

# Shavings No 35 November 2017

## The Ulster Chapter Newsletter

By Peter Lyons and Brendan McAreavy

Welcome to the penultimate Shavings of 2017, doesn't the year fly by.

If you have anything that will add interest to this newsletter, please let me have it by email.

### Notice of AGM AGM 2017

**The Wood Shed, Lowlown Road,  
Templepatrick,  
On 9<sup>th</sup> December 2017 at 1200 hrs.**

### Agenda

1 Apologies

2 Minutes of the last AGM held at the Wood Shed, Templepatrick, 10<sup>th</sup> December 2016. (A copy of those minutes will be available to all attendees at the meeting.)

3 Chairman's Report 2017

4 Hon. Secretary's report 2017

5 Hon. Treasurer's report 2017

6 Librarian report 2017

7 Committee resignation and election of the 2018 committee. (Anyone wishing to stand down from our committee or be elected onto our committee, please let Peter Lyons know.)

8 The Presentation of the Roy McKay Trophy, to a member of the chapter who has contributed to the success of the chapter over the years.

9 General discussion.

### Calendar of Demos for 2017

Each demo is £5 unless otherwise stated.

December 9<sup>th</sup> Ulster Chapter AGM, see notice

Peter Lyons is the demonstrator.

Competition will be a bowl for Cat 1 and a Christmas themed piece for Cat 2.

### For Sales or Wanted

Paul Finlay informs me there is some good stuff on our web site. I had a quick look and there sure is. [iwgulsterchapter.com](http://iwgulsterchapter.com).

### Announcements

#### Training and help before our demos.

Jim Stevens has agreed to do his sharpening class before the February Demo, so put the 10<sup>th</sup> February in your diary at 1200hrs.

#### Omagh Exhibition

Our Omagh Exhibition, "Spun Wood", was a great success there are some photos in this shavings. Brendan McAreavy has made a video at the exhibition and it is on YouTube. Go to this address. <https://youtu.be/eWNzq0ujlFo>



Stephen, Brendan, Billy and Ricky enjoying the Omagh opening.

## Ballymoney Exhibition

A team of our members worked hard to move the pieces from Omagh to Ballymoney Museum, with help from Paul Finlay, Brendan McAreavy, Stephen Dowie, Eugene Grimley and Robin Graham. Billy Ferris then used his van to move all the pieces to Ballymoney. Thanks to these guys, especially Billy, that was some run.



Quite a number of us arrived at Ballymoney for the opening evening. There were lots of other members of the public in attendance. The next day I was told the one £600 of sales was made on the night. There was also a Christmas light switching on the next evening and our exhibition was open that evening as well.



The exhibition closes on 9th December. We will have to remove our pieces on the 11th/12th. If you need help with that let me know. We should be able to organise something.

## 2018

The 2018 programme is as follows:-

January 13th, Tom McCosh is going to show us his vase with the graduated sides.

The Competition will be  
Category 1 Candle Holder  
Category 2 A New Year

February 10th, Danny McGeever.

The Competition will be  
Category 1 A friendship goblet.

Category 2 Valentines Day piece  
March 10th is Sally Burnett, all day demo.

April 14th Christien van Bussell

May 12th is Kieran Reynolds,  
June 9th Seminar, Joss Naigon, all day demo.

Jason Breach will be here in October or November.

We will fill in the rest of the spaces as soon as we have decided on the turners.

## Shavings - November 2017

The Ulster Chapter of the IWG had Jim Johnston visit to demonstrate wood stabilisation and how to make a kit less pen.

At the beginning of the demonstration Jim talked about stabilising wood using a vacuum pot, toaster oven and



stabilising fluid. He prefers to stabilise wood because it prevents the issues associated with wood movement in ambient moisture and he doesn't want his pens coming back with splits so this step is well worth taking because the wood becomes more like acrylic but maintains its colour and texture. The process is so effective that blanks can be cut to finish and not require sanding.

Jim uses a vacuum pot, vacuum generator from 'Turners Retreat' (<https://www.turners-retreat.co.uk/stabilising-system-including-8-25-quart-2-quart-tanks-and-generator>) and 'stick Fast' resin.



The wood is best prepared when the moisture level is under 10% but that can be achieved by gently heating the wood in the hot press for a little time or gently in an oven where 15% to 10% can be achieved in an hour. Jim keeps his blanks in the hot press until he needs them. A vacuum can be pulled using either the generator mentioned that works off a compressor like a Venturi system using compressed air to pull air from the chamber or with a dedicated vacuum pump. We can only

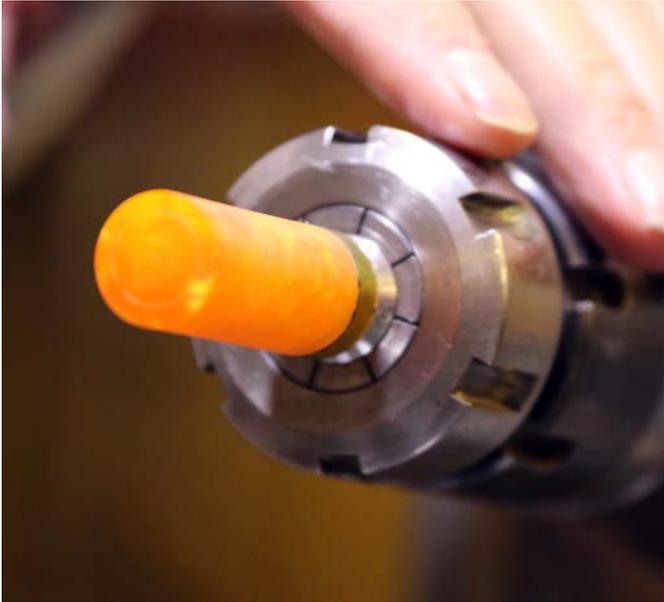
pull one atmosphere because once the air is gone there's no more to take out unlike pressure where more air can be forced in. Some people prefer using pressure to remove air from the blanks but what they are doing is to compress the air bubbles inside the blank until they are negligible. Either method will produce good blanks if done correctly.

To prepare the blanks for the vacuum they are placed in a tub of stabilising liquid (dye can be added at this stage) and placed into the vacuum pot. The blanks are weighed down to ensure that they are completely covered with stabilising liquid at all times. Once the vacuum has been created Jim leaves the pot overnight with the vacuum on to give the air good time to escape.

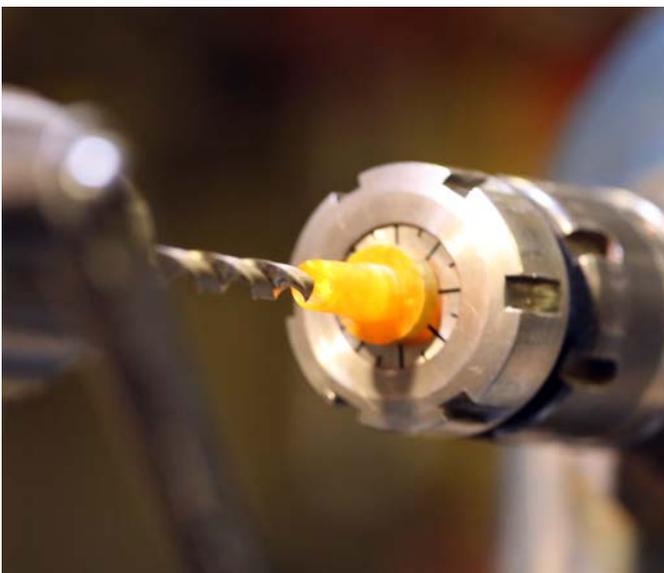
When the blanks are removed from the resin they are wrapped individually in tinfoil so that they don't stick together and put in a small toaster oven. These are not expensive and a new one, with good reviews can be bought on Amazon for as little as £23.99 ([https://www.amazon.co.uk/Quest-Mini-Oven-Litre-Black/dp/B00K22YJEY/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=kitchen-appliances&ie=UTF8&qid=1511713704&sr=1-1&keywords=toaster+oven](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Quest-Mini-Oven-Litre-Black/dp/B00K22YJEY/ref=sr_1_1?s=kitchen-appliances&ie=UTF8&qid=1511713704&sr=1-1&keywords=toaster+oven)). Jim uses an external temperature gauge to monitor the temperature of the oven because it should stay between 93C - 95C to prevent the liquid boiling out of the blanks. The blanks are cooked for 30 minutes to 1 hour and allowed to cool. Once cool they can be treated like any other blank.

The second part of the demo was when Jim showed us how to make a kit less pen. This technique produced a unique 'hand made' pen that uses minimal supplied equipment, only relying on specialised parts like nibs

and clips that are bought in. Essentially, Jim takes a blank and machines a central piece that becomes the 'section' that joins the top barrel of the pen to the cap end and accommodates the nib section and ink cartridge. This entails using very precise drills, taps and dies to construct a unit that achieves all four dimensions. Usually, Jim uses a piece of acrylic for this part because it is very stable and takes good threads.



There are nine pages of notes just on this process so, rather than try to describe the entire process in words, Jim has very kindly offered to show anyone who is interested in making kit less pens the full process in his workshop. Details on how to contact Jim will be included at the end.



There was a lot of good advice given that can be applied to pen making in general. We need to ensure that the lathe centres are accurate otherwise the finished blanks will be oval. Jim advised sticking to one pen manufacturer and buying all the associated bushings, drill bits, taps, etc. from them because there can be tiny variations between kits depending where you buy them. He told us that his 'no-clip' pens are very popular so, for the rest of us making regular pens in could be worthwhile leaving a few clips off to gauge reaction. Some ladies prefer clip-less pens because they don't get caught up in handbag contents.

Finishing - Jim uses Lemon Oil as a lubricant and sands from P240 to P1200. He then uses Simonize car polish, Brasso and burnishing cream before buffing the pen with a 4" wheel going slow... large buffing wheels cause too much heat.

This was a very interesting demonstration and we thank Jim for his thorough explanation of the entire process.

Brendan McAreavy

Jim Johnston has agreed that if any of our members want more detailed instruction on pen making he will be willing to accommodate them by giving personalised tuition at his workshop in Bangor. To contact Jim ring 07771 650675 and work something out with him

Competition for November

Our theme for November was Remembrance. Results with pictures are below.

**Category 1**  
1st David Faulkner



2nd Patsy Cassidy



3rd Vernon Robinson



**Category 2**  
1st Dermot Doherty



2nd Allen Chestnutt



3rd Peter Lyons



November is the month we give our work to the Royal Belfast Hospital for Sick Children. Jenne McDonald and her husband visited the Wood Shed for the handover of in excess of 300 pieces of work, Christmas Trees, Snowmen and a few other assorted turnings. Also some fretwork pieces by Samantha Faulkner new well received by Jenne. Thanks to all of our turners who contributed to the work involved in these pieces. A special thanks to Ricky McDonald and his friend Ramunas Pleckaitis who supplied a lot of the wood we used to make the pieces. Another success for recycling, this wood would have gone to land fill.

Jenne explained to the assembled members how well received our work is at the hospital. Jenne has since told me that because of the quantity she got, she was able to supply some to the Ulster Hospital and the Belfast City Hospital. As a consequence of our efforts, and the staff at the Strule Arts Centre, we were able to give Jenne a cash donation to help the hospital buy paints and equipment to help the play department assist in the recuperation of the children. Since the initial cheque was given to Jenne at the November Demo, we have received a further cheque from Omagh bringing total amount given to the RBHSC play department to £529. This is a magnificent effort and all members of the Ulster Chapter deserve a great big pat on the back. Well done all of you.



Jenne addressing the meeting





Our Treasurer Paul Finlay giving Jenne the cheque, I think she is happy.



Some of the turnings on their way, Jenne's car was full, so Jack Chapman delivered some on the Sunday after the meeting.

