

2016

Cambium

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Contents

Meetings & Events	1
Jim's Wood works	2
Hawke's Bay Wood-turning	3
Our Guild Xmas show	4
Green Wood working blog	6
Pre-Christmas Jaunt	7
Ash Tree Artifacts	9
Denis's Tips	11

Meetings & Events

2016

- 2 Feb Timber drying techniques, Bill Studd
- 15 Feb - 6 Mar. Odlins Gallery, Best of Best Exhibition
- 1 Mar Model Ship Building
- 5 Mar to 27 Mar Artspace Gallery Exhibition
- 5Apr Reflections on a diplomatic career, Jim Howell
- 3 May AGM and Bring and Buy
- 7 Jun Making your own tools, John Spittal

Jim's Wood works

Our editor is bending my ear again to write something in Cambium. So soon!

Well I hope you all had a pleasant Christmas, [maybe a couple of new tools from Santa], caught up with family and indulged just a little. I seem to have done little actual woodwork but can't complain about workshop time.

There was a bowl to make for a wedding gift and slab of ash was chosen. Actually, that was the third choice after creating 2 sacks of shavings trying to make something of an old massive chunk labelled totara. There was dry rot in one edge that I thought I would be able to cut away, but by the time the original diameter of 300mm had been turned down to about 180mm, the shaving reached my knees and the rot was still evident, I admitted defeat. Being a dogged slow learner I mounted the sister piece and repeated the futile procedure, wasting more time and creating an awful lot more shavings - far more than my compost bin and garden could readily accept. [What do you all do with your shavings? Maybe there's a market ??]

I digress. Graham McIntyre once gave me a bit of sage advice; "always use your best bit of wood first". So on this occasion, the third attemptHey presto, a 300mm diameter bowl without a crack, wormhole or piece of rot in sight. This was to be special, so I figured I would like to embellish it a little. Some texturing and some of that fancy Gilders paste would be the ticket. Except I had neither texturing tool or gilders paste.

Terry Scott's wife was very helpful that weekend just before Christmas, seeming to quickly appreciate my urgent enquiries. The call was made at 3.45pm, just as Terry was bundling up the days orders, as serendipity would have it. The goods were in my eager little hands by midday the next day. Amazing. And I told Terry so. I had to smile at his little texturing tool though. He calls it his \$10 tool - any piece he uses it on immediately gets \$10 added to the price, you may remember that little witticism from his visit last winter. The irony I smiled at was that the tool actually cost 10 times that amount. It was hard in my mind to think of it as my \$10 tool as I had just paid \$100 for it. But, to be fair, it is a wonderful little gadget and with little practice and experimentation one can get an extraordinary array of patterns and textures out of it. The gilders paste was good fun too. I had chosen to coat the finished ash bowl, resplendent in its textured 'Aztec Golden' condition, with lacquer. The trouble is, the solvent of the lacquer also dissolves the paste, so wiping it on is not a good method. You know how you discover these things. [The

hard way]. I admit, the lacquer was a new thing for me as well. The lovely gilded effect was patched up again and there was a certain amount of head scratching. I drew the line at rushing out to purchase all the required spraying gear I would need and learning how to do that as well, in the last few hours left to me. We were off on holiday you see and the wedding was the day after we arrived home. Of course I had known about the wedding/bowl thing for ages, months, almost a year I guess. But, anyway, I somehow managed the lacquering without completely messing up my pasting. Just the box to make. Mr Mill says you must have a nice box for the piece.

That was to be done the morning of the wedding, being the easy bit. Well, finding the right size, quality and quantity of cardboard wasn't quite as easy as I had predicted. And box design is not my forte either, as I rarely produce anything worth selling/boxing. The job was done in plenty of time I felt. I had a full 7-8 minutes to shower, shave and suit up. The hot melt glue on the cardboard was still warm as we drove away. And my wife was ever so calm. Good wedding though !

Happy new year to you all and hope it's a good one for wood shavings.. JRA

Hawke's Bay Wood-turning

Phil Quin took part in the collaboration at Hawkes Bay, hence we asked him for a brief report

The 11th annual New Zealand Woodturners Collaboration was held at the Napier Boys High School over 5 – 10 January. This collaboration event started in Feilding at Jim Manley and Gordon Pritchard's premises and then moved to Putaruru and now Hawke's Bay.

This is the first in the series held in Hawke's Bay, and is hosted by the Hawke's Bay Woodworking Education Trust and organised by the Hawke's Bay Woodturners Guild. Members of the organising committee are Roger Mabey, Jill Mabey, Mark von Dadelszen, Mark Bayliss, & Brent Salsibury. Participants live on site using the High School Wood and Metal workshops, which are very well equipped and other facilities.

Lathes are provided by participants or Hawke's Bay Wood Working Guild. (Suggest you check out <http://hawkesbaywoodturners.org.nz> to see their magnificent new Guild Hall).

To start the collaboration process the participants are rostered into teams of three, to undertake three projects. The projects for this collaboration were: -

1. Make an Art Deco theme object that must fit into a 400 mm cube.
2. Make an object that must fit in a 400 cube from supplied dunnage wood.
3. Make an object from supplied wine barrel.

These projects turned out to be a very challenging and some interesting and innovative solutions created. Here are two examples of completed items.

At the end of the five day collaborative gathering all these items were auctioned to provide funds for the next event.

A total of 102 items were produced.

■ Dick Veitch produces a full photographic record of each collaboration which is available to participants as a book. This is worth while for those who may be interested.

Their website picture gallery contains all the highly varied pieces completed from the Collaboration held in Hawkes Bay.

see http://www.naw.org.nz/gallery/hawkes_collab_2016/index.html

Our Guild Xmas show

During our Xmas meeting (last year now) we had a an abundant show of members generosity with the display of toys for distribution by the Salvation Army, whose local branch were in attendance to take these into their care.



Also, in conjunction with the Menzshed, and ladies making the bedding material; a good number of Dolls beds were produced - being a requested item, perhaps catering less to the boys.

As well as the convivial gathering, lubricated with wine and tasty morsels, we had members work on show, to be judged. These were voted on by members confidential ballot.

Hence one of Graeme McIntyres orb like Pohutakawa bowls (with thick walls) took the Wood-turning award. People were seen to be observing the smooth even shape - just like, perhaps a McIntyre artifact.

Apparently one of his first delvings into carving, Eric took the Carving award with a back & front life model carving. Some gossip has hinted that a certain lady may be a little worried(?) that people assume she is the model.

In the general category, the lutier skills and huge effort of Malcolm Collins, resulted in him taking the general award with his Cello. He has yet to play it.

And last, but by no means the least, the Jack Gibson award went to Jim Howell, for his multi-cultural biography sculpture. Those of you who have not seen Jim's explanation of the work, are recommended to read it, to give you an insight into the idea behind the work



Green Wood working blog

24 January 2016: Well, we are just completing our 3rd annual chair making workshop at Fantails in Mangaroa Valley, this year with Brian, Nick, Bruce, Jack, plus Annette & myself. With not everyone being present each day, there was no need to share lathes. Also, Jack has decided that Doug Bailey's old pole lathe was finally due for retirement, but it may yet be re-purposed in the form of a continuous drive treadle lathe.

This year, a couple of carved seat Windsor chairs are being made, so you might imagine that there is competition with the furniture group. Annette worked at stool frames (from home grown ash, rived rather than milled) and Nick, Bruce and Jack worked on post and rung chairs.

We had recently milled blackwood available, which was stored under water after milling to keep it wet. With this process we use, spindles, rungs and posts are turned from fully wet wood. The rungs get to dry out over the week (appropriately - with solar power assistance) and dry tenons are cramped into newly bored wet mortices on the posts.

No glue, screws or nails are used for the leg mortices, but the joints shrink to be a very tight fit. This is in contrast to the Windsor chairs, where components must be fully dried before assembly, and joints are generally glued and wedged.

The leg/seat tenons for our Windsors use a tapered joint which should improve stability, as slight shrinkage does not loosen the joint.

This year we have access to Drew



Langsner's The Chair-maker's Workshop guide, which I find is very detailed and full of helpful hints. For instance, he describes how lathe chatter may be affected by different parts of the chisel bevel contacting different diameters of wood (plus other causes, and how to avoid this). Never-the-less, it is gratifying that quite rough chisel turning on stretchers can be made to look good after drying and sanding. Drew details differences between American and English Windsor chair designs and guides you through the construction of 10 different chair and rockers,

Each time I assemble (or assist with assembly) a post and rung chair I encounter problems and need to seek new solutions. Frames frequently don't quite align square, in spite of using two mirrors and a sighting assistant to help bore holes at the correct angles.

Over the last two years we have evolved improved ways of boring compound angles for the rungs in the back posts, and now use a jig to hold the posts in correct alignment. However, holes are still drilled by eye, using compound squares and mirrors as guides. This time round, with Nick, I learnt how to use off-centre clamping to realign the post and rung angles and how to tweak the amount of flair of the steam bent back posts by adjusting the length of one or more side rungs.

Bryan has discovered a traditional tool for cutting mortices for the back slats (also known as a multi-tool). This is said to be much quicker and easier than boring a line of holes and cutting the mortice with chisels or a twivel. We already use traditional cordless drills (as does Mike Abbott, one of the well published Gurus of Green Wood Working), but, as yet, we haven't openly switched to using electric lathes. Whilst operating a foot powered treadle lathe is hard work, I still enjoy the challenge.

Standing a lot on one leg can put pressure on your hips, so we think that a treadle lathe should be easier to operate whilst seated. (A bench seat that you could slide along would be another innovation). So Jack, we are looking forward to see what emerges from your workshop. *Eric*

Pre-Christmas Jaunt

We sailed on the Interislander to Picton and, having arrived late in the evening, stayed at the Admiral's Lodge. The next day we slowly made our way to Nelson, stopping at Havelock for a coffee and a visit to the Art Gallery. The art gallery is a communal affair where local artists supply the

goods and staff the shop.

As expected there were many paintings and ceramics but also some wooden artefacts. The blanket boxes I noted but the item of interest was a turned shallow bowl with an inlay pattern around the internal base. How did the turner do that?

Explaining to the shopkeeper my interest as an amateur woodworker she suggested I go and see the maker, Lionel Jeffcoate, who lived locally. She 'phoned him but he wasn't in. We agreed to call in on the way back. Lionel was a master boat builder and a book was on sale in the shop about the 57 boats which he had either built, or had worked on – the Cutty Sark being one. This book was bought but I couldn't inspect it closely as it was a Christmas present!

Four days later - and back in Havelock I 'phoned Lionel and asked to visit and that was no problem, so five minutes later we were in his workshop, accompanied by Bella his lively and very friendly dog of Border Collie appearance.



It was a big workshop with a relatively small number of tools, the lathe being very basic. The space was for the making of boats, although Lionel is now well retired. We were taken inside his home a saw his work, a multitude of blanket boxes and turned bowls. Some of the boxes are made of superb wood 'scavenged' from the wrecks of old boats (seriously good wood), swamp kauri and such like. The exterior of the boxes are attractive and the interiors beautifully finished as you might expect from a boat builder who has done everything from laying a keel to fitting out luxury interiors. He is at the stage in his life when he realises he needs to 'downsize' but he has a reluctance to sell these works of art. His turned bowls are superb; they are of large diameter with inlays around rims and on the inside of the curved surfaces. How are they done? If I understand him correctly, he makes his own inlays and after inserting into 'flat' wood he steam bends the wood to a circle on a base and then turns it. Considering the machines he has worked with I was astounded. He makes lampshades of thin wood and he makes horns for old fashioned

gramophones – they are pieces of art in their own right.

Go to the local pub and you will see a half-size dinghy on display, in his sitting-room another dinghy about 400mm long – with detailed construction as if full size.

An extraordinary craftsman; we were so pleased to make his acquaintance. We left Havelock and carried on to Picton catching the Bluebridge ferry back to Wellington. It was not a pleasant crossing but we survived! *Michael*

Ash Tree Artifacts

It just seems to have turned out - we have a bit of a book theme this issue.

Having been given a recent book 'The Man Who Made Things Out of Trees' by Robert Penn, this seemed worthy of passing on the tales within it, as we all use trees - be they straight bits or suitably dried lumps.

Rob Penn cut down well one Ash tree, to see how many things could be made using all the timber; from the small pieces of brash left to decompose, down to the remaining stump which had 3ft coppicing re-growth evident within a year.

He may have himself, made some things (not mentioned) but the book is really an exploration of tales around meeting and observing craftsmen making items from the Ash.

Frequently, these are now some of the disappearing crafts.

Going back through history, Common Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* has been used, for example - in making spears, staffs and tool handles.

Having milled the timber, Rob took some along to 1 of 2 tool handle makers in England (there were 44 in 1940) to have some Axe handles made. This leads deftly into a description of the qualities of Ash, such as being suitable for riving, as it is growth 'ring porous' (vs. diffuse porous). They still make a huge range of tool handles, including naths.

One little line in there .. 'wood has sensual powers that cannot be quantified'



led him to line his office with Ash panels. This Rob explored more fully, but could well be a notion that merits discussion amongst our Guild.

Having tracked down one of the few traditional wheelwrights, Rob arrived with a pack-pack of Ash timber for use as wheel felloes (*fellies*), to see the process and use of exclusive tools to make wheels. Wheelwright Phill Gregson dropped one of his wheels to show how well they bounced, which lead to a calm description of timber elasticity (or Young Modulus, for those with of us with structural engineering bent).

Also, in case you have ever asked who invented the wheel? It seems archeology suggests the first wheels appeared (for chariots) 5500 years ago in Mesopotamia (Iraq)

One lump was handed on to Robin Wood, who turned a nested set of bowls on a pole lathe, using old hooked tools that he made himself. It was suggested that pole lathes were first used to turn bowls, these being a common artifact used by all - to hold pottage (vege soup). Could this be a possible old craft, wood-turning demo ?!

On the Somerset flats at Glastonbury Lake village, fragments of 2500 year old wooden bowls were discovered, and for the coronation of King Richard I, 12,000 timber bowls were ordered. How many could we easily produce nowadays ? Robin embarked on pole lathe turning, after discovering George Laileys' 1957 pole lathe in Reading museum, and subsequently finding out that nobody in the UK was carrying this out this sort of work.

On a trip to a works in Austria, some of the Ash was steam-bent to make a toboggan, although Elm is often used together with Ash, for some parts - Amundsen made his 3000 mile Arctic crossing, using sleds made of Ash, due to their light weight.

Skis were also traditionally made of Ash, but this has now have been supplanted by modern materials. Ash has a standing (not only in the forest) but also in folklore, it was the original Yule log, the Ash tree of Thor held up the sky, and Ash twigs were used for divining, as well as aiding fertility and curing some ailments.



In this project, not all of this South Wales Ash tree was used to make all of the items. A trip to a US baseball match, was part of exploring the use of Ash for their baseball bats. In the US, they use Ash from a distinct band of forest. They also have spreading infestation of the Emerald beetle from Asia, attacking Ash, fortunately they only migrate 1 mile per year. - there is also (as in Europe) the Ash dieback fungus (*Chalara fraxinea*) .

Professional baseball players have stayed with timber bats and hence Ash. Carbon fibre and composite materials were tried. Maple was tried - which led to the a Broken Bat Study, as the Maple tends to tensile rupture & break into shards, hitting players and spectators. Ash bats tend to de-laminate due to a ring porous nature. This then leads us to an explanation of high Modulus of Rupture, because of a high slope of grain within the cell walls. Anyway ... they drill 3" dia billets out of logs, dry, turn, and sand them.

In a different geographical direction, Rob went to a Hurley match in Dublin., then to Frank Murphy is a traditional hurley stick maker based in County Waterford, Ireland. They are a bit choosy about timber for Hurley stacks, a certain size of tree, and using the flare at the base of the trunkyou can sort of see that from the shape of the stick.

The first old bicycles were built in Ash: as an aside (Rob has written books on his cycling adventures) a trip to Tipperary finds a couple of lads making high-tech cycle frames out of Ash.

One would have liked more pictures - perhaps one of the Ash tree. Rob is a journalist, and one of his Independent articles has glorious night-time pictures of trees. However, on the Ash Project website, ½ dozen of the craftsmen and their works are illustrated www.robpenn.net/ash-project/ An acute and thorough observation of wood craft, with a context of industry and history. A Good book! NC

Denis's Tips

Sharpening my skew chisel became a lot easier - after I started using a belt sander held upside down in a vice.

When staining and polishing etc. to get the best results always use a lint free cotton cloth.

Tip supplied by Peter Dawson

Guild Contacts

SUB-GROUPS

CARVERS - Coordinator: Sam Hillis, 529 7105

Meeting at Naenae Mens' Shed - (3rd Tuesday 7-9pm)

HUTT TURNERS - Coordinator: Denis Newton 977 5650

Meet Naenae Mens' Shed, 1st Saturday after Guild meeting 10am – 12 noon

GREEN WOODWORKERS - Coordinator: Eric Cairns 526 7929

FURNITURE GROUP - Coordinator: Lew Skinner (2nd Thursday) 475 7613

Remember that these groups are for you and are open to anyone in the Guild. They provide you with an opportunity for more fellowship and a chance to further develop the skills that you already possess.

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