

Cambium



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Meetings & Events

- 5 Aug Physics of record breaking tops. Warwick Smith, Murray Jansen.
- 2 Sep Wooden boat building - Don Manning
- 12 -14 Kawarau Woodskills
- 19/20 Sep Woodcraft 2014, Johnsonville Community Centre.
- 7 Oct Photographing woodwork. Jim Howell.
- 2nd – 5th SAWG NZ International Symposium Paerata.
- 4 Nov Apprenticeship talks.
- 2 Dec Christmas party.
- 2015
- 3 Feb Jose Llodra, a South American furniture maker.

Our President's Travels

I have recently been to the United Kingdom and to Colorado, 10,000 feet up in the Rocky Mountains, and I am now back in New Zealand.

Each of these countries has had major problems with trees. In order – Dutch Elm disease, Pine Beetle infestation and the recent NZ Kauri fungal infection. Dutch Elm disease, although spread by the Elm bark beetle, is a fungal disease (Ascomycota). Originally found in Asia it was introduced into Europe and America and Europe. It is called Dutch Elm disease because the cause was identified by phytopathologists in the Netherlands.

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_elm_disease

Although there had been earlier infestations, in about 1967 a far more virulent strain arrived. At least 25 million trees have died in the UK alone and the disease is still migrating northwards through Scotland. However Elms still survive in hedges but rarely reach more than 5 m tall before succumbing. This virulent fungus probably came from America. New Zealand did not escape; Napier and Auckland in 1989 (it was eradicated) but a recent outbreak was found at Kingseat Hospital (south of Auckland) in 2013.

Moving onto Colorado – the pine beetle problem

High up in the Rocky Mountains the winters are severe but these beetles are not killed by the cold because the larvae produce antifreeze. At the end of summer the adults leave the dead tree and seek out a living tree that they attack by tunnelling under the bark. Mass attacks by many beetles are common. The pine beetle, and others, transmit the bluestain fungus which assists the beetle in killing the tree, see the attached picture. You do not have to search for dead trees – the acres and acres of dead trees are obvious – the hillsides, more correctly mountainsides, are distinctive with a grey / mauve colouration that depicts the dead areas compared with the dark green living pines or paler aspens. Let's hope they, the pine beetles, don't arrive here.

Refer <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/insect/05528.html>

Finally, the Kauri problem; Kauri dieback is caused by Phytophthora taxon Agathis (or PTA). It is a fungus-like disease that was identified in 2008. It is specific to New Zealand kauri. At the moment it is prevalent in Northland and the Auckland / Coromandel region. "Microscopic spores in the soil infect Kauri roots and damage the tissues that carry nutrients within the tree".

see <http://www.kauridieback.co.nz/kauri-dieback>

It would seem that there is a preference for high soil temperatures; this may restrict its migration south.

It is important to be aware of these problems so that we do take care not to import, or transfer, the offending organisms from country to country or tree to tree as in the Kauri habitat. I have seen the effects of Dutch Elm disease at first hand, and I have seen the effects of the pine beetle infestation. I hope I don't see Kauri dieback in our vicinity.

Take care if travelling up north, clean your shoes, tyres and equipment if you have been up there in the forested areas. Having travelled through innumerable checkpoints in my travels my final act was to scrub my walking boots – no beetles seen there but you can't see fungal spores. Taking all precautions may not be enough but we can only do our best, even if we only go to Northland.



Infected Pine in Colorado

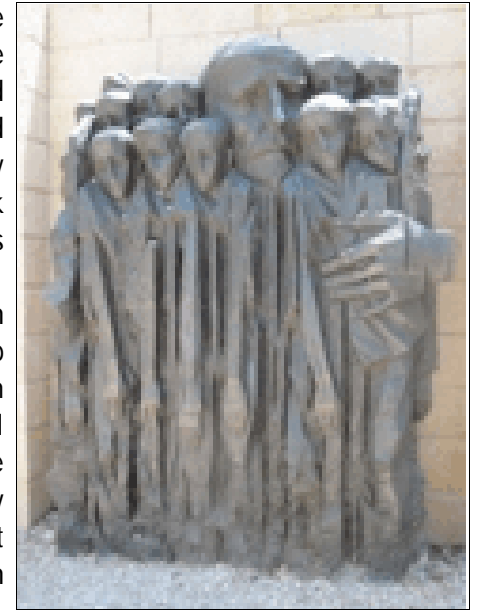
John's Travels

Travels In The Middle East.

I recently travelled to Turkey, Israel and Jordan. Thankfully the region was relatively peaceful while we were there. I always look for woodwork and for objects that could inspire my carving. It quickly becomes apparent that wood is not readily available in these countries with the preferred mediums being stone, fibre and clay. It was quite an experience to be standing in the ruins of an ancient city where people lived 2000 years or more ago.



Because the temperatures are so hot, 40 °C and above, the ancients lived in the cool of caves. Where these were unavailable the next logical step was to dig out rooms into the rock. I visited a house in a rock in Cappadocia. The owners live there in very comfortable surroundings. The floor was covered with the famous Turkish rugs weaved by the family. It is easy to see how early man made the jump from rock houses to building with stone blocks and then elaborate stone decoration. I visited a famous ceramics studio in Turkey where work of the most superb quality was produced. Designs from thousands of years ago were still reproduced along with more contemporary work. The photos show a few modern items that I thought were different to anything we see in this country.



Israel had souvenir religious carvings in olive wood at every holy site. These depicted Christ in various forms and all the saints. On the whole the work was finely executed with the skill of the carvers evident. Olive has a very attractive grain and colour. One of the shopping streets in Jerusalem has sculptures display along it. It seemed that the artists are either invited to, or pay to place their work there to sell. The pieces were very different with everything from stylized roosters to fat nudes to realistic figures at some form of activity. All were in bronze.

A genuine wood working factory and showroom was on the agenda in



Jordan. I was most impressed with a gaming table that expanded out into two stools, a larger tabletop that could be removed to expose tops for other games. They were mostly using rosewood and ebony veneers in very busy geometrical patterns. I was very taken with some large vases, about 1.5 metres high and about 50 cm in diameter, made with segmented camel bone overlaid on wood. The price was astronomical. I had to contend with a walking stick made out of camel bone. Looks great but I subsequently found that I paid far too much and it was made in India. NZ Customs were happy to let me bring it into the country. I did declare it, which eliminated any potential difficulties.

At visit to the Middle East is well worthwhile, but wait till things quieten down a bit. *John Spittal*

Turning Plus at Odmins

This exhibition of wood work promoted by the guild was displayed at the Odlin Gallery in Myrtle Street Lower Hutt between the 21st July and the 3rd August. Also on display were art works by various artists as a group entitled Scapes and Shapes, this art complimented the woodwork very well.



The exhibition was opened by the Chairman Michael preceded by an excellent Maori welcome by Hugh Mill. 118 people attended the opening. The large number of items on display exceeded the initial estimates based on committed items plus adds ons at the last minute.

Work was varied and although there was predominance of bowls, platters and pens there were several extremely well crafted and well displayed items, such as the theatre entered by Michael Harrison and the carving by John Spittal.

The standard of workmanship was very high and a credit to all that exhibited. While sales were slow there was a lot of interest in the more expensive items and some of the NFS items would have sold had they been available according to the gallery staff.

As a first time exhibitor I was a bit apprehensive about entering but once the items were accepted at the review prior to the exhibition I was buoyed by the thought of exhibiting something I had crafted.

Knowing the quality of the work I have seen at other displays the question I asked was is my work good enough to stand beside the names of the experienced turners. I asked several of these persons and was told that until you have tried you will never know, with that I decided to submit several items for review.

All in all an experience I will gladly repeat. I felt that the show was a success and a credit to the organisers.

Carbatec Demo

CARBATEC Afternoon at Menshed. Saturday 21 June.

This was an excellent event and the 40 participants would have been well pleased with the afternoon activities.

Firstly it was pleasing to see the Menshed set up to take an activity of this size and thanks must be given to the Shed organizers to allow the Guild to use their premises in this way. Secondly thanks must also be extended to Sue of the RSA/Bowling Club who made the chairs in their container available to us on the Friday allowing us to set up the Shed well before the event was due to start.

Grant, the owner of Carbatec New Zealand, was keen to personally meet woodturners in this area. He was accompanied by Chris who is employed by Sorby Tools in England and they were on a fairly whirlwind tour of the country promoting recent additions to the Sorby tool range and of course promoting Carbatec and the wide range of tools that company stocks in its Auckland shop.



Grant generously paid for the afternoon tea and for the use of the facilities and he also donated a Sorby bowl gouge which was raffled, earning over \$150 for the Guild. Participants were given an opportunity to view a wide range of tools available for purchase, tools that will now also be available in Palmerston North from Power Tools.

The 3 hour demonstration saw Chris turning a three sided bowl and a small hollow form using the Turnmaster and its different tips for scraping and hollowing, the new small, and very attractive texturing tool with a pretty red metal handle, and a chuck for off-centre turning. He is a very experienced demonstrator and has represented Sorby all over the woodturning world and had just come from the AAW Symposium in Phoenix (which was not considered to be as successful as previous years as only 1200 people attended and because as most had to fly into Phoenix they were not as keen to buy up large for the flight home). His demonstrations were smooth and showed very good technique. He had a very good sense of humour and kept the group amused with his quips and repartee.

My main criticism is with his announcement of that old adage "The faster you turn, the better the cut". While speed is an important consideration, the 3500rpm he was advocating to an audience that contained some who are relatively new to turning is, I believe, clearly irresponsible. He is a disciple of Jimmy Clewes, another sought after international demonstrator who promotes turning speeds over 3000rpm. I have been told that sometimes in Jimmy Clewes demos the front 3 rows are the LAST to fill up. I have not got the space here to expand on the reasons for my concern but I remind readers that last year at our Pataka mini symposium our guest demonstrator Robbie Graham stated that the adage relating to the need for higher speed is nonsense and that our first responsibility, above all else, is our SAFETY. Graeme Priddle urged the same message on his visit later in the year. Both recommended a speed somewhere between 1000 -1500 rpm for bowl/platter turning and I am totally in agreement.

That criticism aside I believe the afternoon was very worthwhile and I hope that their promise to be back next year is fulfilled. HJM

Musings of a Green Wood Worker

I've been studying bodging, more respectfully known as Green Wood Working, for over 10 years now, since I first met up with Tom Prince and

Warren Baillie at Forest Lakes, Otaki. Tom had attended one of Mike Abbot's courses before emigrating to NZ. I had managed to find some books, including ones by Drew Langsner and Mike Abbott, so doing a one day session with Tom and Warren gave me the confidence to proceed.

Before all this, I was and am still a passionate tree hugger, a member of NZ Tree Crops Assoc and NZ Farm Forestry Assoc, and have been planting and tending all manner of trees for the last 30 years on our life 'sentence' block at Mangaroa. Many of the species that we grow are clearly not commercial (e.g. chestnuts, robinia, capuli cherry for starters). We have well over 50 species with "timber potential" with more than 5 of a kind planted.



Trug making at Jack Fry's

When these treasures blow over, or are thinned out, it might seem either like expensive firewood or an opportunity. How much better to harvest them for craft purposes and add value rather than to incinerate them. This low volume, low impact selected tree harvesting also fits with my experiments in continuous cover forestry.

But is it not easy to both optimise tree or forest stand management and utilise the thinnings without compromising the growth of the final crop trees. I.e. thinning would optimally be carried out before the stem was useful for milling (perhaps < 200 mm diameter). Young trees of this size carry a lot of stress, so milled boards are bent, or crook, and yields of sawn lumber are low.

It turns out than such stems can usefully be used in green wood working, if there is enough heart material. (actually, for some species like willow, sycamore and ash, even the sap wood is acceptable).



For chair making, stems need to be

Pierre and Jasper at the pole lathe

split and defect core wood, including pith, removed. Only short lengths are required. For hardwood trees older than ~ 15 years, there is generally enough heart wood to obtain chair legs and rungs, as these items are less than 40mm diameter. The split timber is stable on drying, and stresses or bends are reduced by using short lengths and by dressing with axe and draw knife. Rustic items can use even smaller wood, with bent branches forming spindles or legs. And we have discovered highly figured wood for small turned items such as tool handles (mulberry is outstanding).

So there is an ulterior motive to my interest in chair making. I am far more passionate about the alternative timber species we grow than radiata pine. It would be nice to find high value end uses but we lack economies of scale for most of the odd ball species, and commercial markets for sawn lumber, even blackwood, just have not materialised.

Tools for Green Woodworking: As you will know, hand tools are expensive, but really good quality ones, well tuned and sharpened, are a delight to use. For all that, I am not a purist when it comes to working wood. I have been known to use chain saws, portable mills, even routers, thicknessers and electric planes. However, the traditional cordless drill is an invaluable hand tool. I do try to use a foot operated bungy-cord lathe for chair making, along with side axes, shaving horses, and draw knives. So we are most of the way there. And for chair backs, although sawn and sized by thicknesser, mortising with a chisel was more satisfying and accurate than struggling with the router, (especially on tapered round and steam bent stock).

Also, we get to do some blacksmithing, forging some of our own tools from carbon steel. Fish tail gouges, broad chisels, froes, twivel, hook turning chisels, captive ring tools, small carving chisels and so on.

Timber species round up: What to plant, or salvage? For successful projects, the timber properties must be matched to the end use and woodworking technique. Does it rive easily, steam bend or be hard enough or strong enough for the job. Then there is colour, and grain appearance to consider. Native Ribbon wood (*Plagianthus*) and lacebark split and turn amazingly well, and make good chair legs, but are susceptible to borer. The grain is flecked, like rewarewa or banksias.

Some of the ash group eucalypts (*saligna*, *nitens* and *regans*) are resistant to house-hold borer, and split and turn well, but are not good for steam bending.

However, the sap wood is suitable for pole lathe frames and turnery. Blackwood (*Acacia* or *Racospermum melanoxylon*) has been outstanding. It rives and bends well, has attractive grain and stable colour, but is hard to grow well and is slower growing than some other acacias and eucalypts. It is a tree that needs lots of room and moisture, so prune and thin early or it will sulk or turn into a cabbage.

Silver Wattle, *Acacia dealbata*, grows very fast and has really nice colour when first cut. The colour fades a little, but it rives and steams bends well.

Robinia is hard to grow straight, but lovely colour and durability. It needs to be quite old to maximise heart wood content. Even thirty year old trees are not large diameter

Alder species are fast growing, but susceptible to puriri moth damage. The timber is soft and light. Some alnus species turn light brown on exposure to air. Good for treen (kitchen spatulas)

Oaks: *Q robur* is okay, but is susceptible to borer (especially the sap wood). It is slow growing by the standards of acacias and eucalypts. Lots other oak species are now available (Mexican)

Cypresses, quite frustrating due to canker, wind throw or snow damage. To produce clear wood, trees need to be pruned early, or grown on to large diameter. One of the hybrids (*ovensii*) is the most promising at present. The wood is possibly hard enough for chair legs and rungs, but would be suitable for Windsor chair seats.

Chestnut are short lived in our wet soils and should not be planted if the soil supports rush growth. Hybrid chestnuts (all the commercial varieties) are not ground durable.

Totara, much faster growing than I expected. Even the sap timber is said to be durable above ground. We should have planted lots more of it. A soft light timber, and would be suitable for Devon splint trug bases.

Redwood, Paulownias and catalpa (possibly Whau). Nice light weight timbers for basketry/trugs.

Willow, light weight and easily worked when green. Good for trug staves
Poplar, most of the hybrid ones have low density timber and do not turn well.
Kawa possibly the best of these. Willow is preferable for turning.

Eric Cairns

The Workbench

Here is my new and first 'proper' workbench. It all started with an idea of a knock together 'quick' bench to get me going. 'I can always build a decent bench later when workshop itself is complete.....' Somehow my ideas transmogrified: if I'm



using a bit of decent timber for the legs, it would be better to make some decent joints. I wanted to be able to take it down for future moves or transportation options, so some hefty bed bolt type fixings were formulated but the barrel nuts had to be made up specially from 20mm rod. Advice was offered halfway throughout the leg manufacture to add not just one but 2 top rails, so the design evolved a little further.



My bench top was originally going to be a couple of solid rimu veneered doors stuck together and bolted on. I have had these lying about for years - 'might as well use them up'. However, so much thought and effort was going into the base unit by this time, such a Heath Robinson top seemed silly. Making a solid hardwood laminated top myself was more than I thought I could manage but I knew a good carpenter who could make one for me. Purpleheart was suggested. Good dense wood, from sustainable forest, I am assured. A bit dear but oh boy, it is a good solid heavy top!

About this time in the evolution of my bench, I read some of my 'The

Workbench' book and realised design of a workbench is best done from top downwards - and I was beginning to understand why! I still hadn't clarified my thoughts on vises; a pattern makers vise was definite, probably a leg vise [that I had somehow bought on trade me when no-one else bid on it] and what about a tail vise....? Nothing to say one can't have 3 visas on a bench! All quite difficult to decide upon as I wanted to cover all woodworking options in the one bench. But all these decisions are better made at the outset and the base unit/legs designed accordingly. Oh well. I'll just shorten the bottom rails a bit and shift the top over a little...

So, 2 years on and the darn thing eventually gets assembled and top bolted on. Glorious moment.

But what is this? A bit of vibration when sawing timber held in the vise. WHERE was that coming from? The base unit framework had seemed as solid as a rock prior to the top being added. Asking around the Guild resulted in a couple of folk diagnosing the problem - more leg bracing required.



Bob Yellowlees came up with a solution: a tightly fitted, transverse stile between the legs.

Those were to measure about 200mm by 50mm and be held by coach screws placed horizontally throughout the legs and into the stile, 4 screws per stile. I still had some dressed rimu timber measuring 140mm by 44mm. This was cut to length and glued together edge to edge, planed flat and redressed. This gave 2 broad stiles measuring about 275 by 40mm. These were duly fitted as tight as I could manage and held in place by 4 no. M10 200 long coach screws.].

The result? Much improved rigidity of the bench. Great. Thank you Bob. I am still tinkering with the leg vise mechanism and fitting but that could be another story. Now I have learnt so much about bench making, maybe it is time to apply that knowledge and make another one with all the appropriate improvements! *Jim Armstrong*

Bob the Builder - continues

Time on the tools - part 4

At the end of part 3 I noted that was the completion of my first commercial building venture. What I did not say was near the end of the construction, when it was all closed in and only the fit out was left to complete the contract the contracts manager and senior foremen were sent away to begin other contracts, with about 6/8 weeks left to go I finished up running what was left of the contract.

Very near the end of the contract I was summoned to meet the general manager of Southland one George Bourke to his office in Invercargill. This set me wondering, what goes on here? I had not met George before, only seen him at a distance, a very easy chap to talk to. After some small talk, surprise he asked me how I felt about being a foreman and running my own contract. After a short consideration I accepted the offer. He said he would give some good men and he was true to his word, I only have a few words of advice to give to you when the men are boxing the foundation you are building the roof, and if you can give a client a waterproof building you are 99% there to making him happy. How true these words were.

Well the contract turned out to be to construct a new accommodation wing at the Tourist Hotel at Te Anau a 100 miles from Invercargill. As with all commercial contracts there is a completion date in the contract, in this case it was November the 11th 1956. Back then the tourist season for Milford Sound was summer only, and this started in November and ran through to May.

At this stage I think I should describe what Te Anau was, only 50 people lived there on a permanent basis most of these were M.O.W, maintenance and families. There was no reticulated power supply no sewage or mains water. There was a one man post office, a general store run by husband and wife, he was also the fire chief (a Land Rover) plus he had a school bus run that picked kids from Manapouri the bus was a station waggon. The Hotel was quite large it had two generators one large one for day time and a smaller on for at night, heat to the hotel was provided by a coal fired boiler.

In the off season one bus from Invercargill would arrive about midday, mail for the P.O. parcels for the general store and perhaps a few overnight visitors

for the hotel. There were a few people who arrived by private car for an overnight stay, but in general it was a very quiet place off season.

I arrived in May by bus on my own and settled in. The contract arrangement was that the contractor would have accommodation supplied by the Tourist Corporation and meals supplied as well, we ate in the staff quarters and the food was the same as the guests ate. Our accommodation was the annex , two men to a room complete with wash basin. An early arrival in heaven. The manager of the hotel turned out to be a great guy always helpful as was his wife and two children.

As mentioned earlier Te Anau was 100 miles from Invercargill and every thing for the contract came from Invercargill. I had no phone or transport but was not a problem, Men began arriving in small numbers a few days after me and work began. Looking back it was not a complex building, but modern , every bedroom had its own on suite. We worked long hours on this contract (63 hrs a week) with only Sundays off.

Being so far from head office amongst other tasks I had was to do the pays . Money was telegraphed to the P.O. and I would withdraw it having calculated what notes and coinage I required, then make up the pays in the small brown envelopes and pay the men.

There was one interesting episode where I went to the P.O. to drawer the money and the postmaster said he had none as I had not pre ordered it.(it had to be sent from Invercargill by bus) sure I must have fore gotten, but he knew I ordered it every week. Went back to the Hotel and the Manager must have seen my face and said what's wrong, I explained my situation, no problem come with me round to the reception desk, Blair give this chap what money he wants. That was that no paper work or signing anything. The next day money arrived and he was paid back, what a different world that was.

The contract went along much as planned, with only two unannounced visits by the manager, the second was about two thirds through the contact, with the announcement , we have just got another contract in Te Anau and thought you could handle it as well, contract completion date end of December 1956. This turned out to be a rather large septic tank for the A.A. motor camp at the eastern end of the lake size 7m x15m x2m.

Apparently this camp was extremely popular in summer. This was designed

and supervised by a structural engineer with a tight concrete specification. Aggregate had to come from Invercargill, this was in the days when you could not compete against the railways at a distance of over 50 miles. Therefore the aggregate had to be railed to Lumsden then transferred to a truck and transported 50 miles to Te Anau by road. A long and difficult problem if you did not get the quantities correct in the first place. All went well and we finished the tank 3 days before Christmas, packed up the gear and trucked it to the next contract, a Hospital at Tuatapere, west of Invercargill.

The Hotel was completed on time, apart from the contractual completion date I also gave myself a personal challenge, in that I finished my first contract while I was still 21 years old. This was the beginning of a roller coaster ride in the commercial building world for 50 years. This brought many and varied challenges, Hospitals (3) were the most complex, multi storey buildings (18 floors) needed much different thinking and planning. I think it is time to finish "Time on the tools" as if I went on describe various contracts it would become boring for the reader.

When I look back to the first commercial job where the concrete mixer was fed with shovels, every thing was moved manually or by barrow. To today with concrete pumps, pre cast concrete, tower cranes, support systems and the use of structural steel. As I said earlier a roller coaster ride for 50 years.

And a Question

Have you encountered the build up of resin when power cutting a quantities of such timbers as Rimu? The subtle whiff of burning could initially be taken to be blunt tools.

It is fairly simple to clean the cutters of a router bit - but the 40 teeth on the bench saw is more of a task.

Have you found any easy way to deal with this issue ??

Cambium issue in e-mail form

A few people have expressed a desire to receive Cambium in electronic format (PDF). If you would like this instead of a paper copy, please let us know NC

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	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. And its free! Why don't you check with the co-ordinators about group activity?

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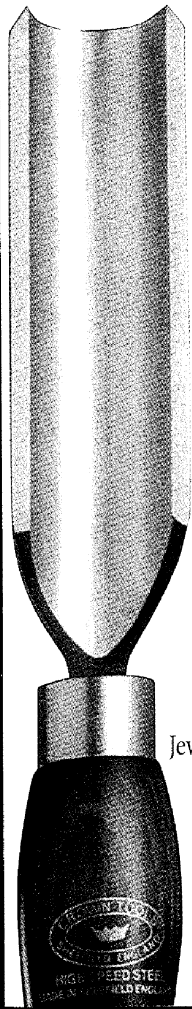
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