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## Meetings & Events

### 2019

6 August	Guild meeting
10 August	Demonstration. Naenae Menzshed
3 September	Guild Meeting: Carvers group
7 September	Demonstration Naenae Menzshed
28/29 September	Woodcraft
1 October	Guild Meeting
5 October	Demonstration Naenae Menzshed
5 November	Guild Meeting TBC
	Pataka Opening
3 December	Guild Christmas Meeting

## **EDITORIAL**

Those of you who read every word in this august magazine/newsletter/journal/mini tome, will have noticed that the April edition was issue number 200 and I think that that needs to be recognised as a significant event in the life of this Guild.

In April 1984 (the actual date is not recorded) Volume 1.No.1, of the Guild of Woodworkers Wellington Newsletter was produced. It did not fill up 2 A4 pages but its enthusiasm for the growth of woodworking was obvious. It stated that:-

“There is an old Chinese proverb that says, “Every journey of a thousand miles starts with one step” That one step has been taken in forming the Guild of Woodworkers Wellington, and we are now under way on that thousand mile journey.

The first part of the first step was taken on the evening of the 21 Feb 1984 when nine people with the single idea that it would be good to have a Guild that would unite all the people interested in Woodcraft in the Wellington region met together in the workshop of the Hand Carved Furniture Co in Cuba St Wellington. This venue was made available through the courtesy of Neil Gandy, a skilled professional cabinet maker and woodcarver and the proprietor of the Hand Carved Furniture Co and a very ardent promoter of the idea of a Guild.

We listened carefully to the enthusiastic enunciations of Roy Patterson (the first President) as to the need for such a Guild and what it could achieve for its members. When we had all ardently expressed our agreement with these sentiments, and added our own enthusiasms, it was decided that the Guild of Woodworkers -Wellington was formed and from that time in being. We realised, of course, that a Guild needed more than 9 members to make it successful and therefore our first task towards completion of the first step was to publicise the fact that the Guild had been formed and arrange our first meeting to gather together all those people in the Wellington region who were receptive to the idea.

Those of you who attended (*John Spittal was one*) know that meeting was held at the supper room of the Horticultural Hall, Lower Hutt, on the evening of Tuesday 21 March 1984 and was undoubtedly a resounding success... On that night we put out 50 chairs in the hope that our optimism was justified and they would be filled. They were and people practically queued at the door – in fact we had to put out more chairs.

All you good and enthusiastic people who have made your commitment to the Guild will spread the news to ensure that the next step in our journey will provide the impetus to create a worthwhile association that will bind together all these people with an interest in Woodcraft. These are people who love good wood and working with it. People who make

things with love and care and pride and skill, to the best of their ability. It does not matter what type of woodcraft they do or whether they are amateur or professional, novice or expert, let no one give the excuse that their particular interest or their proficiency is insufficient to justify membership. The purpose of the Guild is to foster and encourage the craft of woodworking and the desire to make things in wood to certain standards. The individual will obviously want to improve these standards as he or she gains experience and confidence. Membership of the Guild will give him or her contact with people of greater experience and confidence who will be willing to lend their support so that the novice may increase his or her skills.

So, fellow woodworkers, go to it and ensure that our 'thousand mile journey' is a pleasant one, profitable in terms of knowledge, rich in terms of friendship, beneficial in terms of proficiency and abundant in terms of advantages".

*I think the author of the above was Rob Waanders a very talented woodturner and carver from the Kapiti area. I do not know where we are in this journey but I would like to think that after 35 years we continue to meet the aims outlined in 1984.*

HDM

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## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

When thinking about what to write for my first article as President one subject came to mind immediately and that is the problem of how to grow Guild membership and increase member participation.

The reason I originally joined the Guild was to learn wood turning and I think there are others out there who have the desire to learn new skills when working with wood. You only have to look at the classes at Wellington High School Community Centre to see that the classes it offers are being taken up - Woodworking, carving, ukelele making, and they are looking for more tutors! So there is interest out there.

As a Guild, with the exception of Hugh's evening classes and MenzShed group, we have no formal training on offer to encourage new membership. If you look at our Constitution it is clearly stated that our objectives are 'To provide a forum for the sharing of skills and knowledge of the members of the Guild'. There has been some discussion amongst the Committee regarding training but a way forward has not been clear. However I have been in touch with Dick Veitch (NAW) and he has provided me with some useful information which removes some of the problems we thought we had.

We do NOT have to have any formal qualifications in order to teach wood skills. This is confirmed by the Wellington High School Community Centre web site which states that only a demonstrable level of competency is required of their craft tutors. We are covered by NAW insurance for any classes we run provided the participants are members of the Guild. NAW do offer training videos, manuals, and a suggested approach to training. The next issues we have to resolve are:-

1. Where can we run classes?
2. What equipment do we need?
3. Who can run the classes?

I cannot offer solutions to everything yet but the Guild does have some equipment and we do have access to both the Naenae and Tawa MenzShed so the first 2 issues can be solved. The final issue is the tricky one. We need members of the Guild to offer their skills and experience to be able to run these training events -without this we as a Guild will slowly fade away and these skills will be lost.

I am not saying that we need you to commit to taking a 6 weeks class – only a few hours to teach someone your particular skill and this can be basic stuff such as how to use hand tools. If we can get enough of you to participate then we can advertise classes on our web site and offer an incentive for new members to join. This does not just apply to woodturning, we have members of the Guild who have skills in carving, cabinet making, Green woodworking, CNC Machining, decorating and embellishment, Metalworking and a whole host of other skills. We have a lot to offer.

Thank you for your support

**Mark Wilkins**

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## ***The Michael Harrison File***

On Sunday 19 May a good number of Guild members travelled to Palmerston North for this annual wood fest. As usual there were many pieces of exceptional quality on display, including those items which beg the question “*How did they do that?*” Another question about some complex pieces might be “*How long did that take?*” I am always impressed by the skill of these woodworkers and, as we did on our table, it would have been good to have named labels on the items.

I was pleased to see that after the woodturning competition the pieces turned by the different teams were put on display. I would like to think this was in response to a note I

sent to the organisers last year. It is good to see how well the opponents performed. On previous occasions the prize winning articles were put on display on the 'Head' table, this was good because they could be re-inspected. This was not done this year – perhaps it should be next year.

I, like many others, did find the PA system appalling but it is difficult to know how to remedy the problem because of the hard surface and the nature of the building. Another suggestion I have is this...could a team member representing each table stand by the table at a designated time (say 10:15-10:30) and answer questions about the items on the table? The next table could be 10:30-10:45 and so on. I would have really liked to ask the questions I pose above.

The woodturning competition: is it fair? Is it stressful? Is it fun? ...Somebody will know the answer to the next question – has the GWW ever won the Colt Trophy? If we are to win it we need to 'up' our game. Associated with the last Manawatu Open Day Hugh and Denis did hold some sessions to engender team effort but all seems to fall apart when the team taking part is not decided until the last minute. In my view we should nominate a team in February and the team works together in practice sessions. This will help but the items to be turned are not known until the day of the competition. When the details are released the team should sit around a table and discuss the strategy for the turning in some detail. I know this may mean that a technique decided on may not suit everybody but at least the approach will be planned and consistent.

Is it fair? Not completely – small Guilds have limited players to pick from and some Guilds have more experts. Is it stressful? Yes, the time constraint does add stress...but after all that is part of the fun!

Let's get organised for next year.

**Michael Harrison.**

(The Wellington Guild has had many successes in the 'Best Table' competition but has not fared so well in the Turning competition. In the mid 90's then President, Bert Wasley, declared "We can win this if we bloody practice". So practice we did and won the trophy in 1997, 1998, 2001, 2006 and 2007. About then the rules were changed and teams did not know what was to be turned until the day of the competition. So difficult to practice beforehand. Michael's words are timely. Ed.)



How long did this take to make?

## ***DEALING WITH CRACKS***

The increasing shortage of quality native timbers and the increasing cost if you are lucky enough to find somewhere to purchase it means it is also becoming increasingly difficult to reject a turning blank to the firewood pile if major cracks are discovered. So how do we avoid cracks in the first place and what do we do if they are discovered in the turning process?

In the first instance if you are lucky enough to source newly milled native timber in slab form then painting with 'end grain wax' is a major first step. This is a petroleum by-product formerly available from Mobil but now available in places like Mitre 10 and Bunnings. The wax slows down the loss of liquid in the wood (sap) thus lessening the likelihood of cracking. It is usually the rapid loss of sap that causes the wood to crack. I am aware that in some countries it is common practice to put wood in streams thus replacing sap with water until it is time to further treat the wood. In Korea boiling the wood is apparently a common practice. Weighing the wood and noting when weight loss ceases is also suggested. At that time many turners will 'rough' turn the wood to a thick approximation of the to be finished item. Others will turn the piece very thin and allow nature to reshape as it sees fit.

Professional turners like Glen Lucas will put the rough turned pieces in a kiln where they are carefully dried and then able to be turned to finish. Otherwise drying is a rather slow process where rough turned pieces are put in plastic or paper bags and stored in a shed until ready to be turned.

Many turners will simply store the wood under cover for several years (the maxim used to be one year for every inch of thickness).

So you now have a dry piece which you have been looking forward to turn and somewhere along the line you become aware of an unsightly crack which may or may not go right through the wood. What do you do?

- Rejection is the last resort!
- First thought would be is it possible to fill the crack with matching wood dust (using CA glue) to at best make the crack almost invisible or at worst make it less obvious. I keep small containers of various coloured dust for this purpose.
- Is it possible to make a feature of the crack by filling with one of the many metal powders on the market or with turquoise dust or resin? A reddish wood with contrasting turquoise dust can be very attractive!
- Is it possible to make the crack less unsightly by taking to it with a Dremel burr to create what might just look like a bark inclusion?
- The crack can be covered by a patterned band using acrylic paint and/or a sgraffito pattern. (Using a piece of formica card to burn lines to mark the edges is a good way to keep the band neat).
- Pyrography can be brought into play. I often use the crack as the branch of a flower or tree and then burn in petals or leaves. Adding colour to the leaves can create an attractive pattern that fully disguises the offending crack.
- A stippled band using a ball Burnmaster nib is also very effective. It may take some time and patience to carefully fill in the whole band but the results are very worthwhile.
- I have heard it stated that cracks in wood are part of nature and should be left in situ but I am generally not a supporter of this belief. Occasionally the cracks might be a rather minor disfigurement and could be left and some potential buyers of the piece might accept this but its very unusual in my experience – in fact the response to the crack is more likely to be –“Oh look there’s a crack. How much will you take off the price if I buy the piece?”
- If you are faced with dealing with heat cracks which often appear after too aggressive sanding the only practical solution is often to

turn the offending area away and re-sand using oil to cool the wood.

**HDM**

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## **HEALTH & SAFETY ISSUES**

### ***Light flicker***

George Mansell, who is a retired electrician, drew my attention to an article in the May-June issue of the “ElectroLink” magazine. The article is titled ‘Light flicker, safety and health’ and discusses what causes light flicker and how it can be a danger in our workshops. Personally I was aware of the hazards that came with the introduction of fluorescent lighting which could cause spinning lathes and dangerous cutting blades to appear as though they were moving slowly or not moving at all, when in fact they were moving at lethal speeds. I am aware serious accidents to fingers and limbs have sometimes been the result. The article says that today Worksafe prosecutions for injuries like this are resulting in substantial six-figure fines and in many workshops preventive measures like installing newer light fittings have been taken.

The article then gets quite technical but suggests that the most common reason for the flicker today happens because the AC current is supplied at 50Hz which means the lights are switching on and off 50 times each second, an effect that can sometimes be seen in videos made under artificial light. This flicker is also evident in some LED fittings.

The strobe lighting effect, however produced, is more than an annoyance – it is proven to cause health and safety issues. Some of these are immediately critical and others are harmful with long-term exposure. They include:-

- Eyestrain and headaches
- Reduced task performance
- Distraction
- Seizure
- Inaccurate perception of moving machinery with many possible effects.



What is of particular concern for woodturners is that it is suggested that areas where flicker is more likely to have a long-term effect are places where people spend a lot of time underneath artificial lighting particularly in schools and offices but also in our workshops. The remedy to this problem is to check the standard of our lighting and upgrade if there is any doubt.

### ***Fractal burning***

This subject has been raised many times since this very dangerous form of embellishment of our woodwork has become reasonably widely known among woodworkers. I am aware that that discussion was again raised in one of our recent Guild meetings and those who were advocating that the Guild work towards the abolition of the practice received criticism that it was stepping over the boundaries of its powers and responsibilities. I have been impressed by the patterns that can be achieved by pushing over 20,000 volts through a piece of wood but I do not believe it's worth dying for. And if death is a very real possible outcome then I believe it is our duty to loudly and frequently warn against its use.

The February edition of American Woodturner magazine this year notes the death of a retired high school art teacher who was using a homemade rig made using a microwave oven transformer (as is usually the case). Also supplied was a list of 16 known deaths directly caused by fractal burning mostly from the USA but including one from England and two from Australia. Also supplied is a list of users who have suffered severe burns to their hands including loss of fingers.

The AAW has placed a ban on any piece embellished by Fractal burning from any of its exhibitions throughout the USA and I fully support that action. As a teacher of woodturning it is my duty to warn students of the many dangers associated with woodturning and the preventative measures they should take. The risks associated with flying wood objects, deaths caused by hair or clothing caught in the lathe, the dangers of toxic wood dust and other harmful materials, are all fairly obvious and I will not allow a student to operate a lathe unless he or she is wearing suitable protective clothing and is fully aware of the dangers present to them or those around them. But fractal burning dangers are often not fully understood or are hidden. Incorrect assumptions and one inadvertent mistake will lead almost inevitably to serious injury or death.

The Guild, in my view, must surely have the responsibility to make its membership very aware of this dangerous and potentially deadly practice.

HDM

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## ***FINISHING DOMESTIC WARE ITEMS***

Several years ago I was asked to turn a large platter to be used for open salads and as an hors d'oeuvre container. The day after it was first used I received a phone call – the bottom of the platter was covered with tomato stains. I recovered the platter, realised that I had not put sanding sealer on before I had sprayed it with lacquer (several coats), refinished the piece and returned it. I never heard from the owner again so presumed my second finish was fit for purpose. Recently a good friend of mine made a very attractive platter and finished it with the Beal system which uses Carnauba wax as its finish. When I asked how the wax would react with food ie salads etc, he suggested that he was intending that it not be used for that purpose because he knew the wax finish would not cope well with the moisture and content of a salad and salad dressing.( I think I would put a card in with the piece with a warning and suggestions of what steps to take to preserve the finish if the piece is used.) A platter or bowl made to be used as a container I believe should be 'fit for purpose' but what finish would best achieve this objective?

- Leaving the piece without any finish at all is an option allowing the wood to be cleaned after use as would have been done in most homes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Applying an oil such as an olive, tung, walnut or lemon oil and reapplication whenever deemed necessary. Some care needs to be taken with oils such as sunflower oil and linseed oil which tend to go rancid over time.
- My finish of choice is sanding sealer (cut and polished) and then 5+ coats of Mirrotone spray lacquer, lightly cut (0000steel wool), polished and then buffed. I recently visited friends who were using a walnut platter that I had given them in 1991! I was pleasantly surprised how 'well' it still looked.

- I am apprehensive about the suitability of waxes as a finish for pieces designed for food containers. They would not be washable in any way and would not be very durable on items that receive frequent handling and would dull in this situation.

I have asked 3 friends to apply their finish to a piece of Rimu and then place a piece of tomato on it for a couple of hours and we will compare results. An unfair test perhaps but watch this space!

HDM

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## **PATAKA EXHIBITION CHALLENGE**

We have had several top spinning competitions at Pataka but they seem to have run their course. The winning design in 2017 was effectively a large flywheel, which spins for a long time because of its rotational energy. So what about a model car that is powered by a pull on a flywheel? How far can you make it go?

The rules are:-

1. It must be made entirely of wood (or wood products such as MDF) and that includes the wheel bearings. You may use glues but no metal parts such as nails or screws.
2. It may be no longer or wider than 200mm.
3. Power comes from a single pull of a string or tape, to set the flywheel spinning.

Some things to think about:-

1. It will probably skid on the smooth floor at Pataka.
2. The prize is for the car that goes the furthest.
3. How many wheels should it have? What size?
4. Which is better- real wheel or front wheel drive?
5. How big should the flywheel be?
6. How do you get the flywheel spinning?

A photograph of my prototype is posted on our facebook page. It is three wheeled, and one of these three is the flywheel which is made of 4 pieces of 18mm MDF glued together. A tape is wrapped around the 20mm axle to get the flywheel turning. The car body is made from 3mm pine. The frame is so that you can lift the flywheel off the floor while you pull the tape -then you drop it quickly.

Here's the challenge. I will enter this one in the competition. Can you improve on it? Get thinking and get building.

**Warwick Smith**

## GUILD CONTACTS

### SUB-GROUPS

HUTT TURNERS - Coordinator: Denis Newton 9775650

CARVERS - Coordinator: Sam Hillis 5297105

GREEN WOODWORKERS - Coordinator: Eric Cairns 526 7929

FURNITURE GROUP - Coordinator: Mark Wilkins (2<sup>nd</sup> Tues)

*These groups provide us with an opportunity for more a like-minded fellowship; and a chance to further develop those skills that you have so far experienced.*

### Guild Committee

President	Mark Wilkins	0211428187
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Cambium Editor	Hugh Mill	5692236
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**Life Members** : Denis Newton, Neil Gandy, Ken Cox, John Spittal, Hugh Mill, Archie Kerr, George Brown, Jack Fry

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