

2023

Cambium

Aug



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Guild Events

- Oct 3 Guild Meeting - Qualities of Timber
- Nov 3 Guild Meeting – Turners’ Group
- Dec 5 Christmas gathering, competition and toys
- Nov **2024** Pataka

President's Corner

I am now the elected president of the Wellington Woodworkers Guild, and this article hopefully supplies some information on my background and my main focus for the Guilds future.

After completing my degree in Metallurgy, I started work at Rolls-Royce in Derby. Before being assigned to a specific area I spent a month learning workshops skills (turning, grinding, milling etc) and after working in the lost wax casting foundry and other engineering groups, I was assigned to the research laboratory working on highly exotic alloys for the very high temperature parts of RB211 gas turbine engines. After 4 years in Derby, Jane and I moved to NZ in 1981 and I started work at the DSIR as a metallurgist. I continued to work at the DSIR and subsequent organisations for the next 40 years, ending up as a principal consultant. As well as working throughout New Zealand I also worked internationally on numerous major projects in a wide range of large industries (power stations, refineries, ammonia plants, pipelines, shipping, aircraft etc).

I have always appreciated fine furniture and antiques including items that have been passed to us by our families. As some of this was in need of repair and there was a need for more, I began doing some restoration work and learning to make my own furniture to match the style and quality of some of the other existing pieces. This started in the 1970's when I went to adult education classes on woodwork. My first table was octangle with tapered legs made from mahogany. It was designed to hold changeable inserts in the top, including my first chess board. This has been in daily use for the last 45 years and is now in need of restoration, partially because I used a polyurethane finish which is not repairable. Before we moved to New Zealand, I repaired a Georgian chest of drawers belonging to Jane's grandmother. Jane's aunt then inherited the item and later featured on the Antiques Road Show with a number of pieces including the repaired drawers.

I first joined the Guild of Wellington Wood Workers in about 1986 and exhibited a very large oak dresser at the Lower Hutt Horticultural Hall in about 1987. Regretfully I left the Guild after a few years partly as a result of having a young family, travelling internationally for work and extending our house. The house extension work has involved all the internal finishing, including laying T and G rimu floors, restoring and installing rimu doors, wood panelling, all the furniture for bathrooms and kitchen etc. This is still on going. I re-joined the Guild after 30 years and joined the MenZshed in Naenae when I was beginning to retire.

Over the last 45 years I have made a considerable number of items. These are rarely duplicates or for sale. I endeavour to expand my skills with each project. This is not only in wood working but in skills such as knife and tool making, metal working, chasing brass, model engineering etc. About 20 years ago I set myself a personal challenge by making an "Apprentice " or a show piece of fine furniture. These pieces were either made by an apprentice to show he had become a master craftsman or for travelling salespeople. I chose to make a matching pair of a miniature (200mm high) walnut Georgian serpentine fronted chest of draws with all most advanced features of the time including super fine dovetails, cock beaded draws, book matched veneering, French polishing and had cut brass handles. These have been prized jewellery chests from many years.



The only times when I have got into the making multiple items is for toy making or for a commission to help the Menzshed (30 cheese boards made for the new Naenae pool project to be given away to key people involved in the project). One of the cheese boards was presented to the Prime Minister when he recently visited the pool to check on progress. If I had known that I would have carved my mark in all the boards!

When I re-joined the Guild after being away for 30 years, I found that it was very similar to when I left it except there seemed to be slightly less enthusiasm and fewer new members. This is a problem in many clubs when the group has an ageing membership and is not making a major effort to bring in new life. Key areas I would like to focus on are, to regularly display work on our website to show we are an active group, so that the website is the go to place to find what is going and to read interesting articles, secondly to strongly encourage regular training programmes and thirdly to show off that the Guild is going to be 40 years old next year.

David Firth.

Vice president's corner

A Micro-Macro bandsaw box



At our recent Guild meeting our challenge was to make a small object, trying different materials and methods that we are not all that familiar with.

Lurking in a corner was a lump of Macrocarpa. I have made a bandsaw box before, but not one with the bark still intact; it seemed a good chance to have a go. Michael Cullen, has written an article in Fine Woodworking showing how to do these boxes, and a YouTube video. Google it.

He embellished them with painted and carved surfaces. The form, feel, texture, finish, and colour are really limitless. One challenge (which I have tried with a slightly larger box) is to use the solid piece that remains from the void formed inside the box to make a smaller box.

Once you have tried it, the process is fairly simple. Tilt the band-saw table to about 5°. Ensure you have bottom and sides, made flat and square. Mark out the outside box shape and cut around it on the bandsaw. Make sure you retain the square (or face) side off-cut, to use as a base to cut the top off the shaped lump. Next cut off the two sides - then the ends. Cut a bottom and inside top piece off the lump that comes out of the middle. Then glue them back together. Just sand and finish. (Well almost)

The knob on top is a turned and planed piece of Rata. Rata is a wood I have not worked on before and, (you may know this), I was delighted to find that it seems to be self-polishing. The resin is waxy and just needs a cloth to burnish it.

Pyrography is something I have briefly tried - once. The delicate floral imagery on two corners, was used to emphasise the form and asymmetry of the piece. A cheap tool from a DIY shop worked well but resulted in a burnt thumb. There was a mark from a slip with the bandsaw which this covered - design is sometimes a result of dealing with mistakes.

Thinking about Handles

Eric and Annette kindly hosted us again with a Blacksmithing session, enabling some of us to try out a few new things. Some tenderfoots successfully made some nails, and others beat bigger bits of metal into shape. Essentially, a good time was had by all.

It was my chance to make some curved form carving knives. Made out of old bits of saw blade; they were cut to size beforehand. Holes for handle fixing were drilled in them. The forge enabled an opportunity to bend them; and then temper or harden them.

The good thing about making tools is that you can make them to suit yourself. Sam has some brilliant small tools on hand, for use as a travelling carver.

Just thinking about handles. In my collection are a few John Spittal knives; some of his latter ones have a hook on the end (top 2 in the picture) which is mostly used as a marking knife, and sometimes for carving. Also, I have appreciated Sorby turning gouges having a waist and wider tapered end, you can feel where the end of the handle is, as with John's knife. Hence the Matai timber forming the knife handles, almost have a sort of fish shape. Glued and fixed with brass screws; then the tops are filed down. Meanwhile, the shaving knife with 90° handles, is another work / design in progress.



Nick Crocker

Cambium and Guild History

Delving into issues of many years of Cambium*

Editors of our Newsletter and Cambium

Newsletters 1-12 April 1984 to February 1986. Rob Wanders with help from Doug Bailey and Ray Patterson.

Cambium was suggested by Rob and agreed by all with a tree trunk on the cover.

13 - 20 February 1986 January 1987...Rob Wanders

21 - 33 August 1987 to April/May 1990 ...Jack Fry

34 - 57 June/July 1990 to March 1994 ... Joe Farrow

58 - May 1994 – unknown

59 - 60 November 1994 to December 1994 ...Frank Forstner

61 - 77 April 1995 to March 1998 ...Peter Warnes

78 -101 May 1998 to February 2002 ... Peter Randerson. On the cover of issue 100 the design was changed to a circle.

102 - 168 June 2002 to June 2013 ... Hugh Mill

169 - 198 August 2013 to October 2018 ...Nick Crocker

199 - 222 February 2019 to Dec 2022 ... Hugh Mill

223 - 224 February 2023 to April 2023 ...Mark Wilkins/Nick Crocker

Competitions

The first competition to be held was about Haley's Comet, in 1986. And was won by Doug Bailey – a slice cut from a tree stump with grain showing an item (Halley's Comet) flared across the cut. The entry by the author (Sam Hillis) came second and has hung in his workshop ever since. The brass wire tails from the comet now tarnished and the rest speckled with spots of paint.

In Dec 1987 John Spittal issued a challenge – the longest, thinnest, turned object – this was won by Phil Watkins and John came second. That year the Jack Gibson trophy was first awarded, it was won by Ian Waymark for his piece, 'The Puzzle'.

In Dec 1988 the first spinning top competition, won by Jim Manley with a time of 7min 53 seconds. Further competitions have been run; at Pataka in 2013 Murray Jansen and Warwick Smith designed and built a top that ran for 14 min 16 seconds.

Quotes:

No 76 1998

“King Louis XV reigned from 1715 to 1774, he became an accomplished woodturner and designed several pieces of furniture” What type of lathe did he use?

No 74 1997

“The distance between hindsight and perfection is measured in firewood, sawdust and frustration.”

No 103 2002

“Wood from Delight by J B Priestley. To handle new planed wood, events look at it, is to receive a message that life can still be in good heart; the very shavings are crisp confirmation, a mystery: it is because wood no matter how chopped, sawn, planed, somehow remains alive. I put my hand on the desk like a hand on a man’s shoulder.

Into this material passed rain, sun etc. It has lived and some sacred part of it still lives.

Notice few men who work with wood are happy.”

Christmas 1999 – First “toys for the Salvation Army”, continues today.

April 2004 - 20th Anniversary – founding members Doug Bailey and John Spittall were invested as life members.

December 2010, Carving trophy donated by Doug Bailey’s daughter and was won by Phil Watkins.

*Maybe ‘many tears of Cambium’ if no more...

Sam Hillis, August 2023

WWG meeting August 2023

Men at Play

1 Dave Winthrop described how he took a design of a three-legged stool from last month's UK Woodturner magazine and after making the stool, decided he could improve on the original design. The final version which he displayed at the meeting uses a combination of Rimu, Banksia, and Matai.

2 Warwick Smith showed the meeting a range of cheese boards and chopping boards he made using a variety of dark and light woods. Chief among them was Purple Heart which Warwick felt was becoming a more commonly used wood, including for the laying of decks, in New Zealand, with good properties for the woodworker.

3 Gordon Crighton showed the meeting the wig stands he turned over the past few weeks using a variety of native woods.

4 Hugh Mill showed a range of spinning tops he has been making over the past few months in conjunction with men from the Naenae Menz shed. The aim is eventually to distribute these tops among children from a local youth organisation as a means of luring them off their phones and media games.



Preparing the tops for a trial spin



Other people's woodwork

The rimu bowl pictured below was bought at the Auckland Easter Show at least 20 years ago. It measures 240mm diameter, is 80mm deep, and it is as light as a feather.



It is called 'Leaves' which are evident on the inside of the bowl, but they also wrap around the base. The turner was Phill Quinn.

To quote Phil from the Kapiti Woodworkers Guild website (<http://www.kwwg.org.nz/gallery/>), which is worth a visit, 'Embellishing is my life'.

He certainly produces some magnificent work.

Work in Progress – Part 4

The Automaton

There is not a lot to report on the construction of the automaton... well there is but it is not all productive. The alignment of the axles had to be improved, which took some thinking and fiddly drilling. Perhaps it has been the weather, but some warping had taken place.

The 'dolphins', that will appear now and again, have had their first coat of paint but they still need some TLC.

The cams that make the wave movement are still being fine tuned and the interior of the box that holds the mechanism has been painted a matt black, again a first rough coat.

Quite a bit of work but small progress, two steps forward and one step back.

Will it be ready for Christmas... I don't know.

[Just spent half an hour in the workshop and broke an axle!!]

Etymology

Hammer: Of Germanic origin: related to Dutch hamer, German Hammer, and Old Norse hamarr 'rock'. The original sense was probably 'stone tool'.

Chisel: From Old Northern French, based on Latin cis- (as in late Latin cisorium), variant of caes-, stem of caedere 'to cut'.

Plane: From Latin plānum ("flat surface")

Mallet: From Middle English malet, maylet, from Old French mallet, maillet ("a wooden hammer, mallet"), diminutive of mal, mail ("a hammer"), from Latin malleus ("a hammer, mall, mallet")

Now you know.

HELP REQUIRED

A co-worker is required to help put Cambium together. Supply me with material and I will word-process it and send it to the printers.

OR... perhaps several people could be the collectors of material, pictures, text, reviews of meetings or reminiscences. No material, no Cambium.

Guild Committee

President	David Firth	021 398 241
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Secretary	Phil King	021 250 6467
Treasurer	Mike Robinson	477 2303
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Warwick Smith		027 485 3770
Bruce Christenson		04 527 7300
Mark Wilkins		021 428 187
Dave Winthrop		27 442 0167

Cambium Compiler/EditorHelper required

Life Members: Neil Gandy, Ken Cox, John Spittal, Hugh Mill, Archie Kerr, Jack Fry, Eric Cairns, Sam Hillis, Michael Harrison.

TURNERS - Coordinator: John Piper Naenae Mens' Shed,
1st and 3rd Saturday after Guild meeting 10 am –12 noon

CARVERS - Coordinator: Sam Hillis, 529 7105
Meeting at Naenae Mens' Shed - (3rd Tuesday 7-9 pm)

GREEN WOODWORKERS - Coordinator: Eric Cairns 526 7929

FURNITURE GROUP - Coordinator: Nick Crocker
2nd Saturday after Guild meeting 10 am –12 noon Naenae Mens' Shed

Please come along, they are an opportunity for you to further develop your skills.

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