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### Meetings & Events

- 7 Feb Wood bending explained, Jim Armstrong
- 12 Feb-4 Mar Odmins "Best of" Exhibition
- 18 & 25 Feb Plane making workshops, at the MENZ Shed
- 7 Mar Picture frame making
- 1 Apr Glen Lucas demo at the Manawatu Club
- 7 - 8 Oct Woodcraft 2017 - Dowse Art Gallery

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## Gathering Local Trees

So another Christmas dinner has been carefully prepared and joyfully eaten. The ham remnants have long since disappeared into sandwiches and soups and we are almost a 12th of the way into 2017. May it be a grand year for you all. The summer is in full gale force swing as the rain patters yet again on the shed roof. And as the editor quietly asks for another copy; I'm never quite sure how I am going to engage my fellow hylomaniacs with said article, I am scouting about for inspiration.

The previously mentioned chainsaw mill has been out trialing again. I lopped down a 25 m pine in the winter and I figured I could mill some useful timber out of the first 8 metres or so. These ideas [of mine] often seem simple at concept but the reality is actually quite challenging in many ways. Probably that is half the fun I guess. If it was as easy as falling off a log .... why everyone would be doing it. I wanted 4 m slabs. Not sure where the 4 m figure came from but it seemed like a good length to go for. Easy to shorten something too long but infuriating if one needs 3.6 m lengths and all you have is 3 m slabs. To do the first cut on the log, one needs a reference plane to cut from. This is usually an aluminium ladder affixed to the top of the log. So my first challenge was join 2 sections of ladder together because [you guessed it] my ladder is only about 3.5 m long. The join has to be pretty accurate, level and true to each piece of the ladder, as well as having the whole thing true, otherwise the cut made by the saw will reflect the discrepancy in the first cut - and every subsequent cut. Many readers will be sitting there thinking why not just accept one ladder length slab of 3.5m or so. Why make life hard? But there's this stubbornness you see, dammit, I wanted 4m slabs. There has gotta be a way. Another issue to keep tabs on is the twist that can be introduced along the length of the ladder, especially with a join in the middle. Two big winding sticks seemed to sort that problem out. The whole reference plane has to be stabilised over its entire length, which of course gets harder as the proposed length of slab increases, a stiffish ladder can bend, twist or dive in 3 dimensions. It is easy over 2, but the darned foremen has requested 4m. Chocks and wedges can be made pretty easily but they

have to be held firmly in place whilst the chainsaw slowly buzzes over them. Long nails and screws have to be placed cautiously and judiciously so that the chain doesn't find them, which it does uncannily do somehow. Although a big saw at full throttle will chew through a big nail, it doesn't progress very satisfactorily. Afterwards, sharpening, and then re-sharpening the teeth of a 36" bar chain is tedious and time-consuming. Voracious squadrons of sandflies add to one's misery whilst crouched in the grass, clutching the chainsaw file. There is a certain irony in trying to get a perfect sharp edge on all those metal teeth but simultaneously grinding one's own enamel teeth flatter in the frustration at the stupidity. [I had a hunch that damn screw would get in the way, why didn't I move it]. A sharp saw is important for these long end grain cuts. The trunk in this instance was about 700 mm wide and probably about the limit of the saw's capacity. A chain being not very sharp just strains the system; the saw labours and jams more easily, & it cuts slower and overheats the bar more. General wear and tear is increased - on both saw and operator! An extra oiler is possibly a good idea at the bar tip but is another modification yet to be designed and fitted. The ripping chain I use does not have skip tooth pattern but is ground at 10 degrees and is of chisel shape. Maybe a skip tooth chain would work better for me but this is another variation to trial. The second cut took 20 bending, fume breathing, noisy, vibrating minutes. The resulting 4" thick 4 m long slab looked impressive, as I wiped my brow. Wow, look at that. It weighed even more impressively however, presenting the next problem. How the hell was I going to shift that? 2 chaps could just lift it but not far or safely. A bit of manhandling and dangerous lifting for dodgy backs and we had it into a position that I could drag it across the paddock with a Ute. Then heft it onto blocks off the ground. Strangely, the 3rd cut didn't happen that afternoon and indeed still awaits my next attention. The trunk hunkers on the margin of the orchard in a sort of accusing and reminding sort of fashion. I will get it finished and I am sure the wood will come in for something useful. Look forward to seeing you all at next meeting. Best wishes for the last 11/12ths of 2017. JRA

## December Demo

*Events at the Menzshed saw Hugh Mill organise a very successful demo day in December where 6 demonstrators gave an impressive show of their skills.*

The demonstrators were:- Richard Holt: Cosmic Clouds' Paint Decoration Method. Bryan Hawkins: Turning Christmas Decorations. Hugh Mill: Making Pens. John Spittal: Carving the outside of a bowl. Denis Newton: Using the Bowl saver. Andy Ladd: Demonstrating his Laser Engraver Machine. Unfortunately he Graeme McIntyre could not attend to demonstrate his "Thin Walled Vessels" but as he had just undergone an operation. We wish Graeme a rapid recovery.

Richard in doing 'Cosmic Clouds' turned a platter, sprayed it black gloss, when dried, he mixed up small quantities of Josonjas iridescent coloured paint with water and applied dabs of colour around the periphery of the platter.



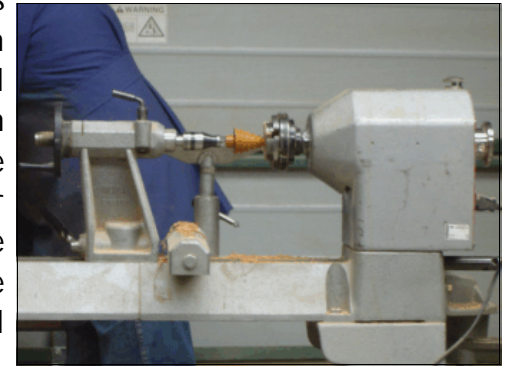
Then with a straw (and later using a small compressor) blew on each spot of paint making an irregular pattern. When the paint was dry he then coated it with a clear lacquer.

Later in the demonstration he invited attendees to try this method out on platters he had previously turned for the occasion.

He emphasised not to mix oil base paints with acrylic and keep the paint stirred all the time.

Bryan at the opposite end of the Shed turned a Christmas Bell and Christmas Tree and went on to make other items. It is difficult to describe his method but to say it was delicate and miniature turning.

In making pens, Hugh's demo was to turn a few Lucida pens which only required a single barrel and had an easy application of the pen ends. This was an easier and more impressive method than the earlier Double Barrel pens I have made in the past. The woods used were Sheoak, Green Kauri and Red Beech.



The wood of square section had been pre drilled and a brass tube super glued into the centre. It was then mounted on the Mandrel and turned to a round Barrel. One piece had a flaw in it which Hugh corrected with super glue and wood dust from the turned barrel. He then sanded the barrel and applied 9 Coats of super glue hastening the drying with accelerator spray. The process continued by sanding again using micromesh pads (5) lubricated with water then friction polish which produced a tough gloss finish.

Using super glue protects the wood from being discoloured by finger acid. The barrel ends were squared off and the fittings applied making a attractive pen.. Hugh offered one of the pens for the end of session raffles.

John Spittal sat quietly carving away on the bowl and other items stopping to answer a number of questions from interested attendees. It is difficult to describe a carving process one really has to observe the process in action.

Before the demonstrations started, Hugh in his opening statements mentioned that the Guild had purchased a "Bowl Saver" for the use of Guild members but had not been taken up by members in the 18 months(approx ) since it's purchase. This was a pity as it has been specifically purchased for their use.

Denis went on to demonstrate it's use which at times was rather noisy

causing Hugh, at the other end of the room to hesitate part way through describing some aspect of his Pen making Process.

Andy Ladd purchased a Laser Engraving Machine some time ago and demonstrated engraving on pieces of Veneer and Pen Barrels. The machine was purchased from China from a company called Gearbest. [www.gearbest.com](http://www.gearbest.com) It was priced at \$97 NZ. It had a small platform (approx 75mm square) with two motors moving it in circular motion. The Laser was half Watt and the software which came with the machine had a good selection of patterns.

In conclusion - there was attendance of 35 members which included a contingent from the Kapiti Guild plus 6 demonstrators .

The day had been organised such that the morning session was repeated in the afternoon after a barbeque lunch. The day ended with a raffle and thanks from Peter Johnston to Hugh and the demonstrators. A most enjoyable and interesting day. *Alan Robson*

## Local Trees - Silver Wattle



dealbata, 2 year old seedling

*Some of us been fortunate to us a few bits of Wattle; hence this time Eric describes Acacia dealbata*

Acacia are in the subfamily mimosoideae of the pea family fabaceae. Acacia species are common in Australia, Pacific, South America and Africa. The taxonomists keep changing classifications, with the 900 or so Australian and Pacific region acacia species sometimes referred to as Racosperma. The Australian acacia species do not have the thorns that some of the African species have.

Silver Wattle is visually difficult to



Acacia dealbata, about 20 years old

distinguish from the closely related *Bodalla Silver Wattle* (*A silvestris*), *Early Black Wattle* also known as *Green Wattle* (*A decurrens*), and *Late Black Wattle* (*A mearnsii*). The latter two species are quite weedy in NZ. The fern like foliage, also seen in the juvenile form of *A melanoxylon*, is present for the life of the tree. A gall rust fungus, (*Uromycladium tepperianum* readily attacks *mearnsii* and *decurrens*, but only mildly affects *A. dealbata*. *A. dealbata* does not sucker, but can be a prolific seeder. This group of wattles all have slightly different spring

flowering times, although the timing may be strain specific. About 20 years ago, nurseries commonly misidentified *A delabata*, so older plantations may not be true to name. The Huon Valley strain of *dealbata* that I am familiar with, has a very smooth silvery grey bark, blueish foliage and is almost untouched by the gall fungus. (The bark is so slippery that they are hazardous to ladder prune without a harness).

Acacias are legumes and therefore soil nitrogen fixers. Potentially they could be companion planted with other species, but I find it so vigorous, that it actually out competes and supresses less vigorous species. It was observed at the recent Hokitika Farm Forestry Conference that the related *Tasmanian Blackwood* (*A. melanoxylon*) does not grow well in the presence of more vigorous eucalypts, so mixed plantings of *dealbata* and eucalypts should be treated with caution. Single species stands of acacia are more vigorous. They need good space to develop crown diameter, and hence trunk diameter, so

final spacing in a plantation need to be at least 8-10 metres apart.

Within NZ farm forestry circles *Acacia dealbata* is gaining popularity, although future markets for the timber are uncertain. It can produce medium sized saw logs in less than 20 years, tolerate dry climates (it thrives in the Wairarapa), and has similar wood properties to the more well-known Tasmanian Blackwood. The range of heart wood colour in fact overlaps with Blackwood with dealbata heart wood containing more red and yellow streaks, and Blackwood tending to be darker. (Blackwood is notoriously colour variable, even within a seed lot). Blackwood however, takes significantly longer to reach the same size, and loses apical dominance at an early stage, so is harder to manage in a silvicultural sense. Dealbata is shorter lived than Blackwood, and more prone to root rots in heavy soils. The best strain of dealbata to grow in NZ comes from Huon Valley, Tasmania.

The timber is medium density, but this is probably age related, with slower growing or older trees having much more dense timber. Tasmanian saw millers often used to include silver wattle timber in with



*A. decurrens* with gall and typical flower



Fungal gall on *A. decurrens*. This shortens the life of the tree and reduces seeding

blackwood (in much the same way as miro was added into rimu stacks here). I have used it successfully for chair making. It can be steam bent, although it has a higher failure rate than blackwood. Some of my green woodworking colleagues experienced difficulty with steam bending dealbata, but I put this down to failure of pathogenic wood. The particular tree was salvaged after wind throw, and the root rots had extended up into the butt log. The pathogenic wood was a slightly different colour.

As for figured grain, if you want fiddle back or highly figured grain, you need buttress or major branch crotches for the figured compression wood. However, compression wood is not as stable on drying as straight grained timber, so may need careful seasoning or the use of resins to stabilise them. I find the colour to be fairly light stable, more so than for Rimu.

A farm forestry colleague in Whanganui recently used his 16 year old home grown dealbata for his house staircase, doors, t&g flooring and feature panelling. It looks great.

This species is commonly grown for firewood, but in my view, it has a much more valuable future as furniture or appearance grade lumber in housing.



## Cast Pewter Pen

*As well as using timber in producing turned pens, Peter has turned to Pewter. Having shown us at a Guils meeting, we asked him to explain how this is done. Some people have been known to melt down old pewter mugs; not the best approach, due to the Lead content.*

A mould was made from off-cuts of pinus radiata, with the casting moulds the exact size of pen blanks. A 7mm dowel was placed through the centre of the mould and the wooden base with the two brass rod sleeves for the blanks slipped over it.



The pewter is supplied in sticks about the size of plumbers solder

(Terry Scott, Timberly Ltd., about \$40 per stick) Old pewter mugs etc are not suitable as they contain lead which is toxic when heated.

Using the very sophisticated (?) apparatus shown, the pewter is melted in the empty tin can over a gas ring ie the stove cooking top, then carefully poured into the two moulds using the vice grips. Because of the low melting point of pewter, the wood is not scorched.

Once set, the rod with the two cast pewter blocks around the brass sleeves, is easily removed from the base and the rod slipped out. The two cast blocks are then placed on a pen mandrel and turned as one would with wooden pen blanks. The advantage in this case is that the blocks are cast to exactly the right length and shape and need no trimming before placing on the mandrel, and the brass sleeves are cast into their centres - no gluing needed.

The pen shown, my first effort with this technique, is not an ideal shape and I had trouble finishing it to a really high lustre. But the next ones should be better!

## Denis's Tip

My workshop is directly under my house so I am always concerned about the possibility of fire. For that reason, whenever I have finished using a rag in applying oil ... I wash it out in warm soapy water and hang it out to dry.

### Also ...

In the light of Denis's tip ... what did you get for Christmas? *Having been involved recently in drawing up Health & Safety plans for a large building, which includes a workshop sometimes used by volunteers, one item appearing on the list was a fire extinguisher. Following this prompt; one is now installed in my own workshop. NC*

### And ...

I love using the old wooden spoke-shaves, they cut at a very low angle that removes wood quickly and cleanly. Two types are commonly found. One with a brass sole in front of the blade and one without. If you have the former treasure it as it is a fine tool. Most people give up on the latter as they can't make them cut well.

I seek out these, repair and tune them and end up with a wonderful addition to my workshop.

There are two common problems.

The blades often become loose and a hollow develops in the wooden sole. I fix the loose blade by gluing a sliver of wood in one or both of the hole the blade tangs fit into. I then gently tap the blade back into place. Don't overdo it or you will snap a tang off.

The hollow in the sole is repaired by cutting the sole back till the hollow has gone and then adding a replacement piece of wood to return the position of the sole to where it was. Some trimming is required to match the sharp edge of the blade with the sole, allowing a gap of about 1 mm.

Sharpen the blade, they are usually blunt, set it in place and commence making shavings. I will be demonstrating this process at the plane making workshop to be held this month. *John Spittal*

## **Guild Contacts**

### **SUB-GROUPS**

CARVERS - Coordinator: Sam Hillis,	529 7105
Meeting at Naenae Mens' Shed - (3rd Tuesday 7-9 pm)	
HUTT TURNERS - Coordinator: Denis Newton	977 5650
Meet Naenae Mens' Shed, 1st Saturday after Guild meeting 10 am –12 noon	
GREEN WOODWORKERS - Coordinator: Eric Cairns	526 7929
FURNITURE GROUP - Coordinator: Lew Skinner (2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday)	475 7613

*Remember - these groups are for you (and could be, by you) .....  
They provide us with an opportunity for more a like-minded fellowship; and  
a chance to further develop those skills that you have so far gleaned.*

### **Guild Committee**

President	Jim Armstrong	562 8554
Secretary	John Spittal	478 3164
Vice President	Lew Skinner	475 7613
Membership Sec	Warwick Smith	233 8042
Treasurer	Peter Johnston ( <i>retiring soon</i> )	476 7942
	Peter Whitehead	476 7227
	Michael Harrison	479 9302
	Brian Cropp	938 8020
Library	Pierre Kunz	934 1027
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