

HORNSBY DISTRICT WOODTURNERS INC

NEWSLETTER for NOVEMBER 2009

(Greg Croker)

Our meeting on Saturday 14th was our last for the year attended by 23 members and 1 guest. Lindsay welcomed us all and advised that member Alastair Bennett was to demonstrate wooden plane manufacture and principles.

Show & Tell started the day with Rusty's 'top-hat duck' (homework from last month) which was very good work.

John Edwards presented a 10" vertically laminated hardwood plate of well proportioned design and of deep colour.

Lloyd showed two items, a merbau plate about 8" in diameter finished nicely with semi-gloss lacquer; the second was an exceptional burl plate/bowl say 10" in diameter with a great red and orange centre (highlighted by the lacquer finish) and a creamy 'sapwood' rim.

Angus Pitt showed a 6" sphere on its own base. The wood looks like a hardwood (but remains unidentified) and with some retained sapwood, and its stand, is an item of beauty.

John Markham made a medium sized bowl from unknown wood with pleasing design.

Ted Utick showed a couple of recently made large Christmas bells to augment his wide collection. Very nice and very timely!

Eddie was also in a seasonal mode having made two fine Xmas tree decorations about 3" long. Produced from rosewood and silky oak the first item was finely made and well finished. The other decoration made from cedar and persimmon wood was equally well turned and finished.

John Knight's display included off-set turned candle stick and a 'pepper' mill with mechanics to crush rather than grind, which can also be used for herbs or spices, an interesting concept.

Elwyn worked on off-set pegs for a coat rack, nicely done and useful. Elwyn warned that the grain needs to be aligned to give an acceptable result. Also shown was an inlaid lettering sign based on tassie oak.

John Talbot showed a large pepper grinder well made entirely from juniper pine.

S & T finished with Ted issuing some Australian cedar branches and a discussion about the qualities of cedar, surian, calantis and fruit woods.

After lunch Alastair commenced the afternoon on wooden planes with ten minutes discussion on principles, needs and the practice of usage followed by a showing of these planes including some Alastair had made himself.

It can be economic and interesting to make these planes particularly for a specialised project or purpose. Choose a block of sound quarter sawn wood which could be silky oak or harder woods such as Victorian ash or laminated wood. Tasmanian oak is ideal for planes.

Consider what you need your plane to do and construct accordingly. The angle and bevel of the blade are varied for the job in hand, as do the width and length of the block.

First square the wood, preferably on a thicknesser and if using a laminated block ensure the laminates are vertical. Mark the mouth position between 25% to 50% of the distance from the front and mark the angle of the bed for the blade.

Draw up the angles and extremities of the throat ready for cutting. When cutting the mouth be careful to keep as narrow as possible so that the blade will not be loose and/or require shims (of wood or brass). Drill the dowelling holes for reassembly before cutting off the sides and cutting the throat.

Cut the vertical sides from each side of the block, and cut the mouth, all on a good band saw such that the plane blade will be tight in the mouth/throat once the side laminates are repositioned. Re-assemble with the dowels and check for fit and specifications, adjusting and cleaning-up as necessary.

Glue the wood and dowels either side of the mouth and when set cut off the dowel wood protruding and file the throat to size. A mouth of 1 to 1.5 mm and a 60 degree bevel will give a good cut on curly grain and hard woods. Where the selected timber swells/moves an advantage can be gained by placing a brass ware-strip behind the blade. The blade angle for softwoods is generally less than for hard woods.

Set a dowel or metal pin in the middle of the throat and halfway up the blade to act as a web catcher. A metal button can be inserted at the back of the plane's body as protection when knocking out the blade.

Finally cut down the square wood to achieve the desired shape and /or to remove the dowels and add handles as per western type planes.

The plane constructed by Alastair during the demonstration illustrated in real detail and skill how one should design and build your own specialised plane; an interesting demonstration and a useful tool to have in the workshop.

(Since this demonstration, the December Australian Wood Review No 65 has a feature on Making a Krenov Style Wooden Plane. The six page article would be an interesting follow-on read).

Many thanks Alastair for a great afternoon.

Our December function will be a Christmas Tea at Hawk's on Second Avenue from 6:30 on Friday 4th December.

To all members, have a Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year 2010.

Following the November meeting we have a new member Angus Pitt, who will demonstrate sphere turning at our (next) February meeting on Saturday 13th and tell us about his new venture, equipped with Vicmarc lathes and all our other needs, at www.alltoolsonline.com

Till then.....please keep turning.