



## The Woodworkers' Association of NSW Incorporated

ABN 51 544 261 324

### From the Chair

Congratulations to **Leon Van Vliet** for winning (yet again) the Royal Easter Show prize for Small item of Furniture. Leon designed and made the



occasional table pictured below which was the stand-out item of woodwork at the Show.



On the topic of exquisite workmanship, work is underway on restoring the **Hannah Cabinet** that was submerged and damaged when the floodwaters swept through the Lismore Regional Gallery in February 2022. Once the floodwaters subsided, the sodden and damaged Cabinet was conveyed to Canberra. A controlled process of drying the components was necessary to ensure that the cell walls of the wood were preserved. Once that process

was complete, a detailed assessment of the damage and the nature and extent of repairs had to be undertaken. That has been an extensive process involving conservators and insurance loss assessors. It is hoped that restoration work on the Cabinet will commence in the coming months. **Geoff Hannah** is busy still restoring his flooded home at Lismore as well as renovating alternative accommodation in Tenterfield. Despite all he has been through, Geoff's not giving up.

Other important works that require recognition and preservation are the items comprising the **Henry Kendall Collection of Fine Wood Art**. This Collection was established in 1982 by the (now) NSW Forestry Corporation as a permanent collection to illustrate the variety and aesthetic qualities of native timbers, the diversity of their application and the high calibre of Australians working in wood. Between 1982 and 1990, the Forestry Corporation acquired 17 pieces, including pieces from current or former members of our Association. Some items are on display in Forestry Corporation offices but many are in storage at Coffs Harbour and in need of restoration. The Association is actively working with the Forestry Corporation to arrange for the items in storage to be brought to Sydney so we can facilitate their restoration and display. We will keep you posted on developments.

Our next general meeting is on **Monday, 5 June 2023** and we are delighted to welcome **David Rowlinson** as our guest speaker. David studied Architecture and Building Engineering and now manages Planet Ark's Make It Wood campaign, which aims to increase the use of responsibly sourced wood as a building material. I hope you can join us for this interesting presentation.

As usual, members are invited to bring along items of interest and there will be a selection of give-aways that will delight.

## 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  
 Les Miller  
 David Palmer  
 Leon Sadubin  
 Richard Vaughan  
 Alan Wale

## New Members

A big welcome to all new Members:

- Robert Holley
- Mark Nelson
- David Searson
- Ringo Taylor
- Christopher Whaite

## News, News, News,

### General Meeting

The next General meeting of the Association will be held on the 5th June at the Canada Bay Club, 8 William Street, Five Dock: 19:00 for a 19:30h start.

The Meeting Agenda includes an update on the Association's activities, as well as an update on the Henry Kendall collection.

Our guest speaker is David Rowlinson from 'Make it Wood' - an organisation run by Planet Ark, in partnership with Forest & Wood Products Australia. David promotes the use of sustainably sourced timber, and his presentation is called "Wood, carbon, health & well-being".

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.

Members are welcome to invite family and friends. Visitors welcome.

### Timber, Tools & Artisans show

On again - off again - this year the Timber, Tools & Artisan show is heading for Brisbane - only. Billed as a rebuild, following the demise of other craft shows during Covid, this show will be on 15 - 17 September, 2023.

### Library up and running

The new library is now fully functional. Thanks to fine work by Mark Angelo and Geoff McClelland.



## WWA Committee

### Office Bearers:

**Chair: Phil Greenwood**

0404 083 499

[chair@woodworkersnsw@gmail.com](mailto:chair@woodworkersnsw@gmail.com)**Vice-Chair: Clare O'Reilly**

0423 360 023

[clare.oreilly@iinet.net.au](mailto:clare.oreilly@iinet.net.au)**Secretary: Mark Angelo**

0405 303 646

[secretary.woodworkersnsw@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.woodworkersnsw@gmail.com)**Treasurer: Gordon Joseph**

0409 488 919

[treasurer.woodworkersnsw@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.woodworkersnsw@gmail.com)

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

### Committee members:

**Frank Duff**

9061 3061, 0422 778 380

[fwduff@icloud.com](mailto:fwduff@icloud.com)**Peter Harris**

0419 164 098

[peterh47@ihug.com.au](mailto:peterh47@ihug.com.au)**Richard Leniston**

0402 306 249

[richard\\_leniston@hotmail.com](mailto:richard_leniston@hotmail.com)**Tim Major**

0418 214 993

[jtmajor@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jtmajor@bigpond.net.au)**Phil Nanlohy**

0416 022 252

[philnanlohy@gmail.com](mailto:philnanlohy@gmail.com)

## Safety message

We are all very aware of the dangers of table saws, band saws, router tables, jointers and like-machinery in our workshops.

To minimise the risk of potential injury, we all use safety aids including feather boards and push sticks to keep our fingers and hands well clear of blades, cutters and spinning router bits. As well as keeping fingers and hands clear, push sticks help maintain an even pressure and rate of feed on the piece of timber resulting in a smoother finish and less potential for any kickback.

There are many very good commercially available feather boards and push sticks, however, many of us make our own to suit our machines or the type of work we do.

# Annual General Meeting - 3rd April 2023

Our 2023 AGM was held on Monday 4th April at the Canada Bay Club in Five Dock.

In accordance with our Rules of Association, each member of the Committee holds office until the next annual general meeting, however, retiring Committee members are eligible to stand for re-election.

At the April 2023 AGM, the retiring Committee members were nominated to stand again and, there being no other nominations, they were elected to hold office until the 2024 AGM.

Our Committee for 2023/4 is:

- Chair: Phil Greenwood
- Vice-Chair: Clare O'Reilly
- Secretary: Mark Angelo
- Treasurer: Gordon Joseph
- Committee:
  - Frank Duff
  - Peter Harris
  - Richard Leniston
  - Tim Major
  - Phil Nanlohy

Phil Greenwood is, by a wide margin, our longest serving Chairman. 2023/4 is Phil's 11<sup>th</sup> year as our Chairman. Phil, thank you!



Some of the 40 members at our 2023 AGM (photo by John Connors)

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022-2023

The last 12 months has been an excellent year for the Woodworkers Association. Our membership has increased by over 10% to 190 members - the largest number in the 45 year history of the Association.

But we have been greatly saddened by the loss of two of our Life members - **David Palmer** and **Kim Larymore** - who each contributed so much to our Association.

The Committee for the past 12 months, comprising **Clare O'Reilly** (Vice Chair), **Gordon Joseph** (Treasurer), **Mark Angelo** (Secretary), **Frank Duff**, **Phil Nanlohy**, **Peter Harris**, **Richard Leniston**, **Tim Major** and myself have met monthly to discuss the affairs of the Association and plans for the future. Those meetings have been vibrant and constructive. I thank the Committee members for their dedication and contributions. Special mention goes to our Treasurer (and so much more) **Gordon Joseph** who has looked after our finances meticulously and our Secretary **Mark Angelo** who has looked after our administration with great diligence. As well as those tasks, they have done so much more, as will be apparent from this Report.

One of the major projects that we worked through last year was the upgrade of our website. **Kain Tietzel** kindly offered to undertake the work at a reduced fee. **Mark Angelo** became the project manager and did a fabulous job of conferring with members and the Committee, preparing content and working everything through with Kain. These projects are not easy, especially in an Association such as ours where people can have very different views about how things should be done. But patience and goodwill reigned supreme and the outcome has been very pleasing. The new website has been a real advance for the Association. Thanks again to Kain and Mark, and all those who assisted with the process.

Our Workshop at Abbotsford has been open on Sundays and Wednesdays for members. We have nine members who have been active supervisors at the Workshop to assist people and to try and prevent any accidents. They are **Peter Harris**, **Tim Major**, **Gordon Joseph**, **Peter Dunn**, **Richard Leniston**, **Phil Nanlohy**, **Peter Munro**, **John Evans** and **Henry Black**. We could do with a couple more Supervisors if anyone would like to help. **Andrew Honan** has kindly taken over the responsibilities for organising the Supervisors' roster and monitoring bookings which can now be made on our website.

We started gearing up for the 2022 Timber, Tools and Artisans Show last June, with **Richard Leniston** leading the charge, but the Show was cancelled just days before it was to open.

Our General meetings have continued with a wide variety of topics and activities. Some highlights were:

- in June, **Henry Black** spoke about Design Development with reference to a number of chairs that he had made, and **Brian Dawson** gave a presentation on unusual hand planes;
- in August, **Peter Young**, master woodworker, gave a fascinating talk;
- in October, **Gordon Joseph** gave a presentation on Designing and Building a Workbench;
- in December, we had our traditional "Show and Tell" meeting; and
- in February, **Tracie Astin** from **Fiddes Australia** provided a presentation on Fiddes' products for finishing wood.



**Phil Nanlohy** has been responsible for organising our courses for members and has done an excellent job. Courses over the last 12 months included:

- Workshop Accreditation Day - **Peter Harris, Tim Major**
- Walking stick carving - **Bronwyn Vost**
- Plane restoration - **Brian Dawson, Kevin Wallace**
- Leather Stitching and Lacing - **Phil Nanlohy**
- Introduction to Box Making - **Tim Major**
- Introductory Woodworking - **Peter Munro**
- Basics of Finishing - **Nik Teply**
- Annual Sharpening Day - with **Mitch** from Japanese Tools and members **Brian Dawson, Peter Dunn, John Evans**
- Introductory Woodworking - **Peter Munro and Tim Major**
- Spoon carving - **Carol and Stuart Faulkner**
- Steam bending shaker boxes - **Carol and Stuart Faulkner**
- New members' course - **Phil Nanlohy and Tim Major**.

In a major improvement, the Courses are now well-advertised on our website and bookings for the courses are arranged through the website.

**Chris Gaskin** kindly and efficiently edited our newsletter for most of the year. In December Chris' other commitments forced us to cajole **Colin Carr** into accepting the job - thank you Chris and Colin. Thanks also to each member who contributed material for the newsletter, especially **Peter Dunn** for his interesting and informative interviews of members.

Besides the website, other significant projects this year have been:

1. the organisation and cataloguing of our library (**Geoff McClelland**),
2. the construction of a bookcase to house the library safely within the Workshop (**Tim Major and Gordon Joseph**);
3. the upgrading of our Health and Safety policy and documentation (**Tim Major**);
4. the collection and organisation of donated tools and consequent tool sales (especially **Gordon Joseph**);
5. the ongoing and regular maintenance of the Workshop (**Peter Harris, Tim Major and supervisors**); and
6. the preparation of a Constitution for the Association to replace our current Rules of Association (**Gordon Joseph**).

After a very busy year and lots of change, I am hoping that the coming year will provide an opportunity for the Association to consolidate and make a positive contribution to the woodworking community.

My thanks to all members who have attended and contributed to the Association's activities.

**Philip Greenwood, Chairman**

**3 April 2023**

## Show-and-tell - Push sticks

At our April 2023 AGM, members presented a variety of push-sticks for multiple uses. Some look familiar to the Spring Street users, others less so.



Alex Springall made the 'gummy toothbrush' push stick to allow him to hold small, irregular shaped pieces against the fence of the table saw. It's made from a robust piece of scrap 200-250mm long, and a soft plastic surface protector, usually used on the bottom of a chair or table leg. This one has a 'tenon' on it that fits tightly into a 1/8" hole in the wooden handle.

According to Alex, "It's important that the handle is strong enough not to break when you're pressing down on the workpiece. Also, the material of the surface protector needs to be soft and 'sticky' enough that it doesn't slip on the workpiece."





A less "Pushy" angle was presented by Tony Anderson, who talked about various aids he uses in his woodwork.

An accurate square is essential and different squares are appropriate for different jobs.

Sharp cutting edges are not only easier to use but are less dangerous, and sharpening stones need to be kept flat with a good lapping plate. Rust can be minimised by storing sharp tools in Nox-rust vapor

wrapping paper - you would need to go to a gunsmith for this.

Ed: I've been advised by Peter Dunn that an alternative, long-term rust preventative is G15, available from Carbatec.

## and mallets?



Walter Muskovic didn't bring along any push-sticks, but he is justifiably proud of his first project, a wooden mallet.



WOODWORKERS' ASSOCIATION OF N.S.W.



We now have a private **Facebook group** to share ideas and have casual discussions about woodworking.

Use this group to network with other members and get feedback about projects in a safe online environment.

Member-only events, courses, and meetings will also be published here.

Join now by scanning the QR code below:



*Please note, this group is for current WWANSW members only so we will be reviewing each request before you are able to join.*

# Meet a member - Terry Gleeson

by Peter Dunn

This time I would like to introduce you to Terry Gleeson, a very talented, long-standing member, who has held positions as Chairman and committee member as well as being ready to lend assistance over the years in the activities of the Association; such as the Working with Wood Shows and various exhibitions. With the support of his wife Tess, who was a Paramedic and is now an Emergency Nurse, he has run his woodworking business and overcome the problems associated with cerebral palsy from birth.

**Q** Terry, would you tell us a little of your life, perhaps starting from school age?

**A** I started schooling with the Spastic Centre, that's what they called it then, it's now called the Cerebral Palsy Alliance.

I lived at Mt Kuring-Gai and father had to take me to Waitara to catch the bus to Allambie Heights. I went there until I was 9 years old.

In 1968 and 1969 I went to Saint Patricks at Asquith and then I went to Saint Leos from grade 5 and stayed there until I left in fourth Form (year ten).

**Q** Was your woodworking career influenced by your family?

**A** Working with wood was in my family. My paternal grandfather was a woodworker, actually a sleeper cutter for the railways - he cut the sleepers for the trans continental railway. He worked from Victoria right through to Perth. After that he got a cutting contract in Port Macquarie and when that was finished, he came back and decided to settle in Turrumurra which is where my dad grew up.

My father was a landscape contractor, stone mason, horticulturist and nurseryman.

My brother was a cabinet maker, and we worked together for a while when I first came here to Dural, he builds boats up in lake Macquarie now.

**Q** How did you get into woodworking?

**A** I was 17 when I left school. I got an apprenticeship, which was a struggle with my disability. The economic situation wasn't good in the late seventies. My dad convinced the maintenance Section at the Spastic centre to take me on. They didn't have any workers with a disability there before that.

There was one guy there who made all the wooden posture chairs for the kids at Mosman, the wheel chairs were made of wood because they were easy to modify as the kids grew; you wouldn't see a wooden wheel chair anywhere these days. It was fairly ordinary work and I worked under a man named Alf Weston. He was a Cockney who trained as a joiner in London before the Second World War. He taught me a lot of good woodworking and I was grateful for that.

I was there for about three years when one of the other guys who I worked with said he wanted to have a talk with me. He took me aside and told me that I had too much skill to be working there and I need to find a better job and encouraged me to get out and told me that if I didn't get out, I would be stuck there for the rest of my life.



**Q** Did you take his advice?

**A** Not long after that, I went there to see a guy named Jim, who I went to TAFE with. He worked in a workshop in Brookvale, - G.L.Macedos. I went there to get some wood turning done for a boat I had been restoring. While I was there, he told me to go and see the boss and ask him for a job, I went and talked to the boss and to my surprise he said yes, so I had a new job, and that is where I learned most of the skills that I have now.

**Q** What were you working on in your new job?

**A** I was restoring antiques, I remember the first day there I was given a mid-Victorian chest of drawers and I remember thinking that was a little hard. In the end I got sick of the sight of antique chests of drawers because there were so many of them. The business did repairs and also copies and replicas ordered by customers.

The day I started there was the day after the worker who did all the wood turning left and quite close to my bench was a chair maker who needed wood turning. They didn't have anyone else to do the turning and I was encouraged to take up the lathe work, I had never done any turning before. I started to do the wood turning for the chair maker and ended up becoming the wood turner for the shop.

**Q** What happened from there?

**A** I worked at Macedos for a while. At the time they were the biggest restoration workshop in the country, they had about 20 cabinet makers there, 6 polishers, 4 upholsterers and all the showroom staff.

**Q** How long did you work there?

**A** I completed my apprenticeship and worked there for another year or two. I was offered a job in 1982 by an antique firm at Manly Vale, but, six weeks after I started it went broke! I didn't want to go back to Macedos so I spent a couple of months on unemployment benefits.

I then spent what little money I had on a contractors saw and moved into a garage at Hornsby that belonged to a mate of my brother and started my own business and I have been working for myself ever since then.

**Q** I have seen your extensive workshop at your property at Dural and you seem to have added to that contractors saw. What machinery do you have now?

**A** Let me think about that, I bought a Woodfast lathe from Hornsby TAFE. That was the first quality machine I purchased. I didn't buy most of my machines until I moved out here to Dural in 1987.

I replaced my Woodfast lathe with a more up-to-date one in 1982; a 900mm Woodfast lathe; a 1982 Wadkin vibrating square head chisel and morticer; a Luna Cabinet saw; a Woodfast panel saw, a big Woodfast 900mm bandsaw that can cut 500mm; a smaller Italian-made 600mm bandsaw for doing curve work; a 1969 12-inch Wadkin Bursgreen jointer; a no name 500mm thicknesser which has been fitted with a helical cutter head which I bought second hand 25 years ago and it still runs as good as it did when I bought it. I have the power tools and hand tools required for my work and to run my woodworking classes.

**Q** When you started your business how did you go about finding customers?

**A** At first I just made whatever came along. After a few years I was approached by an interior decorator that I was doing work for in St Ives and she had a client who wanted some antique chairs replicated. I had never made one before but I had worked next to the chairmaker while working at Macedos,

I had done all his woodturning and I knew that I could at least make the front legs. I could remember how he made the rest of it so I just said yes. It took me forever because I didn't have all the proper carving chisels. Once I had done that, I took myself to the Sydney Antique Fair and found a few dealers who were selling the type of chairs I wanted to make, introduced myself and the orders started coming in. There weren't many replica chair makers in Sydney so I ended up with eight or nine dealers I was making chairs for and that kept my brother, the cabinet maker, and I busy.

**Q** When did you move to Dural?

**A** That was 1987. The property had been a mushroom farm and with a suggestion of our father, my four brothers and I got together and bought it. There are only two of us left the other three moved on to do other things. In the mid 1990's I met my wife at a music festival and we married in 1997, it's our anniversary next week. We have 2 children, a 22-year-old and a 19-year-old. My son, when he gets into the workshop, can produce some good stuff.

**Q** On the subject of anniversaries, I saw a beautiful tray you made as an anniversary gift. I remember thinking of copying it, however, after some examination I saw that it would have been deceptively difficult to copy it so I didn't attempt it.

**A** I am looking at it as we speak, it was made out of sycamore and was made to a plan by Edward Barnsley, a famous English furniture maker. I made it because it was going to be a difficult job which needed the skills of a proper cabinet maker. My wife says it is so precious to her that she won't use it. It sits proudly on display on its own stand.

**Q** I know you give lessons; how long have you been doing that.

**A** I turned the workshop into a school 22 years ago, I have had countless students and a lot of them are long term. I have one student that started in my second class and still attends every week. About eighty percent of my students, once they start, just keep on coming.

Because of advancing age and disability, it became more and more difficult to spend long strenuous days pushing spoke shaves and planes. Tess and I decided the woodworking school was a sensible option for the future.





**Q** What brand of chisels would be your choice?

**A** I am a fan of Stubai chisels. They are good value for money, good quality steel, the backs are slightly hollowed so they are fast and easy to lap and I encourage all my students to buy them. Initially I usually sharpen them as they don't have the skill when they first start.

**Q** What sharpening stones?

**A** I use the Shapton ceramic water stones.

**Q** Plans for the future?

**A** Tess and I bought a caravan about 12 months ago and we are keen to hit the road. We might head over to Perth; we want to do a semi lap of the country for a number of months.

**Q** Favourite timber?

**A** Mahogany, Honduras or Cuban if I could find it.

**Q** Future Project?

**A** Tomorrow I am going to pick up some timber to make a new front door for my house. At the moment I have a beautiful Victorian Gallery door but unfortunately it isn't quite wide enough for easy access for my wheel chair. I am also looking forward to retirement.

Thanks, Terry, for sharing your time with us and telling us a little of your life's story.





# Maleny Wood Expo

By Evan Dunstan

William Bayliss and I recently made the long trek up to the Queensland Hinterland and back for the Maleny Wood Expo. The Expo really is the most fun, inclusive, welcoming and convivial wood-themed event in Australia. A big shout-out to organiser Steve McLeish and the wonderful volunteers who make Maleny possible.



The main hall at Maleny on Saturday morning, giving you some idea of the energy of the place.

To our delight, we did good business as well as having a fun time. The good folk of the Queensland Hinterland respond well to our aesthetic.

William, along with arts writer Meredith Hinchliff and Brisbane woodworker Peter Geddes, judged this year's Wootha prize. For details of the winners, [click here](#).

I would urge all Australian makers to consider entering the Wootha. It's not the easiest place to ship to, especially for Southern based makers, but the first prize of \$10,000 (non-acquisitive) is not insignificant.



William and I talking to a client at Maleny about turning his rare silkwood slabs into an heirloom cabinet for his son's wedding. Image by Peter Thompson.

# Make a thing

## Editorial

Those of you who attended the April General Meeting may recall a beautiful mallet made by one of our talented wood turners, Richard Leniston. Richard is a Committee member, and is active in wood work forums. He is a regular attendee at the Spring Street workshop, where he acts as Supervisor once a month.



Richard holding a future turning project

Next time you're in the Spring Street workshop lookout for a new bradawl, donated by Richard. It is one of a set of five he has recently completed.



# Course review - Introduction to Box making

By Neil Heron

April 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>

Course Convenors: Tim Major and Peter Munro

Five participants spent an excellent two days in the workshop, learning to create precision mitre corners, perfectly fitting lids and adding finishing touches to the boxes under the watchful eyes and skilled assistance of Tim and Peter.



The recycled/reused timber provided for box making included Australian red cedar, Tasmanian myrtle, oregon and silky oak.

The two options for box design were a 'lift-off' lid and a 'lift-up' lid.

Day one involved preparing the timber - hand sanding, using the routing table for rebates to accommodate base panel and lid, and then cutting the panels to size and using a mitre sled with the table saw for precise mitre cuts.

Tape-up, glue-up and clamping was next, followed by lunch in the sun on a perfect autumn day.

The afternoon session included cutting the base and lid to size and gluing the base into place.

Day two was all about finishing - sanding to remove any excess glue and smoothing the surfaces of boxes and lids.

Lift off lids were separated from the base using the table saw and internal timber lining prepared. Rebates to accommodate the lift up lids were finished using a fine chisel.

The first coat of shellac was applied before lunch.

After lunch, the pieces were finished with a second coat of shellac and two coats of wax.

The participants proudly displayed their finished boxes and we headed home satisfied that we had not only produced a beautiful box but had also acquired many new skills.

Thank you, Tim and Peter for your excellent tuition and problem solving!



# Course review - Veneering

By Gordon Joseph

During the last week of April, five members attended a Veneering Course at our workshop under the tutelage of our talented member, Peter Harris.

Peter covered cutting and gluing veneers to a substrate, making your own veneers, and the tools and glues to use. The first project undertaken by course attendees was a chess board pattern using very thin veneers. Each attendee completed a veneering project, and some made good progress on a second one.



Peter Luscombe, Brett Rawlins, James Brodie, Jim Cable, Phil Nanlohy and Peter Harris

# Tutorial - Through Dovetails

By Alex Springall

Dovetail joints are among the most useful corner joints in woodwork. As well as having a pleasing appearance, they have structural strength.

They are traditionally used in drawers and boxes, but are also commonly used in other carcass furniture.

The ability to make close-fitting dovetail joints is often regarded as a sign of a good woodworker, and their incorporation in furniture as a sign of quality. While this is not always true, good furniture and cabinet work often includes dovetails used in appropriate situations.

There are many variations of dovetails, used depending on the situation. The simplest are through dovetails, and these will be described in detail here. Also commonly used are blind dovetails, while other variations are less common.

A number of jigs and machines have been developed to cut dovetails, but these are usually limited to cutting through dovetails, with wide pins. However, machine-cut dovetails always look unnaturally uniform and 'clunky'. Once you have cut a few dovetails by hand, you will find that it is just as quick to do this as to set up jigs.

There are many ways to hand-cut dovetails. Some advocate cutting pins first, others cut the tails first. They all have two things in common – advocates swear that theirs is the best way, and they work well for the people that use them all the time.

I will describe the way that works best for me. I always cut pins first, because it is easier to mark out the tails from very thin (London) pins than vice versa.

The steps in cutting dovetails are as follows:

## General layout

Decide which pieces will have tails and which will have pins.

In drawers, the front and back have pins, while the sides have tails. On large boxes with side handles, the tails should be on the front and back, while drawer chests have the tails on top and bottom with pins on the sides.

Decide how many tails and pins you will have. For small boxes and drawers, two tails and three pins is usually adequate. For aesthetic reasons, an odd number of pins is usually used, but there is no hard and fast rule about this.

Decide how wide you want the pins to be. I prefer to use very thin pins, except on large boxes.

Decide what slope to have on the tails. The common slopes are from 1:6 (9.5°) for softwoods to 1:8 (7°) for hardwoods. You can set this angle on a bevel gauge using a piece of rectangular scrap. For a 1:8 slope, mark 1 unit from the corner along one side, and 8 units from the corner along the perpendicular side. Draw a line between the two marks. Then set the stock of the bevel gauge on the first side, and angle the blade so that it is on the line you've drawn.



## Square up the timber

The ends, sides and edges must be cut square. (There are special techniques for cutting dovetails on angles). Mark the face sides and edges on the inside and bottom respectively of a box or drawer.



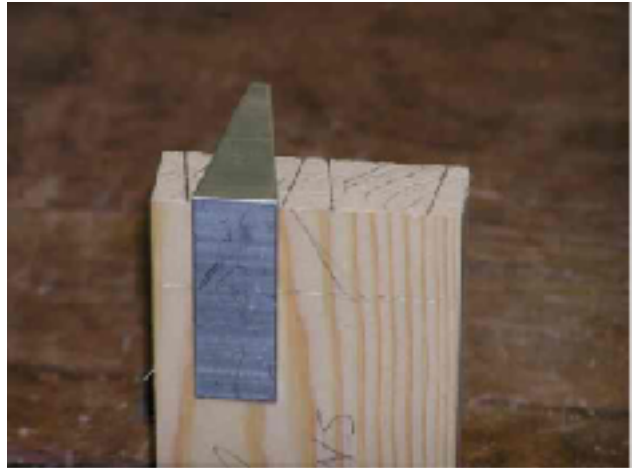
## Marking out and cutting the pins and tails

Set a cutting gauge to the thickness of the timber. If different thicknesses of timber are being used, the gauge is set on the tail piece to mark the pins and vice versa.



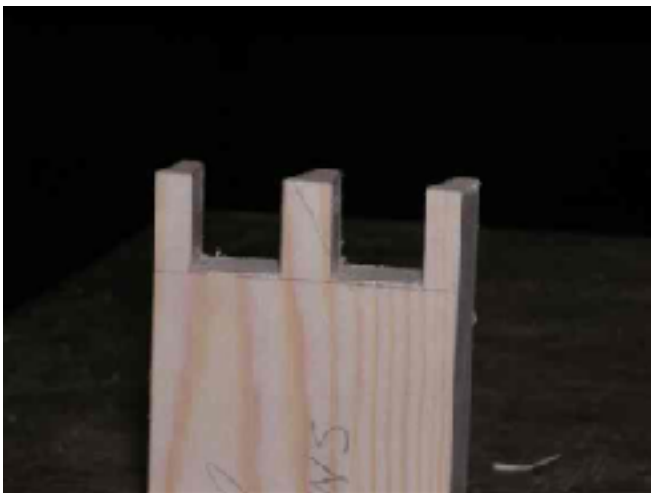
With the cutting gauge held against the ends of the timber, mark the depth of the tails and pins on the sides of the pin piece and all round the tail piece. There is no need to cut deeply. The score marks may be darkened with pencil to make them more visible.

Using a dovetail gauge or bevel gauge, mark out the ends of the pins with a scribe. Darken the lines with a pencil and mark the waste that is to be cut away.



Using a try square held against the end of the wood, mark the pins on the inside and outside faces, and again, mark the waste.

Before starting to cut the tails and pins it's not a bad idea to mark some out on a piece of scrap and make some practice cuts to help you get 'in the rhythm'.



Using a dovetail saw, Japanese saw or fine tenon saw, cut along the waste side of the marked lines. Aim to have the saw bisect the line, but do not cut into the pin. If there is excess waste it can be removed later. Be careful to cut only as far as the depth lines on the inside and outside faces. It is better to not cut far enough than to cut too far.

Remove the bulk of the waste between the pins. This can be chiseled out, or removed using a band saw or scroll saw. Whichever method you use, do not remove the waste all the way to the depth lines. Stop about 0.5 – 1 mm short.

Use a bevel-edged chisel to pare down to the depth line. It helps to make a set of paring guides as shown below. Set the work piece in the vice with the depth lines level with the top of the paring guides. Rest the chisel on top of the guide, pointing slightly upwards, and pare away a thin sliver. Repeat this, gradually bringing the chisel towards level, but do not go through to the other side. You should be able to feel the blade of the chisel in the depth line when the cut is deep enough



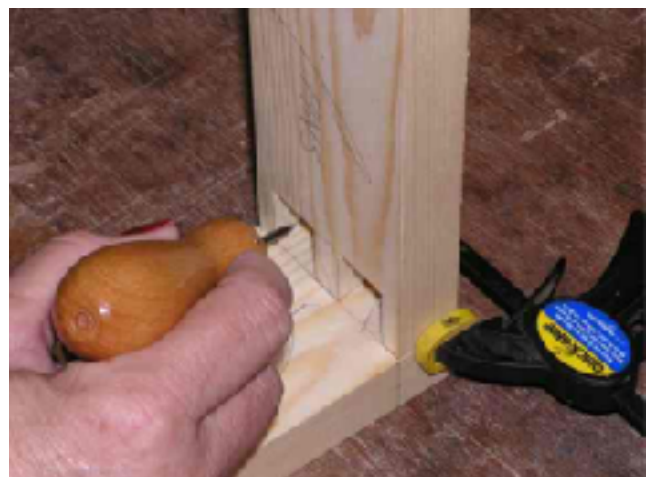
If necessary, tidy up the sides of the pins so that they are flat, square and accurate.

Turn the work piece around, and repeat these steps, again being careful not to go through to the other side. You should aim to pare the bottom flat between the two depth lines.



Using a sharp scribe or bradawl, mark the position of the tails. Be careful not to move the pin piece while doing this. You may darken the scribed lines with a pencil for visibility.

Sit the pins on the tail piece, making sure that the edges of each piece are in line. The inside face of the pin piece must sit exactly on the depth line of the tail piece. It may be convenient to either lightly clamp the pieces or have someone hold them while you mark the tails.



Put the pin piece in the vice at an angle, so that you will be cutting the side of the pins vertically. It is worth the trouble of using a spirit level and bevel gauge to do this. Again, try to bisect the scribed lines on the waste side, but do not stray into the pins. You will need to reverse the angle of the piece to cut the other side of the pins.

Remove the waste from between the tails, as you did with the pins. Again, do not remove it all the way to the depth lines.

Pare back to the depth lines as before, and trim up the tails.



You should now have a neatly-fitting dovetail joint. The joint should need to be pushed firmly together, but not forced. If the joint does not go together, separate the pieces, and look for shiny patches where they are interfering. Pare these spots back lightly and try again. Don't wiggle the joint to separate it. Place the tail piece on the bench with a packing block on it near the pin piece. Lift the pin piece slightly off the bench, and thump the packing piece with a mallet. This should separate the joint cleanly.

When the joint goes together, check all round for any gaps. These can be filled with small slivers of wood, called graving pieces, when you glue up.



Once the joint fits well, do not repeatedly open and close it, as it will loosen. Also, some timber may warp, so it is best to glue the joints up as quickly as possible.

### **Gluing up**

Usually, when gluing up dovetail joints, you are doing four corners at a time, so you will need to work quickly and use an adhesive that will give you enough time, eg PVA or epoxy.

The strength of dovetail joints should come from their shape. Only a small amount of glue should be needed. Make the corners at

each end of a tail piece first, inserting the box or drawer base if necessary. The last two corners will need to be made together. When all sides are together, clamp them and check that they are square by measuring the diagonals.

After the joints have set, use a block plane set to a very fine cut, or a cabinet scraper, to clean up the outside of the joints and remove the marking lines. To avoid splintering the ends, plane from the ends toward the centre of the box. Clean any excess glue from the inside of the box using a sharp chisel.



# Fiddes finishing workshop

## Editorial

Fiddes Australia ran a workshop for Association members on 15th April.



Attending members enthusiastically experimented with the finishes on offer and were able to fully explore the range and capabilities of the hard oils and tints that Tracey and Heidi provided.



Thanks to Phil Nanlohy who coordinated the workshop with Fiddes Australia.







Fiddes Australia offered a discount of 15% on any first purchase to Workshop attendees, per information in flyer provided with ample bags.

Fiddes is happy to extend this offer further for the workshop participants until 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

**Who qualifies:** participants of the Fiddes Workshop on Sat 15<sup>th</sup> April 2023

**Time limit:** Extended offer - Valid until 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**One-off offer:** not to be used in conjunction with any other discount and limited to one use per customer.



## Workshop Courses & Events

This year members have actively supported the short courses. Twelve of the courses originally scheduled have been booked out. In response to this demand, we have arranged to repeat five popular offerings. There are still places left in the six courses that are not yet full.

We have 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.

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?

Places available in the following courses:

- July 17 & 20th Marquetry
- October 7th Plane restoration
- October 21st Introductory Woodworking 2
- October 28th Spoon carving
- November 4th Introduction to Hand Tools

The following courses are fully subscribed:

- Jointing with Dominos
- Dovetail jointing
- Introduction to box making
- Basics of finishing

Course availability is provided on our web site: [www.woodworkersnsw.org.au](http://www.woodworkersnsw.org.au)

## Don't forget....

Dunstone Design - Design & Development 2023

October 9th to 20th, 2023

Unit 3/5 Aurora Pl, Queanbeyan NSW 2620

<https://www.dunstonedesign.com.au>

Maker of the year award is still open; closing on 4th September, 2023.

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



Annual Tool Sharpening day - Saturday  
9th September

WWA NSW Workshop, Spring St. Abbotsford

<https://www.woodworkersnsw.org.au/>

Timber, Tools & Artisans show

15 - 17 September, Brisbane Showgrounds

[timbertoolsartisan.com.au](http://timbertoolsartisan.com.au)







High quality furniture timbers. Slabs up to 1 metre wide, boards, burls, burl slices, blocks, hardwoods, softwoods. Mackay cedar, Australian red cedar, Rosewood, snakewood, Queensland maple, Camphor Laurel, Huon pine, bluegum, redgum, greygum, flooded gum, tallowood, blackbutt, blackwood, pencil cedar, Hairy oak, N and S silky oaks, and more. Cheap Camphor boards and slabs for benches, bars, tables, cutting boards or food display boards.

Delivering to Newcastle, Central Coast and Sydney Metro. Small orders can be collected from Cremorne, Maccas Heatherbrea or Wyong.

**Boutique Timbers**  
**256 Spokes Road, Ballengarra**

16km west of Pacific Highway, turn onto Rollands Plains Road at Telegraph Point. Follow road for 16km, turn left at Spokes Road and travel 2.5km of gravel road. Visitors welcome from 7 to 7, 7 days a week.

Phone Mal or Greg - 02 6585 8296 or 0416 096 827  
 Sydney enquiries - 0407 613 002  
[boutiquetimbers.com.au](http://boutiquetimbers.com.au)



**Finishing for the  
 recreational  
 woodworker**

Take the mystery out of finishing furniture. Learn how to prepare and finish a wooden surface.

Increase your knowledge of the different materials and tools used. You will learn how to finish with: oil, shellac and water-based polyurethane

For bookings  
 call 0425 217 269, or  
 nik@  
[nikteplyrestorations.com.au](http://nikteplyrestorations.com.au)



*Terry Gleeson  
 maker of  
 Fine Furniture*



**Terry Gleeson's School of Woodwork**

We teach woodwork, turning, carving, dovetailing and other joinery in our workshop at Middle Dural in Sydney's North West.

Tuition to suit all skill levels from novice to advanced.

Fully equipped workshop. Small class sizes.

1191 Old Northern Road, Middle Dural  
 Phone 02 9651 1012

[tgchairmaker@gmail.com](mailto:tgchairmaker@gmail.com)

[www.woodworkersNSW.org.au](http://www.woodworkersNSW.org.au)




**Tradition - Innovation - Perfection:**

A decision without risk

Outstanding results, innovative developments and impeccable quality standards make the woodworking machines from Hammer and Felder a class of their own.





**Richard Crosland's**  
**School of Fine Woodwork**

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

Phone 02 9313 4142  
[www.crosland.com.au](http://www.crosland.com.au)



Canada Bay Club membership - Just \$3.30 pa or \$11 for 5 years

Benefits of membership include - reward points every time you swipe your membership card to purchase food, drinks and other services at the club, discounted food and drink benefits, free parking, birthday rewards, health and fitness classes, discounted holiday accommodation in NSW's beautiful Forster

Join at reception next time you visit the Club.

More details at

<https://canadabayclub.com.au/membership.html>

