

Les Miller award presented at the 2014 Sydney timber show

By Deputy-Chair Phil Lake

In recent years, the association has presented an annual award celebrating excellence and dedication in woodwork from high school students.

The award - made annually at the TWWS, is called the Les Miller Young Achievers Award, which the Association has been providing since 2006 in memory of Les who passed away in 2005.

Les Miller was one of the founding members of the association.

He was a fine woodworker and woodwork teacher, and a media commentator who inspired many people, particularly students, to

Continued on page 8

Next association member meeting

**7 for 7.30pm, Monday
4 August 2014**

Abbotsford workshop,
Western end of Spring Street,
Abbotsford

Guest expert speakers will talk about and demonstrate several techniques for bending and laminating wood. More details will be available shortly and sent to members by email.



Our Chair, Brian Dawson, congratulates Kai Schaefer, the 2014 winner of the association's Les Miller Young Achievers Award, for his outstanding accent lamp.



Association Chair, Brian Dawson

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If you'd like to join or assist the committee or be more involved in the association, call a committee member!

Life members

Richard Crosland, Phil Lake, Kim Larymore, Leon Sadubin, Richard Vaughan, Alan Wale

Welcome to new members
See page 9

The Chair's chatter

Your committee has been busy recently with a number of activities . . . The Sydney 2014 Timber and Working with Wood Show on 27 to 29 June was a great success. Steve Townsend worked hard at ensuring a seamless event for us. Our new stand (actually smaller than the previous one) worked so well in its user-friendly format that Stuart Faulkner and Evan Dunstone asked if they could demonstrate there.

Stuart demonstrated his bench, Evan his chair kit, and Terry Gleeson gave a demonstration on making a chair.

These demonstrations attracted crowds as did our special offer of six months membership for \$40 plus a free angle-mag. Many thanks to all who helped with the recruitment drive specially our star performers, John Kirkwood and Frank Duff. We now have 30 new members!

We had pieces on display from Peter Dunn, Alex Springall, Andrew Downie, Brian Dawson, Bendetto Parolino, Terry Gleeson, John Brassell and, of course, Hugh Jones, who also gave a talk about his research into harp making. Many thanks to all our happy helpers in "mantling" and dismantling our stand and to all of you who came along to lend a hand.

On other matters, we have formed a safety sub-committee (Peter Harris and me) to develop our safety regime. Some proformas are 90 per cent complete and will be on display shortly.

We have already reached our quota of exhibitors for the September exhibition in Lane Cove and Miko has prepared an outline of the layout, which can be seen at the rear of the workshop. This should be a great fillip for us and I ask all to come along, bring friends and tell all and sundry.

Steve and I attended a meeting at Canada Bay Council, which was held so that lessees could describe their activities and how those activities benefit the community.

A total of 14 groups had five minutes each to present their case to community representatives and council officers.

The community representatives then split into seven sub-groups, each of which was visited in turn for more one-on-one discussions. The outcome was that we were favourably received, partly because we do perform a useful community function and partly because our premises are described as "of no commercial value".

So, having no heating or plumbing helps to keep our rent very low. The fact that we do much of our own maintenance also helps. But we are looking into installing a water supply and drainage at our own cost. Quotes are currently being sought.

Finally, we welcome new member Phil Nanlohy to our committee and look forward to his contribution. Committee numbers are now at the prescribed level.

Contact the editor, Jo Healy-North at jhn@bigpond.com (or 0417 667 367) if your listing or ad is no longer current or needs amending.

2014 copy deadlines: Mon 25 August, Sun 25 October



Competition entrants, from left to right: Stewart Einfeld, Phil Lake, Peter Harris, Andrew Downie, Gary Roberts and Alan Perry

Last general meeting summary

The association's June 2 general meeting at the Abbotsford workshop was busy and well attended. *Brian Dawson reports . . .*

Stewart Einfeld, Phil Lake, Peter Dunn, Alan Perry, Gary Roberts, Andrew Downie and Brian Dawson presented the work they made for the recent competition, in which each participant was given two pieces of flattened and squared mahogany and asked to create something.

Each spoke for five minutes describing how their piece is built and the pitfalls and dramas in so doing.

It was an interesting and informative session and the committee will endeavour to have these competitions more regularly.

Thanks to Phil Lake and Peter Dunn who worked long hours to prepare the wood.

Evan Dunstone came up from Queanbeyan to present his kit chair. Evan has put a considerable amount of effort into producing and refining the design of the chair, which can be assembled and customised with minimal tools and experience.

He has contacts with various woodworking teachers in New South Wales and Queensland to help to market the chair. His ultimate aim is to have the chair kit available to schools.



From left to right: The Alpha Chair, its maker, Evan Dunstone and Alpha chair enthusiast and association member John Connors

Tom's Finishing tips

The problem: if surface imperfections are left, they become emphasised, to a larger or lesser extent, by the finish chosen. In general, the higher the gloss the more the imperfections show.

A trap for the inexperienced: over-relying on power sanders and the like to produce an acceptable raw-finished surface.

Although these methods provide a precursor to the finishing process, total reliance thereon might lead to more complications than might be thought.

In essence, while valuable in initial preparation, such tools have limitations and these must be known.

Usually, there are ripples left by the rotating cutters, or fine scratches from various machine sanding operations.

Traditionally, the final smoothing of the surface is accomplished using smoothing planes and cabi-

Renowned woodworker and long-time association member, Tom Paley, shares some thoughts on finishing. In this edition he focuses on preparation and how to apply oil finishes. In the next edition, Tom will tell us about wax finishes and French polishing.

net scrapers to remove the small imperfections left by machines. Until this is done the surface might not be truly smooth.

Method 1: Smoothing by sanding

Contemporary finishers have been encouraged to remove imperfections with abrasive papers, starting with 80 to 100 grit and continuing through progressively finer papers in increments of 30 to 50 grit.

For a super, ultimate finish, the process can be carried through to 400-600 and 1,000-1,200 grit. Very fine grits cut very slowly and tend to clog quickly so surface remediation should be accomplished before moving beyond 200 grit.

The effect of sanding – always with the grain – is to remove coarse scratches, replacing them with ever-finer ones! The surface should begin to take on a sheen at about 300 grit and this improves marginally as the process continues.

It's important to realise that this process, which has become ingrained in the methodology of finishing, is geared to the continuing use of abrasive papers to the general profit of their manufacturers.

Method 2: Diminishing the reliance on abrasive papers

It is assumed that the raw-machined surface is at the stage of sanding with 80 - 100 grit paper. If less reliance is to be placed on abrasive papers, older tool-skills must be re-learned:

(a) Planing with finely set well-sharpened planes; and

(b) Scraping with well-sharpened cabinet scrapers.

There is much written about these skills in almost any textbook on wood working. It's worth spending time learning and re-learning the techniques, as these skills can really pay-off in terms of money and time

Essentially, much depends on the ability to properly sharpen these tools as opposed to merely making an edge. It is the inability to master these techniques and overcome frustration that leads to over-reliance on abrasive papers.



A card scraper is probably the quickest and easiest means of achieving a surface ready for finishing.

Continues next page



From left to right: Tom Paley and Stewart Einfeld, showing off their very apt door-prize T-shirts !!

Tom's tips cont

Continued from page 4

Small ripples and scratches left by initial machining operations are first removed a little at a time by planing at about 45 degrees to the grain one way and completed by planing at about 45 degrees the opposite way.

Note that shavings (as such) are not produced by this process, the idea is to remove only the tops of the ripples, the board having already been made flat by the machining process. This is NOT easy.

The cabinet scraper is then used to complete the smoothing process, also at 45 degrees each way, finishing with the grain.

When the process has been completed, the outcome can be improved greatly by resharpening the scraper and repeating the final scraping with the grain.

If done well, a scraper finish will be clean and ready for applying the chosen finish. However, some

improvement can be made using a last sanding with very fine abrasive paper to burnish the surface before finishing. This re-education process should reduce:

(a) cost and reliance on abrasive papers by at least 70 per cent

(b) time taken in preparing for a finish by at least 50 per cent.

The effort expended is the same, or less! You just use different tool processes to the same end and save money. Simple!

Oil-finishing (for inside use)

An oil-finish is a simple finish to use on timber (for inside use only).

The principal advantages are it's simple and uses cheap, readily available materials. It's also repairable and robust. There are, however, some disadvantages:

* It is not entirely proof against the accumulation of dust and grime

* If more than a 30 to 40 per cent level of gloss is desired, a great deal of labour and effort are required

* If the oil is not fully polymerised and the item is used in a damp atmosphere, a fungus (sooty mould) can grow on the surface. This is unsightly, but not damaging.

Almost any vegetable oil, salad or cooking oil can be used, with varying effects.

Professionally, the choice is largely dictated by cost and, to some extent, by its colour or darkening effect on the timber.

The most-commonly used oils are tung oil and linseed oil. Both may be used cooked or raw. Cooked oil dries (polymerises) faster, which is an advantage.

It tends to build a higher gloss more easily, but doesn't last as long as raw oil.

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Tom's Finishing tips

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WARNING: Cooking raw oil is a simple process, but this is inadvisable because of the inherent danger of it catching fire.

Application

This finish, perhaps more than any other, is subject to many

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individual secret mixes and methodologies! Basically, coats of oil, applied sequentially, soak into the timber and, over time, build up a surface. (This is a finish that is never finished!)

First coat: Brush or wipe a generous amount of oil onto the surface and leave it to penetrate the timber for 15 to 30 minutes. Then wipe off the surplus before it starts to go gummy. With a fresh cloth, wipe the surface hard, removing the surface oil and generating friction heat to initiate the setting process (polymerisation).

Make sure no residue is left on the surface because that eventually will become tacky and attract dust and dirt. Put the item in a dust-free environment for about 48 hours to let the first coat dry.

Second coat: repeat the process with a thin coat of oil and leave for 10 to 15 minutes. Then, using the last grade of fine abrasive paper used in sanding, sand with the grain. This will produce a small amount of oil and sanding dust (gunk), which will become incorporated into the finish filling the pores. A little heat from sanding pressure will help build the surface finish. Wipe off the surplus oil and gunk to leave a

smooth surface FREE of oil as any residue will become gummy.

Successive coats of oil are applied at longer intervals until the surface builds up: typically 48 hours, 48 hours, 60 hours then weekly until a patina develops. Note that friction heat is important as a precursor to the polymerisation process.

Ageing: Oil finish improves with age. It is said that a fine patina is only achieved by a combination of the original maker and subsequent dusting and polishing daily for 100 years.

Speeding-up ageing: To quicken the appearance of the aged patina it has become customary to apply furniture or floor wax after the oiling process, thus imparting a soft glow. That, however, is another story.

Occupational health and safety

In a workshop environment there is a real danger of fire (spontaneous combustion) from screwed-up oily cloths and rags being left lying around. After use, EITHER spread out used cloths to dry, or leave used rags and cloths in a bucket of water.

In part 2, in the next edition, Tom deals with wax finishes and French polishing.



An oil finish is simple, cheap, robust and repairable.

Creations in Wood

Members Exhibition September 2014

Lane Cove Gallery

Tuesday 2 to Saturday 13 September 2014

Any questions or if you want more information, contact:

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The committee has decided to add a long-overdue gallery section to the association's website. We want to showcase the amazing accomplishments of our members. Send photos of your best pieces with information about the materials, tools and techniques used in making the piece. Particular problems that had to be overcome are always of interest.

Use top quality photos with good lighting and a plain background to best show your work. Digital photos should be emailed to **Steve Townsend at steve@ibis4.com**

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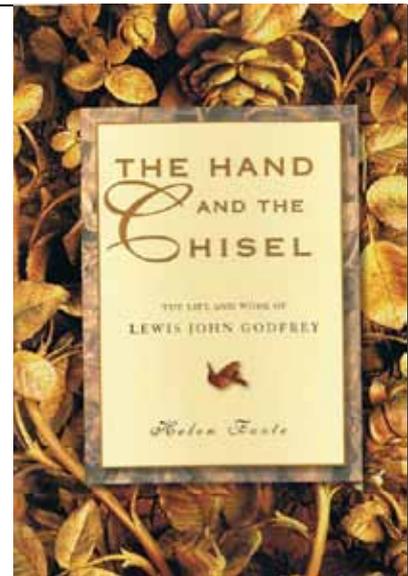
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Les Miller award presented

Continued from page 1

develop and extend their woodwork skills.

As fellow exhibitors, the Institute of Industrial Arts Technology in Education (a body of professional teachers) shows and promotes student work.

The projects are submitted as a major unit for the previous year's Higher School Certificate.

This year, Alex Springall, Peter Harris and I agreed to select a winner from the student projects on display at the IIATE stand at the show.

Our overall collective opinion is that the standard and complexity of projects was of a very high order and we applaud all of the work on display.

Industrial arts is much broader subject than just woodwork. In fact, there were two projects on display that were entirely unre-

lated to woodwork: an IT project in robotics and a restoration and upgrade of a motorbike.

Another project was devoted to a model of an early lift pump from the steam era with the working model in wood.

It is unfortunate that we had to be selective and choose just one of these excellent creations.

As a major unit of the HSC the subject is very challenging. The folio the students present with their project is a significant component of the mark they receive.

The folio covers ideas, research and perhaps historical factors of design, materials and procedures for the build and documentation of their build process.

These projects represent a huge commitment in time on top of the students' other subjects.

Unfortunately, we didn't have the time to look at the folios, we

just concentrated on the displayed projects.

Ultimately, we awarded the Les Miller Young Achievers Award and the \$500 prize that goes with it to Kai Schaefer, a student at Killarney Heights High School for his accent standard lamp.

In arriving at the decision for the award we ranked three pieces very highly: they were all very well resolved, showed considered attention to detail and were appropriately finished. But our final decision rested with Kai's unique accent lamp.

On Sunday afternoon, association chairperson Brian Dawson presented our prize to Kai as part of an awards presentation by the institute.

There are some personal observations I wish to express as a salute to the dedicated teachers.

Ends next page

New members

A record number of new members have joined the association since the last edition.

The Sydney Working with Wood and Timber Show proved to be fertile ground: a \$40 membership and a free angle mag for those who joined at the show was very effective. The list on the

right includes all members since the last edition, all of whom are most welcome. We look forward to seeing our new members at members' meetings and the Abbotsford workshop.

Please feel free to contact committee members if you have any questions.

Les Miller award

Mark Tyler, department head at Pennant Hills High, is one of the principal organizers in assembling the institute's display for the show.

In the course of our conversation I mentioned that my youngest is a teacher in industrial arts.

As part of his commitment to his year 12 students, he steps them through year 11 and 12, with year 12 studies beginning in the third term of year 11.

The practical HSC project is impossible to address in the time slots allotted during the normal day-to-day teaching week.

Students and teacher can only address it by working extra hours.

My son opts to use a swag of the school holidays to provide his students with continuous and lengthy sessions to complete their dream project.

This commitment to follow-through is typical of teachers that elect to take their students through their final year.

The manner of allocating extra dedicated time to work face to face varies, but the end result is much the same.

Remember that the teachers are salaried, receiving no financial gain for extra-curricular work.

On the Saturday I engaged in conversation with a couple of young guys who were perusing our exhibits from the Create from a Crate competition.

Interestingly, one of them was student exhibitor on the IIATE stand from Albury.

His piece was a hall table, which we talked about. He explained the legs are a torsion box construction.

I have the feeling his teacher was well versed in problem-solving design detail. The young fellow made it abundantly clear his teacher was a huge influence in bringing his ideas together.

It's a joy to see, feel and be confident about the engagement of human existence.

Peter Bachmann

Jon Bayley

Malcolm Currey

Hermen Diaz

Lawrence Eames

Peter Evans

David Grayson

Ravi Gunaratne

Anna Hearne

Diane Hines

Ralph Holmes

Greg Inglis

David Irvine

Timothy Jackson

John Jones

Stephen Jones

Frank Kelleher

Mohamed Khadra

Cliff King

Chris Lockhart-Smith

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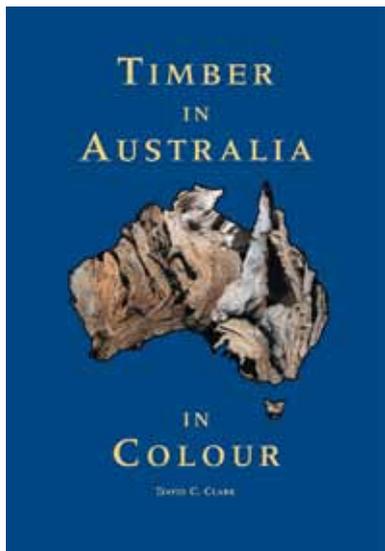
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Extending a timber database

The NSW Forestry Corporation Martin Grealy has supplied the association with very useful spreadsheet lists of 43 NSW timber species and who sells them.

One list is sorted by species name, the other sorted by company name. There are 43 species listed among 19 vendors. The spreadsheets provide common names, scientific names, and the merchants' region, name, phone number and email address. The production levels in cubic metres

are also given for each species and each vendor. The Excel file has been emailed to all members and, for those not familiar with Excel, we have also sent a version as a PDF file.

Extending the database

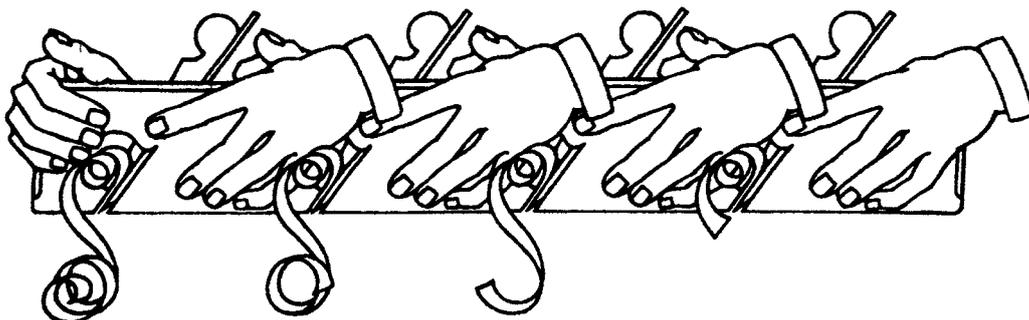
This NSW Forestry Corp list is very useful but it would be great if we can build on it so it includes all timber species available in NSW – not just the ones grown here. In fact, we don't even need to limit ourselves to NSW vendors.

Many species of timber are available only in other states. So, let's build a more extensive database. Please send in details of other merchants you buy timber from.

Send in contact details, where they are, what sort of timbers they sell, whether they cut to size, website, etc. We will restructure the Forestry Corporation database and add new ones to it building a valuable resource for our members. Send database info to Steve Townsend at steve@ibis4.com

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Member notices and adverts



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Instead of every second Wednesday, our Abbotsford workshop will now be open from around 10.00am on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month.

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