



The Woodworkers' Association of NSW Incorporated

ABN 51 544 261 324

From the Chair

Our **Annual General Meeting** is on **Monday, 3 April** and I hope many of you will be able to attend.

Members who have joined the Association this year (for the first time) will receive a free "Welcome Chisel" at the meeting to encourage and inspire their woodwork journey. The formal parts of the meeting never take very long, that is the presentation of reports from the Chairman and Treasurer and the election of the new Committee. Thereafter we propose to have a show and tell session on **"Push sticks and other workshop aids that you have made yourself"**. Please bring along a selection of your favourites!

The Association has received a generous donation of tools which have been sorted. Some will further equip our Workshop and others will be available for members at the AGM. There are some good planes (which will be for sale at member-friendly prices) and other tools for people to pick through.

As this may be my last meeting as Chairman, I would like to take the opportunity now to thank all the Committee members who have provided their time and service to the Association. It has been my great pleasure to work with each and every one of you and you have my gratitude and respect.

One such person was the dedicated and ever-charming **Kim Larymore**, Life Member, who passed away on 27 February. Kim served as Vice-Chairman for many years and was otherwise a great contributor to the Association, as was his wife Pam. Our Treasurer, **Gordon Joseph**, spoke at Kim's funeral and has included an article in this newsletter for those who did not know this gentle, funny and caring man.

In relation to our Workshop, I wish to thank **Peter Harris, Tim Major, Gordon Joseph, Richard Leniston, Henry Black and Andrew Honan** for each spending a day recently undertaking important maintenance of the machinery and facilities. Tim and Gordon used the time to construct a bookcase to house our library, which is a great addition.

And just a reminder... we have lots of new members and we all need to be safe in the Workshop. That means people can only use a machine without supervision if they have been officially accredited to use that machine. We need everyone to do the right thing so that no-one gets hurt.

I hope to see you at the meeting next Monday.

Phil Greenwood



WWA Objectives

The objectives of the Association are:

- to provide a forum for networking and to encourage camaraderie amongst all those who work in wood
- to promote public awareness and appreciation of fine woodwork
- to encourage creativity, design and development of skills and application by all woodworkers
- to represent professional woodworkers and promote sustainability of fine woodwork as a career
- to promote awareness of environmental issues including encouraging the judicious use of our precious native timber resources and use sustainable harvested, recycled and reclaimed timbers.

WWA Life Members

Richard Crosland
Geoff Hannah
Phil Lake
Kim Larymore
David Palmer
Leon Sadubin
Richard Vaughan

News, News, News,

General Meeting

The next General meeting of the Association will be held on the 3rd April at the Canada Bay Club, 8 William Street, Five Dock: 19:00 for a 19:30h start.

Members are encouraged to arrive early to enjoy the company of other members and eat a meal at the bistro or restaurant available at The Canada Bay Club

2023 Royal Easter Show

One of the Association's Objects is "To promote public awareness and appreciation of fine woodwork".

One of the ways we do this is through the sponsorship of two woodwork competitions at the Royal Easter Show. They are (1) Small Furniture Item (predominantly in wood) and (2) Wooden Box Work.

If you are going to the Royal Easter Show this year (6 to 17 April 2023), visit the Arts and Crafts Pavilion and have a look at the entries in these two Association sponsored competitions. Perhaps

New Members

A big welcome to all new Members:

- Saskia Freidrich
- Bella Lee
- Tony Ryan
- Steven Pavicic
- Simon Petre
- Anthony Prpic
- Brett Rawlins
- Elizabeth Seares
- Didier South
- Venkatesan Ganesan

Safety - be responsible

Working on our projects with power tools (and hand tools) requires us all to keep safety foremost in mind.

Don't try to perform operations you see online or read about until you are certain they are safe for you. If something about a process does not feel right, don't do it. Look for another way. We want you to safely enjoy the craft of working with wood, not just during 2023 but beyond. Please keep safety foremost in mind when in the workshop.

WWA Committee

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Some email addresses have changed. Generic addresses are gradually being introduced for Officers of the Association.

If you would like to join or assist the Committee or be more involved in the Association, please call any member of the Committee.

Before we get too serious



Workshop News

- In February the number of bookable places in the workshop was increased from 3 to 4
- Performance of the dust extraction system has been improved following planned maintenance
- Performance of the jointer and thicknesses has been tuned, again following planned maintenance
- Problems with the bandsaw blade cracking have been addressed by tuning the drive wheels and the guide blocks
- Work is on-going to replace the halogen strip lamps with LEDs

Many thanks..

The Association is kept alive by the dedication and effort of a small number of selfless individuals:

Rostered supervisors:

- Henry Black
- Peter Dunn
- John Evans
- Peter Harris
- Gordon Joseph
- Richard Leniston
- Tim Major
- Phil Nanlohy
- Peter Munro
- Clare O'Reilly

You may note the number of supervisors who also work on the Committee!

Vale - Kim Larymore



Kim being presented with his Life Membership Certificate by Chairman Phil Greenwood in 2011

By Gordon Joseph

With sadness we advise that our Life Member, Kim Larymore, passed away on 27 February 2023.

Kim was born in 1932 in Western Australia and moved to Sydney with his family after World War 2. He spent a major part of his working life in the technical and engineering department at Sydney University.

Kim had a well-equipped workshop at his Eastwood home with a range of woodworking

machinery and many hand tools. He made furniture and other items for the family home and for his daughters.

Like many woodworkers, he accumulated a large amount of timber and around 8 years ago, when Kim and his wife Pam moved to an independent living retirement village, he donated his timber racks with some timber to the Association. Kim's well-built timber racks are laden with timber in one of our Abbotsford store rooms.

Kim joined the Association in 2000. As was his wont, shortly after joining, he volunteered to help a sub-committee organise a major exhibition of members' work titled "Woodmasters at the ABC". Probably due to his willingness to help, Kim was elected as Vice-Chairman in 2001. He served on our Committee for 10 years, including 6 years as Vice-Chairman.

Kim was a "can do" person and a quiet achiever. He worked tirelessly behind the scenes on a wide range of activities that were essential to the effective overall administration of the Association. Many of the tasks he undertook were time consuming, but he always went about them with a calm demeanour and good humour. These tasks included helping arrange and volunteering at our stand at Timber and Working with Wood Shows, helping with exhibitions of members' work, helping organise workshop visits, arranging raffle prizes and lucky-door prizes, assisting with catering at general meetings, cultivating relationships with our advertisers and promoting the Association at every opportunity.

He rarely missed a meeting, a workshop visit or a working bee and never sought recognition or thanks for anything he did for the Association or for other people.

In 2011, in recognition of the outstanding service he had given to the Association and to woodwork in general, Kim was appointed as a Life Member of the Association. Kim was a fully engaged and active member right from when he joined and continued this active engagement throughout his membership, until a few years ago when ill health prevented him from doing so.

He was a selfless and generous man who made a significant contribution to our Association.

Maintenance Day 6 March

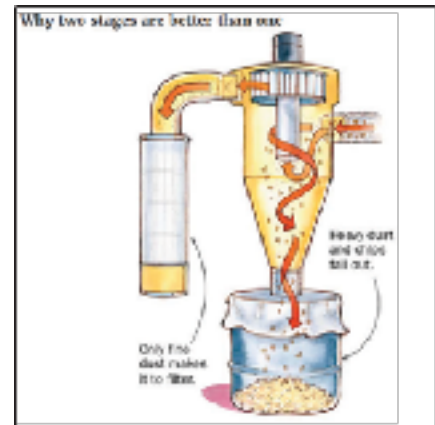
Andrew Honan

A full day of maintenance activities occurred on Monday 6 March at the workshop. Organised by Tim Major with Phil Greenwood, Andrew Honan, Peter Harris, Henry Black, Richard Leniston and Gordon Joseph there was much activity. This included equipment maintenance, building a bookcase for our library, some equipment upgrade such as lighting and vices for benches as well as cleaning and tuning dust extraction.

Dust Extraction:

Suction pressure at some ports was not as strong as it should have been.

The dust extraction is a 2- stage system whereby the chips and heavy particles drop through the cyclone and into the drum. Peter was able to clean and tune the "fines" filter of the dust extraction cyclone. The suspended fines bypass the venturi and go through the second stage filter and into a polyester collection bag. Maintenance was conducted on both the filter and bag collection system to improve the dust collection.



Two high capacity ceiling mounted Laguna A-Flux air filtration units have been installed in the workshop. These units are designed to filter and recycle air several times an hour within the workshop, providing an almost dust-free environment for our members.

Henry and Andrew attended to the gate on the jointer which was not shutting correctly. A large amount of saw dust had accumulated in the gate mechanism preventing its closure. The orientation of the gate was adjusted.

The ducting to the jointer and the thicknesser was modified (to reduce clashes with the table saw) and to reduce the static head at these locations. This also improved air flow of the dust extraction system.

Closing gates when not in use is important to maintain the efficiency of the dust collection system overall.

Face Vice on the #2 Bench

Andrew was very keen to replace the face vice on the #2 bench. The quick release mechanism on this vice had been playing up for several months, and following much investigation and fiddling around with the half-nut, it was agreed to replace this vice with a spare Groz quick release vice. The old vice would simply not grip and would jump the half nut. This spare vice was previously re-conditioned by Henry and Peter with a new welded/machined retaining plate and so was available to be installed.

With the help of Richard and after some fiddling, the Groz vice is now installed and working satisfactorily. A small issue is that there is a slight racking problem, which we hope to address during the next maintenance day.

Large Band Saw:

A problem with the re-saw blade on the large band saw has been stress fractures occurring on the back edge of the blade. Peter had advice from suppliers that the problem lay both in the tension of the wheels/tyres of the band saw as well as the pressure on the ceramic guide and back blocks on the table. He was able to replace the blade and undergo serious maintenance on the ceramic guide blocks.

All reports are that the blade is performing well and members are very happy with its performance.



New LED spot lights:

Richard volunteered to replace the halogen lamps with new LED low wattage lamps. We have 4 "strings" of 8 lamps on each string. One string already has a set of LED lamps on them, so it was required to replace the other 3 strings. Unfortunately the form and fit of these new lamps was not the same as the halogens and so each lamp holder had to be manually adjusted and there was a lot of mucking around to get them to fit. This took a lot of time and only 2 of the 3 strings could be completed. Thank you to Richard for persevering with this task. It is only when one starts to retrofit new equipment into legacy systems that you discover all the interface issues!

Nevertheless the new lamps are more energy efficient and provide a higher level of lighting performance. I did not take a note of the wattage of the old halogen lamps (I will do so on the next maintenance day, but typically they are at least 50 watts). The new LEDs are only 4 watts each, so there could be an energy saving of 46 watts per lamp and with 24 lamps, a saving of 1.1KW. Based on current operating hours of 6 hours per day, 2 days per week and say 50 weeks per year, that equates to a saving of possibly 662 KWh or approx \$200/year (average NSW electricity prices are 28.66c/KWh).



The new lamps are set to "daylight" (6,000K) temperature, which is a high level of brightness.

New book case for the Library

Both Tim and Gordon got stuck into the huge task of building the bookcase which will house the Association's library. This will allow members to reference resource material as they build their projects. The bookcase is a project in itself and it was only ever contemplated to make a start for this maintenance day. However with a lot of enthusiasm, Tim and Gordon fully built and located

the carcass of the bookshelf. By the time of writing this article the bookcase has been primed and painted. Tim will be building the doors for the bookcase over the coming weeks.

It was a huge effort by both Tim and Gordon and we are all looking forward to moving the library from a storeroom to our workshop. and sitting down and reading the many articles in our possession. The bookcase will also be home for some other

administrative documents and items. Further photos of the completed bookcase with doors will follow.



Jointer and Thicknesser cutters rotated

The cutters on both the jointer and the thicknesser have been rotated and reseated by Henry, Andrew and Peter. This involved dismantling the cutters from the helix drum; thoroughly cleaning the seats; cleaning the scum off the cutters; rotating the cutters 90° to the new face and re-tightening (approx 4 Nm). Each cutter was lovingly cleaned and prepared for reseating. It is important that the cutters are not over tightened as they are quite brittle and prone to cracking.

Hopefully members see a pronounced difference in cutting performance.



Summary

Thanks to Phil Greenwood for his help in the maintenance activities throughout the day as well as getting the food and drink in, and putting on the BBQ for lunch. It was much appreciated by the hungry mouths.

Thanks to Tim for organising this event and preparing the list of necessary maintenance activities. We were not able to complete all the tasks on the list, for example the sharpening of some of the tools. It is hoped that we will have a maintenance day once every 2 months and that will deal with any preventative as well as any backlog of maintenance. We are very fortunate to have the equipment in the workshop and these maintenance days provide an opportunity to manage our asset base.

John Kirkwood's recent visit to our workshop



A few years ago our long-term member, John Kirkwood, moved to Adelaide to be closer to family. John joined our Association in 2000.

John visited Sydney in February and made time to call into our Abbotsford workshop to catch-up with members.

The photo of John shows him standing in the workshop in front of the superb and highly functional router table he designed, built, and donated to the Association. On the wall behind him, which I call "The Kirkwood Wall", are the many accurate and useful jigs and shooting boards John made and donated. They have been used by many members when working on their projects.

By Gordon Joseph

Meet a member - Fred Blake

By Peter Dunn

Hello readers, I would like to introduce you to a long-standing member of the Association. Fred Blake has been a member from the very early days and our records say he is the fifth longest standing member of our Association. When you have finished reading our talk you will no doubt realise that when Fred makes his decision to do something he does a thorough job of it.



Fred Blake at his wood carving bench

Q. Is your age a secret?

A. No, I'm 86 years old.

Q. When did you first realise that you had some talent with woodworking and carving?

A. Well, I grew up in a scientific household, and had an interest in handyman DIY type activities, popular in the restrictions and scarcities present post war. When I left school, I didn't know what I wanted to do, and there followed two years of all types of jobs, mechanical engineering (the physics and maths too tough), painting (no fun on a wobbly wooden ladder 3 floors high), jack-pick labouring (lost fitness), taxi driving (ulcer job), and surveying. I finally decided on medicine, specialising in Orthopaedic surgery (i.e. bone carpentry).

I enjoyed extensively renovating our first house, a 'free-standing terrace', a lot of basic wood working being involved. For relaxation, when I could get away, I would get into the bush. Being born in a country town on the Columbia River, in Western Canada in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, I guess that is where the love of the bush originated. I liked canoeing and fishing, and I would find myself picking up a few pieces of driftwood. These would be interesting because of their shape, weathering, and the qualities of the wood itself. Often some would be cleaned, sometimes polished, and even carved a little, as a sort of natural sculpture. As midlife came creeping on, a yearning to venture into the artistic side of life surfaced. Lunchtime wanderings down Martin Place and then visits to the Opera House discovered the exhibitions of fine woodwork by members of the Woodworkers' Group of NSW (the Association's forerunner). These appealed greatly and were very inspiring.

Q. What happened from then?

A. The serious approach to woodworking and carving began in 1988, on gaining the last place in the inimitable and inspirational teacher Michael Gill's final term of classes. He was recommended by a senior resident that I worked with, herself an artist and sculptor. It has been a guiding personal policy, when starting into any new worthwhile activity, to get good instruction in the basics first up if at all possible. Michael held his classes in his Red Cedar Workshop in Pyrmont. A period of hands-on instruction would be followed by a formal lecture wide-ranging into woodcarving, sculpture, and art. His enthusiasm was very contagious. He designed the multi-plane logo which heads our newsletter, and is currently in the news for his Sydney Harbour Cocktail cabinet, 36 years in the making.

Meet a Member cont...

This led to the fun of experimentation with different types of carving, including stone, and the harmony of Australian woods and semiprecious stones, e.g. opals and red cedar, in such as pendants and small jewellery boxes. It resulted in my first (and only!) commission, from the Australian Museum shop.

Further learning and experience in traditional carving and sculpture proved particularly stimulating, when being fortunate to study and learn under such great tutors as Laurens Otto (3rd generation traditional carving and design – his drafting studio was as big an area as the carving workshop), Derek Morgan (soapstone sculpture), Ian Norbury (1 of the world's greatest wood sculptors – we arranged 2 workshops with him in Sydney), Robert Howard (many enjoyable chats after a class over a glass on the philosophy and art in carving), Jennifer Johnson (clay modelling in Darlinghurst Gaol - NAS), Marcus Tatton (contemporary leading sculptor often in wood, intensive 3-wk. course at the now closed The Australian School of Fine Furniture in Launceston), and Ingrid Morley (live modelling in wax then casting in bronze). As continues now, contact with and listening to other of our leading members –e.g. Richard Vaughan, Richard Crosland, Leon Sadubin – enthuses and inspires.

The subsequent path led into carved and sculptured objects, the main areas being busts and small figures, and explorations into the infinite variations on the bowl form, including a short flirtation with turning.

One of my main failings was carving 1 or 2 versions of a subject, then thinking if a few more were carved I might get somewhere ("Repetition leads to discovery" – Bob Howard), but stopping in favour of starting on a new subject. The best exception has been continuing on a series of 12 "pentagram" bowls based on the 5-pointed star. The idea came in one of those rare moments sitting at an empty bench, asking oneself "what to do next?" So Mario Livio's

Book 'The Golden Ratio' was perused for ideas. The pentagram is an ancient figure, dating back to 4000 BCE at least, found on cave walls at Uruk, Mesopotamia. It has a variety of connotations, both good and bad, and is considered likely to be the mathematical source of the Golden Ratio – ratio of the long side to the implied base of the isosceles triangle forming each point of the star. The calculated value is 1.618....ad infinitum, a never ending, never repeating number, that fascinates mathematicians, and us mortals as well. Each bowl starts its design within a circle drawn so as to maximize the block of wood used. 5 equidistant radii are drawn on tracing paper, the 5 peripheral sub-bowls are sketched in, and the outline then transferred to the wood block and carving commences. Over the series the bowl has progressively become deeper, the rim folded in, then later out and coming to a point, somewhat like a lotus petal. The sub-bowls have filled out to voluptuous proportions.



Pentagon bowl in Huon pine

The great pleasure experienced with individual pieces is firstly in the research and designing of the project, and secondly in the actual carving.

Meet a Member cont...

Q. Did your parents or siblings or perhaps a school teacher have some effect on your love of working with wood?

A. No-not my family members. Born in Canada and moving here in 1946, only a year after the second world war finished, the school I went to had a real hotchpotch of teachers. There was a woodworking class, out of my orbit at the time. I more enjoyed the handyman work around the house and doing the heavier work around the garden, building walls and such. My father was an academic electrical engineer, but a poor electrician. He nearly set the house on fire a few times, just twisting the ends of wires together and hiding them under the carpet. Later in life his sister gave me some carvings done by him, and they were quite nice, simple but nice, so perhaps he did pass on some skill.

Q. What is your favourite carving timber?

A. Huon pine is the one I enjoy most, I remember Michael Gill saying that if I wanted to be a real carver I would have to master a variety of timbers, giving me a list, with some of them really hard. Red cedar looks nice but is not terribly easy to carve. I did a little carving of the Pied Piper, influenced by Ian Norbury and taken from one of his wonderfully instructive books. The main carving was Huon pine, the feather in his cap was Tasmanian leatherwood, jacket buttons were myrtle, and his pipe from a piece of eucalypt that had domiciled in a bog in the Barmah Forest for ~5000 years, a gift from Laurens Otto. So it was all made from Australian timbers. The wood chosen for a particular carving is often strongly influenced by the requirements of the carving.



Prescot, Fred's grandson at 5 months NSW beech



Hippocrates in NSW beech

Q. Did you mention that at some time you won some awards for your work?

A. Yes, about 9 all up. The two things I am most proud of are the 1st Prize Carving at the 6th National Woodworking Competition, Royal Melbourne Exhibition Bldg, October 1994; and the invitation to participate in the Kauri Project at the Sydney Botanical Gardens in 2010, wonderfully organised and run by Leon Sadubin. Timber from a large mature Kauri Pine in the Gardens, killed by excess flying fox damage, seasoned and expertly milled by Richard Parsons, was distributed to have a wide variety of creations in wood made and sold to raise funds to (successfully) save adjacent trees .

Thank you Fred for giving us your time and for the recounting of the effort you devoted into achieving your profession and the efforts you put into mastering your choice of woodworking art.

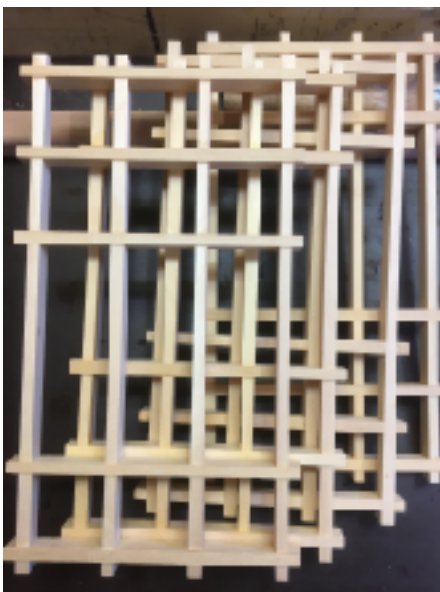
MAKE A JAPANESE LAMP

by Tim Major

The traditional ANDON oil lamp entered the Japanese scene during the Edo Period (1603 - 1867) and took on many forms. The lamp consisted of paper stretched over a frame of bamboo or wood. The paper protected the flame from the wind. They were usually open on the top and bottom to allow air flow. The lamps often had a handle to allow lamps to be carried from room to room or suspended from a hook.



The lamp shown in my images is made using Rosewood for the frame and Basswood for the Shoji side panels and Kumiko top panel. Timbers without too much, if any, figure are traditionally preferred. I have used Jelutong successfully for Shoji and Kumiko as the timber has little figure, is easy to work and readily available. The Jelutong can be milled and dressed to 10mm x 5 mm strips using the workshop machinery. The frame can be coated, after assembly, with your preferred finish but the panels should remain raw.

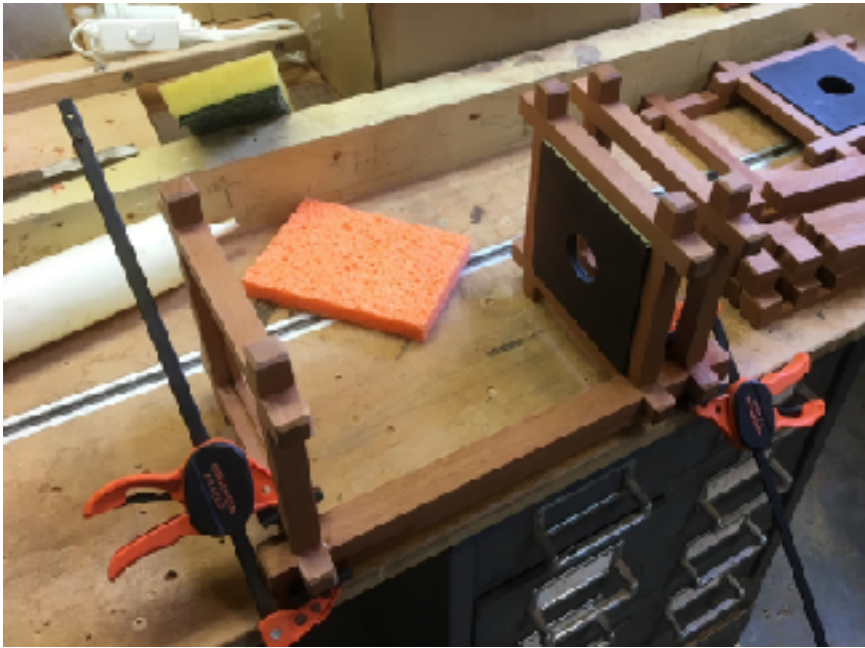


Assembled side panels. Carefully sand side panels to fit into lamp

The Shoji side panels, after sanding flat, are covered on the inside face with Washi Paper which can be obtained from JTA or a Western Australia supplier through e-bay. It is important to fix the Washi paper using Craft Glue, not wood glue. Instructions should be supplied with your paper purchase.



After sanding side panels flat, attach Washi Paper using Craft Glue to back of side panels.



I have used 6mm MDF, painted black for the bottom panel which supports the lamp base. The lamp holder should be connected to the cord, supplied with an in-line switch, by a licenced electrician. The lamp shown is lit using a low wattage LED candle globe.

After fixing painted base panel, fix frames to uprights.



Have a licensed electrician fit a lamp base with in-line switch

Ed.....

Tim has indicated he will be adding the story of his Japanese Lamp on the Association Web page.

Introduction to woodworking course

Conducted by Tim Major and Peter Munro on 28 January 2023

This is really an introduction to the NSW-WWA workshop rather than to woodworking, per se and an introduction to the safe use of many of the major items of machinery (table saw, thicknesser, jointer, various sanders, drill press, band saws, etc).

However, its more than that! Importantly the teachers imparted their personal perspective on the imperative for safety, machine use and choice as well as the order of machines to use and lastly their perspective on design, finish and expected quality of the output. Tim would be a hard examiner/ boss and not accept poor work!



There's still a lot more to learn! Personally, I find the use of the thicknesser and jointer to be complimentary and I'm not always sure which to use first. Where do I obtain timber?

Students were afforded group and personal assistance with each/every device but with

adequate proficiency and prompting allowed to use machines themselves and given feedback about technique and finessing one's technique. I guess, I find the table saw the most scary! Questions such as - How do I keep my fingers attached? Where do I stand? What type of push stick should I use? How small a piece of wood can I use? How do I make adjustments to cutting position, etc were answered. Other questions such as changing blades for ripping and cross cutting were introduced but left for another day, as expected.



There are 2 types of bandsaw in the shed. Another scary device is the big one with the foot brake because of the difficulty seeing if the blade is still running. My preference is for the smaller bandsaw for cutting a shape in a board - much better than a Ryobi Jig saw!

Concepts of choice of wood, having a design before you start (a novel idea for me!), layout,

At the end of the day, everyone was happy, especially Tim and Pete... Everyone proudly displayed their boards for a group photo. None were the same. It may have been less costly to purchase a board but we gained a lot more in their production.

We finished the day by cleaning up the sawdust and importantly getting signed off for our use of some of the machinery items and were encouraged to come back and use the shed on a Wednesday or Sunday for our own projects.



My thoughts about the course were very positive but if I was a complete novice, I may need more help and 6 students could be too many for the 2 teachers - which side to cut on a pencil

line, combination squares, bench hooks - even these can be foreign to some beginners. The course was designed around the available machines but I am personally pleased that there is also a course (later in the year, I believe) around the use of just hand-tools, too. I find that they fit into my lifestyle better in an increasingly crowded city. The



day and the teachers also sparked my interest in obtaining more information about techniques, tools and projects. Can I really afford that Veritas low angle jack plane? I have spent way too much time watching Sellers, Estlea and Cosman for my partners liking. I guess we all need a sense of balance in our lives.

Money well spent, in my opinion. Thanks teachers!

Adrian Gillin

A year at Sturt - Clare O'Reilly

As many of you know, I was lucky enough to be a member of the 2022 Sturt School of Woodworking class. In this article, I would like to give you an insight into what the course involves, a bit of history of Sturt and some 'tips' that I learned that you might find interesting too.

My journey to Sturt

When I enrolled in a weekend course making steam bent boxes some years ago, it never occurred to me that it would lead me down a path trod by many amateur and professional woodworkers to Sturt. Indeed, if anyone had mentioned the Sturt School of Wood, I would have been surprised that there would be any interest in such a school still operating and bemused that it would ever be something I would be interested in. Now I am surprised that there are not more woodworking schools operating!

While Covid shut down so much of what we took for granted, occasionally it opened opportunities that may not have been possible otherwise. For me, Sturt was one such opportunity. Around May 2021, I was surprised to see a message from Sturt that there remained a few vacancies for the 2022 student intake for a 11 month course in fine woodworking and design. I knew that for most years, vacancies were filled at least a year or more ahead and competition for a spot was strong.

More on a whim than with a plan, I applied. A few months later, I was travelling to Mittagong - along a road I would get to know intimately - for an interview. Six months after that, I was heading back down to Mittagong to start a year of making.

Where and what is Sturt?

The Sturt School of Wood was established in 1985 by the founding director, Alan Wale. It is based in Mittagong and is located on the grounds of Frensham School. Alan ran the school until he retired in 1992, when he was followed by Tom Harrington who was director until 2009 and then Stuart Faulkner until 2013. Alan, Tom and Stuart's presence remain influential in Sturt. It was under Tom that the Sturt School was accredited as a Certificate IV in Furniture Design & Technology. While there were a number of competing furniture design schools, most notably the Australian National University and University of Tasmania, today Sturt remains the last full-time fine furniture school in Australia.

The 2022 year at Sturt

Sturt is a full-time intensive course, although full-time often means 6 days rather than 5 and from 8:00 in the morning to at least 5:30 or 6:00pm in the evening, and as each term neared its end, much later. The workshop is not open on Sundays to give the neighbours a break.

Sturt generally takes 12 students. In 2022, we had the largest intake of women, with five women and seven men, with varying degrees of skill and experience. We had an architect (another WWA NSW member), an interior designer, a cabinet maker, a guitar maker, a linguist, an accountant, a former CEO of a non for profit organisation, a hospitality manager, a couple of recent HSC graduates, a carpenter and a lawyer.

A year at Sturt - cont

There are four terms at Sturt, each run by a different teacher. We hit the jackpot with the 2022 teachers. Peter Young taught term one, the introductory term. David Upfill-Brown taught term 2. Linda Fredheim taught her first term at Sturt taking our third term and we finished our year with the wonderful duo, Pam and Neil Erasmus. In between the terms, we had short courses with the incredibly talented and enthusiastic Darren Oates on bending timber and the incredibly skilful Paul Nicholson on making our own dovetail saw (from scratch!).

Term one

Term one was an intensive introduction. We covered the basics of sharpening, setting up or tuning hand tools, understanding the use of different glues, making both hand cut and machine cut joints, making the iconic Sturt breadboard (by hand), making mitred and dovetailed boxes, veneering, making a small bench, with dovetails and a mortise and tenon rail, and finally making a tool cabinet. We whipped through each topic and it was hard to keep up at times.

Often past Sturt students would comment that they ended their year much healthier than they had begun. It took me more than a few weeks to physically adjust to the standing, the carrying and the moving. There is no doubt though, that a year not being in air conditioning, not being in front of a computer screen and being physically active was a healthy way to live. Certainly, the activities at Sturt were much more akin to a daily functional training session!

Dovetail marking out tips

- Cutting tails or pins first is a matter of personal preference. We were initially taught tails first, so the marking out tips follow that sequence;
- Always cut with the face of the board towards you;
- You do not have to be super accurate when cutting tails, but the marking out and cuts need to be crisp. Similarly, when transferring to the pin board, the marking out needs to be crisp but the pins need to be accurately cut.
- Use the cutting gauge to mark the location of the baseline but use a knife (the X-acto knife is a good choice) to deepen the cut and ensure it is crisp.
- Mark out the location of the tails using a divider. Use a 0.7mm pencil to mark out the tails (a saddle marker works very well).
- When marking the baseline of the opposing board, make it 0.5mm less than the width of the other board. This allows even pressure across the joint and can be planed flush after fitting.
- Use knife to cut baseline (but not edges) on the pin board and 0.7mm pencil to mark pins.
- When sawing, cut down or split the pencil line.
- Be brave and commit to the cut.

A year at Sturt - cont

We spent several weeks on tuning handtools and sharpening. One of the big benefits of Sturt is being able to try other students' tools - if you ever see a Lie Nielsen # 5 plane on sale, grab it (or tell me!). It is a superb tool!

There are more methods to sharpen than there are days in the week and everyone swears by their method as giving the best results. After much experimentation, I concluded that the method that works best for you is the best method! I also discovered that you need to sharpen more often than you think you need to. A sharp plane or sharp chisel works smoothly and consistently. If the tool is sharp, it is much easier to focus on technique.

Different Sturt teachers favoured different honing angles for both chisels and planes. However, for chisels, generally 25 degrees was considered best for the primary bevel and between 30 and 35 degrees for the secondary bevel. I found that a secondary angle of 35 degrees held an edge longer. I also learned that accuracy when sharpening is less important than repeatability. If the angle is 33 or 36, it will not matter as much as being able to ensure that angle is retained each time the tool is sharpened.

Generally, a combination of a course diamond stone or sandpaper (80g) for creating the bevel and water stones from course to fine were favoured for fine tuning the primary and secondary bevels. Grinding wheels can give an excellent edge, particularly water cooled grinders, and are particularly good at re-establishing the primary bevel. We made a sharpening station for water stones which worked well for being able to quickly check the desired angle and sharpen a tool. Let me know if you would like the plan to make one.

What was the best lesson from Sturt?

Many of you will have heard of the theory that it takes 10,000 hours to become an expert. Well a year at Sturt felt like 10,000 hours, but none of us emerged as experts. What did become clear though is that there are as many different ways of doing things as there are teachers or indeed, woodworkers. Experimenting with different techniques and finding what works was probably the biggest lesson from the year. Any craft, and indeed any profession, requires consistent and deliberate practice. Sturt fostered that ability to practice with strong tuition from woodworkers who have made their livelihood from their design skills and workmanship.

Woodworking is really problem solving. Having a range of approaches or different methods of doing things is like having an extra kit of tools that can be applied in different situations. When mistakes happen (and they do!), knowing how to fix the mistake or finding a different way around a mistake (a design choice) can make all the difference to the final piece. It can be easy to lose confidence when making a piece, or to be afraid of experimenting, but knowing the skills to advance a piece and fixing things that go awry can be liberating, particularly when designing something from scratch.

In the next newsletter, I will share some more details about the design aspect of the Sturt course.

Steam bending

On Saturday 11 February 2023, Stuart & Carol Faulkner ran another excellent course at the workshop, this time on Steam Bending.



Geoff McClelland, Stuart and Carol Faulkner, Liz Sears, Michael Palmer, James Cable and Mal Bloomfield

Geoff McClelland, Liz Sears, Michael Palmer, Peter Luscombe, Mal Blomfield, Jim Cable and not only learnt how to steam bend timber but were each able to make two delightful shaker style oval boxes using the techniques learnt.

Stuart & Carol were incredibly well prepared as always, but even then, the steam bending didn't always go quite to plan. Fortunately, this just presented Stuart with another "teaching opportunity"!



On a related note, John Wilson of Shaker Box fame died late January aged 83. John taught and wrote extensively, unlocking the mysteries of Shaker oval boxes for millions of woodworkers.

Fortunately, the business John established, continues. The Home Shop is the only known manufacturer of the tiny copper tacks used in Shaker boxes

<https://www.shakerovalbox.com/>

Great instructors and a typical cohort of friendly members made for a very enjoyable and informative day - **Geoff**

Michael - I can certainly summarise as saying the course, as always, was an excellent experience where we ventured into the world of bending wood using steam. Expertly presented, with full support from leaders that included all the ingredients for us to create our small round containers highlighting the nuances of steam bending. Not all went to plan on all exercises - which of course is where the best education comes from as we go through mending and alternative processes to end up with our fantastic results. Was an excellent day with a bunch of excellent people!



Workshop Courses & Events

This year members have actively supported the short courses. Twelve of the courses originally timetabled have been booked out. In response to this demand, we have arranged to repeat five popular offerings. While 70% of all current places have been booked and paid there are still 30 places left in the eight courses that are not yet full.

There are four places left in Hand Carved Walking Sticks with Bronwyn Vost. I completed this myself last year and thoroughly enjoyed the detailed, expert instruction. I walked away with a parrot topped walking stick. We have a few places left in the two dates of the Marquetry course being run by Peter Young. Towards the end of the year more spaces are available. In October, the Plane Restoration course that was so successful last year is being led again by Brian Dawson and Kevin Wallace. There will be a second running of Carol Faulkner's Spoon Carving day and finally, there is Introduction to Handtools. This is a brand-new course that will do just what the name suggests.

We are so fortunate to have the experienced woodworkers who lead these events and so create the opportunities for us all to develop our skills. Courses leaders include woodworkers who are renown for their teaching and making. There are leaders who have a specialised expertise that they share. There are regular presenters who are offering programs that they have honed over several years. Most importantly, there are the members who attend. It is their participation, your participation, that make the courses the success that they are. Increasingly, we are offering additional events that fall outside the courses program. Recently we started to offer a course for new members on an invitation basis. These are for members who are also novice woodworkers. The day focuses on the safe use of the machine and hand tools in the workshop. In addition to established one off events, like Sharpening Day, we are seeking opportunities to collaborate with firms that service the woodworking community. An example is the Fiddes Hands-On Demonstration day that will run on the 15 th of April. The Fiddes company sells a wide range of finishing materials that were featured at the February meeting. We still a few spots left if you are interested.

So, what is special about our courses? There are many good alternatives available in Sydney. We have a deliberate policy of not competing with the courses offered by the woodworking schools, by other woodworking associations or by the businesses servicing woodworkers. Our courses try to respond to the needs of our members. The class sizes are limited by design, they are run by volunteers and the costs are kept low. Our courses continue to be run by members for members. Is there a course for you?

Cheers,

Phil Nanlohy

April 15th	Fiddes Finishing workshop
May 27th	Hand-carved Walking sticks
June 24th	Jointing with Dominos
July 17 & 20th	Marquetry
August 14th	Dovetail jointing
September 16th	Basics of finishing
October 7th	Plane restoration
October 14 & 21st	Introductory Woodworking 2
November 4th	Introduction to Hand Tools
November 14th	Jointing with Dominos

Three courses are fully subscribed:

- Leather stitching and lacing
- Introduction to box making, and
- Veneering

Course availability is provided on:

www.woodworkersnsw.org.au

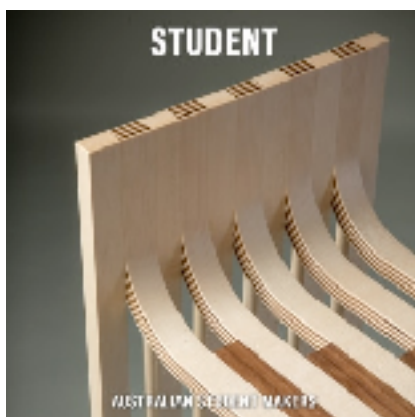
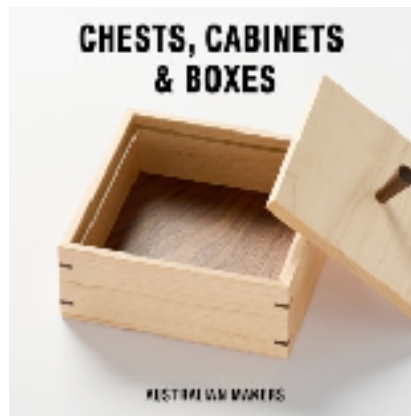


ENTRIES NOW OPEN

The Maker of the Year Awards 2023, presented by Carbitool, are open for entries with a new major sponsor, a new category, and more than \$18,000 in cash and prizes on offer.

The Awards close for entries on 4 September 2023 and culminate with the announcement of the winners in a special Maker of the Year edition of Australian Wood Review magazine in December 2023 where the **Top 100 entries will be published.**

[Click here for details and to enter](#)



Bedtime 'reading'

Woodworking Podcasts

By Clare O'Reilly

There are times when cleaning the workshop or sitting down to sharpen a bunch of tools that looking for a diversion can help time pass quickly - a podcast can be diverting. Of course, a long drive or commute can also be useful for listening to a woodworking podcast, as long as there is no one else in the car! There are a bunch of interesting woodworking podcasts around. Here is a short list:

- Designer Maker Revolution podcast: the South Australian furniture maker, Adrian Potter is the host of this podcast. Adrian interviews a bunch of woodworkers, furniture makers and other artists. The interviews can be quiet rambling but it is like eavesdropping on a conversation. Stand outs for me included David Haig, Neil Erasmus, Linda Fredheim, Will Matthysen, and the Witness Tree Project.
- Out of the Woodwork podcast: Sean Everleigh presents this podcast from Axminster Tools in the UK. Again, the podcast is interview-based and includes makers, artisans and craftspeople. All episodes are worth a listen, but particularly John Makepeace, Chris Fisher, Hattie Speed, Alice Blogg and Matt Estlea.
- The Mortise and Tenon Podcast: from the publishers of the Mortise and Tenon magazine.
- Modern Woodworkers Association Podcast: more interviews with some great woodworkers, including Aspen Golann, Chris Schwartz and some useful tips.
- Fine Woodworking Podcast: can also ramble, but some useful information about tools and techniques.
- The Shop Stool Podcast: this includes makers from both Australia and New Zealand. It can veer into cabinetry and kitchens.

Coopering

The following video has been forwarded by Walter Muskovic, I found it very interesting, I hope you do too:

Walter stumbled across this great interview with traditional cooper George Smithwick produced by the Museums of History NSW that they posted on their YouTube channel several years ago.



Letters to the Editor

This is your opportunity to have a say!

If you have items you feel may be of interest to other Members or if you have suggestions for improving the experience of Association Membership, I'd welcome your feedback.

Please send an email to: **newsletter@woodworkersnsw.org.au**

Don't forget....

Sydney Royal Easter Show
6 - 17 April 2023
Showground, Homebush



Maloney Wood Expo
April 29 - May 1 2023
Maleny Showgrounds, Maleny, QLD
<https://malenywoodexpo.com>

Wood Dust 23
May 18 - 21, 2023
Melbourne, VIC
www.wooddustaustralia.com.au/

Sydney Timber, Tools & Artisan Show
Fri 2 - Sun 4 June, 2023
Rosehill Gardens Racecourse, James Ruse Dv., Rosehill
Sydney Timber Tools & Artisan Show



Dunstone Design - Design & Development 2023
October 9th to 20th, 2023
Unit 3/5 Aurora Pl, Queanbeyan NSW 2620
<https://www.dunstonedesign.com.au>



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