

TURNING TALK

Newsletter of the South Auckland Woodturners Guild

Number 111 : April 2003

Bob Main 23 February 1927 – 6 March 2003

Founder, Patron and Senior Life Member of the South Auckland Woodturners Guild.

At the funeral Jim McCarthy was asked to reflect on Bob the Woodturner.

“Evelyn on behalf of all the present and past members of the South Auckland Woodturners Guild our condolences come to you and to your family in your sad loss. In our own small way we in the guild share that loss in these sad moments.

The guild has lost the rock upon which it was built.

Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words on behalf of the Guild, and myself.

Back in 1987, when I first had the pleasure of meeting Bob, he was the leader of a group of people who shared his enthusiasm for creating many different things from so many timbers. It was Bob's dream to have such a group, and to this project, as with so many other things in his life, he applied his seemingly boundless energy. He secured our first real home at Manurewa High, and by example he fired the group up to become what other people have described as a team of people, from many walks of life, who grasped the challenge which Bob had set for us – to constantly improve the standard of our work (and there was a lot of room for improvement for some of us) – and – equally importantly to share our time, knowledge and such skills as we may have with one another to achieve Bob's aims. We all know also that friendship was always the over-riding factor.

No-one gave more in time, effort and the passing on of skills than Bob – he was mentor to all who needed his help, and with the late Derek Johnson as secretary, the guild moved steadily forward.

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To watch Bob demonstrate was an experience in itself – his professional depth of preparation and bright humorous presentation brought so much knowledge to so many. Yes, even when a piece of wood mis-behaved, like flying off the chuck, Bob made a lesson of it, and with the aid of his trusty roll of masking tape often to hand, converted error to a lesson in lateral thinking and versatility. Heaven knows, had it not been for Bob many of us would still be turning bowls on a faceplate and leaving screwholes in the bottom of them. But Bob encouraged, cajoled, and by his wonderful example constantly improved our standards. He set the base upon which we have continued to build. Such standards as any of us may have achieved are due to this man – he will be long remembered with respect and affection by those of us in the guild who have been lucky enough to have known him.

Goodbye Bob. Rest easy. You ran a great race.”

Programme for the First Term 2003

We will continue to meet at Papatoetoe High School at 7:00 pm. For those who wish to make use of the machinery, do some shopping, or get a little extra advice, the doors open at 6:00.

9 April **Fred Holder** will demonstrate making a threaded bolt.

The Pig and Spoon Night. All the salt pigs and spoons that you have made will be on the show and tell table.

Also this night sees the presentation of the Table Prize for Term One

Programme for the Second Term 2003

This term sees the continuation of a Table Prize for each term – so keep your good work and lessons learned flowing to the show and tell table each meeting night.

30 April **Scoops – Project for this Term.** Demonstrator Terry Meekan. There will be a hands-on scoop night later in the term and a show and tell scoop night on the last night of the term.

Club Night 5 March 2003. Pig and Spoon hands on.

Every lathe was turning. Turners, advisers and critics were all in attendance. I should have been walking around collecting good info for this newsletter – instead I was happily hollowing too, even if a little too far at times.

It looked like pigs, pigs and more pigs. I hope there will be some spoons too – a pig is no use without a spoon.

The real test comes on 9 April when all will be displayed on the show and tell table.

Teknatool Open Day

Last year they counted the green shirts, this year it was a spinning top competition – two entrants from each club.

Each participant had first to turn the top from the wood provided on the Mercury lathe provided. Here the technology of top making came to the fore. Shape, width, length, centre of gravity, balance, spindle thickness, angle at the point, and more all came under detailed critique.

Then out to the spinning pitch – a square of mdf carefully levelled and inspected by referee and players alike. “Spin” called the referee and spin they did. Some ran around, others wobbled and toppled quickly, some bumped the side, others just died. The first to three wins for each pair of players. Heats, quarters, semis and finals. The competition was intense.

In the end the technology did not seem to matter but skill at setting the top spinning strongly and smoothly won the day. Which club – not South Auckland.

Most woodturners, though, will remember the day for the bargains. Chucks at low prices. Second hand lathes. New lathes. All sorts of bits. The queue at the paying counter lasted well into the afternoon.

Others will remember the prototype DVR 5000 or the wireless remote control on the DVR 3000 – signs of more great things for future Teknatool buyers.

Club Night 12 March 2003. Finishing

Peter Walters of Wattyl Paints showed an array of finishes on his sample collection and handed out three pages of details about stains, spray applied finishes, and brush and hand applied finishes. He then used the following notes for his talk:

“I will talk briefly about stains, but in general most wood turners seek to enhance the natural look of the timber and are not that interested in changing the colour of the timber they are turning by staining.”

“French Polishing is considered, today, to be the archetypical old fashioned traditional way of finishing timber furniture and timber pieces in general. However it is worth noting that in Arthur Hayden’s book “Chats on Old Furniture” published in 1905 French Polish was referred to as “A cheap and nasty method used since 1851 to varnish poor-looking wood to disguise its inferiority. It is quicker than the old method of rubbing in oil and turpentine and beeswax.”

“How slow is rubbing in oil and turpentine and beeswax? The adage is “for a full bodied oil finish rub in a coat of oil once a day for a week, once a week for a month and once a month for a year before the job is done.” The finish demonstrated on rod 6 (Instant Estapol Satin – 2 coats. Teak oil – wet abraded on) duplicates the result obtained by following that adage, but in four days instead of one year.

Vic Wood, a woodturner from Melbourne who also addressed the Putaruru Seminar is a great believer in using turps thinned gloss polyurethane, like our Instant Estapol Gloss, as a means of treating turned green timber to ensure stability. He turns green timber on the lathe, saturates the timber with the gloss polyurethane, using it as a penetrating oil. He claims this technique stabilises the green timber preventing the shrinking and cracking normally associated with turning green timber.

In the finishing of wood there are a wide variety of possible systems that can be used, each having its own strength and weakness. The items I have on display show the result of each of these staining and finishing types. The samples on the turned tawa were all prepared for the Putaruru conference and so are now eight years old. Those on pine were prepared for this address, so are only a matter of days old.

For most hobby wood turners spray finishes are not practicable as they do not have the facilities or turnover to enable them to invest in the equipment needed. However I have brought examples of spray finishes on turned rods to demonstrate the type of finish the industrial sprayed products achieve, and to show that it is possible to duplicate the build and finish of sprayed finishes with hand or brush applied products.”

Some very obvious conclusions from this talk and the samples that Peter showed us, are that there is a huge array of possible finishes and there is no single finish that is good for all woods.

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CollaboratioNZ 2003

from Rex Haslip

Take anyone out of their comfort zone, throw away any rules that they normally subscribe to and give them the human and material resources that they need to try something new, and you had better be ready for what happens.

Every second year, a group of 70 artists from all disciplines gather at McGregors Bay in Northland, to relive the magic that was born at Emma Lake Canada in the early 90s. This year there were glass blowers, potters, bronze sculptors, furniture makers, black smiths, bone carvers, neon sculptor, paint and fabric experts, jewellery makers, and of course, woodturners, lots of woodturners. Five days of sharing ideas and making pieces together, taking someone else's oops and transforming it into another master piece, expanding one's horizons and gaining new skills, that's what its all about. Nothing is right or wrong, no one's ideas are out of hand. Its perfect really.

CollaboratioNZ 2003 was the 4th of these festivals that has been held in New Zealand, and is part of the Northland Arts Festival. Graeme Priddle has been part of the organising committee for this since the first and it was he who bought the concept back from Emma Lake. The first CollaboratioNZ was actually held at Graeme's home. All materials are provided, and at the end, all the created pieces are auctioned to cover costs.

Now days the venue is the Baptist Youth Camp at McGregors Bay near Whangarei Heads. Dormitory accommodation or tents are the order of the day, and a communal dining room doubles as meeting room, social room and a great place for a chat. Tents and Marques are strung between virtually every solid structure to accommodate the incredible amount of equipment that gets dragged along, from buzzer to glass kiln, carving chisel to smithies forge, its all there.

People travel from all around the globe to be there and this year was no exception, with nine from Australia, five from mainland USA, one from Hawaii and two from Canada. The rest were Kiwis, from all over the country.

This year three South Auckland Woodturners Guild members set off for Northland with three Australians on board and a couple of vehicles and trailers full of toys. The first stop was Teknatool's Annual sale and open day, an ideal opportunity to wet the appetite for what was to come and to re-new old acquaintances.

Its amazing how fast you can unload and set up several workshops full of gear when the only thing in mind is making the most of the next five days, not a moment to waste. Well that's the story day one, but after five days from 0700 till the wee small hours of the morning, it starts to get a little hard, and then the learning really kicks in as you slow down and start to absorb. Try this, have a go at that, have you done any bone carving yet, did you see what I did to that broken glass goblet, what do you think I should do to get the most out of this, and so the conversations start to flow. You can't help but get swept up into the collaborative frenzy. After all, its not every day that a woody gets to take advice and share ideas with names like Michael Hosaluk, Michael Lee, Vic Wood, Giulio Marcolongo, Neil Scobie and Terry Baker.

Slowly but surely the creations start to take shape, the pieces come together from one end of the site to the other and you start to wonder how some of these people come up with the ideas they do. The simplest idea starts the ball rolling and next thing it's the start of a series with several pieces being modelled on the theme, like the rooster that roamed the camp site, but that's another story for another day

Alas though, all too soon the five days were over, the collaborative creations packed and loaded, and it was off to the auction, to see what people would pay to take home such diverse pieces as beautifully crafted Bone carvings and 2.5 metre long wall hangings. This year, the 110 odd lots realised \$26,000 which is a good indication of the quality of what was produced.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the NAW for assisting in funding my participation at CollaboratioNZ this year through the Ken Sager Fund. This valuable source of financial assistance was much appreciated, and I look forward to being able to share what I have learnt with other woodies.



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Most people use pegs to hold their tents down when camping, but Greg Sutton has developed another method. During CollaboratioNZ, Greg risked life and limb, sleeping in his water proofs, to stop his tent ending up in a tree. Reckons it was one of the warmest, if not most restful nights he has spent in a tent for a long time. [Why was he there? A lady told me he has the good manners to know that his snoring is more than most people can bear.]

Club Night 19 March 2003. Tools

After establishing that most people in the room has actually made some form of tool for their woodturning, Dave Harmes went on to show and discuss the array of tools he had made.

But why make tools? If you have a problem, or are not happy with the way things work, then making something new to make it work.

He wanted no screw holes in a thin piece so he used a part from inside a video recorder as a glue-on spigot to grip in a chuck. His figure 8 calipers did not fit so he made different shaped ones from ply. A lengthwise cut in aluminium rod makes a good thin sanding drum.

He was not happy with scrapers that tended to be thin and flexible so he got a massive lump of regular steel for a shaft and easyflowed a good cutting tip onto it. His anglepoise lamp shade was too big and got in the way so both shade and bulb were replaced with a halogen downlight.

For a bowl depth gauge he has a bar to place from rim to rim of the bowl and a cross bar from that down to the bottom of the bowl – just remember to measure the wood and set the cross bar before hollowing the bowl. To get a piece level before filling a rim with epoxy, make a little table with three legs made with bolts – adjust the bolts up or down to get it level.

His Chinese ball tools were the most complex. Here good wood and industrial formica played an important part. The screws in his ball chuck have been in and out many times but the wood still holds firm. The Chinese ball cutters were made from gauge plate then tempered – and that sounded so easy.

An excellent demonstration that if we want it we can make it.

Coming Events

Fred Holder demonstration day, 12 April 2003

Royal Easter Show, 16 to 21 April 2003

Franklin Arts Festival 18 to 25 May

Harihari Learn to Turn Jamboree, 30 May to 1 June 2003

TreeWorkX Open Day, 5 July 2003

NAW Demonstration Day and AGM.

Participation 2003, 2 & 3 August 2003

National Woodskills Festival, Kawerau, 12 to 14 September 2003

Tauranga Festival of Woodcrafting at Baycourt, October 17-19 2003

Spin Around Waitaki, 31 October to 2 November 2003

The Art of Turned Wood, Aotea Centre, 10 to 22 November 2003

Papakura Christmas Sale, 8 to 24 December 2003

Turangi Jamboree

The weekend at Turangi took on a new note this year: kerlunk, kerlunk, kerlunk – the sound of Rex Hall's lathe turning the parts for an oval lidded box. It was weird to watch as the oval wood slipped back and forth in order to keep the cutting surface steadily on the cutting line. The end result was a well proportioned oval box with lid and matching grain lines just as planned.

Fred Holder had a gathering to watch thread chasing and Chinese ball making. Ken Port of Woodcut Tools drew a crowd to look at his grinding jig. Jim Lowe from the Woodturning Shop had a gathering around his demo DVR lathe. Doug Tanner was handing out material to potential buyers. Ron Wallace-Wells of TreeWorkx had his wonderful array of sandpaper, waxes and wood. Country Aire Crafts had unloaded their busload of paints, clocks, tools and other bits to fill the side room. Ross and Heather Vivian unloaded a fair part of their truckload of wood. And I think there were others there too that I did not see.

One hundred and ten people registered to attend. They came from most parts of the North Island plus a few Americans for good measure. With only 31 lathes there was plenty of talking, watching, asking and advising. But the shavings continued to flow and new pieces were added to the display table as the weekend progressed.

I did hear a comment that there were more small lathes than in the past so maybe some turners had taken the easier transport option (you don't get old if you don't get cunning). But big and different lathes were there too. Indeed, if a person wanted to see all types of lathe in action this would be the place to go.

The constant free coffee, free lunches and Saturday night BBQ is also worthy of more than a passing mention – excellent to keep everyone turning.

Thanks to the Turangi team for another great weekend.

Teresa Hopkins advises that you try a bit of hair spray when you strike difficult end grain in dry wood. Apply the spray to the hairy patch and it firms the grain for cutting.

What sort of club president would set a piece of stringy, knotty mongrel butt kauri on a bunch of unsuspecting Aussies. Well he did, much to the amusement of the Kiwi Contingent. Still, to their credit, they battled on and delivered an acceptable outcome. All part of the CollaboratioNZ experience.

Club Night 26 March 2003. Rose Engine Lathe

A delightful assemblage of cogs, wheels, wood and machinery lovingly hand crafted by Bob Lynn in 1999 so that woodturning clubs could have a simple introduction to ornamental turning.

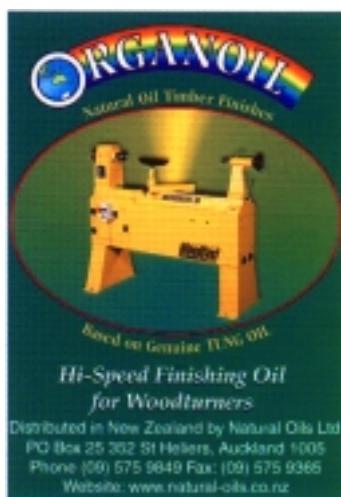
The basic concept is to rotate a piece of wood against a spinning cutter which may vary from a simple burr to a shaped router bit. The shape and position of the cutter and whether the wood rotates through a circle, rose shape, or any other shape, determines the final pattern cut into the wood or which parts that are totally removed and what shaped edge remains. Patterns may be overlaid to obtain a further array of complex figuring.

The surface to be decorated should be finished and sanded. The wood remains on the chuck and the chuck is then mounted on the Rose Engine Lathe. Keeping the wood on the chuck in this manner ensures that the surface to be decorated remains true to the axis of the chuck.

The chuck mount is the key to the operation for the other side of this holds the pattern – a disk with the edge cut to the desired shape. This pattern rests against a stop in a manner that causes it, and the chuck and wood, to move to and fro as the whole assemblage is rotated.

The engraver that cuts the wood is firmly fixed so cutting a groove in the wood as it rotates and moves to and fro. Or it may be that the wood is a bowl with a flat edge which the cutter can then scallop into as the bowl is revolved. Or the pattern wheel can be replaced with an index wheel and the wood shifted from stop to stop and pressed forward to a cutter at each stop.

This Rose Engine Lathe is owned by the Lynn Historical Woodworking Trust and is currently on loan to the Auckland area for use by club members who wish to broaden their knowledge.



Ooooops! Did you hear about the fledgling pen maker who got so carried away turning out pens of Sheoak, Jarrah, Snappy Gum and resin, that he took to his pen mandrel with his gouge. I hear there is now an off centre pen mandrel looking for an owner at a reasonable price.

NAW at the T&WwW Show

The Timber and Working with Wood Show is a well recognised show that does the rounds of main centres in Australia. March 2003 saw its first appearance in New Zealand and they invited the National Association of Woodturners to be there and do whatever they wished to do.

The intentions of the the T&WwW Show are to have for the public a display of timber and tools for the serious hobbyist and one-man builder. They filled an entire hall at the Auckland Showgrounds with timber, tools, toys, and talkers. Some stands were a mass of different products while others were more specific, but nevertheless attractive to the crowds who stopped, listened and purchased. All day machines buzzed, chainsaws roared, speaker systems bleated. The public poured in (despite the Auckland showers, one of which continued all day Friday).

Shane Hewitt had a central display patch with about 100 chairs around it. He talked and turned almost without a pause for the three days. Ian Fish had the Teknatool area filled with shavings as he turned and gave away more than 40 bowls. Carba-Tec (now with a shop in Auckland. Orders only 0800 444 329) had the Vicmarc range of lathes and Hamlet chisels amongst a dazzling array of other tools. There was wood from Western Australia, wood from Northland, and a host of machinery and tools from all the favourite stores.

The NAW chose to have two lathes turning full time and an additional person to talk to the public. To decorate the booth there was a wide selection of turned wood, the NAW display stand with pictures and brochures, and a "NZ Woodturner" banner.

The idea was just to show the public that woodturning is alive and well, to give them NAW brochures and the addresses of woodturning clubs. Brochures about the lathes we were using and tool sharpening gear were also there for the public to take.

By good luck, we gained extra space just hours before the show opened. So we spread out. Just as well for the people crowded in to watch the magic of pens, bowls, spinning tops, salt pigs, spoons, lidded boxes, goblets, and egg cups.

We enjoyed it. They enjoyed it. Hundreds more now know about the NAW and the clubs. The show will be on again next year. NAW stand will have two talkers, even if the space is smaller.

Club Night 2 April 2003. Twist Pens

If you look in the right books there are many different types of turned wood pens and pencils. Many of us have seen Les Sivewright's nicely boxed pens or pen and pencil sets at our sales so we called on him to show us how it is done. He demonstrated the making of a twist pen.

The parts that you need to buy to make this pen can come in many forms – platinum, titanium or gold, with plain, beaded or feathered centre band, and a host of different clips, including one with New Zealand on it.

A pen mandrel is a necessity and a pen mill or barrel trimmer is desirable.

The wood is your choice or a wide variety of horn, bone and synthetic material may be used – anything you can cut on a lathe. Cut this material to 18 or 20mm square and 130 long. Now cut it in half and mark the two halves so that the grain will match when they are put back together as a pen. From this point on try to mark and keep the two halves so that you don't lose track of the grain match.

Drill a 7mm down the centre of each piece. Glue the brass tube in using a good coverage of glue. When the glue is dry use the pen mill to cut the wood down to exactly the end of the brass.

The two pieces can now be mounted on the mandrel and turned to shape. Basically the top half of the pen can only be straight as it needs to accommodate the clip. But the lower half can be straight or shaped to make a fatter grip on the pen. This shaping needs to be done carefully down to the size of the bushings at each end of each half. At this stage the wood is less than 1mm thick.

Sand longitudinally to avoid sanding rings on the wood. Apply a finish of your choice. Push the pen pieces together on a woodworking vice, with a drill press, or between centres on your lathe.

Experience is the hardest teacher – you get the test first – and the lessons after.

Woodcut 2003

Good move, Ken, taking the open day to Totara Springs Christian Centre just out of Matamata.

Cars covered the entire sports area, displays filled the huge hall, morning tea food filled the foyer, lunch filled the dining hall. Almost true – there were 220 paying customers, at least another 20 workers, and still room for more. That all made it a very pleasant place to be, easy to move around, see the displays, watch the woodturning, and buy some goodies.

For buying, there was the big Woodcut area in the centre of the hall; the Woodturning Shop had one corner and Off 'n Ons the other corner. Outside four wood sellers spread their wares.

Around the hall, each in a separate booth, were Fred Holder making threads, Jim Manly making boxes, Ian Fish with bowls and platters, Fred Irvine sharpening tools on the Tru-Grind jig, Paul Beckett with big pots, Shane Hewitt deep hollowing, Granville Haworth and the bowlsaver, and Jim and Judith Ross showing their way of doing things. There was certainly something for everyone to watch and learn from.

Totara Springs also adds an opportunity for people from further afield to get there early and stay the night – 20 people took advantage of this and had the added extra of a slide show from Fred Holder.



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> From: "Lars Tougaard" [in Denmark]
> Subject: microwawe
> —
> Hello
> Very nice advices. I really agree by your proposals not to hurry.
> I did and my house burned down. To much time and effect, maybe.
>
> with regards from Lars
>

[The accompanying picture was of a totally burnt out house, burned due to his excessive microwaving of wood.]

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