

# The Woodworkers' Association of NSW Incorporated

May/June 2019

## From the Chair

Yet again, **Leon Van Vliet** won the blue ribbon and the Standard of Excellence Award at the Sydney Royal Easter Show for best Small item of Furniture with a sleek, light bench seat. Other entries did not stand a chance. **John Evans** was also successful, winning the Musical Instrument category with a beautiful guitar. **Peter Harris** also received commendation for his excellent Boxwork entries.

Congratulations to each of them! Their skilful work is featured later in the newsletter and each has been invited to bring their exhibits to our next general meeting for inspection and discussion.

Welcome to new Committee members **Phil Nanlohy** and **Richard Leniston**. They have both thrown themselves into the fray with Richard organising the Association's stand at the upcoming Timber, Tools and Artisans Show and Phil is working with **Clare O'Reilly** on the development and organisation of courses for the balance of the year whilst **Gordon Joseph** has a well-earned break. Please give them your support and encouragement.



The month of May has been a busy one for members. We have had **Fred Blake's** woodcarving course, our **Sharpening Day** at the Workshop and the **Woodturning course** run in conjunction with the Western Sydney Woodturners. It is wonderful to see the enjoyment and camaraderie that come out of these opportunities to develop skills, learn and share experiences together.

Our next general meeting on **3 June** will provide another such opportunity. We have an array of informative speakers and topics with something of interest for every member. More details appear on the next page. I have just been informed that we will also have a member of the Sydney Male Choir attending to receive the batons described on pages 17 and 18.

Many of us will be dining beforehand in the Bistro with our guest speakers. Please join us if you can.

*Phil Greenwood*

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## WWA objectives

The objects of the Association are:

- to provide a forum for networking and to encourage camaraderie amongst all those who work in wood
- to promote public awareness and appreciation of fine woodwork
- to encourage creativity, design and development of skills and application by all woodworkers
- to represent professional woodworkers and promote sustainability of fine woodwork as a career
- to promote awareness of environmental issues including encouraging the judicious use of our precious native timber resources and use sustainable harvested, recycled and reclaimed timbers.

## WWA Life Members

Richard Crosland

Phil Lake

Kim Larymore

Leon Sadubin

Richard Vaughan

## Our next meeting ...

**Monday, 3 June, 2019 - 7.30pm**

### *Oils ain't Oils*

### **Guest speaker - Graeme Hill**

**Graeme Hill** and his partner **Doris** will be our guests at the next meeting. Graeme is a founding partner of the **Eco at Home** retailing business which sells an extensive range of environmentally-friendly products for woodworkers. These include the BIO range of wood oils, KUNOS oil and the LIVOS range of oils, waxes, polishes and sealers.

Graeme has a background in Science and will discuss the composition of the different products and the advantages of each for particular applications. Feel free to bring some of your work along that you would like to get advice about.

### *2019 Easter Show winners*

**Leon van Vliet, John Evans** and **Peter Harris** will have their prize-winning works on display for members to inspect and they will be available for discussion.

### *Wood Dust Designer Maker*

**John Madden** will be providing a short presentation on an upcoming and innovative event which offers opportunities to learn from some of the best in the business.

Members are welcome to invite family and friends to attend the meeting.

Please bring your membership name tags to make it easier for people to say hello. We will also have name tags to write on for visitors.

As usual, the venue for the meeting is the **Canada Bay Club, 4 William St, Five Dock**. Plenty of parking is available. We will be meeting in the William Room on the first floor.

**Please join the Canada Bay Club when you arrive - it is only \$11 for 5 years! More details of the benefits of joining are on page 7 of this newsletter.**

Meals and light snacks are available at the Club if you would like to partake before the meeting.



## WWA Committee 2018

### Chair: Phil Greenwood

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**If you would like to join or assist the Committee or be more involved in the Association, please call any Committee member.**

## News, news, news ....

### A very warm welcome to our new member Rhys Hobbs.

We look forward to meeting you at the next general meeting and at our Workshop. Please make yourself known to as many members as possible. We hope you will immerse yourself in the activities and spirit of the Association. More about Rhys on page 6.

And a very warm welcome to someone who may become our youngest member, Humphrey Neuman Greenwood, son of **Angus and Ari Greenwood**, born 3 May 2019.



Humphrey's cousin in London, Santi Greenwood, is already showing interest in hardware catalogues.

Members are invited to contribute their stories about their favourite wooden item when they were a child or great woodworking projects for young people.

Years ago, members of the Association made wooden toys for children in hospital. That fell away when plastic became more fashionable and was regarded as healthier". Perhaps the tide is turning...





On 11 May our very experienced and talented woodcarver, **Fred Blake**, conducted another one-day introduction to woodcarving course at the Association's workshop.

Fred had prepared comprehensive and informative notes for participants.

He commenced the day discussing some of the key aspects in the notes including safety, types of carving chisels and how to hold and use them. Members then started on the first of two woodcarving projects.

The two projects were (i) carving a "tile" which required the use of different carving chisels [various gouges, straight chisels and v chisels] and (ii) carving a simple bowl.

The timber used was Huon pine and it quickly became apparent why it is regarded as one of the better timbers for woodcarving.

In his notes Fred commented "it is said if you learn to sharpen woodcarving gouges you should be able to sharpen anything". How true these words are. Sharpening and honing a bench chisel or plane blade is much simpler and easier.

It was a wonderful and informative woodcarving course and overall a most enjoyable day.

**Thank you Fred for sharing your wonderful knowledge and skills.**

As a follow-up to the successful **Wood Dust Festival** last October, Craft Media Australia led by **John Madden** is producing a new event called **Wood Dust Designer Maker** being held in Footscray, Melbourne from **8-11 August 2019**.

Wood Dust Designer Maker features three key events including:

- Woodworking Masterclasses – featuring international and Australian masters
- A Weekend at Wood Dust Makers Conference – with revolving live demonstrations over two days
- Timber and Tool Marketplace – with your favourite woodworking retailers

This is your chance to build your design and woodworking skills alongside other passionate woodworkers. Special guests include David Haig from New Zealand, Reed Hansuld from Brooklyn New York, Vic Tesolin from Canada, Carol Russell and Ross Annels from Queensland and Bern Chandley, Adam Markowitz and Alastair Boell from Melbourne.

To learn more about this innovative, wood-centric woodworking event, visit the website at [www.wooddustaustralia.com](http://www.wooddustaustralia.com) or contact John at [hello@wooddustaustralia.com](mailto:hello@wooddustaustralia.com).



L to R - John Evans, Clare O'Reilly, Stuart Einfeld, **Fred Blake**, Carol Faulkner and Brian Dawson. Inset Sharon Lee

**The Museums Discovery Centre (MDC)** at Castle Hill is a collaboration between the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS), Australian Museum (AM) and Sydney Living Museums. It is open **Monday- Friday from 10am-5pm** for \$10.

There are five permanent exhibition spaces with a wonderful, eclectic collection of items including tools and equipment such as this superb band saw.



A visit to the MDC provides an opportunity to learn about museum collecting, conservation and research practices.

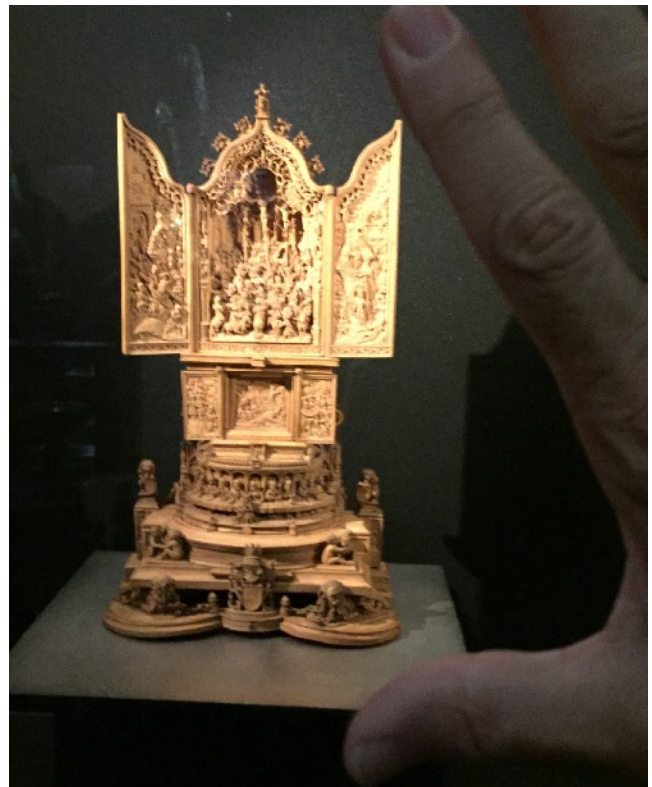
As well as the five permanent collections, tours can be booked to see Behind the Scenes and thereby gain access to many more exhibits.

The works of a number of our past and present members are represented in the “deep collection” of significant items from Australian society. These include a writing table and a bench made by **Leon Sadubin** and one of **Jeff Snell**’s Angle-Mags.

You can search the collection at <https://collection.maas.museum/search>.

Whilst on the topic of Museums and carving, during a recent visit to the **British Museum** I spotted this gem... Around 1500, sculptors in the Northern Netherlands invented a new art form - **microscopic sculptures** carved in wood which tell the Christian story and encourage the viewer to identify with its message.

Made for private devotion and enjoyment, they are virtuoso masterpieces. Below is boxwood altar (with hand to get a sense of scale) and a close up of some of the detail!!! Fred Blake, can you show us how to do this??





We promised to keep members updated on progress regarding the future of the **Henry Kendall Collection**. First, some background...

In a visionary move in 1981, the Forestry Commission of NSW (as it then was) established the Collection to encourage the development of Australian culture as expressed through creative work with Australian timber. It was intended that the Collection would grow steadily through an annual acquisition to ensure both the collection's growth and its continuing relevance to the appreciation of contemporary work. A fund was established to achieve that end.

For the past 27 years there have been no acquisitions. One item is missing, believed to have been stolen in 2002. The Collection has not been displayed for more than a decade. Some items are damaged, others continue to deteriorate.

In **February 2018** the Association wrote to the **CEO of NSW Forests, Nick Roberts**, expressing our desire to discuss the preservation, exposure and expansion of the Collection. Sadly we have still not received a reply.

In response to our most recent inquiry, we have been told that some ideas around the future of the collection have been developed and these will be raised at this month's Senior Management Team meeting. We have been promised "an update on the pathway forward" following the meeting.

We will persevere and report again.

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**Almost free wood...** We have too much wood in our wood store (the middle of the three stables we rent on the other side of the car park). We want to reduce the amount we have and are offering it to members at an extremely low cost: \$2 a kilogram.

Ask the supervisor on duty to open the store and let you select what you want. The supervisor will guess the weight of what you select and charge accordingly.

There are some choice pieces of wood in the store so don't delay. First come, first served.

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Unfortunately the politicians decided to hold an election on the same day as our **Annual Sharpening Day**. As voting was compulsory, it got precedence and our Workshop was poorly attended. Thank you to **Brian Dawson, John Kirkwood** and **Peter Evans** for your efforts which were not repaid by attendance of appreciative members.

The Committee will need to consider the future of **Sharpening Day** and decide whether this was an aberration or whether all members are so skilled at sharpening that we no longer need this opportunity to see different techniques and pick up tips. Your thoughts, ideas, suggestions comments and involvement are welcome and invited.

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Our newest member, **Rhys Hobbs** is a user experience designer who has recently become interested in woodworking.

*I love the process and the complexity of making something that is useful and hopefully, beautiful, and I think woodworking is a hobby that brings the two together nicely.*



## Timber Tools and Artisan show 2019 (renamed TWWW Show)

To all Members,

Please be reminded that the wood show is in on again, under the new banner of The Timber Tools & Artisan show, at Rosehill Gardens racecourse, June 7th, 8th, 9th. We are once again participating and have several members lined up for demonstrations including Peter Harris (marquetry), Peter Dunn and Steve Townsend (sharpening), Alex Springall (setting box hinges), the ever accurate John Kirkwood (shooting boards) and Stuart Faulkner (his Mybench). Not to mention the huge array of items made by members also on display.

Please come and show your support for the event.

Regards

Richard Leniston (2019 Show organiser)

## Dates for the diary

Remember that our Workshop at 1 Spring Street, Abbotsford is open to members each Wednesday and Sunday...

<b>3 June 2019</b>	<b>WWA General meeting, Canada Bay Club</b>
<b>7-9 June 2019</b>	<b>Timber, Tools and Artisans Show at Rosehill Gardens</b>
<b>13 July 2019</b>	<b>Introduction to Woodworking course with Matt Dwight</b>
<b>22, 23, 25, 26 July</b>	<b>Members' annual box-making course with Alex Springall</b>
<b>8-11 August 2019</b>	<b>Wood Dust Designer Maker, Footscray Melbourne</b>
<b>9-20 Sept 2019</b>	<b>Design &amp; Development Masterclass with Adam Rogers and Evan Dunstone</b>
<b>14 September 2019</b>	<b>Members' course with Kerry Carter</b>
<b>12-13 October 2019</b>	<b>Illawarra Festival of Wood at Bulli Showgrounds</b>
<b>14, 15, 17, 18 Oct</b>	<b>Members' course: Veneering course with Peter Harris</b>

### Canada Bay Club membership - Just \$3.30 pa or \$11 for 5 years

Benefits of membership include - reward points every time you swipe your membership card to purchase food, drinks and other services at the club, discounted food and drink benefits, free parking, birthday rewards, health and fitness classes, discounted holiday accommodation in NSW's beautiful Forster

Join at reception next time you visit the Club.

More details at <https://canadabayclub.com.au/membership.html>

## 2019 Royal Easter Show winners

**Leon van Vliet** is a quietly-spoken chap with a hint of an English accent.

He was born in Lewisham in London, which is not far from the Royal Observatory in Greenwich.

At 12 years of age he developed an interest in competitive cycling. After leaving school at 16, he worked in advertising in the print department and became a "Finished artist", preparing artwork for press ads.

At 21, Leon decided to have a working holiday in either Canada or Australia, and chose the sunnier option. Like so many Brits, once you get here it is hard to go back.

Leon obtained work in advertising but the advent of computers made his work redundant. He decided to become a gardener, which he has been doing for the past 30 years.

His interest in woodwork arose from doing landscaping jobs such as timber retaining walls, gates and decks etc. About 10 years ago he decided to do a woodworking course to be able to do some finer work. He enrolled with Terry Gleeson and that provided the inspiration and interest to get more engaged.

He took the plunge and equipped his workshop and with the help of You Tube, magazines and a friend who was always very generous with his help and advice, he has been making saw dust ever since. Leon describes his "work pattern" as follows...

*First I have an idea, then I have a period of doubt, then I go clean the workshop. Then I trawl the internet, then still full of doubt I go and buy the timber...Now I'm committed!*

Each year for the last six years Leon has made something to exhibit at the Royal Easter Show, and every year he has been a winner.

This year he decided to make a woven stool. He had never woven cord before, so YouTube was a useful resource. He discovered a recycled paper cord produced in a traditional factory in Denmark and available from Germany. There is approximately 110 metres of cord in the seat which is woven around special 90 degree nails on the underside of seat.

Leon's inspiration was 1950s Danish furniture. He found a similar design in his research which he tweaked to make his own - just like Sam Malouf, Hans Wagner or George Nakashima.

The timber is Australian red cedar, which he purchased from another member of WWA. The construction is all mortise and tenon, and the splay on the legs was cut 3 times. The whole thing was then rounded over with router and rasps before gluing up and applying finish Danish oil (ofcourse).





Not only did Leon win the Best Small item of Furniture category, he also won the Standard of Excellence award and medal. Leon is about to start a Maloof style rocker. He observes ... *I am way over my head, I am a bit stressed, I have cleaned the workshop, I have the timber... so here we go again!* We look forward to seeing the outcome, presumably at the Easter Show next year with another blue ribbon!

**John Evans** is also quietly-spoken and meticulous. With a background of being the Clerk of the NSW Parliament for decades, and the current parliamentary ethics adviser, being careful and measured are obvious attributes. John tells the story of his award-winning guitar...

*Although I am no guitar player I have always been intrigued in building a guitar.*

*In November 2018 I attended the Gold Coast Guitar Making School in Miami under the tutelage of Aaron Fenech of Fenech Guitars. Aaron is an extremely skilled, passionate and knowledgeable craftsman and luthier, and makes some of the finest Australian made acoustic guitars: <https://fenechguitars.com.au>.*

*The course was a two-week intensive guitar-building course. I actually managed to finish in 8 days.(Ofcourse he did!)*

*Students are guided through each stage of guitar building and nothing is pre-assembled.*

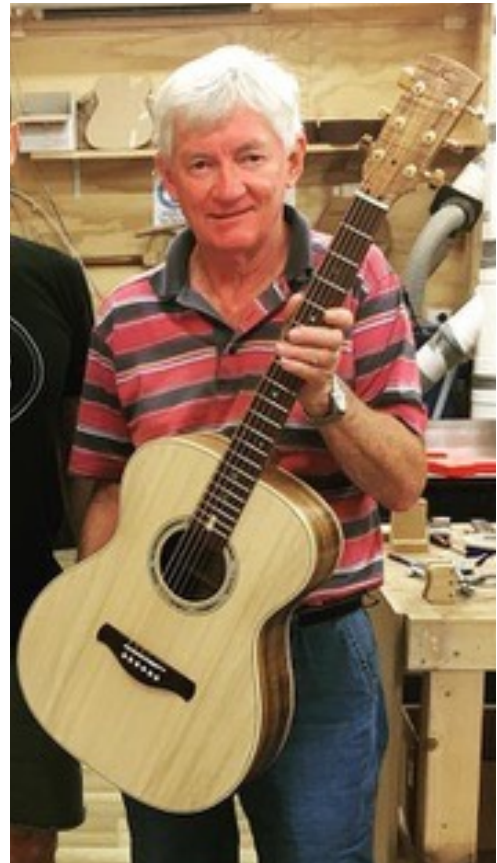
*The process of guitar making starts from selection of acoustic master grade tone woods; guitar design and bracing patterns; joining and bracing of top sound board and back; heat bending of sides; creating a custom sound hole rosette; fitting and gluing the top, back and sides; routing and fitting bindings; carving and shaping of neck to suit individual needs; routing and fitting dovetail neck joint to body; creating a custom design bridge and headstock; making and slotting of fingerboard; installing and dressing frets; final assembly of neck, fingerboard and bridge; and applying lacquer finish.*

*The precision and attention to detail in guitar making can only be appreciated when one undertakes such a task. There are no straight joints in a guitar. Little did I know that the guitar top has a curvature (radius) of 9.1 metres, the back a curvature of 4.5 metres, and the finger board a curvature of 38cm.*

*The course was thoroughly enjoyable and it was rewarding working with beautiful timbers to create and amazing sounding instrument with superb sustain – I am told it sounds better than any Maton guitar.*

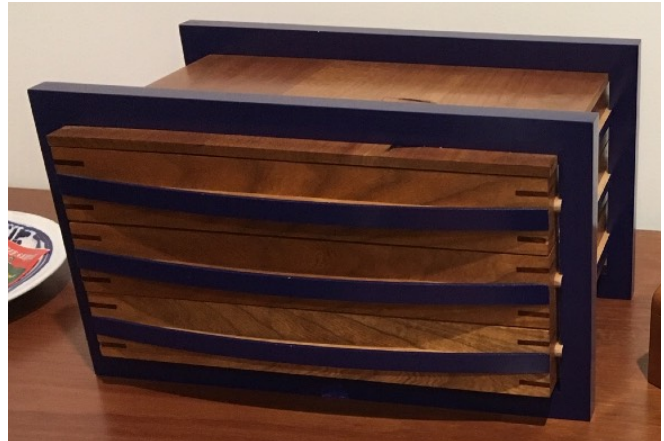
*The guitar is an OM or orchestral model size and is made from Australian timbers – the back and sides are fiddle back blackwood from the Victorian ranges, the top Silver Quandong (Qld), the neck Queensland maple, the fingerboard and bridge Gidgee, and the tailpiece and fret board inlay satin box. The internal bracing is also Silver Quandong.*

John's first effort at making a guitar was entered in the musical instruments category of the 2019 Sydney Royal East Show and was awarded first place. Pretty impressive!



**Peter Harris** also received commendation for his Boxwork entries.

Peter's three drawer chest was made for the *Create from a Crate* competition last year and is made from American Oak. It has an exo-skeleton frame which has been painted blue to provide differentiation.



Peter's roll top box has a flooded gum frame. The lid is bent ply with veneer top and bottom with hand made stringing.

A very impressive effort.



Terry Gleeson  
maker of  
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# Steels for Woodworkers -

## A simple guide to the best steels for your plane blades and chisels

**Steve Townsend**

Steel is composed of the element iron combined with carbon and other elements. The qualities of different types of steels are determined by two main factors: firstly, the level of carbon and other elements; secondly, the level of heating and cooling it undergoes.

Carbon is the first element to be mixed in with iron to make it useable. At low levels of carbon, below 0.5 per cent, you get wrought iron. At high levels, 2 – 4 per cent, you get cast iron. It's brittle but easy to pour and cast and it resists rusting better than other steels.

After carefully juggling the level of carbon to between 0.5 and 1.5 per cent you finally get some useable tool steels.

One highly regarded steel used by woodworkers is called O1. It has a carbon content of between 0.8 and 1.0 per cent. It also has around 1 per cent manganese, and small amounts of silicon and chromium. It has been in common use for decades.

A2 is a more recent steel to come on the market. Both A2 and O1 have similar amounts of carbon and silicon but A2 has less manganese and much higher levels of chromium. The high level of chromium in A2 steels improves the hardness but makes it harder to sharpen to a really fine edge.

PM-V11 is the latest development in steel for woodworkers and it's a proprietary product developed by Veritas. It's hard to find reliable figures as to its constituents and these are just the best guesses I could find. The standout is the high level of vanadium. This is a great addition for increasing the steel's hardness but it comes with a problem. Vanadium will mix easily into molten steel but as it cools the vanadium tends to crystallize out into large grains that stop you getting a fine edge.

Veritas overcame this problem by using powdered metal (that's what the PM stands for, "powdered metal"). The molten mixture is sprayed into a vacuum chamber in a fine jet which instantly turns to powder. This is then sieved to get a uniform particle size and sintered, that is, fused together. This gives a very hard metal with a fine, even grain.

**Table 1 - Composition of three woodworking steels**

	<u>Carbon</u>	<u>Manganese</u>	<u>Silicon</u>	<u>Chromium</u>	<u>Vanadium</u>	<u>Molybdenum</u>
<b>O1</b>	0.8 - 1.0	1.0 - 1.4	0.1-0.5	0.4 - 0.7	< 0.3	nil
<b>A2</b>	0.9 - 1.0	0.4 - 1.0	0.1 - 0.5	4.7 - 5.5	0.1 - 0.5	0.9 - 1.4
<b>PM-V11</b>	~ 1	?	?	?	10 ?	?

In Table 1, you can see there is a huge range of variables, and this isn't mentioning other elements like nickel, tungsten and titanium which can be added. Also I'm only talking here about steels widely used in plane and chisel blades in Australia and the US. There are many other excellent steels such as those sold by HNT Gordon and Japanese tool vendors.



## Heat treatments

Steel is made up of crystals. It starts off as crystals of iron and carbon called Perlite. They're moderately hard but, as the steel is heated up to its critical temperature, around 800 degrees Celsius, the crystals rearrange themselves into a structure called Austenite this is much softer and makes it easier to shape the metal.

If it is then cooled slowly, some of the Austenite returns to Perlite but much of it remains giving a fairly soft steel. However, if it is cooled suddenly, what we call quenching, the Austenite crystals are converted into a structure called Martensite. This is extremely hard. In fact it's often too hard and cracks can form in it. So, the trick is to cool each kind of alloy at exactly the right speed to give the optimum mix of hardness, shock absorption and grain size.

With a thick tool, like a large cold chisel, the outside is going to cool faster than the inside. This can be a benefit. The outside becomes very hard but the inside remains fairly soft and able to absorb the shocks of hammer blows without cracking.

The drawing adjacent shows how grain size affects the ability of a steel to accept a very sharp edge.

The different quenching materials and rates of cooling have been standardised by the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI), which gives us some of the familiar codes we use for our steels.

**W** is for water-quenched steels, very hard but can be tricky and crack.

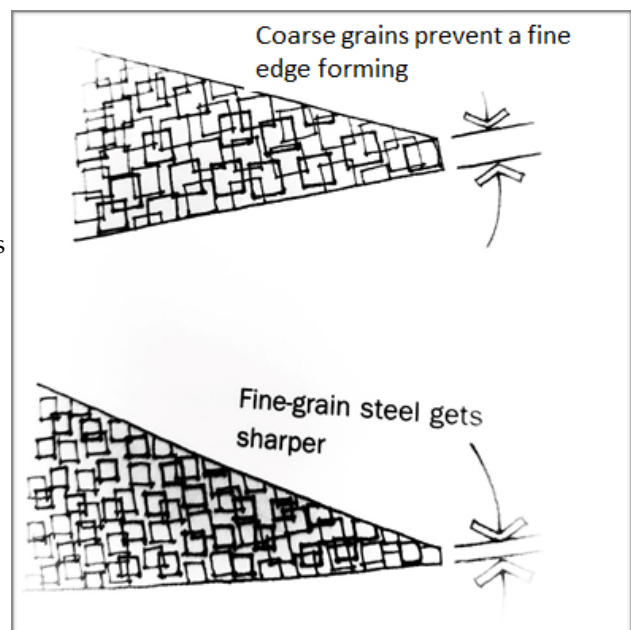
Oil quenching produces the range of **O1**, **O2** steels, etc.

Air cooling is how the popular **A2** plane blades are made. The air can be still, cold, moving fast or even heated.

Then there is a whole heap of AISI code letters that don't correspond with quenching methods: M, T, D, S, etc

The two important qualities, hardness and wear resistance, are closely associated but they aren't the same thing. Very, very hard steel can be brittle – particularly at the very edge of a blade. But if you're serious about hardness why not use tungsten carbide blades? Isn't tungsten carbide the hardest metal?

Well, apart from the fact it's very expensive it's rather brittle and it can't tolerate the fine edge angles we need for woodworking tools. Blades on tablesaws, for example have only their tips made of tungsten carbide while the rest of the saw is ordinary tool steel. The blade has to be constructed in such a way as to relieve shocks being transmitted to the tungsten carbide tips. The smallest angle they can handle safely without cracking is about 60 degrees if you made them with 25 or 30 degree angles they would break up very quickly.



## Comparisons

Table 2 (on the next page) compares the "Big 3" steels for chisels and plane blades: O1, A2 and PM-V11. These findings are from Veritas. It is the manufacturer of PM-V11 so they need to be taken with caution. But, from everything I've read from other suppliers and commentators, these figures are reasonable. The Rockwell scores come from several sources. The scores range from 0 to 10.

**O1** gets the top score for ease of sharpening and that seems to be due to its fine grain structure and the fact it's not extremely hard. It's easy to get an incredibly sharp edge ... but it's also easy to lose the edge.

	<b>O1</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>PM-V11</b>
<b>Ease of sharpening</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<b>Impact resistance</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Edge retention</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>

(Figures from Veritas)

<b>Rockwell C scale</b>	<b>57-61</b>	<b>57-62</b>	<b>62.5</b>
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**A2** is not as easy to sharpen but is a much harder steel. You won't get the sharpest possible edge but it's going to keep its edge much longer.

And then there's **PM-V11**. Not much difference in ease of sharpening to A2 but much, much harder. Once you get a good edge on it it's going to stay that way much, much longer.

So, to me it looks pretty much as a choice between O1 and PM-V11. Not that there's anything wrong with A2. I have some A2 chisels that I'm perfectly happy with and see absolutely no need to change them. In the choice between these steels, there's another factor we need to look at: price.

Price is an important consideration. How much will I have to fork out to get a superior steel? Looking at Table 3, O1 and A2 replacement plane blades are the same price. And PM-V11 is 30% higher. But that 30% increase comes out as a difference of just \$13. It seems to me if I'm buying a plane blade that's going to last me the rest of my life, I have to confess, \$13 isn't going to be an insurmountable barrier.

The table adjacent shows prices in \$US for a replacement No.6 plane blade from Veritas, not including shipping costs.

<b>O1</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>PM-V11</b>
<b>\$42.50</b>	<b>\$42.50</b>	<b>\$55.50</b>

## Conclusions

Now we can leave the science of steel behind and deal with some personal preferences. For plane blades and chisels, the choice seems pretty simple to me. If you really enjoy sharpening, if you're well set up with sharpening equipment and you're happy to strip down a plane to get a scary sharp edge, get an **O1** blade.

If you're not all that keen on sharpening, if you think it's a chore, if you're happy with a very, very sharp blade that stays that way for a good long time you can stick with an **A2** blade.

If you want to minimize the time you spend sharpening and are happy with having a very sharp but not extremely sharp tool that stays sharp for a long time, then get a **PMV-11** blade.

## Further reading

*The Perfect Edge* by Ron Hock. This is an excellent book on sharpening and steels for woodworkers. It's available from [www.hocktools.com](http://www.hocktools.com).

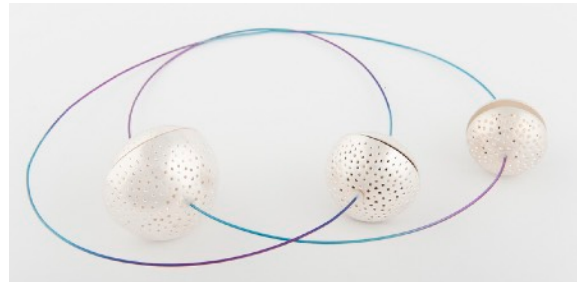
There is an helpful, very detailed article on steels for woodworkers at [http://www.fwwa.org.au/www.Art008\\_ToolSteels\\_c.pdf](http://www.fwwa.org.au/www.Art008_ToolSteels_c.pdf). This was written by Mike Wiggin of the Fine Wood Work Association of Western Australia.

## Meet Members - Carol and Stuart Faulkner

Today I would like to introduce to two of our members, Stuart and Carol Faulkner, a husband and wife team, who manage to make a living out of working with wood. They have the required credentials, talent, business sense, experience and the willingness to give it a go.

### ***Q. Carol, would you tell us a little about yourself?***

I came to Australia just after I turned 18 escaping a small country town in New Zealand for the bright lights of Australia. I didn't have any qualifications outside of wool handling/wool classing so I spent many years in the TAFE system as an adult. I've now spent quite a few years working in accounts, but in 2004 I started working part time and did a Certificate II in Design Fundamental at Lidcombe TAFE. A few years after that I decided to quit work and signed up for the three-year full-time Jewellery and Object Design course at the Design Centre, Enmore. Moving out of my comfort zone was scary and frustrating but overall I remember it as the best of times. In 2009 I achieved an Advanced Certificate and then successfully applied for the one-year scholarship that in 2010 allowed me to create a body of work that resulted in a solo exhibition. The exhibition was held at Gaffa Gallery was and called "A Matter of Scale".



Coincidentally my Head Teacher and mentor during my studies at Enmore was Catherine Harrington, the wife of Tom Harrington who Stuart studied under at The Sturt School for Wood.

For the last 6 years or so I have joined Stuart at the Sydney Timber Show on the Association stand talking about Stuart's bench "Mybench" and recently, our woodwork courses. I particularly enjoy meeting and talking with people and over the years I have met quite a number of Association members. This year I joined the Association in my own right having attended several meetings, and enjoying the presentations immensely. Even as a sideline-woodworker I find the range of topics of interest, and recently I did Fred's intro to carving course at the Association workshop.

I currently work part-time in accounts and my "love job" is looking after our own business "Heartwood Creative Woodworking". I am also Treasurer for the Studio Woodworkers Australia. You could say that I do everything for Heartwood except teach woodworking. I often tell people that I "can talk woodworking" but that's extent of it. In my spare time I am learning to carve and play the banjolele – but not at the same time! So once I move on from "C" I'll be looking for a course to make my own ukulele. It's something to aim for.

### ***Q. Stuart, how did you get started in this career that you have chosen?***

My interest in furniture design and making really started when I was working as a designer in London. That was in the late 80's. Like a lot of Poms I travelled to Australia, met a girl and stayed. I completed two years of a three-year cabinet making course at Lidcombe TAFE in 1992 but I was also busy running my own design consultancy, so things got put on hold. It wasn't until 1997 that I undertook the Certificate IV in Fine Furniture Making under Tom Harrington's instruction at the Sturt School for Wood. After Sturt I joined Splinter Workshop in Sydney.





***Q. If I recall properly Splinter group was set up in the mid 1990's by a group of ex Sturt graduates as a co-operative of independent designer/makers. Were you one of those?***

Yes, Splinter Workshop was set up by Sturt graduates Phil Boddington, Georgina Legiterwood and Julia Charles. I joined in the second year and stayed for nine years. The aim was to produce fine handmade furniture for commission, and part of the benefits of Splinter was the ability to share resources and ideas as well as the work space.



***Q. Where to from there?***

To support my making practice I started teaching part-time on the Furniture Design and Product Design courses at Lidcombe TAFE. I also developed and delivered short courses for Sturt's new short course program in 2003. I then went to full-time teaching at Lidcombe and was promoted to Head Teacher of the Design Section in 2008. It was during this period that Tom Harrington came to see me. Unfortunately, Tom had been diagnosed with mesothelioma. He asked me if I would be willing to take over the Sturt School. I did, but it wasn't until 2010. I stayed for just over two years, returning to Sydney mid-2012. It was then that I started teaching recreational woodworking

courses while developing and trialling my woodwork bench design.

***Q. Not all of our readers would know but you have developed a slightly out of the normal workbench. Can you tell us about your signature workbench?***

Yes, my workbench is called "Mybench" as in "make Mybench, your bench". The bench is still going strong and over the years it has undergone some changes. The original bench was a torsion box construction, then a lami beam construction. There has been a change in the leg design and the addition of a dead man support and I have now settled on a vice that we fit with a meaty vice jaw. The original idea was to sell kits, but at the woodworking shows most people wanted to buy the bench complete. Currently we offer a course where participants can construct and finish a workbench and fit it with a good quality vice within three days. That seems to be the best outcome and everyone that has made a bench has told me that they got a lot more than a great bench out of their experience. A number of Association members have made their woodwork benches with me.



***Q. Any plans for the future?***

I have a very long "to do list". There are a number of new courses that I have been developing that need to be trialled this year. As an accredited member of Studio Woodworkers Australia, I am making again for exhibition with a piece due for February 2020. I am also looking at taking time off next year for professional development. I continue to be passionate about sharing the knowledge and skills that I have accumulated since leaving Sturt, but I also feel there is more that I can learn from my fellow woodworkers.

*Thanks Carol and Stuart for sharing your story with us.*

**Peter Dunn**



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### ***A post script from Steve Townsend....***

## **A better grinding wheel**

Grinding a nice concave bevel on a blade makes it much quicker to do a final sharpening on a flat stone. But grinding heats the blade and can drastically reduce its hardness. In my research I came across the latest must-have sharpening system: CBN grinding wheels.

CBN stands for cubic boron nitride, a crystalline compound that is close to diamond in hardness. They offer much cooler grinding, never need to be dressed and last seemingly forever. Go to Youtube and search on "CBN grinding wheels" and you will have lots of interesting videos to watch.

## Conductor's Baton Challenge

The Sydney Male Choir was formed in 1913 in Petersham by a group of men who enjoyed singing together in harmony. It has become one of Australia's finest choirs and since 1930 it has led the singing every year at the ANZAC Day dawn service at the Cenotaph in Martin Place, Sydney.



The Choir is led by its Musical Director, Keiran Brandt-Sawdy who joined the choir in November 2016. Keiran recently formed his own opera company, The Apollo Opera Collective. Their debut performance of Handel's Ariodante played to packed houses in February 2018 and was enthusiastically received as an exciting new addition to Sydney's opera scene with a very bright future.

Keiran needed a new baton and the challenge was put to members - who could copy Keiran's existing baton? **Richard Leniston** and **John Evans** accepted the task. Their respective approaches to making the batons are fascinating and reflect their different approaches to woodwork and, one suspects, to life as well.

**John Evans's** baton was turned from a 10mm square of European sycamore. The square blank was held in a 4-jaw chuck and first turned round to 9mm between centres. Starting at the live centre, the narrowest end was turned to 3.5mm and then backwards towards the chuck in increments of about 50mm to 5.5 mm at the centre and 8.5mm at the largest end.



John did not use a steady. He preferred holding the blank with the left hand resting on the lathe and holding both the blank and chisel with the right hand. Query whether OH&S inspectors would approve of that methodology.

Both a wide gouge with a skew cutting motion and skew chisel were used. The baton was finally sanded to dimension using 150 to 1200 grit sandpaper. The square end was planed to dimension with a block plane. It matched the original dimensions precisely with the benefit of being a fraction lighter at 6grams.



**Richard Leniston** decided Keiran deserved a more elaborate baton. Although the challenge requested plain, 8mm square for 25mm, with a gentle taper down to about 3.5mm to 382mm long, Richard thought that if all the other characteristics were "as requested", the recipient may like what he'd created. As Richard says "I don't do plain". So he decided to make two batons - one with African Wenge and Silver Ash, and the other with Olive wood and Silver Ash. Here is his story...

*First was to read up on how to turn something so delicate, and knowing how wood behaves under pressure from a tail stock, especially as it gets thinner and thinner, I had found myself probably biting off more than I could chew. Yet I wasn't going to let this get the better of me.*



After discovering that a Trembleur is very similar to what I was doing (except a lot more complicated), I found that some string steadies were needed to allow for the extended support once the tail stock is removed. In essence a String steady adds support to the tail end of the mounted piece and stops it moving too far whilst attacking it with a super sharp skew chisel. So I whipped some up using the circular jig cutter on the bandsaw (kindly donated by John Kirkwood) to accurately cut the centres out.

I roughed the pieces as far as I could take down safely, then added the string steadies 1 by 1, (3 in all).

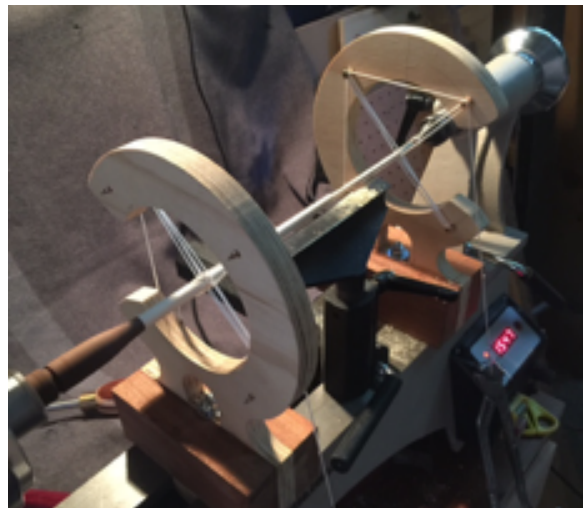
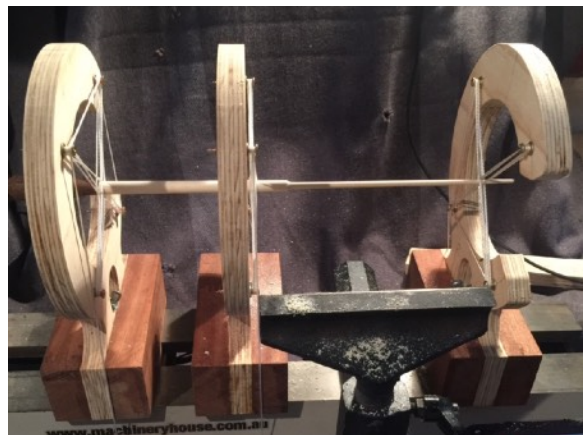
And as you can see, the string is carefully wound around the baton with just enough tension to keep supported but not too tight to restrict revolving. I used Brickies string but I should have listened to recommendations (common theme I have) and used waxed saddlery thread, or at least caked the Brickies string with wax.

I then began the slow process of shaving along the length of the baton, using the callipers to continually check the diameter. After you move along each time, you must keep going to the end as you really shouldn't go back to an area.

Slowly but surely it started to come together. The recommendation again calls for high speed turning but as the chuck I have is only rated to 2k and my aversion to anything over 3k (outside of a gear change from 2nd to 3rd), I settled on between 1500 – 1800rpm.

I could finally remove the string steadies and reveal the piece held within. After about 4 coats of Gloss Acrylic lacquer from a spray can, she came up apples.

I then, thought, nope, I can't hand this over as is, so I made a box complete with velvet lining. Timbers used – New Guinea Rosewood carcass and Jelutong lid, and splines. Happy Conducting!!



## Many thanks to...

**David Palmer** for his tireless work as Secretary of the Association, with all that that involves, and also being the Workshop Supervisor Organiser (WSO).

Our Workshop Supervisors for April/May - **Gordon Joseph, Peter Harris, Peter Dunn, Peter Munro, Brian Dawson, Phil Nanlohy, David Palmer and John Kirkwood.**

**Oliver Addis** for looking after the finances of the Association and dealing with the day to day expenses.

**Peter Hunt** for maintaining our membership database, issuing subscriptions notices and membership cards and distributing the newsletter

**Peter Harris** for making two beautiful presentation wine boxes.



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