

NGOW APRIL 30TH 2019 MEETING DIARY

The annual general meeting (AGM) formalities having been concluded our normal monthly meeting began at 7:16 p.m. For a list of apologies and those members who were present please refer to the minutes of the AGM. Andrew Harley was welcomed as a new member.

Paul Trolove distributed a number to each of us and then used a random number generator on his phone to ensure equal opportunity audience participation as he presented his thoughts on correcting flaws in wood and some of the mistakes we all make. He emphasised that he was considering only a few of the most common disasters.

WOOD FLAWS: Knots are the usual issue and tend to be in the most awkward positions possible. A tight knot can often be secured with cyanoacrylate glue, blended and coloured with dust from the timber in use. Sodium bicarbonate (baking soda), which is readily available and safe to use, can help by allowing the glue to spread evenly through the slurry and allow the glue to stick where you want it to. (Baking soda can also be used to change the colour of wood. It sets up a chemical reaction with the tannins in the timber so be careful, it has different effects on different species. See this Wood Whisperer video - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYH083c8dEw> for further comments on baking soda.) Magazine articles and videos, particularly from the United States, often mention an accelerant for use with cyanoacrylate glue but it's not easily available here. Tony Clark thought one of the owners of Waimea Warrants, the WOF station at 55 McGlashen Avenue in Richmond, had taken over the stock of the toy shop which used to be in Queen Street and might be a convenient local source of glue and accelerant. Paul Gutch commented that accelerant was also available on line.

Looser knots need greater care, patience and time. For the best results Paul suggests finding a suitably colour-and-grain matched piece to act as the patch and trimming it to an irregular shape. Trace round the patch and cut out the knot and some surrounding timber in this irregular shape to a depth of about 5mm. Fine gouges can be a help with this but it takes time and care. A quicker approach is drilling out with a Forstner bit and plugging but this will result in a more obvious repair. Paul's variation on this is to turn very small oak branches, little more than big twigs, to the same diameters as a range of Forstner bits. Then by drilling overlapping holes the repair can be made to look less of a blemish and more of a good-looking talking point. The most important thing is to always use the same wood and align the grain correctly; or as nearly so as is possible. David Haig emphasised the importance of matching the growth rings in achieving a near invisible repair. Paul went on to remind us never to throw away offcuts until the whole project had been completed – not only is matching of grain important when overcoming defects in the timber it's essential when correcting a mistake. He favours, in some situations, using liquid hide glue since it blends well with timber and interferes less with finishes than PVA-based glues.

MISTAKES: Dents. Fold a clean cotton cloth over at least four times, soak it well with water and lay it over the dent. Iron it carefully with a very hot iron to generate large amounts of steam. This will correct most small dents and often results in a slight elevation of the wood fibres. Don't be tempted to sand this bulge back; be patient and wait since it will return to the correct level as it dries out. No iron available? Try a soldering iron or hot air gun as your source of heat. Another alarming sounding

but successful method is to pour methylated spirits into the hollow area and light it. Be careful not to singe the normal surrounding wood!

Scratches. Fine scratches in French polish, and many other finishes - particularly with a dark wood such as mahogany- can be made invisible by rubbing them with the kernel of a walnut.

Damaged edging. Rather than starting again it's often possible to graft in a new oversize segment and run it through the table saw and over the router table to recreate its correct profile.

Misplaced mortises. If the error is small plug the hole and start again with the correct measurements as the mistake will be hidden by the joint. If the displacement is major then care must be taken to match the grain and growth ring patterns of any plug. Paul described Michael Fortune's technique of enlarging the defective mortise into a canoe-shaped hole and then filling that as a more easily disguised repair. Again the wood colour and grain matching are critical.

Thin tenons. Add a thin veneer to both sides of the tenon. Alternatively cut off the tenon, plug the mortise and use a biscuit or Domino as a floating tenon.

Drawers. If you create the groove for a drawer bottom on the wrong face of the drawer side you could fill the groove with a fillet and make a new groove on the inside face of the drawer side. It may, however, be simpler to cut off the bottom of the drawer side along the line of the groove, glue on a new full-thickness piece and then redo the groove; hopefully in the correct place.

If you find you have a gap at the top or bottom of a drawer front make it larger, if necessary, and glue on a new piece of timber. Then add a scratch-stock decorative line to hide the glue line – possibly putting lines at both top and bottom or round all four edges of the drawer front.

Dovetails. If you've cut on the wrong side of the line and finished with a gap on one dovetail make it slightly larger by sawing down it at an angle and then inserting a fillet. Take time to find a well-matched piece of the same timber and the repair should be very hard to spot once refinished. In making a wedge for this sort of repair fashion a large piece of wood to a roughly triangular shape so that you have something to hold onto as you pare it to a point at the other end.

Faulty mitred beading on a frame. If your mitred corner is not quite perfect plane the inside of the two affected pieces of beading to help bring them together. If the gap is large then you've got no option but to start again.

AVOIDING MISTAKES: If you're not making mistakes then you're probably not in your workshop. Console yourself that even the experts make mistakes but it takes a true master craftsman to recover from them. And try not to make the same mistake twice. These suggestions may help you avoid disasters:

- Sensible design and careful thought beforehand are both helpful. If it's a complex construction make a full-sized drawing first and follow it carefully.
- Measure carefully.
- Keep your tools razor sharp.

- Cut the longest piece first. If you make a mistake it may still be useful as a shorter piece later in the construction.
- Have a reliable numbering or marking system which clearly identifies the identity and orientation of each piece.
- Focus. Don't work when tired and never do anything in a hurry. You'll regret it.

Paul's presentation was followed by supper and then Show and Tell.

Chris Feltham produced the Founders' book of the month, a text on Fretwork and Marquetry published in 1895. Leather bound and still in excellent condition after 124 years it was purchased by Bryan Swadel.

David Haig showed us a jewellery box which he's been commissioned to make and modestly commented, "... there's quite a lot to this box." He explained the complex design of the convex koa top and emphasised the importance of a mock up in achieving the curvature he wanted. We admired the rosewood sides, ebony inserts, sycamore internal divisions in the drawer and the



leather base but, having just had its first coating of oil, the top was reluctant to open and, with David equally reluctant to force it, we weren't able to inspect the internal divisions. David explained how he had sawn, glued and re-sawn the front to achieve an almost invisible junction between the drawer front and its surrounding timber so that only the drawer pull indicates anything to open.

The contrast between the drawer front and its sides was particularly striking and highlighted David's immaculate dovetailing. The internal compartments are cloth lined; an exercise in precise measurement and careful cutting. So far this project has

taken David a month; the top alone took a week. I suspect this will be a unique piece!



Paul Gutch then told us of his progress on his ring/coin cases. He had shown us a prototype



previously but has now developed an almost production line efficiency with improved jigs. He had one set back to report. He needed 5mm drill bits for insertion of the barrel hinges and bought some new from Mitre 10 in a Bosch set of drills. He duly drilled 20-something holes only to discover that the hinges were loose because of a subtle bend in the bit. This caused it to wobble, producing a hole slightly more than 5mm in diameter. He complained to Mitre 10 who joined him in testing another bit from a Bosch set. This was only slightly better but a singly packaged 5mm bit did prove to be accurate. Moral; drill one hole first and check it before doing the others!



Finally, **Tony Clark** showed us his improved mitre-key cutting jig with a sacrificial insert; a standard ninety-degree V-shape with a 3mm plywood false side creating a slot to lock a replaceable piece of plywood inside the end of the jig.

He's also, as a result of having new neighbours, been trying to cut down the noise from his dust extractor. Testing with decibel and airflow meters has revealed a significant problem which will require some sort of noise deadening structure round the extractor. He's done significant research and, should anybody else have issues or want to borrow his meters please contact him directly.

The meeting concluded at 9:15. Our next monthly meeting will be on Tuesday, May 28th.