



**Special Timber and
Working With
Wood Show Issue**

Inside this issue:

Members Views 3
on the TWWWW

TWWWWs gallery 5
competition

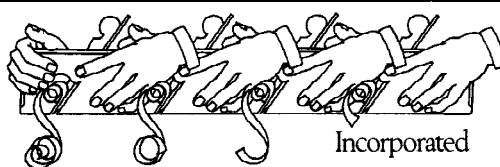
Paul Gregson 6

New 8
Competitions

Exhibitions:
Alan Wale
Retrospective 9

Sturt School for 12
Wood 21 years

WOODWORKERS' ASSOCIATION OF N.S.W



www.woodworkersnsw.org.au

ABN 51 544 324

August 2006

From the Timber and Working With Wood Show



Having fun at the Woodworkers' Association stand at the Show. What is she doing? Turn to page 9 to find out.

Put in your bid for this beautiful workbench made by Phil Lake with contributions from the Miller McLeod family and others—further details page 6.



The next bi-monthly meeting

Monday 7 August

"Special Chairs Show and Tell night"

Bring along a chair or stool
that you have made or are
making

YourWorkshop

Unit 2, Building 5,
75 Mary Street, St Peters
(Peter Stone - 9519 1234)
7 pm for 7.30 pm start - until
9.30 pm

Meeting fee \$4-00, incl.
draw for door prize.

Visitors welcome - 1st visit
free!

The Woodworkers' Association of NSW, Inc
Correspondence to PO Box 1016 Bondi Junction NSW 1355

Chair Warwick Wright (02) 9555 7960 warwick@grainwoodworks.com.au

Vice Chair Paul Barton (02) 9608 8195 paullbarton@bigpond.com

Secretary Peter Hunt PO Box 1016 Bondi Junction NSW 1355
0418 867 870 p_j_hunt@msn.com.au

Treasurer Phil Lake (02) 9518 4150 philjanlake@yahoo.com.au

Membership Secretary Peter Hunt PO Box 1016 Bondi Junction NSW 1355
0418 867 870 p_j_hunt@msn.com.au

WebMaster Paul Barton (02) 9608 8195 paullbarton@bigpond.com

Editor Paul Barton (02) 9608 8195 paullbarton@bigpond.com

Assistant Editor Frank Duff 41 Sherwood St Old Toongabbie NSW 2046
(02) 9896 4017 fwduff@optusnet.com.au

Public Officer David Buick (02) 9557 5799 pabuick@idx.com.au

Committee members

Conal Downey 0407 767 800 conaldowney@aol.com
Frank Duff (02) 9896 4017 fwduff@optusnet.com.au
Peter Hunt (02) 9369 1193 p_j_hunt@msn.com.au
Phil Lake (02) 9518 4150 philjanlake@yahoo.com.au
Chris Redondo 0405 983 672 ingnews@oz.com.au
Robert Chapman (02) 4271 1599
robertchapman@contemporaryfurniture.com.au

Exhibitions Coordinator Robert Chapman (02) 4271 1599

**Welcome to new and
returned members.**

**Ant Burrige,
Hemant Daya,
Peter Evans,
Mike Freestone,
John Greenland,
Philip Greenwood,
Tracy Gumm,
Antony Lyncham,
Norman Nolan,
Gordon Windeyer,**



**Aims of the Woodworkers
Association of NSW, incorporated**

- To foster creativity and the pursuit of excellence in the crafting of the wooden form.
- To provide a forum for the exchange of expertise and to foster camaraderie among those who work in wood.
- To provide for the networking of information and material supply.
- To promote public awareness and appreciation of this work.
- To be a respected voice concerning the management of our precious native timber resources and to promote best practice in land management.

Membership is open to anyone interested in woodworking, both amateur and professional. The Association meets every second month: the first Monday of every even month.

Opinions expressed in articles in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the editor or the Committee of The Woodworkers' Association of NSW Inc.

Articles for the next newsletter should be forwarded to Paul Barton by 20 Sept 2006.

“Can’t you find something better to do than fiddle around with bits of wood?” **Minerva Coulter**

From the Chair

Please be seated! Come along to the next meeting on 7 August with a chair or stool you have made.

Chairs are the iconic challenge for woodworkers. Apart from the revered James Krenov, who couldn't see any point in designing and making yet another chair to add to the thousands of others already made, most woodworkers have either made a chair or aspire to make a chair. It need not be an exhibition piece. Anything you have made, including a proto-type or work in progress, will be welcome. I am sure we will all have something to learn from our collective experience.

Competition: Make a cabinet for the December meeting.

A frequently asked question is when are we going to have another competition but there have not been too many suggestions of a subject. The Committee has decided to run a competition in parallel with Australian Wood Review's *Inner Space* which is a

competition with the theme of cabinetwork.

This will allow members to enter a national competition (entry forms and images need to be provided to AWR by 12 October) and then bring the real thing to our December meeting. Judging will be independent of the AWR competition. There will be a second category for those members who do not want to enter the AWR competition. Members are encouraged to enter one or both competitions.

More details are on Page 8.

Exhibitions

Co-founding member, Alan Wade, has had his achievements and contributions to fine woodwork celebrated in two recent exhibitions. An article featuring his life and work also appeared in The Canberra Times Arts and Entertainment section of 26 July.

A very emotional Alan struggled through his address at the opening of *Twenty-One years at Sturt Exhibition* (28 May to 2 July). The exhibition included an historical overview of the school which Alan established in 1985. The exhibits included Alan's beautifully crafted music cabinet and a small box.



As soon as the Sturt exhibition concluded Alan's pieces were sent off to Canberra to join other examples of his work in a solo exhibition, *Alan Wade Retrospective*, at the Australian National University's School of Art (20 July – 19 August). Alan gave a Walk Trough talk on 22 July. In contrast to the Sturt address, Alan was vibrant and jovial and obviously enjoyed discussing his life and his work. There is a review of the exhibition in this newsletter.

Please bring along your chair or stool to the next meeting on 7 August and start planning a cabinet for the competition.

Warwick Wright

A point of view – Sydney Timber & Working With Wood Show 06

Phil Lake

I have been closely involved with the organization of our stand and the competition. This year once our stand was built and the major move in was out of the way I felt it important to focus on the competition. Our intention is for the clubs present at the show to take ownership of the competition, to both organize and promote the event. We are still in the early stages of club interaction and consequently responsibility for the process revolves substantially around me. Our stand was well furnished with a good variety of member pieces and with our position just inside the entrance to the hall everybody was kept busy. Miko's koalas and gorilla got a great work out. Some kids found the hand coordination difficult but with a little help there was a lot of excitement "satisfying stuff"

Our stalwart ticket sellers did a marvelous job and were kept busy seemingly without having to perform to catch the attention of the public. All thanks to the overall membership for their part in swelling the return from the raffle. Without the financial boost we receive from this event we would either have to curtail activities or increase membership fees.

One corner of our stand was devoted and set up for demonstrations of toy making and other making processes. We thank the following exhibitors for the loan equipment that furnished this area; Felder, Triton, Carbitool, Major Woodworking and Gifkins.

The competition was well patronized with just over 100 exhibits (not quite as many as last year). Eight Association Members exhibited with a total of nine

entries in the categories Furniture and box making, Carving and Sculpture, Musical instrument making and General Woodwork. Prizes were taken in Furniture and Musical instrument making.

The layout and presentation for the competition was good (I understand we had improved on last years presentation).

All clubs at the show provided labour for an attendant roster and with Patrick O'Reilly's show team presence we are improving the flow of administration of the event.

The bump in and bump out went well thanks to all involved. All in all it was a good show, thanks to the O'Reilly team for the improvements in access to and notification of our pavilion. Continued page 4.

Member's Classifieds

Richard Crosland's School of Fine WoodWork

Learn with the master. Richard Crosland's School of Fine Woodwork operates small, hands-on classes for students of all levels.

The friendly, creative atmosphere fosters rapid progress and many beautiful pieces are the lasting result.

All tools provided and work in progress can be stored at the Alexandria workshop.

Call Richard at the school: 9313 4142



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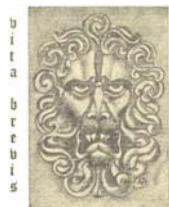
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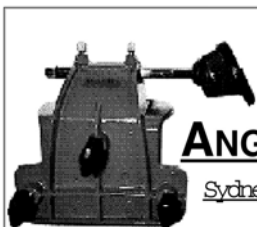


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Phil Lake continued from page 3

The Layout of the Horden was open and relaxed which is a big contribution to visitor enjoyment.

Post script - My thoughts related to the competition are; if we view the process as sharing our creativity and expertise

with other like minds and as a celebration of our efforts rather than win or bust then a prize is a bonus not the be-all and end-all. Our perspectives and horizons are enriched by the interaction. For next year what can we bring to the table? Enjoy your woodwork!

Timber & Working with Wood Show: From the Editor's viewpoint

This was my second Timber and Working with Wood show as a member of the Association. This time around, I was more involved with the preparation although work commitments ensured that I didn't do as much as some others did.

It was five solid days of set-up and stand attendance at the end of which, my defective feet were feeling somewhat worse for wear.

It's a good experience, meeting other members that I haven't met before, meeting people who are well known in the industry and making a difference to the association.

I was intending not to concentrate on the ticket selling as much as the previous year and instead, keep an eye on everything so that it ran smoothly. Well it ran reasonably smoothly and I was soon standing next to yet another of Richard Crosland's masterpieces conning the unsuspecting public out of their money as they swarmed like flies to Richard's honey-pot. If they escaped me, then they fell into the clutches of Peter Hunt and his helpers.

I also managed to chat to a number of people about the benefits of joining the Association but didn't actually sign anybody up. Hopefully some of those will

join. A number of them were interested in tuition by Richard, Terry, Peter, etc., and I hope that membership will be a natural progression. There were a number of women amongst those expressing an interest in learning and that interest can only be good for the association.

People were fascinated that "somebody still does that kind of work".

A number of people were also interested in members' works. We were pretty much unique in having fine furniture on display and a little more would not have gone astray. People were fascinated that "somebody still does that kind of work". The public is interested - we now have to cultivate that interest to the point where they start to buy!

Miko's koalas were a hit with kids of all ages - they certainly brought people to our stand. While the kids were playing with them, we hit dad for a raffle ticket! It was disappointing that the practical display area was often idle. I hope that our benefactors were not as disappointed to see their machinery and tools idle.

I believe that we were successful but we could do more, especially in the area of recruitment.

Paul Barton

"Our perspectives and horizons are enriched by the interaction. For next year what can we bring to the table? Enjoy your woodwork! "

PUTTING TIMBERS ON SHOW IN NSW FINE WOODWORKING COMPETITION TIMBER & WORKING WITH WOOD SHOW

In all there were some 100 items entered, the standard was good to excellent. Unfortunately a number of categories weren't well supported and in accordance with the rules of competition all categories with less than 10 entries were grouped under general woodworking.

To encourage participation each of the sub categories under general woodworking were firstly judged as general woodworking, places 1st, 2nd & third and then considered for a merit award being equal to second and third place in the category in which they were submitted.

Judges for the event were, Richard Vaughan; sometime chairman of the Woodworkers Association, cabinet maker, wood skill teacher and contributor of article to Australian Woodworking magazines. Tom Harrington, head of the Sturt school for wood. Richard Raffan, wood-turner of international reputation and author of several wood turning books. Geoff Delves, ex woodwork teacher with TAFE.

There were 9 entries from 8 Association members in categories – Furniture and box making, instrument making and carving and sculpture. First and second prizes

in furniture making were awarded to Evan Dunstan and Warwick Wright, Hugh Jones received a merit award in instrument making.



Generally the handling of the event and the display presentation were an improvement on last year. The show management provided two people to be on hand from set up to pack up with the clubs providing security throughout the show by means of a roster. Whilst we are a long way short of a fully professional presentation the clubs represented at the show are taking an interest and with their continued support this competition could become a valuable

emissary for the promotion and recognition of artistry in wood.

The Les Miller Young Achiever Award Winner: Will Evans

Our Association promoted and maintains an award for young achievers working in wood.

Les Miller was an educationalist and keen supporter of skill sharing, Les was also a strong advocate for the possibility of this competition. This year the Les Miller Young Achiever Award was awarded to **Will Evans** for the piece (a credenza in southern silky oak) he produced as his project in the industrial technology HSC 05

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman, sent Will a congratulatory letter and a cheque for \$500.

The 07 competition is now being drawn up; will you be there?

There will be riches to be won, the best of all is to witness and share in the creativity and expertise of others. Remember the 07 Putting Timber on Show in NSW – Early June 07 !!

Phil Lake

Prize Winners Gallery Competition

First prize: Evan Dunstone, chest of drawers (left).

Second Prize: Warwick Wright, hall table (below left).



The Winner of the Les Miller Young Achievers Award

Will Evans of Bowral

Will says that wood working runs in his blood. "Dad has owned his own joinery business for the past 25 years and I was raised on the smell and dust of timber. The workshop was as familiar as the class room as I grew up and not only did I receive excellent tuition, not only from my father but also the trades people, and I believe I absorbed considerable knowledge without realising it."



More TWWW Show—the raffle results

Timber & Working with Wood Show 2006

The Association thanks all those who sold and bought raffle tickets and congratulates the prize winners:

Workbench	Ray Little	AngleMag saw guide	W Tyross
Rali planes	Will Sawtell	Triton respirator	D Stone
Cabinet timber	Chris Redondo	\$100 book voucher	G North
Straight edge	Daniel Massaili	Organoil pack	Peter Hunt
Irwin chisels	Andy Hretja	Australian Woodworker sub.	Jeff Snell
King water stone	Denis Daly	Australian Woodworker sub.	P Gibbs
Archer biscuit jointer	John Brassell	Australian Wood Review sub.	G Bolliger
		Australian Wood Review sub.	Noel O'Dwyer

SILENT AUCTION of unwanted prize (Photo on front page)

The winner of the workbench in this years raffle (an acquaintance of a member of the Assn) is in the process of finishing a workbench of similar size and construction to the bench David Eden displayed on our stand at the TWWWShow. Naturally the bench he made takes pride of place and two benches is one too many! He has asked us whether we knew of anybody who would be interested in purchasing the prize bench. We offered to set up an auction for the bench and advertise it in the next newsletter. To provide the widest opportunity to bid we decided that a silent auction was the best medium.

THE BENCH- 1.83m x .81m x .9m high de-mountable into four major components, top, shelf and two leg frames.

There is an outrigger router table included fitted with a "Mast R Plate" router mounting system and fence dust extraction port to accept variable diameter exhaust ducting. The fence has three, sub fence blanks provided to be profiled around your favourite cutters.

The router table is stored on runners under the bench top when not in use.

The bench construction is top and router table – three millimeter phenolic resin on 18mm ply with 45mm x 45mm framing at rail separation of appx 300mm.

The leg frames are fitted with adjustable feet.

All solid timber is Tasmanian Oak; the bottom shelf is 18mm pine ply.

All woodwork is finished with tung oil.

Bidding should start around \$1000

The sale does not include delivery. Currently the bench is stored at the winners house Loftus NSW.

Register your bid with Warwick Wright, by email - warwick@grainwoodworks.com.au or by post – PO Box 1016 Bondi Junction nsw 1355

Bidding will close Thursday 31st August

Finishing Fine Woodwork

Notes on a talk by **Paul Gregson** to the Association's Meeting, 19th June 2006

You visit a garage sale of a previous buyer of one of your creations. You remember it well. There was the planning of the shape, careful selection of the lumber, the excising of the composite joints and the convoluted but intricate assembly and subsequent sculpturing after holding it together with the best 'rock hard' adhesive that will, in its solid form, have all the promises of lasting decades if not centuries.

You then remember the endless and faultless smoothing and the laying of a finish that was rubbed and smoothed to a silken feel.

But at the garage sale you find your creation discarded: one or two members fractured, with loose joints, and its surface damaged through use - almost embarrassing! How could this

happen?

So you buy it cheaply and anonymously and retreat back to the workshop to refurbish it - for resale perhaps. Then you find that some of the joints need dismantling to repair properly - but you used the super dooper extra hard adhesive and can't see how the complex joint can come apart easily. The badly marked finish needs to be completely removed because new coats will not mechanically bond with the old surface and any repairs will result in colour patches paler than the adjacent surfaces.

I am not here to talk about my work (the care and conservation of items from the last 300 - 400 years and the making of wooden and mixed media items) but to convey my experiences and philosophies.

Paul Gregson continued

Longevity

I ask you all - how long do you want your pieces to last, and in what condition? From a preservation point of view, a piece should be able to be repaired and enhanced if it is worth it, monetarily or culturally. Also, if the best timber resources are in short supply, then that factor should engender some thought to its future use.

Repairability

So, for the best items I have handled, reversibility & repairability are paramount. Choice of material and engineering design are also factors. Aspects to be considered are the form and movement of the wood, the glue to be used, and the surface coating.

Some of you will already use it, some will think about it, but most of you will be frightened of it - unfortunately.

PVA & Animal Glues

PVA glue may be used where appropriate, but rarely! I use protein or animal glue in all antique and new items. May I suggest that those who want to see their work survive do some research. The process is easy, but the only way to learn to use protein or animal glue is to see it demonstrated, ask questions and practise. I have written articles over the years in *The Australian Woodworker* on the subject. Please feel free to write to me directly or through the Magazine. Be aware that some internet information is not necessarily 'gospel' truth.

Surface Coating

Most of the historic finishes I am familiar with on wooden objects are quite organic in origin, not chemically synthe-

sised and outlast coatings of the 20th Century. The finishes that have outlasted all others are those based on shellac, lac (urushi), oil varnishes and polymerised 'vegetable' oil.

Shellac

By far the easiest for both amateur and professional woodworkers to use is shellac (in its various forms and proportions). It can be:

- * brushed (using best quality varnish brushes);
- * brushed, cut and polished;
- * levelled with a pad (rubber) in the French method (devised by MARTIN family in 18thC.); or
- * acid finished for highest clarity and finish.

Clear Finishing

The stagnant mindset with most woodworking is that, no matter what the wood, it must be clear finished. But some very ordinary material can look very ordinary with a natural finish!

Enhancements

WOOD is a MEDIUM for getting a shape - the choice of material should reflect the attention to enhancement. Some timber surface enhancements and examples are given in the Table which is a mere summary of some of the products applied to wooden goods. Most are still available.

Woodworkers must exhaust all avenues to correctly enhance their surfaces.

Colours Vegetable solids in oil Vegetable solids in spirits Vegetable base in water Mineral based in turpentine Dye in spirits Colours in oils	Alkanetroot Dragon blood, gum acroides Walnut crystals, coffee Asphaltum Anilines Oxides, crushed earths
Reactants Fuming Weak acids Oxidants	Ammonia Nitric, oxalic Potassium dichromate or permanganate
Solid Colours Paint (casein, acrylic) Gilding	Graining, spattering, faux/marbling fantasy Gold/silver leaf Brass leaf
Metals	Complex inlays or lines
Finishes Best clear or solid Shellac (various forms) Oils Spirit varnishes (other than shellac) 'Carriage' varnish Waxes	Japanese urushi From 'white' to 'brown' Cold pressed, adjusted or synthetic Tung - blended 'Violin varnish' Long oil Variable quality - most poorly used

Paul Gregson can be contacted at
14 Railway Parade, Thornleigh NSW 2120
or via *The Australian Woodworker*,
PO Box 514, Hazelbrook NSW 2779.

COMPETITIONS

Enter your cabinet in Australian Wood Review's "innerspace" competition AND The Woodworkers Association cabinet competition.

In association with The Australian Wood Review magazine, the Association has decided to conduct a competition for Cabinetwork with two choices available to members. Members may elect to enter the Association competition only or enter the Australian Wood Review's competi-

tion as well as the Association's competition. The magazine's competition closes on the 12 October and has several great prizes whereas ours closes upon presentation of your item at the December meeting and has its rewards as well! The regulations are the same except that the magazine's competition

requires photographs of your work and ours requires the real thing!

For details of the competition visit the web-site at

<http://www.woodreview.com.au/competitions/innerspace/>

Street Furniture Competition



Exciting new competition!

Nimmitabel Show Society

invites you

to participate in the

street furniture competition

a design competition for seating along

the main street of Nimmitabel.

2nd and 3rd of February 2007.

FIRST PRIZE: \$3,000

See Web site under Events Calendar

for details and entry form

Woodworkers' Association Seminars

Once again the usual suspects lined up to perform their varied magic tricks on our seminar stand. Thomas Paley, as well as stand duty, did six seminar sessions on preparing timber for finishing, and on finishing with oil, wax, and shellac. Tom also did a question time to fill in for one of our members who dropped out at the last minute.

Terry Gleeson did five sessions on how to dress and prepare timber by hand; on dovetailing and its application in carcass construction; and on drawer-making.

Richard Crosland gave two sessions on selecting the

right joint in furniture making.

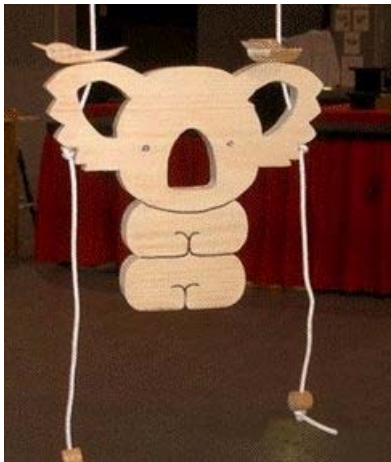
Alan Perry gave a session on removing machine ripple, grain tears, bruises etc.

Terry Gordon gave a demonstration on wooden planes, including cutting angles for soft and hard wood, and plane irons; on using the right steel and the right edge.

Thanks to all the above for giving their knowledge and time.

Kim Larymore

From the show, with Miko Nakamura—designer of the climbing koala



Climbing Animals

When I first found an article about a climbing horse in a Japanese craft book, a question occurred to me: Does it really work? Of course, as a woodworker, I had to make one quickly. The simple mechanism was impressive. I could not wait to assemble the first one and to try it out.

Even greater joy came from designing my own animals, while satisfying the mechanical design requirements. So the koala was born - in silhouette - and well accepted by everyone. The next design was King Kong - the huge gorilla. But I had to stop designing as I was getting a bit obsessive.

I gave a koala to a 12-month old baby girl but her first reaction was to lick it. Surprisingly, 7 months later, she began to make it climb (her

mother had been playing with it and the girl must have been watching). One day, she just discovered how to do it. 19 months must be a record! I wonder if we can teach a monkey?

At the T&WWW show in Sydney, it was very interesting to see the reaction of grown people. When I demonstrated it, the action looked easy - but when they tried, it did not work. I enjoyed seeing the puzzled expressions on their faces.

It gave me immense pleasure to see the concentration and obvious joy expressed by the child of 19 months when she finally discovered how to co-ordinate her little arms. This joy was also shared by the children who played with the koalas and gorilla at the Sydney show.

I look forward to seeing the reaction of young patients at the Children's Hospital at Westmead when we donate more of these items for their education and pleasure.



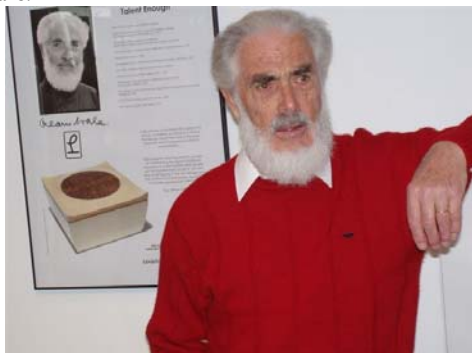
Alan Wale Retrospective

A Review by Warwick Wright

ANU School of Art
20 July - 19 August 2006

Column quote "Good woodworking is craftsmanship plus skill and approach to design." Alan Wale

A significant event in the history of our craft took place at the ANU on Saturday 22 July when Alan Wale shared his experience of fine woodwork spanning a period of over 50 years.



Alan was the founding Director of the Sturt School for Wood in Mittagong which recently celebrated 21 years of teaching fine woodwork. He was also one of the three founding members of the Woodworkers Group which became the Woodworkers Association of NSW Inc.

At the ANU exhibition, Alan treated the audience with poetry, song and his approach to woodworking. Remarkably, blindness has not stopped him from working in his workshop. "I couldn't image life without a workshop," he says. Nothing I can say here however can convey the warmth, humour and passion of the man. The best I can do is pass on a few recollections and observations.

The scene for the talk was set with the assembled being asked to imagine an English country lane. There is a cottage with a thatched roof with roses in the garden. Behind the cottage are various out buildings including a workshop. In the workshop is an old man at the end of the day. He is wearing a flannelette shirt, no collar, with the sleeves rolled up. There are shavings on the floor and the room smells of wood. The room is rather dim.

Continued next page

THE CRAFTSMAN

*No gaslight ever lit his shop,
He had no wheels to start or stop
No hot metallic engines there
Disturbed the shavings scented air
His hands were engines, and his eye
His gauge to measure beauty by.*

*How gently time went by for him,
Up in that workshop which grew dim
At sunset, and then he'd lay
His chisel down, and sweep away
The chips and shavings of the day
But left upon the bench no less
Than that day's gain in comeliness.
Then shut the door and slowly went
Under the roses to bed, content.*

Anon

The poem had a profound impact on Alan. What a wonderful way to live, he thought.

Alan completed 3 years training as a craft teacher at Shoreditch in London in 1948 and then completed a further course in cabinet making. After teaching woodwork and technical drawing in various schools he took a position with Heal and Son, a distinguished London furnishing house. He was not employed as a maker but as a representative for large commercial and civic buildings. He is proud of his time at Heal and the experience greatly influenced his approach to design.

After he and Doreen immigrated to Australia, Alan worked in a number of jobs including another stint of teaching. He established his own workshop, set up the Cheltenham Craft Centre at Thornleigh and later the Sturt School for Wood in Mittagong. Together with Leon Sadubin and Les Miller he established the Woodworkers Group which subsequently became the Woodworkers Association of NSW Inc. He retired from teaching at Sturt in 1991 after his eyesight had deteriorated significantly.

The exhibition featured samples of work spanning his entire woodworking career (to date) from his major piece as a student to a recent bookcase. Alan was known for his beautiful boxes. There were a variety on display including; "Duo" an elegant rectangular box in Silver Ash and Queensland Walnut (1980); "Box with Sterling Silver Dovetails", Ringed Gidgee (1982); "Pentagonal Box", Ebony and silver (1983); "Cirque", Huon Pine and Mallee Root (1988); and "Foot Print" box in Casuarina (1976).



Duo box

Alan referred affectionately to each box by name. Scrolling his fingers over the surfaces and identifying features including the particular joints, he entertained his audience with commentary on materials, craftsmanship, skills and design. His fingers are not just an aid to memory – they are his eyes. I have watched Alan at previous exhibitions as he has "viewed" unfamiliar pieces with his fingers. It is a delight when, at the conclusion of his thorough examination, he pronounces judgement.

So, what did Alan have to say about woodwork? Lots!

"Good woodworking is craftsmanship plus skill and approach to design"

What is meant by "Craftsmanship"? Someone who understands their material thoroughly and has developed the skills to work it competently and confidently. Hand tools make you understand your materials and develop your skills. He is critical of overemphasis on machines, as the woodworker does not get to know the materials as one does with hand tools. However, he is more accepting of machinery that computer assisted design. "No place for that!"

His first major piece, completed at college in 1948 "BPT" (before power tools) was a seat made from Black Bean and English Oak. The seat sat proudly in the exhibition. It was made entirely by hand, assembled with hide glue and finished with shellac and wax. The piece has travelled from London to the south of England, back to London and then to Sydney, Adelaide, back to Sydney and then to Mittagong. It has stood the test of endurance of extreme climate change and two generations of children. Not one joint has failed. Apart from a few dings it is in first class order.

What is good design? Alan is adamant that he has never considered himself a designer. Yet design punctuated his talk. The time at Heal and Son had a major impact on Alan's education in design. He worked with eight qualified designers as well as many architects on a daily basis. He says that he soaked up the design experience and loved it.



Music cabinet

Alan stated that *design* as the resolution of problems. "Good design is the good resolution of problems". Yet as he talked about individual pieces he divulged a deeper sense of design aesthetics rather than merely resolution of problems.

Alan Wale retrospective continued

His music cabinet (Queensland Walnut & Silver Ash) was designed to solve the problem of having sheet music from numerous composers lying about the house in an unorganised and unsightly fashion. The cabinet has 12 drawers – one each for Bach, Brahms, and Beethoven etc. In the front corner of each drawer is a small finger size hole for ease of pushing up the sheet music from below. The shaped drawers accentuate the figure in the Silver Ash and provide contrast with the straight lines and colour of the carcass. The shape and colours – black & white – resemble piano keys which no doubt have brought its contents to life over many years.

Designs take time to resolve – and often many attempts. One of his first attempts at a carved box with a piano hinged lid was exhibited at the Woodworkers Group exhibition at the Opera House. His fellow woodies provided some constructive criticism – “A bit chunky”, “Hate the hinge”, “You can do better than that”. We all need comments like this to spur us on to greater achievements.

After licking his wounds – and no doubt a great deal of thought – the box that looked like a chunk of hollowed-out wood with an ugly hinge developed into a graceful sculptured box with an integrated wooden hinge. The box was on display at the exhibition. The outside has smooth flowing lines with contrasting textured interior. Like most of his work the finish is shellac and wax. Contrasts in texture and colour became a significant feature of his work.

Another feature of Alan's work is exposed joints and the contrasts afforded by exposed end grain and protruding tenons. He sees this as an honest approach to woodworking rather than seeking to conceal the construction. Finger joints feature prominently in the work on display.

Alan is justifiably proud of the stationary cabinet commissioned by the Power House Museum. Remarkably, the ANU was able to borrow the cabinet from the Power House for the exhibition. The cabinet embodies everything Alan had to say about design and craftsmanship. Form follows function, consistent design shape, exposed finger joints, contrasting exterior and interior colours, resolved features such as small legs and drawer handles – and beautifully executed.

The most recently made piece in the exhibition is “Blind Man's Bookshelves” in Casuarina featuring his favoured finger joints. He made the joints on a table saw. Amazing!

The talk finished with a poem written by Alan in response to the earlier poem which had been such an inspiration to pursue the life of a craftsman.

THE RETIRED WOODIE

There's lots of daylight in my shop
And one or two knobs that start and stop
But I minimise the routers there
Because they screech and rend the air.
My hands still function, and my eye
Remembers shapes from days gone by.

*How free of stress my time can be
Out at my bench with a cup of tea
And there I will work the wood all day.
Well it's not like work, it's more like play.
I'll do odd jobs around the house,
Perhaps fix a shelf to please my spouse.
And then towards the end of day,
I'll clear my tools and mess away*

*But leave upon the bench no less
Than that day's gain in usefulness
Then shut the door and cross the lawn
To contemplate another dawn
When I shall chip and shave away
And spend another pleasant day.
Feeling my time has been well spent,
I snuggle down to bed, content.*

Alan Wale

Thanks to Rodney Hayward, Head of the ANU Wood School, and his wife, Pam, for organising the exhibition and kindly providing copies of the poems recited by Alan.



Stationery Cabinet commissioned by the Power House Museum



“Cirque” box, Huon Pine and Mallee root.



Tom Harrington



Alex Springhall



Twenty-One Years at Sturt School for Wood

Members of the Woodworkers Association of NSW were well represented at Sturt School for Wood's 21st Exhibition (28 May – 2 July). The exhibition was opened by Ros Kelly AO, who gave a genuinely passionate address of appreciation for the craft of fine woodworking.

The event was an emotional one for the schools founding Director, Alan Wale. Alan and his wife Doreen had recognized the need for a high quality full-time course in fine woodworking. After many hours of planning, preparation and hard work Sturt School for Wood opened with 10 students in 1985. Alan taught at the School until 1991. Tom Harrington became the Director in 1992 and has taught the majority of the exhibitors in the current exhibition.

The number of exhibitors was surprisingly small considering the number of students who have passed through Sturt in 21 years. Many wanted to participate but, as always, things get in the way and

only a small proportion of those expressing interest actually delivered. Of the 34 exhibitors, 11 are members of the WWA.

The members exhibiting were; **Alan Wale** - Honorary Life Member of WWA (*South Seas* box and Sheet Music cabinet), **John Brassell** (console table), **David Buick** (bowl carved from *Angophora*), **Ant Burridge** (jewellery box), **James Carr** (Japanese inspired tea chest), **John Gallagher** (side table), **Christine Hurditch** (garden bench), **Paul Nicholson** (retro chairs), **Alex Springhall** (small boxes platonic solid forms), **Warwick Powis** (desk with drawers), **Warwick Wright** (desk with a single drawer).



Paul Nicholson



John Gallagher



Warwick Wright



David Buick



John Brassell



Christine Hurditch



Warwick Powis

More news from the TWWW Show

A THANK YOU TO RAFFLE CONTRIBUTORS

With the support of the following people and companies our raffle was a great success, with a significant increase to our funds.

Sandy Miller and family gave us \$300 in memory of Les, and Phil Lake thought that if the WWA put in some more he would like to make a woodworkers bench, which would be a major prize worthy of Les' memory. All agreed, so thanks to Sandy and family, and to Phil for such a beautiful bench.

Thanks also to: David and Honor Croaker of Carba-Tec NSW for no less than 3 prizes for the raffle and a vice for the bench; to Paul Williams of Academy Saws for a straight edge; to Harry Siesritz of Rali Planes for 2 planes; to Gordon Heggie for a Triton respirator; to Jeff Snell for one of his AngleMags; to Stan Ceglinski from Mullumbimby for a timber pack; to Linda Nathan for 2 x 1 year subs to Australian Wood Review; to Steven Burrows of Skills Publishing for 2 x 1 year subs to Australian Woodworker and a \$100 book voucher; and to Ernie Williams for 2 Organoil finishing packs.

Kim Larymore

Tracy trades her office for furniture

by Martin Stevenson
from THE EXAMINER NEWS, July 1, 2006

Seventeen years in a Sydney office environment saw Tracy Gumm seek a big workplace change.

"I decided on a wood turn rather than a sea change," said Ms Gumm, a second-year Australian School of Fine Furniture student.

Ms Gumm is among first and second-year students who have produced work for an exhibition at the school, *Sit And Reflect*, which includes seats and mirrors.

The exhibition was opened last night by the Univer-

sity of Tasmania head of the School of Architecture, Prof. Roger Fay.

Ms Gumm said she was inspired to produce furniture after so many years in IT.

"I thought there must be something else out there for me," she said.

The "out there" for Ms Gumm was the Launceston school and a chance to explore her woodworking talents.

The tangible proof of this year's work is her Celery top pine and saddle leather (chair).

Ms Gumm and fellow students were given six weeks to design and build a piece of furniture.

Her 3.5 kg chair, with delicate finger joints, is named Thule, a Nordic word meaning "the land beyond the border".

"I was inspired by the work of the Danish designers in the 1920s" Ms Gumm said.

Some members will remember Tracy who used "Your Workshop" and also attended classes with Richard Crosland.

Tracy will graduate from the Australian School of Fine Furniture in November and return to Sydney where she would like to share a workshop with others.

Tracy can be contacted on 0424 103 134 or gettracy@yahoo.com.au



New member Tracy with examples of her work



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Brush the Dust Off and Find the Woodie below By David Hire

Our first interview with David Davenport would have to be considered near the extreme end of experience, so I thought I would go to the other end of the scale and pick a relatively inexperienced woodworker. When I asked him how long he had been involved in woodwork- ing he replied 46 years. I was stunned. So lets find out more and meet Mr. Ian Stewart.

dh. Welcome to Brush the Dust Off.
How long have you been involved in woodworking?
IS.46 years. When I was in my teens, my dad built a weekender. I helped him a lot with the internal fit out. Then in 79-81 I went to TAFE part time and did construc- tion carpentry. In 1980 I got an owner/builder permit and built a house from 81 through 85. It was a very long term commitment and I didn't have much of an outside life.
dh.I know you are doing the TAFE course in cabinet making tell us about that?
IS.It is the cabinet making course at Lidcombe TAFE, the only place it is run in Sydney. Two nights a week for 4 hours for 3 years.
dh.And at what stage are you?
IS.3rd year
dh.What does it cost?
IS.\$700 to \$800 per year materials included.
dh.Do you intend to work at cabinet making full time?

IS.Only if asked.
dh.What do you think you will do with your new cabinet making skills, work for yourself or maybe part time for a shop?
IS.Work for myself and occasional commissions.
dh.What is your normal occupation?
IS.Sales executive of industrial miner- als.
dh.Would you ever consider making woodworking a full time career?
IS.Not really.
dh.What aspect of wood working is your specialty? ie turning? mar- quetry?
IS.Furniture in solid timber.
dh.Do you have a favourite wood species you like to use?
IS.Tassie Oak because it's reasona- bly priced
dh.What is your favourite item of woodworking that you like to make?
IS.Furniture and boxes.
dh.What is your favourite finish?
IS.I have used mostly polyurethane, but I want to try other finishes, es- pecially shellac.
dh.How can fellow woodworkers contact you?
IS.stewart4@tpg.com.au or 9680 2498 ah
dh.What would you like to tell your fellow woodworkers?
IS.Practice makes perfect which gives the satisfaction of a job well done which is the motivation.
dh.Is there a particular era of furni- ture you like and if so do you make pieces in that style?
IS.I have no desire for older furni- ture. I like arts & crafts and plan to

build some in the future.
dh.Do you have your own workshop facilities? Tell us about it.
IS.Not at the moment butt I have a large garage.
dh.What is likely to be your next power tool you obtain?
IS.Band saw.
dh.What is likely to be the next hand tool you obtain?
IS.Compass plane.
dh.What are you going to make next?
IS.A work bench.
dh.What is your favourite thing about woodworking?
IS.Satisfaction of the job
dh.Least favourite?
IS.Making mistakes.
dh.What has been your greatest success?
IS.In the 2005 Working with Wood show I entered a small side table in the com- petition and won second place in the Novice section.
dh.What is your favourite joint?
IS.Hand cut dovetails.
dh.Do you prefer machine power or are you a tradi- tionalist?
IS.Machine power if neces- sary but prefer hand tools
dh.Any closing comments?
IS.So pleased to find an organisation like the WWV of NSW.
dh.Thank you for your time and all the best success with your woodworking.

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