

2023

Cambium



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Guild Events

Nov 3 Mark Wilkins’ European trip

Dec 5 Christmas gathering, competition and toys

April 2024 – Exhibition at Odlin Gallery - 40th Anniversary of the Guild

Nov **2024** Pataka

President's Corner

The Woodcraft 2023 exhibition occurred at the end of August/early September at the Hutt Art Odlin Gallery, in conjunction with the Portrait Painters at Hutt Art. This was a high-quality exhibition with a wide range of interesting items on display. We had many, very complimentary comments and the Guild was asked to repeat the exhibition in two years' time. Although there was a reasonable number of sales, this could probably be improved significantly for future exhibitions, if we had additional support for advertising from artists who are interested in selling. A couple of notable items are shown below.

Over the last couple of months, I have been focusing on restoration. This has included a rimu statesman door which is about 100 years old. This is the seventh completed for the house. This had originally been varnished and later painted. It has been well used over the years and in serious need of repair. The work involved removing all the mouldings, paint stripping with the aid of a hot air gun, hand scraping, inlaying inserts into all the previous holes, replacing a section which had been seriously eaten by borer, applying two coats of a tung oil/varnish/turps mix, French polishing, installing the moulding, installing new solid brass handles, installing rimu mouldings around the surround and then hanging. The result is stunning, and I am very pleased with the final look.

Secondly, I have been restoring a flame veneered mahogany Victorian duchess dresser (circa 1870) which was brought into the Menzshed for repair. This was in a very poor condition and at some stage in its life had been darkened so you could hardly see the wood grain. So far this has involved cleaning with meths (to remove damage to the polish, remove the darkening stains that had been applied and a century of dirt), replacing missing/broken knobs by turning new ones,

adding part of a missing carved scroll, re-attaching veneer that was lifting (by using a hot iron and veneer hammer) and French polishing.

Thirdly, I have commenced the restoration of a solid oak dining table, with turned, carved pedestal legs, that was modified in the 1950s to shorten it and to make it extendable. I suspect the original table was made in the mid-1800s. So far this has involved rebuilding the table, as I flat packed it for shipping from the UK, and scraping the table to remove the stained finish that was applied in the 1950s.

Lastly, I have restored a large oak cutlery canteen cabinet which was a wedding present in 1924. This required a major rebuild of a door that was very badly burnt, restoration of the French polishing, polishing all the brass work and repairing some of the internal supports for the cutlery. As seen below, I purposefully left a burn mark on the moulding underneath the damaged door.

Also, I have finally completed the oyster veneered table I had on display at the Odlin, by making its cover top. I have then delivered it to its new owner, my 5-year-old granddaughter, who is thrilled to bits with it!

So, I am now into toy manufacturing! This year I am making 11 sets of dominoes to give away. So far, the pieces have all been made and are awaiting their second coat of tung oil/varnish mix before being painted. The pieces for the boxes are all thickened and sized, ready for cutting mitre joints. As in the previous few years, the Guild are providing toys to the Salvation Army to be given to children in need for Christmas. I would like to encourage you all to make some toys to help with this project.

David Firth



Vice president's corner

Some Favourite Tools

What are your favourite tools? ... perhaps it is the latest bright new shiny one?

It is rare that I buy new ones, but I've just had a Terry Scott delivery. Often my favourite tool, is the one that has just been restored - or one that is used only very occasionally; and just today the perfect use was found for it.

Using hand tools, one can work away peacefully, making shavings - instead of dust. Machines are useful for reducing bulky material, and other things; I have Denis's old Tanner lathe; and the drive had a bit of a wobble when in use. Tightening up the grub screw and replacing a missing one helped a lot; removing the build-up of lacquer, and with a few other tweaks, it now works fine. A small bench saw with cast iron bed, came with signs of rust and neglect; although some care and attention, had it working well.

A Block plane is used reasonably often. Having bought the small one from John Spittal, years ago - I was a bit ho-humm, at the time as it is so small. It gets used a fair bit, usually just to take the sharp edges off small bits of newly planed timber. What is a delight is that it goes in your pocket ... one timber merchant was surprised, when I pulled it out to plane a little off some rough sawn timber. The bright & shiny one from a shop, is crap. The Stanley one, I acquired later with the usual rust; it cleaned up well. The bevel gauge was rusty with the locking knob missing - a brass plate soldered to a screw and is just the right size to fit in your hand.

Whilst showing a box I have been making to chaps in our woodwork class, I showed them how to adjust the depth of the rebate to take

the bottom panel. Having planed a tiny bit off the bottom, the rebate needed adjusting with a router. Luckily, I had been given a Stanley 271 hand router, which was just the right size for the task. Also known as a 'Grandmother's tooth' - it saved getting out and setting up a noisy router, which would be oversized anyway.



Hence (just as a reminder to self) Let the tool do the work, and the right tool for the job; are mottos we sometimes forget. Working on some projects, things go well with some of my very old tools



Nick Crocker

CHOLLO : *pr. chol-yo*

An Arizona desert landscape of chollo against the lowering sun is beguiling—back-lit rolling undulations outlined by the soft brown fuzz that gives chollo one of its names, Teddy Bear cactus. Wickedly deceptive too; that fuzz being almost translucent, barbed spines, painful and especially difficult to remove from human skin, and which some believe leap at their prey; giving chollo its other common name Jumping Cactus.



Chollo bushes grow to about 1-1.5 metres high. The waving fleshy arms give no hint of what the skeleton inside is like, a hollow woody tube with a spiral pattern of elongated perforations. Straight pieces of any length are rare. I gathered a bundle of dead, dried stems ranging from walking stick thickness to one rare piece of trunk about 60mm diameter when I lived in the area last century.

I'm currently using up the last of my stock, while I'm still able. Making decorative walking sticks mostly. Except they're not walking sticks. I class them as works of art.

Straightening is necessary. I steam and clamp pieces. Repeatedly. Next, I remove the soft woody waste from the centre. Sometimes by very cautiously drilling through (a very long bit, worked from each end of the stick, just has the reach). Sometimes by bandsawing the stick lengthwise, hollowing out each half (a power file works well—provided the radius of the file tip is right for the stick diameter) and then gluing the two halves together again.

Now for decisions about finish. One approach is to smooth the rough outer casing. When doing this it is possible to reveal and highlight the spiral pattern of the chollo. This process also emphasises the perforations which then need to be cleaned up, one by one, with a Dremel tool.

Alternatively, the outer casing can simply be refined by delicate wire brushing to reveal its fine thread-like structure and the intricacies and permutations of the perforations.

Chollo of walking stick diameter requires a strengthening core. I use aluminium tube or (for a translucent effect) polycarbonate. Of the largest diameter I can fit inside the hollowed chollo, using a long sash cramp to ease it through gently without splitting the chollo casing.

Now the not-so-fun bit: for most of my sticks I use 2 pot Norski resin, sometimes with a colouring pigment, both to stiffen the stick and for decorative effect in the perforations. It takes delicate hole-by-hole application and a constant slow rotation of the stick to keep the resin from running everywhere before it sets. The stick pictured, which is black coloured (Osmo wax), needed eight applications, alternately of white resin and black wax, to eliminate all colour overruns. Each

application requiring up to an hour of hand rotation of the stick plus a day for the resin to dry. (If my chollo stock was any larger I'd be inventing a slow mechanised rotor. Or gerbil-powered?).

Last come handles, feet, and trimmings—the art finishing. Variously horn, polished aluminium, silver, leather, braided thread, wrist strap etc. On the stick pictured the wrist strap has, for adjustment, a sliding ebony ball with a thin 'equator' band in sterling silver.



The stick stand pictured is my sole piece of chollo trunk. About 80 years old by ring count. 60mm diameter bored through with a 50mm Forstner bit—a tricky operation! With a polycarbonate tube insert. The outer chollo skin required careful Dremel-assisted finishing to enhance its wonderful texturing and is embellished with turquoise, also scavenged in Arizona (and hero material in south-west Native American art). The whole is finished off with a sterling silver-adorned 5-sided black walnut crown ring and a polished aluminium 5-piece foot with walnut skirt. Chollo never had it so good!



My stock of chollo stick material has almost run out. A little further ahead I may be able to do a concluding note on the exercise, for Cambium.

I will still have smaller pieces and offcuts of chollo for any Guild members who want to try their hand at pen blanks, chollo-handled conductors' batons, or Harry Potter wizard's wands, or whatever your imaginations (with Professor Google's assistance) come up with. You're welcome to get in touch with me.

Jim Howell

WWG meeting October 2023

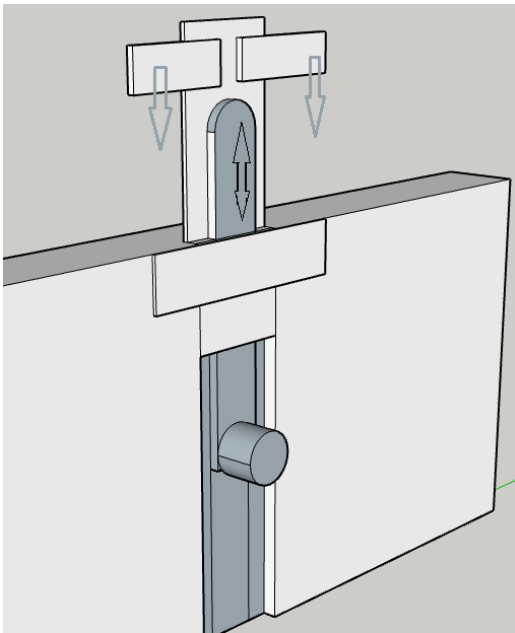
The qualities of timber were presented by Jack Fry and Roy Slack. The spiral structure of some Douglas fir was described, highlighting its potential for the dramatic collapse of a poured concrete form. The spillage of tons of fluid concrete evidently caused a shortage of sugar in London! I did not know sugar stopped the setting of concrete. Google [Effect of sugar dosage on setting time, microstructure and strength of Type I and Type V Portland cements - ScienceDirect.](#)

The effect of the type of timber and the curing of paint was also described. A truly interesting talk...the takeaway message is, you need to know the botanical name of the wood because not all woods with the same common name are equal.

Work in Progress – Part 5

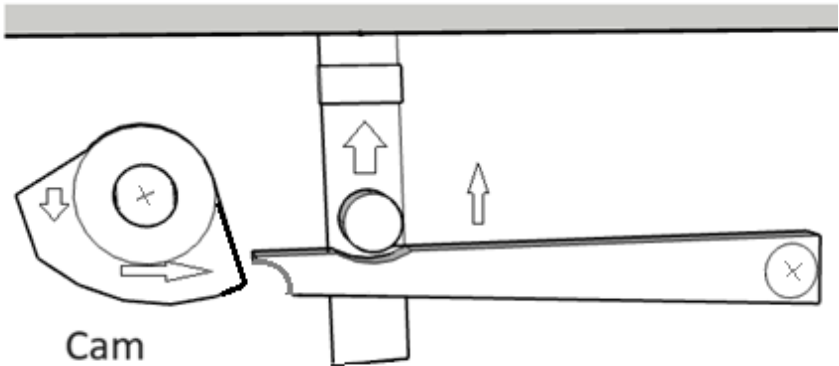
The Automaton

You may be becoming tired of the automaton. Progress is being made; a new frame to hold the mechanics, a new set of cams and now we have a new moving piece, not only do we have two dolphins, but we now have a cormorant. Here is a very crude depiction of the mechanism that raises and lowers the wings.



The plan is that the cormorant, sitting on a rock, will raise its wings as if basking in the sun. There are two actions here, the actual mechanism that raises the wings and the cam action that initiates that movement. That is still being perfected.

Still, progress is being made...ready for Christmas? Maybe, maybe not.



The wing raising mechanism; the linking of the cam and the rotating beam has to be quite precise. By the way ... see [How Cams Work - YouTube](#) this reference courtesy of Alan Berry.

Michael Harrison

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.

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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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