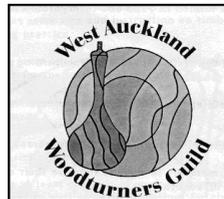


Newsletter



Issue No. 280
NOVEMBER 2015

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Des Bellette 818 4607

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Reuben Wood 832 7060

Fred Day 834 5354

John Horsfall 832 4816

Club Rooms :

2 Rangeview Rd., Sunnyvale,
Auckland, NZ. Tel : 027 604
3851.

Postal Address :

PO Box 69135, Glendene, Waitak-
ere 0645

Club Meetings

1st & 3rd Thursday ea. Month at
7.15 pm.

Hands on sessions

Mondays (not holidays) 1-3 pm.
Tuesdays (Juniors) 9.30-1130am
Saturdays from 1.30 pm.

Years End

We are getting very near the end of the year and it has come very swiftly. The Guild has kept its membership steady. We lost a few members but gained some new ones as replacements and we are getting ready to face next year with real hopes of substantial progress in enlarging our clubrooms and extending our activities to other woodworking skills.

Our juniors continue to be enthusiastic and skilful members and acquitted themselves well at the National Woodskills Competition in Kawerau. Joel Hannaford taking third place with his bowl



Dates for your Diary 2015

Hands on Sessions are held on Mondays 1—3pm and Saturdays from 1.30pm

Guild Meetings are the First and Third Thursdays each month at 7.15pm.

They are:-

November 5th **Demonstration - Ian Thorburn, Lattice Lidded Boxes**

November 19th Competition—Christmas Ornaments

December 3rd Top Night and Break Up

End of year function

When:-

Sunday, 6th December 2015. from 11a.m.

Where:-

Ryders Cinema & Restaurant. 177 Riversdale Rd. Avondale. (Off Rosebank Rd).

Drive to the end of Riversdale, turn right through wrought iron gates.Plenty of parking area.

Format:-

Roast Dinner, Presentations, Cinema.

West Auckland Woodturners Guild

Meeting 17th September 2015. 19 members present.

Show & Tell

15 Items on the table and Trevor Pollard did the critique.

It was remarked again on how well filled our show and tell table always is.

National Association of Woodworkers, Creative Wood, Spring Issue, has two articles by members, one on our juniors.

Joel Hannaford, one of our junior members, won third prize in the National Woodskills Competition, Kawerau, in the College Age category. Very well done Joel.

DEMONSTRATION

Tonight's demonstrator was **DAVE DERMY** (N. Shore) who turned a Christmas Cracker, a novelty item which took a lot of thought and planning and a great amount of skill to turn.

Dave had started turning small crackers to be hung of a Christmas Tree, using jarrah but he later thought about turning a large cracker, as this could be used as a decoration on the dining table at Christmas and if made in sections it could hold several small gifts as well as the traditional crack to give the explosion.

Experiments and development led to a large cracker, bored by forstner and the opening enlarged by hollow turning. The removable ends are a good fit and when pulled the "crack" gives the bang. The outside is painted as required.

This led Dave to think it could be a family heirloom, to be used year after year and he had it suitably engraved by laser.

The "cracks" that make the bang are sold by Spotlight.

Laser engraving is by Laser Art, 570A Swanson Rd, Ranui, Auckland 0612. (09) 832 5629. www.laserart.co.nz. They can engrave on round objects.

Dave was given a round of hearty applause for a good and very original demonstration.

Planned Extension

In recent weeks the work on planning the building and completing paperwork for the extension we are working towards has hotted up.

The Committee has had extra meetings to complete forms for submission to the Council and to make sure the necessary signatures are in the right place.

Paul Sokolich is the principal negotiator and liaison with drain layers, electricians, architects, plumbers, etc,etc., in addition to the council officers who review all the papers we have to complete. All this work is taking up a great deal of Paul's time and we owe him a huge debt of gratitude. Other Committee members are also involved as necessary, principally the President, Secretary and Treasurer

So, keep your fingers crossed that it all goes without a hitch and that we get the grants necessary to carry out the work.

A Skew Whiff Tale

.Is this how the Skew started?

To arrive at the sequence of events that led to the development and use of the skew chisel, one must go back in time to the days when men were first learning primitive woodcraft skills, mainly by trial and error methods. Having learned these, they soon found that a round pillar was far better to bump into than a rough hewn square one, so they applied their minds to this problem. The obvious solution was to use much smaller younger round trees but the conservationists quickly put a stop to that, so back to the drawing board.

The more skilled artisans began to experiment with short sections of timber and found that by shaping a square, then cutting the corners off, then cutting the corners off the corners etc. etc. they could arrive at a point where they had created a fairly well rounded short pillar. A spin off from this of course was the invention of the wheel and, because the

processes involved in making wheels and pillars were at best labour intensive, minds were applied to the problem and mouths to bottles. The end result of course was a crop of first class headaches and, as you have probably guessed, the lathe was born.

The woodturners very quickly realized that they were on to a good thing, so, closing their ranks, they formed a Guild and for many years they prospered sharing their skills only with other members. Secrets, even the best kept ones, will out and, as a result of industrial espionage or just plain snooping, trade secrets were laid bare to all comers. Amateur turners grew in numbers and developed skills in the craft that were equal to if not exceeding those of the professionals. This was bad enough, but imagine the impact on the industry when amateur turners began to give away work instead of selling it!

The Guild members got together to discuss ways and means of overcoming the problems being caused by the amateur, and after much discussion it was decided that the best way to combat the threat to their livelihood was to invent a new tool which would be so hard to use that the amateurs would become discouraged and things would return to normal in the trade. After much consideration they took a flat bar of steel, fashioned a tang on one end and then, because it was too long, cut a few inches off the other end. Owing to the fact that they were not very proficient in working steel the end they cut off was far from square, but they ground a cutting edge on it anyway and fitted a long handle.

The next problem was a name. One said it was a chisel, but another objected on the grounds that the cutting edge was not square and, furthermore it was positively askew, which everyone knew was also askance, awry, aslant and definitely oblique. Much argument ensued and things became rather heated until the President remarked that, even if it was askew, it was still a chisel and maybe they could call it just that. This suggestion became a motion, was put to the vote and passed. So it was that the tool became known as a skew chisel.

Volunteers were called for to test the new tool and two doughty members stepped forward. In very short order one slashed his wrists and the other disembowelled himself, dying for the cause a few minutes later. The tool was, it seemed, a far greater success than had been

hoped for. A delegation took the prototype, wiped the blade clean, and carried it off to the toolmakers. They requested that several thousand copies be made and released world wide after suitable media coverage had whetted the appetites of all the amateurs.

The toolmakers accepted the order with grateful smiles, and emptying out their scrap barrels, went to work producing large numbers of the new tool from all the off cuts they had been hoarding for years. This set a precedent which is still followed today. It is a well established practice in the trade to use up any large stock of otherwise useless off cuts simply by putting a cutting edge on one end and a handle on the other the resulting object is then promoted as the latest wonder tool and sold to unwary wood turners world wide.

The dreaded skew was duly released onto the market. The amateurs snapped them up, and shortly thereafter throughout the length and breadth of all the lands of the earth a large number of freshly turned graves began to appear. In a world subject to wars, plagues and pestilence, this in itself was no great cause for comment. There was however cause for speculation as it became apparent that a large proportion of headstones were designed in an unusual manner. Instead of the popular Norman or Gothic arch atop the stone, or fluted column dripping vines and angels, these headstones were almost austere in their simplicity. They were some three or four feet in height on one side and the top sloped down eight or ten inches to the other. This gave them the appearance of a parallelogram with one end buried in the ground. The only inscription upon the face was the dear departed's name and age at the time of death.

There was one minor difference to be seen, some sloped to the left and some to the right. At first this was thought to have political significance and, in some cases, widows and children were subjected to the usual discrimination from an ignorant minority. Nothing was further from the truth as the variation only indicated the direction that the skew was being traversed along the tool rest at the time of death.

The guild members agreed that the results of their plan exceeded all their wildest expectations. They closed their ranks and went about their business certain in their own minds that a return to the prosperous days of

old was just around the corner. The one thing that they had not allowed for was human nature

History has shown us that the human race, when faced with great adversity rises to ever greater heights and the amateurs responded to the occasion. They took up the challenge of the dreaded skew, and slowly learning from the mistakes of others finally mastered the skills required to survive. Whilst doing this they discovered that the skew really was a wonder tool. It produced a finish far superior to that achieved by any other tool and it soon became apparent that any turner who could not master the art was at a great disadvantage when it came to reducing costs.

The Guild members suddenly found that they were trapped in a snare of their own making. This trap was twofold, as, whilst the amateurs were mastering the skew, the professionals had discovered another interesting fact about woodturning. Put simply it was that far more money could be made from teaching others the art and craft than by continued hard work in the trade. In a manual craft or skill one needs to be able to demonstrate the use of all tools pertaining to the said craft. This meant that the Guild members now had to master the art of using the very weapon with which they had tried to decimate the ranks of the amateurs.

During the period that it took for the Guild members to master this dread tool their numbers fell at an alarming rate. To avoid the very real possibility of the Guild being wiped from the face of the earth the members opened their doors to all comers. So it was that the situation where both amateur and professional can share in an ancient craft first began, and as we all know, still exists to the present day. This happy state of affairs was brought about by the introduction into the craft of the not so humble skew chisel.

(Murray White—Peninsular Woodturners Guild)

Apology

I regret the lateness of this Newsletter, problems with computers and printers were the main trouble. I hope they do not recur!

Ed

West Auckland Woodturners Guild
PO Box 69135 Glendene Waitakere 0645