing the veneer into the diagonal cut Robby first pours thick CA glue into the crack and then inserts the veneer, working the piece into position and then squeezes the blank in a vice for the glue to set. For the purposes of demo he used activator but usually waits a while for the glue to set before cutting off the tail of the veneer and using a chisel to remove any excess material or

glue that would throw the blank out of true for the next cut.



With the first side done, Robby repeated the same process for the remaining three and said that he would then leave that blank overnight to cure before turning. It is very important to maintain a strict sequence to ensure the integrity of the finished knot because any errors will show up in the finished product.

Robby had a display of blanks he made using many types of materials from Corian to B&Q plastic trim. He had many patterns like brick, herringbone, staggered steps etc. He also showed us how moving the centre of a pen top one side of a blank can create a unique pattern down the side of the pen after it is turned.

We thank Robby for a very informative demo and for inspiring us to try things we might not have considered before.

## **Parkanaur**

On Saturday 17th August 2019 the Ulster Chapter will be doing a demo at Parkanaur House as part of the Castlecaulfield Horticultural Society's annual event.

<http://www.castlecaulfieldhs.org/show.html#.XVGjKOP0mM8>

The event starts at 12.30pm but anyone who has offered to help or is interested in helping should be there for 10.00am to set up the stall. We will have three lathes going and will be making spinning tops and trees for children along with anything else you wish to make. Sometimes we get requests from people to see how a particular item is made so the turning is flexible. We are there to enjoy ourselves too!

For your sat nav: BT70 3AA

## **September Demo**

Emmet Kane is the demonstrator on Saturday 7th September at 2.00pm.

The competition themes are:

Category 1 - A pair of serviette rings

Category 2 - Four serviette rings

## **Library**

All library books and DVDs are going to be sold and proceeds put towards equipment. There are hundreds of both so there's bound to be something of interest to everyone. We plan to start the sale in September.

## **Committee Meeting**

The Committee is meeting at 12 Noon on Saturday 7th September before the afternoon demo. An agenda will be sent out later.

Brendan McAreavy  
Hon. Sec.