

Ulster Woodturners' of the IWG
Shavings No 55 - September 2019
By Brendan McAreavy, Paul Finlay and Peter Lyons

Emmet Kane visited The Wood Shed on Saturday 14th September to demonstrate some of his techniques and the development of a sculptural form. His first message was to "have fun, relax, and enjoy what you are doing"

For this demo Emmet made a small spiral Oak box that he would ebonise and texture with gold leaf. The Oak had been rough



turned and stored in a vat of water so that the wood will move easily when turned on the lathe.

Running a slow lathe, Emmet formed the rough shape of the box with the lower wing of a gouge and left some weight at the bottom until after the piece was hollowed out. He hollowed the blank through a small opening so that he could open the top later and retain consistency in the form. While hollowing we were advised to listen to the sound the gouge was making for clues to wood thickness and to use the long grind of a bowl gouge on the inside to refine the shape.

When satisfied with the inside Emmet removed the blank and made a jam chuck from a piece of Ash in order to reverse the blank and work on the base. Ideally, the chuck will extend far enough into the blank to touch the base and so provide support and stability. With the chuck complete the blank was remounted, the lathe speed increased, and the chucking spigot was used to form the base. Emmet likes a small base to help the piece 'float' when displayed so spent some time refining the shape with the lower wing of a gouge until



he was satisfied with the result.

It is important that we allow enough thickness so that after the piece dries there is enough wood for any texture that is going to be used unless break-through to the inside of the form is a desirable element.

Emmet uses Pentacryl ([Here](#)) to stabilise the wood and help with drying. The Wood Shed has Polycryl available. He soaks the wood for 2 to 3 hours which he says reduces drying time. So, the wood is soaked and then stored to allow to dry to completion.

At this stage Emmet produced a prepared blank for texturing because the one just completed was too wet to work with. His

technique to texture wood he calls 'naturalising' because he is trying to find a natural type texture for the piece he has already turned to shape. If there are any cracks in the wood they can be treated with CA glue because evidence of that will be removed or covered.

In order to texture the wood Emmet used a saw disk from Amazon. There are various types and, obviously, a fine disk will



produce a fine texture as opposed to a rough disk which will leave a coarse



texture. There are many different types



([Here](#)). A 24-tooth chainsaw disk for an angle grinder will leave scars by just touching it to the wood. Needless to say, these disks must be used with extreme caution and full safety gear employed. Emmet did advise us to try not to cut through the wall of the vessel unless that is a desired effect.

During the break Emmet took us outside and showed us how to use ammonia to 'fume' the wood. The piece of wet wood is placed in a sealable container with a little ammonia... just a teaspoon on a lid. After 5 - 10 minutes a darkening effect begins to appear on the wood and will get darker the longer the wood is exposed to the



ammonium hydroxide. The proximity to the source of the fumes will affect the rate of darkening. The wood can be neutralised with water when the desired depth of colour is reached but we need to remember that the ammonia will not penetrate glue or oil. Woods with tannin



react best to the process but their sap wood will not react as well. There are many suppliers online and, seemingly few restrictions on buying. However, we have contacted a chemical agent in NI and are waiting for a reply on availability and any restrictions on buying. That information will be published in a mail shot or in the November edition of 'Shavings'.

If the wood is too dark a two-part bleach, like Rustin's ([Here](#)) can be used to lighten it a bit. Neutralise the ammonia by washing the wood and, when the wood has dried it can be finished with oil.

Emmet textured the piece on the lathe during the break to save time later and, when we returned, he cut the base of the piece with a parting tool. He then cut the mouth of the piece with a saw blade and pulled the cut pieces off to widen the mouth. He used engineering burrs (cheaper than carving burrs) to refine the shape of the mouth and remove the saw cuts. He reminded us to leave the opening of the vessel small during drying to prevent the piece moving too much.

"Finish is everything" - and Emmet prefers a matte finish to a shiny one. To enhance the surface he used a Dremel-type



machine with small ball burrs to touch the surface and create a dimpled effect. A bigger die-grinder will do the job much quicker but you need to exercise care when using a lot more power. Emmet uses nylon brushes in P120 and P180 grit



to clean the surface because they aren't as aggressive as wire brushes which could remove the texture you have just applied. There are many, many, types available on Ebay ([Ebay](#)). The nylon brushes are good because they can remove torn grain.

In order to sand the inside of the piece Emmet used pump-up sanding balls that conform well to the curves ([Like these](#)).

As a final tip Emmet showed us how to use a router and router bits to texture a surface. It's important to set the depth of cut and exercise great care when carrying out free-hand routing.

This was a wonderful demonstration of interesting and inspirational techniques that certainly fired imaginations and gave us a lot of good technique to apply to our own work. We thank Emmet for coming to visit us and hope he will return again.

Competition Results

Category 1 1st Francis McHugh

Sorry no pic.

2nd Gerry Leddy



2nd Jim Neil



3rd Paul Finlay

Category 2
1st Eugene Grimley



The Country Comes To Town
During our demo at Parkanaur we were asked to come to a huge event in Portadown called 'The Country Comes To Town' and agreed to do so. We then discovered we were being paid and so raised money for our coffers.



Seven turners went to the show with two lathes and had a great response. People were genuinely interested in our work and a lot of business cards were taken. We weren't allowed to sell because vendors are charged a lot of money for their space so would not be please if we got to be paid and sell as well. However, the good will we enjoyed was payment enough on a personal level. The organisers have been in touch to tell us our stall was one of the



most popular and that feedback from visitors was very positive.

We thank the people who went to turn for the day, they know who they are, and would encourage other people to get involved in the demos. They are great fun and we always go home happy.

October Demo

Gary Rance will be coming to The Wood Shed on Saturday 12th October 2019. It is an all-day demo starting at 9.30am and will cost £25. Please bring a lunch as none will be provided at this demo.

A note from IWG

Hi Member,

The Irish Woodturners' Guild seminar is less than 3 weeks away and the hotel wants to know how many meals they must cater for before the 8th October.

To guarantee that meals are available at current prices, you must have the seminar booked before the 8th October. After that date the seminar can only be booked without meals.

To book the seminar you can do it 3 ways

(1) Fill out the application form at www.iwg.ie Seminar 2019, Book On-line and fill out the relevant information.

(2) Send application form with payment to Tom Dunlop. Form is below and in the journal or can be downloaded from www.iwg.ie Seminar 2019, Download Booking form and fill out the relevant information.

(3) Ring Tom Dunlop on 086 3491153 to reserve a place.

