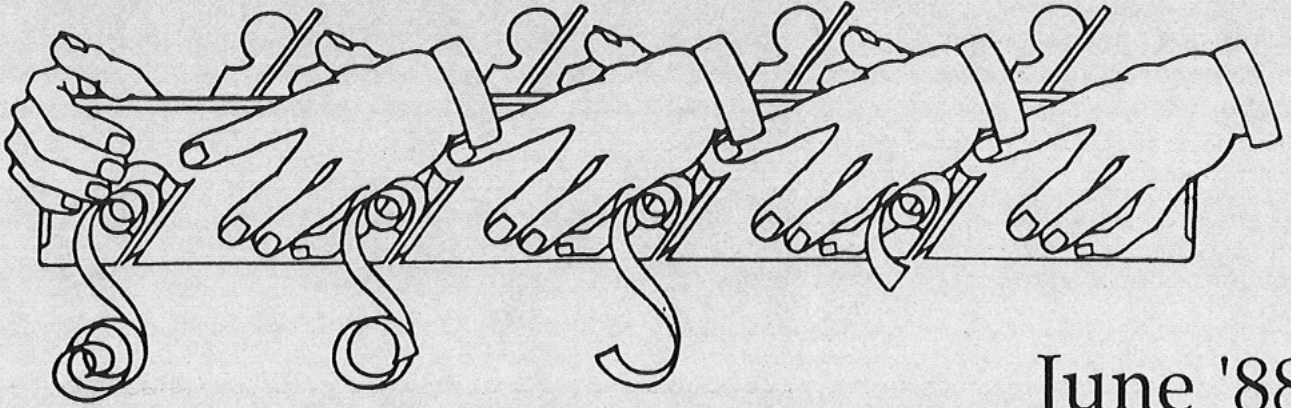


# WOODWORKERS' GROUP OF N.S.W.



June '88

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## WOODWORKERS' GROUP OF N.S.W.

Chairman :	Laurie Oliver	922 2277
	2 Collette Place, East Killara 2071	
Secretary :	Nick Hill	997 8788
	16 Chiltern Road, Ingleside 2101	
Treasurer :	Gayl Leake	488 8925
	1002 Pacific Highway, Pymble 2073	
Newsletter	Jim Littlefield	666 4266
Editor :	27 Corben Street, Surry Hills 2010	
General	Mike Jefferys	250 7173
Assistance :	66 Narrabeen Pk Rd, Warriewood 2102	

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Friends,

As you know, the quality of the newsletter, like the Group itself, depends entirely upon the contribution of our members. We are very fortunate in having talented and conscientious stalwarts who time and again provide us with excellent copy. I'm afraid its very easy to come to depend on these good people to fill these pages but I feel the burden should be spread more evenly. After all, we have some 180 members.

Its good to contribute, its good to put thoughts onto paper ... Not all of us are as philosophical as Geoff Hague or Mike Darlow or as technically astute as David Lockwood. Not all of us feel our writing abilities are equal to that which we would like to express. But then, on the other hand, you may have these abilities. At least you don't know until you've tried and we all know practice makes us, well, better anyway.

I would like to suggest a fairly easy way for members to contribute to these pages. Many of us may feel as though we work in something of a vacuum, unaware of what others are doing and perhaps wishing others know a little more of what we are up to. Its a long time between exhibitions and some of us live too far afield to have regular contact with other members. So why not let us know your recent, current or future work? Photos and drawings would be useful, as well as some description of use, design, materials, techniques, philosophy, etc.

Henry Black has started the ball rolling with a brief description of what in fact was an extremely involved project for Parliament House. We hope to have more on our members' contribution to this amazing building but we also want to hear of less glamorous projects. So, let's keep in touch. due date for copy for newsletter to be received by 11 July.

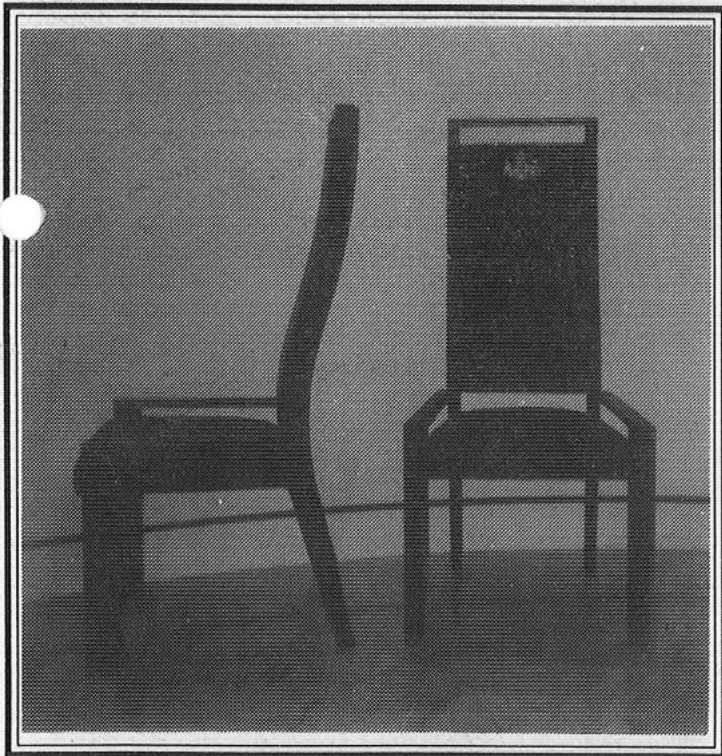
Jim Littlefield.

## OUR NEXT MEETING

Second time lucky. We have arranged for George Ingham to give his lecture at the next meeting on June 6.

The meeting is to be held in a seminar room, level 3 at the Powerhouse Museum. Enter the Powerhouse from McCarthur Street Ultimo, off Harris Street or across the walkway from the Entertainment Centre.

There is no parking in the Museum forecourt. Your best bet is to use the Entertainment Centre carpark.



*Parliamentary Series chairs of Myrtle and leather for placement at various points around the building. Designed by Aldo Giurgola.*

## OUR LAST MEETING

This meeting was well attended with 25 or more members, some of whom travelled from afar.

Alas, George Ingham was not in attendance as our guest speaker. Due to a car breakdown just out of Canberra and a long wait to receive help George was unable to be with us. He called me with profusions of apologies but that's how the cookie goes.

The meeting certainly wasn't all in vain as we were able to discuss exhibition ideas and proposed incorporation and a subsequent name change which will happen in about August. As in times of crisis Mike Darlow came to the fore and was able, unprepared, to give us a short but interesting chat on copyright and plagiarism. Mike had been researching for a current piece he was writing so the topic was in mind.

The venue at the Powerhouse was excellent and seemingly easy to find for all and the accommodation was more than adequate. Parking may be a problem as the Sydney Technical College is quite close so be early for the next meeting.

## WHAT'S - ON - CALENDAR

A request was made for dates on 'What's On'. This will be a regular column in future W.W.G. newsletters so let Jim Littlefield know of events coming up.

Two worthwhile exhibitions are currently running at the Crafts Council in the Rocks; Craft Classics on the ground floor and designer furniture downstairs. Until 12 June.

Terry Baker and Nick Hill will exhibit work at the Old Bakery from 1 July to 23 July. Open Tuesday to Saturday : 10.00 am to 5.00 pm.

### National Woodwork Exhibition

All categories of woodwork to be held in the Exhibition Buildings, Melbourne, 21 to 23 October. Selected from the exhibition will be the bicentennial woodcraft gift to the nation, an acquisitive award worth \$10,000. For entry forms contact Interwood Holdings, P.O. Box Gembrook, 3783. Phone (03) 240 8461.

### A.W.I.S.A '88 Exhibition.

July 20-23, Yennora Wool Stores, Dennisoun Ave, Guildford, Sydney. Everything from woodworking machines, timber, plywood, laminates, cabinet hardware, abrasives, etc.. Admittance by official pass or business card.

### October Guest Speaker

Please note in our diaries that our guest speaker for the October 10 meeting will be Chris McElhinney. The topic will be 'Design and the Drawing Myth'.

### Basic Joinery Workshop

Requests have been made by amateur members for a basic skills joinery workshop. Alan Wale has agreed to conduct such a workshop at Sturt on a Saturday to be decided. Estimated cost will be about \$25.00 per person. If interested please ring Henry Black (744 2822) and leave details.

Any other ideas for workshops please contact Henry.

## WWG MEETING DATES FOR 1988

### Group Meetings in 1988

June 6  
August 8  
October 10  
December 12

### Newsletter Deadlines in 1988

7 July (for August issue)  
7 September (for October issue)  
7 November (for December issue)

**Newsletter articles :** the Editor requires copy to be easily legible, typed or handwritten.

**Photos supplied with articles :** to be preferably black and white or, if colour, only high contrast shots are suitable for screening for printing purposes. Line drawings should be in black pen.

### Committee Meetings in 1988

Committee members will be advised by phone.

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# Exhibitions – ad- infinitum ?

Exhibiting members have received a letter from me setting out ideas on continuing small exhibitions using the facilities of the numerous galleries in our state.

The letter follows so if I've missed any full members, my apologies but its here to read now and please respond to me if you want to participate.

The reason for continuing small shows is to maintain a higher public awareness of our work. There are always shows of fine arts, ceramics and fibre but its a long time between wood shows. These small exhibitions will not only give members good exposure but also provide interaction between members and an opportunity to see each other's new work. It will be beneficial for associates of the Group to see what we're all doing between the biennial opera bash and perhaps we will encourage new exhibiting member as the scope of these shows will not be quite as overwhelming as the big exhibition tends to be.

*Dear Member,*

*The Committee propose that the Woodworkers' Group of N.S.W. should have regular small exhibitions to maintain a continuous public awareness of the work that our members produce. The idea is to approach galleries on a regular basis (e.g. two to three times/year) with 5 to 10 members exhibiting. Full members only to exhibit. Upon settlement of a venue, letters will be sent notifying members. Acceptances to exhibit will be on the basis of first in best dressed. One ruling will be that the same piece (pieces) not be exhibited more than once unless venues are very diverse (i.e. Newcastle to Wollongong).*

*We propose the Group should cover part of the promotion expenses as the exhibitions will be under the Group's name (e.g. The Woodworkers' Group of N.S.W. at The Louvre present members A,B,C,D).*

*We will be producing a brochure/leaflet for continuous promotion of the Group. The brochure will be full colour photos of work (if funds permit) and have a list of full members and their expertise. The venues already approached are the Old Bakery in Lane Cove and Naturally, in the Rocks area.*

*We also propose to exhibit at the 3rd Australian Craft Show this year on November 23-27.*

*We have been offered 4 booths at a cut rate and additional space may be available if necessary.*

*Please let us know as soon as possible on the enclosed form provided if you wish to show your work (1-3 pieces larger items, more pieces for boxes, turnings, etc) in this type of exhibition. We aim to keep dollar outlay by exhibitors to a minimum (e.g. \$0 - \$50).*

*The Australian Craft Show must know by the end of April if we are to take up the offer.*

*On your response we will move to confirm bookings in the other venues mentioned and also seek out more venues being in as diverse an area as possible and your suggestions for galleries will be mos welcome.*

*These exhibitions are selling shows as the galleries are interested in commercial survival as we are. Commissions will be negotiated and will vary with each gallery.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Nick Hill.*

Response has been good so far but I'd like to see all the forms returned so as to be able to call on the short list of members when venues are organised. These shows will be continuing throughout the years so a list of those interested is essential for quick informing of the next venue. We have accepted the Australian Craft Show offer for space and will be writing to those interested in that venue to let you know the details. Watch this spot for exhibition ties and venues organised by the Woodworkers Group of N.S.W.

Nick Hill.

## PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

Peter Johnson is an articulate, enthusiastic perfectionist. The one-day workshop by one of Sydney's top commercial still life photographers was advertised in the last newsletter. Peter described and discussed his equipment and how we could achieve something similar with a whole lot less (as he had done when he started). I would have felt I'd had my money's worth had we stopped there. He then demonstrated the effects of various light source locations. Because he could take polaroids with his studio camera we were able to compare results immediately. Most instructive.

Then one of Henry's black (fancy that) chairs was used to provoke consideration of composition of line and light and views.

Of course we didn't leave Peter's as competition in the field of photography, any more than he'd leave a workshop with Michael Gill as a candidate for the Power House. But we sure learned some stuff. And at around \$1,000 a day for a photographer who is as good as you may be aiming your work, it's handy to be able to make the best of what you've got.

That's an idea of what you missed. But what's lacking that so few should recognise the need to be there? Photos are as vital as business cards.

How about showing a potential client what you're capable of? If you've got even a thousand words that can do that then maybe you should keep wood as a hobby.

For promotion, be it local gallery or National Glossy.

For your own morale on those days when you've forgotten what you've done (and to enjoy how distance can improve).

But it seems that very few have even half presentable photos, as I found when assembling the Group portfolio. It also seems that even fewer are inclined to up their game.

Thanks to Peter Johnson for an obviously worthwhile day and to Mike Darlow for organising another opportunity for Group members to learn.

Richard Vaughan.

# D E S I G N

## - AN ESSAY

In a previous essay I wrote how twentieth century western society has forgotten the medieval fear of God and replaced it with a very contemporary fear of man and how the energies of this epoch are still shaping our lives. (I watched the explosion of a solid rocket-fuel factory in Nevada, USA, last night on television and 'felt' the blast from the explosion even as I sat eating dinner.)

The idealism that created the League of Nations and the United Nations is but a recent manifestation of many attempts to renew life after a period of devastation and tragedy.

In the late eighteenth century America represented an opportunity for many peoples of the old world to renew their lives and start afresh. The French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars and the advent of the Industrial Revolution represented to many people the evils of the corrupt old world and the new world, an opportunity to live lives without violence, war, greed, poverty, lust and intemperance.

The idealism of this era was personified by people such as Ann Lee, who left Manchester, England, which was experiencing the disruptive dislocation as the Industrial Revolution gathered pace, and sailed with eight others to New York to establish the society of Shakers.

While nowadays we talk of shaker design, they themselves did not see themselves as one aesthetic movement but a religious sect, within the traditions of English puritanism. 'Mother' Ann Lee taught them to avoid excess and needless luxuries because they drained energy from the real pursuit of life. She was concerned with the eternal life of the soul, not with the ephemeral things of the earth such as chairs but acknowledged that the outward appearance of things revealed the inner spirit.

Their communal life produced an extraordinary opportunity for creativity. In seeking to think, act and worship alike they eliminated the tyranny of petty decisions. Communal life provided uniform clothing, meals, a daily routine, job assignments and freed them from financial worries. No-one had to make cheap second-hand goods to get by and, with ample work space and the best of materials, the Shaker craftsmen could concentrate solely on their work. The authority of this communal effort also had the effect of freeing them from the demands of fashion. They just did not have to care what the world considered fashionable.

While the 1917 chair of Gerrit Rietveld that I've written of was an aesthetically logical expression of cubism and used the three elements of the rectangle, primary colour and asymmetrical balance, Shaker design was a moral imperative: a simplification, a refined and purer version of a Federal-style country furniture common around the turn of the 1800s. It was the moral imperative that was the driving force behind their unconsciously designed and 'other worldly' simplicity. Their fundamental principle was to not make what is not useful. They rejected only applied ornament as unnecessary. Colour, pattern, line and form, they used with vitality and joy. They clearly worked to create a visible world

in harmony with their inner life: simple, excellent, stripped of vanity and excess. Work and worship were not separate in the Shaker world: '*Do all your work as though you had 1000 years to live and as you would if you knew you must die tomorrow*', Ann Lee said. '*Put your hands to work and your hearts to God*'.

So the Shaker ethic on living unconsciously produced work of striking beauty and clarity of design that is remarkable, in a contemporary sense, for enduring well into the eclectic, fashion conscious market of today.

It is unlikely that by living in NSW in the later nineteen eighties there will emerge any force or creative need that will emulate or re-invent the Shaker world but their very historical existence throws into relief the parameters of our own work ethic and 'zeitgeist'. One substantial difference is shown in our attitude to grain. The Shakers frequently painted their work, eschewing the beauty and grain of timber as being unnecessary and frivolous. Our own aesthetic delight for that 'beautiful piece of wood' shows us how little we subscribe to any puritanical ethos; if anything it reveals something I describe as 'The Zen of Wood'.

The Shakers were a product of English puritanism, a northern hemisphere reaction to and assessment of life and action. Van Gogh, a Dutchman, from the world of cloud and wet fields produced early drawings of simple and blunt peasantry until he went south and was stunned by the Mediterranean world of sunlight. Whereas although the Shaker life was different their philosophy did not change because of their new country.

Looking at where we are in the last decades of the twentieth century shows us that while we are self-consciously aware of many different strands of design, we've had to discriminate between the inspiration that comes from living in a country of the southern hemisphere and the ubiquitous and internationalised 'magazine culture'. We certainly can't wait for a wholesale disaster or tragedy to provide us with an imperative to rebuild or renew in a sense that Riefeld's chair expressed a new idealism after the First World War and the Shakers' world of furniture reflected a new world ethic after the madness of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars.

In our infinitely more complex scene there's no need to reject the frivolous and unnecessary and repeat the Shaker ethos; to do so would be to render us irrelevant and mere copiers in our own times. Too many people are marketing their products irrespective of their worth - if someone thinks there's a need for a 'smurf' to promote the sale of petrol or Italian furniture is necessary to make us feel modern then our own position and creed as woodworkers must be certain and concrete, otherwise those that want to manipulate will do so. Perhaps that is its own moral imperative - I'll leave what you want to design up to you.

G. Hague.

# The New Parliament House Furniture

The chairs as shown on the front page and variations of this design for the members' dining room were designed by Aldo Giurgola, the Architect who designed the building. I was involved from mid 1985 with small scale mock ups through rough prototypes to finished upholstered chairs which were used as samples for the mass production of hundreds of each type by industry.

I was also involved in prototyping a lounge chair in Silver Ash with Coachwood Trim. These were largely veneered customwood, deliberately heavy so the public wouldn't move them from their places in the House.

The last piece was a 1.5 metre square by 1 metre high display cabinet in jarrah species. Being sited in a very public area I was concerned for the safety of the case contents and the public's own safety. To this end the glass is 10 mm toughened safety glass. This heavy glass is housed in its Jarrah frame

which is in turn bolted top and bottom edge to the carcass. The veneered triangular doors are vertically hinged using soss hinges. The Jarrah was virtually impossible to buy, the wastage totalled at least 70 per cent and in desperation I made the fourth leg from timber purchased off the building site of Tom Uren in Balmain, this was after rejecting six duds with internal checking and splits.

The curly 4 mm veneers on the doors were cut on Gerard's bandsaw and epoxied onto ply cores and thickness sanded on my Wadkin lathe using an old conveyor roller as a sanding drum.

The completed cabinet weighed about 140 kg and took six people to carry through the House to the foyer.

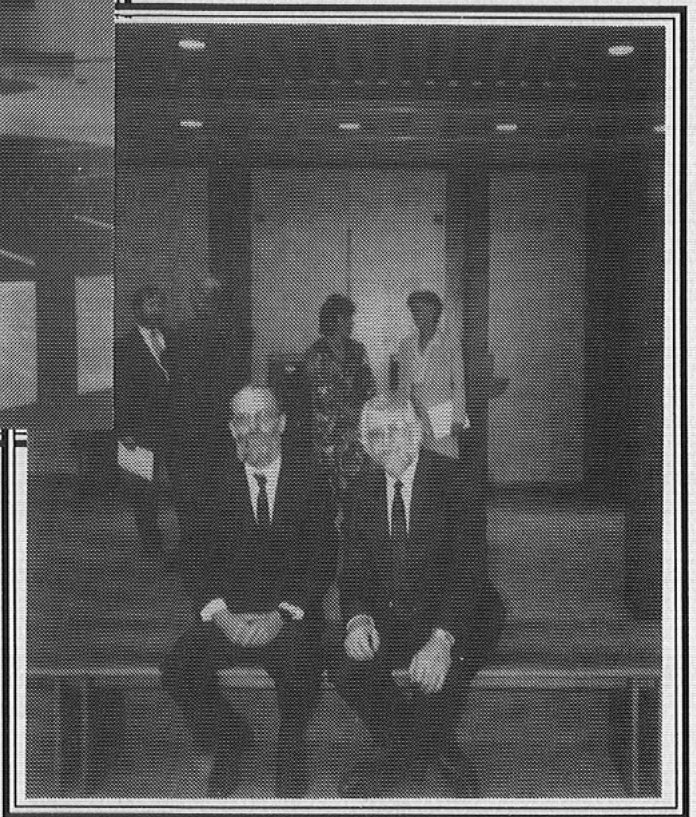
I'm now sorting firewood and removing rust from tools and machine surfaces after the big wet.

Henry Black.



*top : Aldo Giurgola with Jarrah display cabinet by Henry Black.*

*right : Michael Retter and Henry Black at the opening of the New Parliament House sitting on one of Leon's benches.*



# A Reply on Splined Edge Gluing

Regarding Mr. David Lockwood's response to my ruminations on the splined edge glued joint, I have to say that I have been unable to find in my offering anything remotely resembling a 'blast' that deserved his fire breathing 'counter-blast'. All I can think of is that he is still suffering from Cup hangover (you have two kinds of boat races, right?) and just wanted to do a little Yank bashing, but, mercy, please!...don't take it out on me... I was pulling for your boys (at least for the first go-round) despite daily recriminations from my boss at the time who was a member of the New York Yacht Club. Since we up here have a special feeling of friendship for Australia (see enclosed stamp), I choose to believe that it was all good natured, like in my favourite Errol Flynn movie 'Gentleman Jim', where, after a commonplace neighbourhood brawl, Alan Hale shouts: '*Of course we like you, we fight you don't we?*' Seriously though.

Mr Lockwood doesn't like my presentation, which I admit is a bit chatty, but then I'm no parliamentarian debator. I'm not sure that I follow his count of assertions that according to him I should not have made, nor can I respond to that charge, since he identified none of them. Appeals to authority? Indeed, I can't think of two more authoritative people than Bruce Hoadley and Francis Herrishoff and quoting them is entirely reasonable. Granted, in the type of magazine the article first appeared in (Woodenboat), footnotes are usually not included by the editors, so what I do is sneak them into the text, which was the case here. What I found amusing was Mr. Lockwood's own 'appeal to authority', which he footnoted as 'an early issue of Fine Woodworking, USA'. I dug around my magazine vault and managed to track down the article he referred to in the Summer 1977 issue: 'Glues and Gluing; Woodworking Adhesives, Used Correctly are Stronger Than the Wood' by (you guessed it) Bruce Hoadley. I also recommend the article, as well as Mr. Hoadley's book 'Understanding Wood', both of which support my thesis.

I agree that I did not cover all the aspects of preparing a proper glue joint but that was not the point of my article after all. True, I could have included a bibliography of articles and books but, as with footnotes, these mags don't like that sort of stuff and I think we all know where to get the information if we don't already have it. As for '*What the hell does that mean*' (a nice turn of phrase don't you think? And he says that I'm offending!) it means that if all glues are going to be superior to wood cohesiveness, why, we can look at the weak ones and our discoveries cover the strong ones.

Which brings me to Mr. Lockwood's next mistake. Unfortunately, your editors in their infinite wisdom deleted parts of my original text which might have clarified the point, such as my referring to the mechanical and chemical aspects of wood gluing. All adhesives exhibit both mechanical properties ie: penetrate the substrate and 'hook on', as well as chemical properties ie: actual molecular attractions between wood and adhesive (such as hydrogen bonding, dispersion,

dipole-dipole, Van der Waal's forces...all loosely termed secondary bonding). Lockwood's incorrect use of the term 'molecular cohesion' at once hints that he may have an understanding of the above and, at the same time, reveals a lack thereof: 'adhesion' is a measure of how strong the molecular attraction is between adhesive and substrate, 'cohesion' is a measure of how strong the molecular attraction is within the adhesive or within the substrate. Hot hide glue (my adhesive of choice) is indeed very strong in the former case because of the many possible bonding sites on the collagen and cellulose molecules but, unfortunately, hide glue does not possess great cohesive properties: it is not a good gap filler. On the other hand, epoxy has enormous cohesive strength since it is a thermo-setting, three dimensional matrix polymer, but it relies much more on penetration and mechanical 'hooking' (incidentally, regardless of the degree an adhesive relies on this type of 'hooking', roughing the wood surface with sandpaper or a toothing plane is not a good idea since the roughened fibres are in fact damaged fibres and as such are weak.)

As for Mr. Lockwood's herringbone splines, I did indeed address them but in a caption to one of the four illustrations your editors deleted. sorry...not my fault. It was on this point that he makes his most reasonable observation, which is just a reiteration of my remarks. Yes, a cross-spline will mechanically bridge the joint for a while...after adhesive failure. It's still a failed joint.

Finally, I would suggest that any craftsman who really desires to understand the kind of molecular forces that are involved in the work he does, take a semester survey course of organic chemistry (except that it will ruin junk food for you for good!)

Best regards to my woodworking brothers and sisters down under.

Michael Sandor Podmaniczky  
Contributing Editor, Fine Woodworking magazine  
and  
Associate Furniture Conservator, HF duPont  
Winterthur Museum

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# AFDI Tree Images Exhibition & Competition

The Tree Images exhibition and competition was held in Albury in conjunction with the International Forestry Conference in April.

The exhibition contained a wide range of items - 137 pieces in all - predominantly of carved or turned pieces. Craftspeople from NSW, Tasmania and Victoria dominated exhibits, however people from the Northern Territory, South Australia, ACT and Western Australia also exhibited. There were 28 NSW craftspeople exhibiting of whom 9 were members of the NSW WWG, unfortunately keeping this important information secret - that's another article later.

Few cabinet / chair pieces were shown relative to the number of carvings and turned pieces. Robert Forrester of Victoria showed considerable design flair and wide application in his execution of woodwork in five exhibits including a pedestal table made from Australian grown English Walnut, a musical rocking chair from English Elm and Black Walnut, a grand piano wall hanging in Black Walnut, another wall hanging called 'Waltzing Matilda' in Jarrah and a beautiful harp made from Mountain Ash and Blackwood.

The turned pieces and carvings showed considerable flair. Mike Darlow's 'Voyager', complete with hardware (bolts), Blue Gum, Ebony and Cedrus Deodar and Terry Baker's large platter of MDF painted with gold and silver leaf expressed this flair. No NSW bias - you can be assured.

Carved pieces really stole the show, winning most of the prizes. Pieces ranged from a tiny mouse with a chestnut carved from Leatherwood (which won the best exhibit) by Susan Wraight of Caulfield Victoria, to 'bloody Cedar bowls' by Grant Vaughan of Rock Valley NSW who won 2nd prize in the miscellaneous division (whatever that means ?!) to 250 tiny carved boots in different timbers in a display case - definitely eccentric !

Pricing of pieces was very erratic and something that needs hammering home throughout the various Groups and Associations. It was very evident that some people 'bunged' any old price on pieces without thinking and not aiming to encourage proper competition and certainly not intending to make a living. Mike Darlow's pricing principles do not appear to have been read by many in the South (Mexicans do I hear ?!). No doubt an unconscious fault of hobbyists.

By the way, a competition was held with categories comprising :

- (i) Best Exhibit : Susan Wraight of Melbourne with her mouse.
- (ii) Special Prize of Excellence : Ken Martin for a carving of a Clydesdale drawn plough in River Red Gum.
- (iii) Wood Turning :  
1st : Susan Wraight (that mouse)

2nd : Ken Martin (Port Lincoln)

3rd : Peter Bradley (Canberra)

- (v) Wood Carving : Machine Carved Winner : Barry Black (Sydney)
- (vi) Miscellaneous :  
1st : Clive Price (Brisbane)  
2nd : (Grant Vaughan (Rock Valley NSW)  
3rd : Vic Wood (Burwood Vic)
- (vii) Murray Valley Timber :  
Winner : Vic Wood with a large turned form in Red Gum
- (viii) Innovative Item :  
Best Exhibit : Terry Baker

Judges included Chris McElhinny, currently a lecturer at the Canberra School of Arts, Graham Peterkin, a partner in the firm 'Fine Design' in Victoria, and Ray Margules of Victoria.

Phillip Bohringer.

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## NEW PRODUCT FROM FEAST WATSON

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FINISHING WAX should be used with a cloth and allowed to 'set' for a few minutes before polishing to a fine lustre.

FINISHING WAX is suited for spinning objects that develop friction heat. Friction heat helps to flow the wax into the irregularities of open grain wood.

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FINISHING WAX will be available through your usual supplier packed into 250 mls., 500 mls. and 1 Litre cans.

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# Forgery, Plagiarism and Woodwork<sup>©</sup>

At many exhibitions of contemporary woodwork there are pieces which the cognoscenti will damn as being overly inspired by the work of others. Forgeries and reproductions are a recurring hazard for collectors of antique woodwork. In this essay I shall attempt to introduce and clarify these concepts - concepts which lie within a muddled spectrum stretching from the original (or at least highly individual) work at its zenith to the forgery at its nadir.

An excellent discussion of forgery and its associated intellectual gymnastics in the fine arts is given in the *Forgers Art*.<sup>1</sup> On page 189 a forgery is defined as represented as genuine with the intention to deceive. In woodwork, however, I suggest that accidental misrepresentation is far more common. Through carelessness, ignorance or wishful thinking pieces tend to be misrepresented as being older, or rarer, or by a more famous maker or out of costlier materials than they truly are.

Why are forgeries despised? It is not because of inferior technical or aesthetic quality - in these some forgeries surpass the originals. It is not because they are accessories to fraud. It is not because they are copies for some are not, being unique designs by their forgers in earlier styles or the styles of particular makers.

It is instructive to consider what happens to a supposedly genuine piece that is discovered to be a forgery. Its value and worth are decimated. Yet the piece has not changed. What has changed are the criteria by which we judge it. Its essence has vaporised. It has lost the romance and the associations that we attach to a particular maker or a particular period. It is the revelation that the non-material substance (which may constitute the major component of the piece's value) was but a mirage which causes the piece not merely to be downgraded but to be assessed as if it were now a different category of object. The exotic sports car has been exposed as a billycart in drag.

It can be argued that forgeries are not necessarily harmful. Many unrevealed forgeries give great pleasure to their proud owners in addition to having given financial succour to their conceivers, yet the only harm that they would seem to promote are distortions in the history of objects and the reputations of makers. An undermining of public confidence is not of course possible until the forgery is exposed.

Forgeries have not always been made from scratch. Many are the result of what are known euphemistically as improvements or marriages. Reducing the size to suit modern rooms, carving plain surfaces, changing mouldings, feet and handles to those an earlier period; such are the techniques exposed in 'Is it Genuine?'.<sup>2</sup> Chinnery<sup>3</sup> informs us that improvement by the incorporation or addition of pieces of earlier carving or turning was a popular and accepted practice in the nineteenth century.

Improvements were and are sometimes carried out by

restorers. Their profession is in a continuing state of controversy regarding the proper degree of restoration. The current practice is towards conservation rather than restoration. This change in philosophy is fundamentally a change in the concept of ownership. No longer is a piece private property to do with as its owner wishes. There is now a growing belief that we are minders for posterity, that we are curators of links in the chain of human history. Obviously the poorer the condition of a piece the greater the restoration required. Indeed the restoration may need to be so great that it could be argued that the restorer had created a reproduction or, if the restoration work was especially well disguised, a potential forgery.

For most contemporary wood craftsmen, forgery, in the sense that someone copies work and tries to represent it as the originator's, is not a problem. Were we so forged we might even be flattered - at least initially.

Plagiarism, the appropriation or imitation of others' ideas or styles and the passing them off as one's own is, however, relevant to us all. Most readers may not have been plagiarised but I suggest that few of us are innocent of the practice although it may have been unconscious. Undoubtedly many accusations of plagiarism are well founded but not all.

Design progress is not a series of isolated original inspirations. It is, rather, a process in which new designs almost inevitably evolve from earlier ones<sup>4</sup>: a process in which new designs are usually fresh or unorthodox arrangements or associations of pre-existing design elements even when catalysed by new materials or techniques: a process which is in a sense impossible without plagiarism.

The concept of plagiarism is dependant on the the belief that design ideas are the property of their originators. Governments have judged the ownership of ideas inappropriate for legislative protection, electing instead to restrict protection to the manifestations of ideas. Patent protection was developed for the manifestations of new principles; design registration for new shapes and arrangements of parts. The legislation also recognises that after a period the protection should lapse. The rationale is to encourage invention and development by permitting a period of unfettered exploitation without allowing permanent progress-preventing monopolies.

Patenting and design registration are expensive to apply for and depend for their effectiveness on a willingness to litigate. There is some protection under copyright but this is appropriate only to one-offs and small quantities and is again ultimately dependant on a willingness to litigate. Patenting is rarely appropriate for woodwork and the two other forms of protection become increasingly ineffective the further the plagiarism is from being an exact copy.

It is not only woodwork which is plagiarised. Woodwork writing is another fertile field for those short on ideas of their own. My book 'The Practice of Woodturning'<sup>5</sup> has been plagiarised in articles and at least one book. Woodwork writers and publishers almost universally seek to expunge any hint of Academe by omitting footnotes and references and this may be a factor which lessens the tendency to acknowledge one's sources.

In woodwork, unlike in literature, plagiarism is generally met with benign indifference. Further, it is harder to substantiate than one would think:



- a) Similar design ideas will occur to individuals who are unaware of each other.
- b) Many supposedly new ideas are not new. Their re-introduction or higher profile may be conscious plagiarism.
- c) New ideas are frequently exaggerations, refinements or reappraisals. The warping of green-turned bowls was, I suspect, considered until recently an inevitable evil. I suggest its utilisation as a decorative feature is a modern innovation.
- d) Many techniques and design features are difficult if not impossible to attribute, particularly when of some antiquity. Also, the paucity of woodwork publishing until recent years is an obvious bar to successful research on design evolution.
- e) New design styles are often fresh associations of a number of pre-existing design elements. Such compound plagiarism is rarely considered as plagiarism at all.
- f) One can have inverted plagiarism. A design evolution which seeks to highlight or parody its ancestry.
- g) We saw that after a period of time knowledge becomes public. This does not imply that we should not acknowledge the originator but perhaps implies that it is less critical to acknowledge because the relevant public should already be familiar with the knowledge and its source.
- h) Design elements may be plucked from other media. In this century ceramics and jewellery have tended to be aesthetically more advanced than woodwork and therefore woodworkers have used them as sources for ideas. For example dimpled bowl bottoms, which I have frequently used for ten years, have long been common in blown glass. I found recently that they are not new in woodturning either! One is shown in 'Das Drechler Werk'<sup>7</sup> published in 1940. Intermedium plagiarism is also less likely to be discovered and there is probably less onus to acknowledge one's source.
- i) The level of design knowledge of those interested in woodwork is generally low which is a stimulus to covert plagiarism.
- j) If there has been successful litigation against woodwork plagiarism it has not been well publicised.
- k) Many leading woodworkers teach, demonstrate and exhibit - a double-edged sword - as it both encourages plagiarism directly and discourages it by making the original material better known.
- l) There is widespread indifference to plagiarism among woodworkers and woodwork sellers. There is a widespread misconception that copying is permissible if one doesn't intend to sell it.

In this I have attempted to show that plagiarism is a paradox; is fraudulent yet is unavoidable. It is also probably becoming more common and more conscious. The erosion of isolation has smothered regional and national styles. The once gentle pace of stylistic evolution and the forces of artistic conformance have been blown away. Whereas originality was once the means to achieve the desired effect of greater beauty or greater efficiency, the tendency now is for means and ends to be transposed, for originality to be the aim and for bizarreness to be the result. Inevitably those rare individuals who do evolve styles of true integrity must exploit them



quickly before they are rendered passe by the terrible twins plagiarism and over-exposure.

I hope that this essay has made readers more aware, knowledgeable and cautious about forgery and plagiarism. Aware, so that they may be alert to them, knowledgeable so that they will recognise them and cautious so that they do not accuse others of them before being sure.

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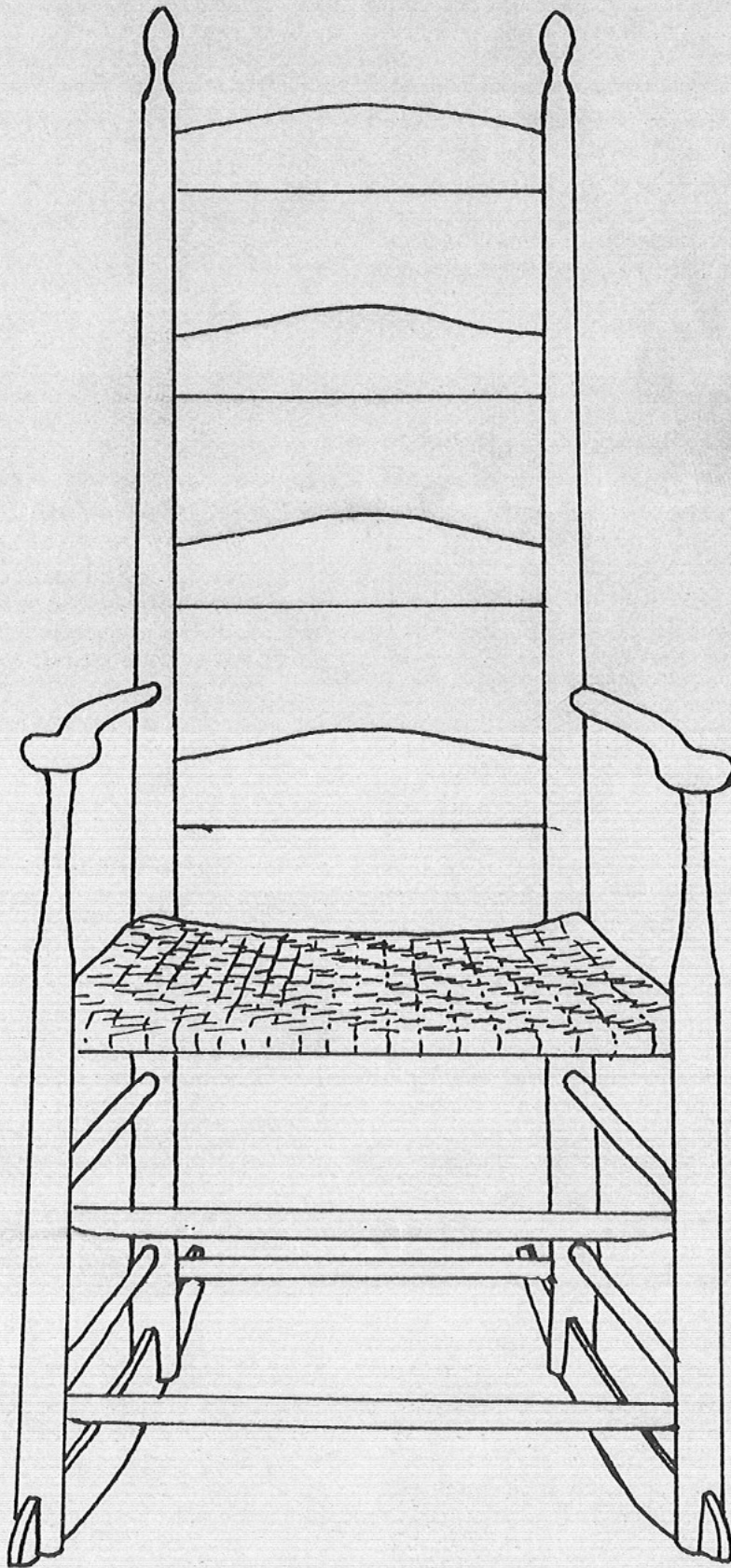
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