



# GALWAY CHAPTER NEWS

Issue 65

February 2008

## 2008 AGM well supported.

It was great to see so many faces at the AGM. We welcomed our new chapter members (and our regular members also) to a fresh new year of turning. This year looks like a cracker!

We have a wonderful trip arranged to Glen Lusas's workshop this month. I'm looking forward to finding out how he manages his business workshop. I expect to learn a lot from this professional.

We will also be printing a series of profiles on different trees, over the coming months. I thank everyone in advance for their contributions.

The challenge piece this month is to bring a cup and saucer to the next meeting. A wooden one that is! Happy cuppas! See you there George

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

Chairman: John McGann 091-635354  
 Hon. Secretary: Ambrose O'Halloran 091-798225  
 Hon. Treasurer: Brid O'Halloran 091-798225

### Committee members

Roger Greally, Martin Lodge George Anderson

[www.galwaywoodturners.com](http://www.galwaywoodturners.com)

### Membership fees were due January 1st

Ordinary membership	€54
Family membership	€57
Student membership	€10
Associate membership	€10

# Chapter Workshops 2008

Date	Host	Location
January 24th	John McGann	Ardrahan
February 23rd	Glenn Lucas	Carlow
March 20th	Tim Lydon	Kilannin
April 17th	Brid & Ambrose O'Halloran	Cregboy
May 15th	Columba Eagleton	Ballyglunin
May 31st	Mark Sfiiri	Ardrahan

## CHALLENGE PIECES JAN 2008



Joint 1st Place  
Clare Gurley & Ambrose O'Halloran

2nd Place  
Tim Lydon

3rd Place  
Martin Lodge

## Workshop in John Mc Gann's

I arrived a little late but with pencil sharpened and notebook ready to the January workshop of the McGann clan in Ardrahan. The workshop was in its usual clean state not a shaving in sight. The Galway Chapter are no strangers to this workshop with 3 international turners having done workshops there in the past year and some exciting Galway Chapter workshops. It seems that this place cannot get enough of turning. This night wasn't to be any different.

Even though I was a little late the turning had not begun, just the local banter and joking associated with our Chapter. John had a piece of wet sycamore on the lathe mounted between centres covered with a wet dish cloth, proof if anyone needed it that John had just come from the kitchen sink, which is probably the only thing that John's workshop hasn't got. John got the ball rolling by turning this into the shape of a vase with wet shavings streaming through the air some as long as the smile on John's face.

When this was complete John removed the tailstock and produced a Hamlet Big Brother with a hook tool cutter and proceeded to hollow out the vase. As John got deeper into the piece, using the tool became very challenging. John offered the tool to anyone willing to give it a go. Firstly Roger stepped up to the challenge and before you could say membership secretary he had shavings flying with the ease of a man that had done this before. Next up representing the Moycullen splinter group was Neil who also made shavings at ease with this mighty tool. Next up was our own journal editor George then Noel, Tim and our newest member Kevin Walsh. All were able to cut with this tool which is a credit to them, as this is not an easy tool to cut with. Not wanting to embarrass myself I kept the head down and kept writing. Enda Coffey (welcome back Enda) was asked to have a go. Even though it's 2 years since Enda had turned, he produced some nice cutting strokes. Unfortunately the piece suffered the effects of too many craftsmen having a go and parted company with the base.

John then produced one he had made earlier with great success. He had decorated the outside with a pyrography tool and it looked like a coconut. Sorry John if it was meant to look like something else but it was very attractive indeed. Well done John.

Seaneen then stepped up to the lathe to turn a small spalted sycamore bowl for Enda to colour later on. He turned the outside first



explaining that you need to get a very good finish, if you are to colour on top of it. If you don't it will show up any scratch marks or defects in the timber. He then turned the bowl over and turned the inside leaving a wide rim for colouring. He sanded the bowl and got it ready for the colouring later. At this stage it was time to break for the tea.

As usual Mary and her helpers had a great spread put on for the hungry troops. If the dog is anything to go by no one leaves this kitchen hungry. Being on a diet myself (paying for the Christmas indulgence) I sampled only a small amount of the goodies on offer. Judging by the smiles on everyone's faces the treats went down very well. The tea break gives everyone a chance to have a chat and share ideas.

Thanks Mary for the hospitality and best of luck as I hear you are swapping the apron for the smock (Woodturning smock that is) in the near future.

Back to the workshop for the final session. Enda burnished the bowl with some shavings and this gave the bowl a glass like finish. He pointed out to use the shavings from the wood that you are using as other shavings could be harder and damage the piece. He then wet the piece to make the grain stand up, dried it with a heat gun, sanded it lightly and burnished again with shavings to a produce a glass like finish. This was done to prevent the grain from raising after colouring. He then carefully masked the front of the bowl. He proceeded to mix the colouring using a black acrylic for the outside. This was applied with a Passae air brush worked from a small compressor. Four or five coats would be needed and Enda dried with the heat gun between coats. This was only done for the demo as heating could damage the coat and you would have to sand down and start again. The airbrush was washed between coats as it is very fine and can block up easy. Enda applied a wax coat over this and cut it back to reduce the sheen.

He then cut open the masking tape off the hollow section of the bowl. This allowed the inside to be coloured but kept the rim protected. He coloured the inside with a copper colour going over the same steps as before. This can be very time consuming and as Enda said there is a lot of time spent watching paint drying. He then cut patterns in the masking tape in the rim to produce some nice shapes and designs. He coloured these with yellows and blues allowing them to blend into each other. He then removed the rest of the masking tape to reveal a lovely coloured decorated bowl to a well deserved round of applause.

Well done to the demonstrators on the night and to everyone who travelled. It was a very enjoyable and informative night. Thanks to the McGanns for the warm welcome which we now come to expect on every visit to Ardrahan.

Martin Lodge. Feb 08.



## The Majestic Oak

Oak timber is a dense hardwood. When felled it is 75% water. When dry it is still a heavy hardwood. Oak is strong, and beautiful. There are many beautiful woods, and there are many strong woods, but few that combine both qualities. There are two primary reasons that oak is so aesthetically pleasing.

The first reason is that oak has highly visible "medullary rays". These portions have a dense cellular structure and reflect light differently from the other heart wood. The rays radiate from the center of the oak log. Most hardwoods contain medullary rays, (they help to retard the spread to fungi in the living tree) however these are very pronounced in oak. When the oak log is quarter sawn, the rays are cut at a very low angle to reveal more of their surface. Quarter sawing is labor intensive and produces fewer board-feet of lumber than plain sawing. It is therefore more expensive.

The second attribute of interest is that oak trees contain large amounts of tannic acid. This makes their leaves useful to leather tanners. Wine is matured in oak barrels to supplement the small amounts of tannin present in the grape skin and hence to impart a slight bitter taste to the wine. Tannin makes the mouth feel little bit dry (as with strong tea).

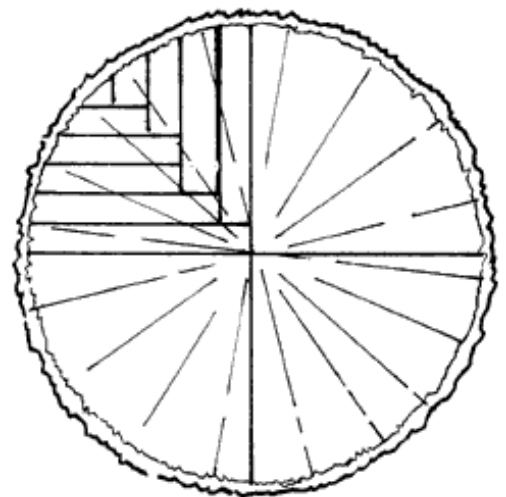
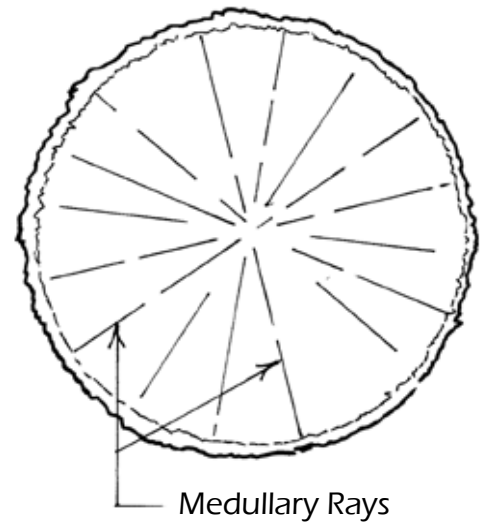
Ammonia reacts strongly with the tannic acid in oak and can be used to darken or blacken it.

From a botanical perspective the two native Irish oaks are *Quercus Robur* (Pedunculate or common oak) and *Quercus Petraea* (Sessile oak). To differentiate between them we must examine the leaves and acorns.

The Pedunculate oak's acorns have stalks whereas the sessile oaks do not. In contrast, however, Pedunculate oak leaves have very short stalks and the sessile oak leaves have longer ones. Another difference between the two is their soil preference. Pedunculate grows well in moist humus rich soils, while the Sessile thrives in lighter, well drained soils. The timber from both is identical.

In Ireland we cannot forget our very special source of ancient oak. The buried trees in Irish bogs. In the west of Ireland entire forests of pine lie preserved underneath the blanket bog. Three important types of wood found preserved in Irish bogs today, Scot's pine, oak and yew. They can be from 4,000 to 7,000 years old.

Oak and yew trees are generally found around the edges of the bog. They were drowned as the bog expanded out of its basin onto the surrounding mineral soil. The lack of oxygen in waterlogged peat prevents the natural process of decay and ensures the tree trunks and stumps are preserved for years, in the accumulating peat.





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Scientifically, bog wood has proved invaluable as a dating tool and for studying climate change. This is made possible because of the variation in the annual growth rings. Tree rings are wide in a good year and narrow in a poor year of growth. Studying variations in the tree rings is known as dendrochronology. By studying and matching the patterns in tree rings from a wide range of bog wood samples, a year by year chronology can be built up.

Queens University in Belfast has a tree ring record compiled from 4,000 bog oak and other ancient oak timbers that spans 7,000 years. A pine chronology for Ireland is also under development. The tree ring chronology allows accurate dating of anything made from oak or pine in Ireland. The annual growth rings in bog wood timbers also give a record of past climatic conditions. The patterns in the rings give a detailed record of climate change over time.

For us turners and woodworkers, oak timber can be difficult to work. It can chip easily, it is very hard, its dust is rough on your lungs. When kiln dried, these problems are exacerbated.

It takes a certain dedication to work with oak, but when finished we are well rewarded.

George Anderson

## *Monthly Turning Challenge Items*

# 2008

*January 2008      Inspired Item*

*February 2008      Cup and Saucer*

**For this years Challenge the best of your 8 entries will be considered. It's the prefect time to make that new year resolution to bring in a piece each month .**

## NEWS BITS

### February Meeting

**Thursday 7th Feb**

**8.00 P.M**

**Quality Hotel Oranmore**