

SOUTHERN FELLOWSHIP OF WOODWORKERS

Newsletter

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www.sfwoodworkers.co.uk

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Chairman's Thoughts

At the meeting in March I had the very pleasurable task of presenting Clive Clarke with a fountain pen, which was given to him as a small token of our appreciation of the 10 years that Clive served on your committee. For much of that time Clive was Treasurer and Membership Secretary. On the front cover of this Newsletter there is a photograph recording the event.

Last month I said that we hoped for a "News" article in the Furniture and Cabinetmaking magazine. We had a letter published with a photograph of Martin Cheung's collection of Lie Neilson planes and that has yielded two new members to the Fellowship and I would like to welcome Andy Spence and Steve Isherwood. We are still hoping for a feature on the Fellowship but that will not appear until a Winter issue as Andrea Hargreaves is not visiting the group until my workshop visit on September 19th, where she hopes to meet as many of you as possible.

I have confirmed with Classic Hand Tools that we shall have a stand at their show at West Dean College on the 6th and 7th June. Many thanks to Martin Cheung who will man the stand on the 6th – so please come to the event and lend Martin a hand. Roger and I will be there on 7th. If there are any volunteers to help man the stand on either day then your help would be much appreciated.

I visited the 21st Century Furniture – The Arts and Craft Legacy exhibition at the Millinery Works in London this week and can honestly say it was excellent with many excellent pieces on display – lots of food for thought on possible ideas and how far I am away from such excellence. I have to say though fellow members that three of our older members (no names but I think two were past Chairmen), who invited me to accompany them, have led me into bad ways. I naively thought that at such august events one did not touch the furniture. In fact I realise that that is not the style at all. What you are supposed to do is take the drawers out, turn the smaller pieces upside down and inspect them most closely. Sit on all the chairs and give them a good rocking. Anyway, we had a good time and the owners of the Gallery were most accommodating. I took many photographs and will circulate to members in an email. We also purchased a CD for PCs, which gives more details, for the members' library – do try and borrow it if you did not have a chance to attend.

I have 6 bookings for John Cain's workshop visit on 23rd May so there are only 4 places left – don't leave it too late.

Colin Waters

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Deadline for next Newsletter is 10th July, 2009.

Email to:- sfwoodworkers@btinternet.com

Are you going to the International Woodworking Exhibition in February. If so how about sending in a report on it.

Subscriptions

At the 2008 AGM the decision was taken to keep subscriptions at the current cost of £10.00. A level at which it has been for a few years now. Since the Fellowship does not wish to build up a large reserve of funds it was felt acceptable to retain this cost of subscription provided numbers attending meetings covered the cost of speakers, etc.

However, it does take a lot of effort each year to collect in subscriptions. We are well into the 2009 year and I've only just finished receiving subscriptions from existing members. One way to overcome this is to use direct debit. **The committee would like feedback on the view to setting up direct debits to collect subscriptions. The direct debits would be taken in January rather than requesting them at the AGM in November. Feedback to the Secretary please.**

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NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome Steve Isherwood of Camberley and Andy Spence of Farnborough.

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Members' Welfare

Several members are now deciding that driving to evening meetings is too much for them. If you live near other members or pass close by on route to Mytchett please offer to collect them so they still have the opportunity to attend the Fellowship meetings. Many thanks to Neil Hiscox for giving a lift to Dennis Lambert and to Martin Cheung for giving lifts to Roy Clemson.

Bill Griffiths also finds it difficult to drive more than a few miles and doesn't like driving in the dark. Although he remains a member of the Fellowship he will not be able to attend unless given a lift.

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FOR SALE AND WANTS:

If you want to sell any woodworking items or are looking for one the this is the place to advertise. Adds are Free so take advantage of it. I promise not to bag all the best bargains before they go to print.

FOR SALE:

Email from a member

The following email is a very emotive view of one of our most valued members. The Chairman has agreed to its publication in the hope it will stir other members into expressing their views on how they would like the Fellowship to be run.

“Dear Colin,

The recent feature of SFW in F&C magazine urges me on again to confront the question of our depleted membership, our survival and what our aim should be to achieve an appropriate mix of events which inspire better attendances and Renewals.

Should you not take a look at the Survey that David Allaway conducted when Chairman? Are there some missed clues there? Were questions asked the wrong way?

I am well in the knowledge that there is tension in the club as to what we should principally meet for. One argument is that we are a very dedicated fine woodworking association connected to the highest levels of cabinetry work & design and that this assumes high-end skills. So if we are pursuing talks on methods, then these would focus quite narrowly on something esoteric which we had just chanced upon. It is doubtful that this assumption is well founded.

The visits of Messrs Burt, Ingham & Ripley come to mind here.

The other approach/belief seems to hold that we should have a number of speakers on disparate subjects loosely connected to cabinetry, believing this to be the best way to maintain Club loyalty.

Undeniably our numbers are falling. Our most able makers have dwindled to about 5 now. The argument about Meetings with high-end pro-makers seems to be that although they greatly distinguish the “Club”, they are costly, attendees are no greater and the sole benefit is a portfolio slide show. Another argument is that in order to learn design you need to attend College for 3 years so to develop, constrain and channel ones ability. Then flair can be given free reign.

Design skills cannot be learnt in the course of a 2 hour lecture and slide show. All I have learnt on these occasions is to select & reject items for admiration

The argument about the other type of Meetings is that they can be unfocused and are suspect to the charge that they are merely there to satisfy the convention that we meet monthly. Sometimes they do connect, almost by accident, with a real need.

If you think about it, there is a real oddity about the “Club”. Everyone else demonstrates and trains ---and thereby thrives & grows. E.g. the Surrey Woodturners and at exhibitions where we buy machines you can often get a useful introduction and short lecture to , say, a planer you have just got yourself .

Yet in the Club we sometimes seem to be just an exhibition facility. Projects come to Mytchett all perfect and polished. Photos are admired. How does a fresh Member get to that level? The project Maker will often skate over a joint process briefly; whereas I often estimate considerable time, not to mention remaking, has had to be brought to bear. I yearn for more time to be spent explaining how parts were made. What tools? What jigs? I do remember the keen interest shown to David Barron when he uncovered some of his latest ideas for polishing and finishes; also his wood planes and Domino joints. Similarly there was the rapt attention to John Cain’s splendid coopered cabinet doors and Bill Clayden’s ditto chest lid

Apart from the above advanced stuff, it is as if the Club should not be tainting itself with this artisan stuff like successful cutting of a bridle joint. There are definite recommended procedures and pitfalls in cabinetry joints and somehow we always avoid talking about them.

For example, whilst on the Committee, several times I pressed the idea of having a series of evenings over the years devoted to taking apart the making of a specific classic cabinet/joinery joint. There could be a lead speaker to get the item going. There would soon be contributions

from the floor and of course tales of disaster with an expensive work piece! Why was there no enthusiasm on the Committee?

Reluctantly they gave way, as to me talking about Tenons. Disingenuously, they squashed my talk between yours on your Workshop and David on his Festool Domino. I got 20 minutes and was cut off in mid sentence having had my talk belittled in introduction as “----Stuart is going show you some tenons on a jig he has made.” So I maintain the Committee had not bothered to listen that what I was trying to propose, i.e. that this should be the trial run for a Series. No time was allocated, no sincere interest was there and, in my view, we drift from one grey meeting to another, possibly as a direct consequence.

So I am breaking ranks and puncturing this almost unspoken convention that we expect Members to bring along fine cabinetry but will offer no guidance of any meaningful sort to the many, probably shy Members, who are struggling to improve the basic building blocks of what we all try to do, from books magazines & DVDs.. I do believe we have, since our beginning 17 years ago, never devoted any specific time to the classic cabinetry joints. Stripped down, this is the central thing we do, so you could uncharitably call it a major mistake. At the moment, we could be accused; all of us, of just driving round the Home Counties admiring things. So be it. If this is what the Committee directs, it will have to be. However, the figures show we are on a slow decline which will become a crisis if we lose 15 more Members. The figures also point to the greatest interest being generated when Members show and explain their own manufactures. I maintain this connects directly to what I am saying. In my profession I tried to stand a decent arms length away from Management Consultants. Usually, they were refugees from my calling who were trying to come back and tell us about our own industry in which I had sometimes formerly actually trained them --and this with our own data! So, I suggest, if we examine more carefully what has provided rattling good Meetings in the past and also glaringly missing items which magazines see as their “staple content”, we might begin to crack the vital question of maintaining “Club” interest at a really good level.

Can I also suggest that the Committee could approach the design of the Meeting Programme like the Editor of a Woodworking magazine who is assembling ideas for several future copies of his publication? He will know from his Postbag what his readers want and so it will look like this even though these subjects may have been covered 3 or 4 years before by another expert :-

Simple Furniture projects:

Advanced-----do-----

Sharpening-----Planes, Chisels, Scrapers, Planer knives, Kit Etc., etc.

Dovetails, Dovetail kit & jigs, Joints, joints, & joints plus jigs therefore

Member’s recent purchases plus their opinions thereof

Quick projects and larger projects.

Members wheezes and jigs.

Workshop heating

Handling 2440 by 1220 sheets.

I confess that I was so annoyed about the way the subject of joints was treated let alone my talk which I had spent a lot of time preparing, that I was relieved when family ill health forced me to resign from the Committee, so I would be most reluctant to be the one to try again to start a Series if you all took it on.

I suppose this is a rather serious e-mail. Forgive me if you feel I have rather pinned you against the wall so to speak. It is not at all personal to you. It is just that some of the Members have, I know, given up on the “Club” because it is not interesting. This is not my way really and I do

believe the “Club” could prosper from its present resources.

Kind regards

Stuart Austin

I am grateful to Stuart for copying his letter to me, I read it with great interest and much sympathy for the view he put forward. We were both on the committee some years ago when we discussed the forward programme I shared his view that we should vary the diet more and include topics to help the less highly skilled progress in the craft of woodworking - a first step to cabinet making.

An objection was that, while a woodturner can demonstrate and produce something to, at least, a nearly finished condition, in an evening making a piece of furniture cannot be done in so short a time! True, but to make that piece of furniture the woodworker would use several joint making processes, adhesives, polishes, fittings (hinges and catches perhaps) which would need careful work to install them correctly. Any one of these could provide a topic for an evening (remember David Barron on polishes?) and some could be the subject of a demonstration. Such demonstrations could perhaps be provided by the more skilful of our number, reducing the cost substantially. Stuart has suggested a list of other worthy topics - I have always found his talks on jigs and wheezes (his word) instructive.

I suspect that a number of members - and I would include myself - do not have highly honed skills, perhaps have never had any tuition beyond the school carpentry shop, but do enjoy working with wood. Perhaps they want to progress beyond the softwood, DIY stage and would like to learn; maybe they joined the Fellowship in the hope that this would give them an opening to do so. I joined some years ago to hear Ronnie Rustin talk about his company's products, quite educational.

At the other end of the scale are the highly skilled cabinet maker members who do it for the love of it, but also for the challenge. I feel sure that they would be happy to impart their knowledge to the rest of us.

The programme needs somehow to satisfy the spectrum of member interests. I have felt for a long time that evenings devoted to designer makers showing a series of photographs of their work are not what I am looking for; indeed I feel that they tend to be ego trips for the speakers and become rather tedious. They are also expensive. Could we not reduce the number of such talks to one, or at most two in the winter series?

Members' Evenings are generally popular; but I know that it is not easy to persuade people to speak. Personally I have found the members' talks where they not only show us the finished product in all its glory but also tell us how they did it interesting and inspiring. I know that I shall never attain their level of skill but it is very encouraging to be given an insight into the thought process that goes into the design and the practical aspect of making. I remember the evening when Bill Clayden told us how he set about making his chest, the materials he used (some of which I had never heard of) and how he achieved the final very complex shape of the lid. John Cain's presentation was equally worthwhile.

On another occasion Peter Guyett showed a chair he had made (I think it was at a SAW Open

Day). This had a chequer work back that curved and tapered and I could not imagine how the many joints had been designed let alone measured and cut so precisely. While we can admire the finished article, how much more we could learn at the feet of the masters!

I would welcome advice on the selection, use and sharpening of hand tools - it is easy to buy in an enthusiastic moment and repent at leisure! The purchase of power and machine tools can be even more fraught. Depending on the size of the workshop and the prospective projects (to say nothing about the depth of one's purse) buying the right machine would be a lot less risky if one were better informed and did not have to depend on the catalogue or the salesman. We all acquire tools and sometimes regret our purchase or, happily, may be delighted. Members might like to hear about that.

There is a fund of knowledge within the membership, if only it could be tapped and members persuaded to speak about, and perhaps, show their work being frank about their successes and failures I suggest that the value and the interest of meetings could be enhanced - and the cost reduced! I suspect that many, having seen the exceptional quality produced and shown by our leading members (and really these are the only projects that are displayed), are shy about putting up their simpler and less perfect work for fear of being judged unworthy.

I seem to have gone on a bit but I have felt for some time that the Fellowship has become somewhat elitist while the interests of humble woodworkers' - who, I suspect, comprise quite a large proportion of the membership - are not covered. Stuart suggested blowing the dust off David Allaway's survey; a good idea which I think Roger Hardwick took up a little while ago. This might show whether others share my views.

If you have read this far, thank you. I hope you have not found my thoughts too radical.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Pattinson

Note that Stuart's email refers to the questionnaire survey conducted during David Allaway's time as Chairman. You will remember that I sent out a new questionnaire in November 2008 and as I stated at the March meeting only 15 members have sent in returns. The committee does indeed want to run the Fellowship in a manner that the membership would want us to; but we are somewhat handicapped if we do not get feedback and support from the membership. Roger Hardwick—Secretary and Newsletter editor.

Bits & Pieces

*Raymond Hastings is a self-employed penny-pinching cheapskate who avoids paying anything for anything which sometimes results in many hours spent restoring "bargain" tools...
Raymond Hastings is of course not his real name, this is just a nom de plume to prevent the Institute of Carpenters raising a fatwah against him.*

The UK quality guru John Oakland says that quality is broken down into quality of design and quality of conformance. Quality of design is mainly of interest to those who manufacture planes not restorers, but quality of conformance is very important to plane restorers. Quality of

conformance issues arise when the resulting plane does not live up to (or conform) to the intended design due to errors and a lack of finishing in the manufacturing process. When I opened the packaging on a Record 5 ½ that I had bought on ebay I noticed that it had not been used much. On close inspection, no ordinary mortal could have had a satisfactory result with this plane as the frog was so badly shaped due to casting errors and very rough edges. The Record number 4 that I am currently restoring has also seen very little use, but the sole has some coarse grinding marks – most likely due to the manufacturing machines not being checked or adjusted and their inaccuracy simply being passed on to the products they were making.

On a Record number 73 shoulder plane, the sole of the adjustable mouth was out of square and on close examination this was due to a casting error (ie lump) preventing the adjustable mouth sliding smoothly. This was corrected with some careful sanding with 400 grit wet & dry paper on float glass. Still on the no 73, I was having problems getting the blade exactly square to the sole, which is fundamental to the correct working of the plane. My first attempt was to place the edge of the spade-shaped blade on the guide of the Veritas Mark 2 jig, but this was not successful because that edge was not made exactly square to the remainder of the blade. The solution was to put a small steel rule between the main part of the blade shank and the guide on the jig. I used a 25 degree angle which gave me more contact length between the blade and the jig and this produced a dead-on square result.

Tuning to squares, I find that the larger traditional squares are very useful but they are not always square. With apologies to those who already know this, a simple test is to place the square on a completely straight edge (I use a scrap of furniture board) and use a scalpel to make a mark. You then turn over the square, put the scalpel into the line and bring the square up to the scalpel before creating a second line. The two lines should be coincident and any deviation indicates out of square (by double the amount). I have tuned squares back into square by rubbing them carefully over grit paper on float glass. I use 400 grit and keep the square very flat on the surface with slight pressure on the high side. I re-test for squareness every 100 strokes. This is not a very fast process but you can restore a square and return it to being a useful tool.

RUTLANDS CATALOGUE WINTER 2008/09

Have a look at these in your catalogue. Here is my personal stroll thro' it.

P33 Milecraft 360o Drill Attachment £30-I have this.

An extraordinary item for really awkward angles. Not too pricey. Or you could buy their 90o Drive Attachment also on p33 @£19_which takes hex drive things. Looks very compact.

P42 Dakota Butt Chisels Items 2--7

Don't be tempted by these very attractive little chisels. The coarse sides to the bevels do not taper nicely, so much grinding will be necessary if they are intended by you for cleaning up dovetail sockets. There are now specific dovetail chisels on the market, triangular in section across the blade but you can easily pay £30 for only one. Ten years ago I bought 12 Japanese butt chisels from Tilgear for £90. Although modestly bevelled, the edges of the bevels are also typically very coarse. The other day I gathered up my courage and 5 of these chisels and took

them to an expensive (£36) new Norton blue grindstone I got from Classic Handtools' event at West Dean. With no practised skill but 100% care, I radically changed the cross section so that the blades are triangular and the bevel edges are elegantly fine
As you know, the bulk of these blades is quite soft iron for hammer blow absorption . So it is no surprise that the process is not a lengthy one even if you work as slowly as I did.
I do urge you to try if you have Jap chisels. If you only have White or Donaldson type rose grinding wheels you should be OK. Don't rush Swap the chisels around to allow cooling.
Don't dunk in water Ashley Isles advise. That is a mistake. You can see Norton wheels on p16.
I do have some of those fine Lie-Nielsen chisels but even Rob Cosman has had to modify his for the job

P50 Dakota & Kreg Pocket Hole Jigs and Dowel Jigs generally

I have been rather snobby about these until now. Fine Woodworking has just done tenon joint comparative tests and dowel joints came out, not the top, but very well all the same. Kevin Ley always fixes face frames this way and our own David Barron uses dowels although he has one of those super Joint-Genie Jigs rather than the different Kreg system.

P57 Dakota Parallel Jaw Clamps 50"--£30 or 4 for £80 on special offer on-line I have 4

As you all probably know this is the new style of F Clamp pioneered by Bessey where both jaws remain parallel rather than one of them having a swivelling pad, as of yore . I would say nearly all I want to clamp have parallel surfaces. I have 4 of them and I reckon the mechanism replicates Bessey's at little more than half the price.

P65 Veritas Hold-Down Clamp £54 I have one.

I bought one of these years ago for £ 40. Many of you will have one. Its only problem is the main vertical steel post which goes into your bench dog-hole is 260mm long meaning you often need considerable clearance under the bench-top to use it successfully. May I suggest you look in APTC p356 March 2009 Edition at the "Axminster Hold-Down "--about £10.--I have two in constant use. Very simple and flexible in use all over your bench. It is a "Pony" design made originally in the USA by Jorgensen. I also find them extremely useful holding work pieces firmly on jigs .Also in APTC on the same page for a miserly £17 is Axminsters version of the famous original Record Ridgeway Hold Down which was at least £40 before it was withdrawn over 10 years ago ---however same problem with the long vertical post as the Veritas version .

P66 Dakota Clamp Grip Guides £25 (50") I have 2

I use these together with the UHMW carriage plates (Items 3&4) featured on the same page. The plates hook onto the guide slots in the guides and you mount a router or a circular saw onto the carriage plate. This has completely stopped me being able to make machining errors. I have just also bought the "Wide Jaws "--(same page, Item 7. £5 pair). This has had the excellent effect of turning these Clamp Guides into more than passable 50" clamps.

P75 Shark Saws (Takagi Co. Ltd) various prices. I have 2

I confess to owning 3 rather posh traditional \British saws, but I keep on reaching for these Jap saws even tho' the Shark ones are at the lower end of the Japanese offerings. Mine were from a special offer by Tilgear @ £10 ea. David Barron uses a Sun Child Dozuki tenon saw (£26) from Craftsmans Choice in Ashford,Kent for his dovetails which I am learning , so I bought one too because it is beautiful and a quarter of the price of , say , a Lie-Nielsen equivalent .

P79 Dakota 10" Reversible Saw £20 --- I have an identical one but it was made by Crown Tools of Sheffield

Unique cranked reversible blade. Do yourself a service by taking the " set " off the teeth on the outer side of the blade (on a stone) , so to be able to cut plugs close to the fair surface of your work piece. I find uses for this saw over and above the Veritas and Japanese miniature saws with set on one side only. This Crown saw has a really nice comfortable handle, the whole blade back mechanism is solid brass and it oozes "pre-War Sheffield "style.

P87 Dakota Tenoning Jig £90 but Tilgear recently offered it for £60

Keith Tait has one and likes it. Or you can make Bob Wearing's version which will do even more for you. I have details--ring me 01892 653143 .This is a famous Jig and potentially frequently used . I use those Pony "Hold Downs" on it.

P92 Brass Mallets No9 £20 No 11 £20 I have both.

The smaller less attractive No11 is the one to buy. It just fits beautifully into the palm of your hand when tapping chisels with delicacy. The No 9 is excellent but really for much larger work. Unluckily the small one has just been hiked up from £12!

P104 Planes Item No6 £15 I have one.

A humorous note to Martin Cheung! As well as all your lovely Lie-Nielsens, what you need is this super little wooden 127mm apron plane from Hong Kong, where I believe you come from. Lovely Rc.60 A2 plane iron and handsome body in hardwood. Essentially for the large number of light trimming jobs we do. Light and user-friendly in your pocket all day long---also light on your pocket book.

P123 Veritas Sliding Adjustable Bevels £34 & £37

A delight to see, but so expensive. Those who know a bit about these things say that the Japanese "Shinwa "type (£10 APTC) is just excellent altho' humble of aspect and material. The locking mechanism by means of a turn-key at the base of the stock, right out of the way, is the thing that matters of course.

P126 Veritas Ruler Stop £10 I have one

Rather expensive but since I got it, it has been in use almost as much as my pencil. I love it but it should be £6. Don't be tempted to buy the Dakota version pictured below it --also £10 .It is too big and probably too heavy. You can see that its greater size casts a shadow just where you are trying to read the rule to which it is attached. I do realize that my peers in the Club use those super - thin Inca rules with a 0.5mm pencil. So be it. So do I, but there is plenty of general work which can be marked up with this more robust item on the way to a projects completion.

P134 Digital Callipers £40

First of all , don't do what I did and bought a " dial " style callipers thinking I should this way avoid a battery run-down situation at a key moment . They are really confusing to read and I strongly dislike them .Also the figures are very small so without specs. You are sunk. So get modern and go digital. The figures are typically 13mm high if you've dropped your glasses! Don't buy from Rutlands. I will get a pair for you from my local Lidl Supermarket. Mine are splendid in stainless steel from Germany and cost a miserly £10. Two weeks ago they were featured again--same make-- for £7-80. So If you do not sport a Lidl shop nearby, register with me to get you one when next they are featured.

Jess-Em Tools Items p85 & 138

Neil Hiscox and I have bought some of these and we are both very pleased. Quality is impressive but these are big ticket items and so not your everyday purchases.

P152 Incra Hinge Making Jig £60

In the past I have made my sons some chests with wooden hinges. They are eye catching features beyond the effort they take to make, even with my moderate ability. This jig is on my wish list. If anyone has one I would dearly like to hear what he thinks of it (01892 653143).

P152 Dakota Router Sled £70

Looks a nice piece and useful for making tenons on a router table. However, you can make it yourself fairly easily, and you only need to buy 2 toggle clamps (p212). The wing nuts can be made easily from wood by cutting circular blanks with a hole-saw in the drill press and then embed M8 nuts with a bit of epoxy .

P164--167 Tornado Router Cutter Sets £various.

Buying in sets can be expensive because you do not always use all of the cutters. However, I have found the groupings which Tornado offer to be helpful. Take a look also at the Box Joint bit. At £30 it is one third of the cost of Trend's version. Good for making small tool component boxes.

P212 Jig Making Slick Plates £14

A good product, but go to Morrisons or Sainsburys and buy a pack of two non-stick low friction chopping boards for about £3. Useful for jigs generally and Router Sleds in particular.

Doubtless a lot of you know a good deal of this already. The Club, via the Newsletter, is interested in any intelligence you have to offer on items that are on the market currently. If you have just purchased something, why not send a little Report in to Roger for the Newsletter. You will notice I do and it is particularly helpful where the item is not a success that we all know about it, despite your small embarrassment!

Stuart Austin

John Cain's Workbench

The features of my workbench came together mainly after poring over 'The Workbench Book' by Scott Landis, though other sources were also influential.

It's predecessor had been two 8' x 4' sheets of 3/4" OSB screwed to three A-frame trestles made from lengths of 3" fencing post. A strip of wood was screwed onto the top at one end to act as a planing stop. It was a bit rickety and not what one would term 'attractive', but it was a lovely large work area and although it didn't have a vice was effective. It did, however, take up too much space in my single garage workshop so had to be replaced.

This bench has a solid hard maple top made up of ten 4" thick boards varying between 21/2" and 23/4" in width. With breadboard type end caps, the top is 78" long x 26" wide. Blind or

stopped holes on the inside face of the front board are tapped 12mm to receive threaded stainless steel rods which pass through the top front to back and are secured at the back with nuts set in recessed holes. The hardware for the tail vice - along the lines of the Michael Fortune design in the aforementioned book - is made from gauge plate, grooves in the guide plates were milled by a local engineering company, and a Record bench screw provides the means of



operation. The tail vice wood is African padauk - chosen not just for contrast with the maple top but for its stability and durability.

A Record quick release front vice with maple cheeks is fitted. The cheeks of both vices are lined with leather some 4mm or so thick. Dog holes, set some 2 1/2" back from the front edge, run along the top and the tail vice. Wooden bench dogs - maple for the tail vice, padauk for the front strip with ash springs - have been made and installed.

It goes without saying, the top is heavy.

My calculation puts it around 200 lbs. for the timber alone.

Such a weight obviously requires a correspondingly robust under frame. This is made from English ash - the end frames formed from 3" x 4" sectioned timber and the rails front and back from 3" x 3" sections. All are joined with pegged mortise and tenon joints. This frame is rebated/grooved to take 3/4" birch faced block board panels to form the bottom, sides, back, shelf and divide between drawers and cupboard and are glued in place. The whole is a very solid and again, heavy structure. The top merely sits on top, two blind holes in its underside fitting over two 1" plus sized dowels fitted to the top of the end frames. Gravity has been a great 'glue' so far!



To add yet more weight are three drawers made from oak with applied birch facings and mounted on full extension runners. These house hand tools. To the side of the drawers is a cupboard in which is stored power tools.

The entire bench is finished with Danish oil.

(John has sent me photographs of several fabulous pieces of furniture he has made. I hope to show them in future issues of the newsletter. I just need him to write a few words on how he made them. You may also soon find them on the website. Editor)

A useful Tips

If you are not sure how much glue to spread on your work piece, try using a short length of 1/2" threaded rod to spread the glue. The depth of the thread is perfect to give the right amount of glue.

Shelf Life of Yellow and White Glues

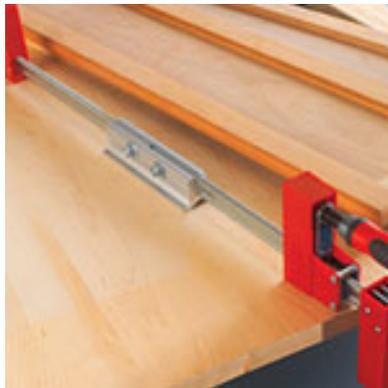
Yellow and White glues have a shelf life of about 8-12 months after which they should be thrown away. Freezing also damages the bonding power of these glues. If the glue is excessively stringy this can also be a sign that it has passed its useful life. Glue is too inexpensive to risk building furniture with bad joints.

Removing Glue from Clamps

Taken from Woodworkers Journal. www.woodworkersjournal.com

Can you tell me how to remove Titebond® II wood glue from my Bessey® clamps?

Andy Rae: Use a finely sharpened chisel to remove the stuff on the plastic heads, taking paring cuts. The dried glue will pop right off. To soften the encrusted glue on the beams in preparation for the next two steps, you can pour hot water over these areas, but I've had success without the water. On the relatively smooth edges of the serrated metal beams, use what I politely refer to as a crap chisel (you know you have one), duly sharpened, to scrape away the glue. Then use a steel wire-bristle brush to scrub between the serrations, or chuck a steel wire wheel in a hand drill and have at it. A yearly wax 'n' buff regimen on the beams will prevent glue build-up.



A better method is not to get the glue on the clamps in the first place. Save the backing sheets from sticky labels and the backing from double sided tape. It's like silicone paper. Put the shiny side towards the wood. The glue will not stick to it. (Editor)

Meeting comments

February - John and Louise Cropper

The highlights for me were the book-shaped box (which I would like to copy one day), the lighthouse (which I won't) and seeing Louise's marquetry technique.

March - Joint Genie

In spite of the slightly off-putting exhibition sales style, The joint genie was very clearly presented and seems to be a well thought out and simple system. The price might be a problem unless you make a lot of dowelled joints. I have seen the product before and last October I bought a stripped-down 6mm system which they had on special offer on-line for £19.99 (included a big bag of dowels). I have recently used this to make seven drawers for my workbench out of some old slightly 'gappy' 12mm ply. It worked extremely well but you do need to be careful about which faces of the parts to reference the jig. Because of the different depths of hole required for the sides (<12mm!) and the backs (deep enough to take the rest of the dowel), I did all the sides first and then the backs. This avoided having to keep adjusting the depth stop. To avoid mistakes I marked the outside face and the top edge for each part.

March - Colin's Chairs

It was very interesting to hear Colin detail his approach to solving the difficult problems presented by chair making. I was impressed by the solutions he came up with and I am sure the results will justify the effort. My wife thinks his 'clients' must be very patient.

Steve Outram.

Evening Meeting Feb 26th

Louise and John Cropper a husband and wife team of Designer Makers provided an entertaining and informative evening. They brought along several items for us to see the largest was a four foot section of a lighthouse John told us that when he took the full size one to a craft show other presenters quipped that he would never sell it, it went in the first half hour and since then he has made and sold several more, you can see it on their web site.

John did most of the talking with Louise correcting him from time to time, he smiled. A resume of their past seemed to indicate that they like to make things complicated almost as if to challenge their skills.

The first item he talked about was a very large organ complete with keyboard stops and pipes it was a replica of one that an American had seen and he wanted one for his study in New York. This like most of the items that John talked about had a story to go with it, to long to go into now. But to say the organ had an electronic works inside.

John designed and made a jewellery box in the form of a book, it was beautifully made with drawers hidden behind the hinged spine it was to be birthdays present for Louise and it was on display at The Cheltenham Show, guess what he sold it and had to make her another and sold that as well and many more.

The three sided Egyptian cabinet was an interesting design problem about how the corners worked but the elegant marquetry by Louise was very impressive in spite of an expert in Egyptian history who said it was not quite correct.

After we had a cup of tea Louise gave a demonstration of the way she works, it was nice to be able to talk to her while she was cutting and shaping the large number of pieces she needed to make a figure and all so quickly.
It would be nice to have another visit in the future to see what comes out of an old barn in rural Oxfordshire www.jlcropper.co.uk

Terry Hiscox

Honing Guides

For what it's worth, herewith my attempt to summarise what I had aimed to say at the meeting on 22nd January.
But having now completed the script, I've become aware that it's probably far too long for your purpose. In other words, it's written in the way I got used to. So, ditch it if you wish - I have no reason to object!

Across the field of woodworking, there are some instructors who recommend that, in the interest of saving time, sharpening standard edge tools is best done by hand rather than with the aid of honing guides, and a couple of our guest speakers have taken that line. It doesn't include our own, late, Jim Kingshott, who reserved the hand option for those whose work, requires them to sharpen tools frequently, each day. Moreover, acquiring and maintaining that skill becomes more difficult when using waterstones, as slips can lead to the edge of the tool digging in.

The most popular guide has been the Eclipse: it's compact, well made, straightforward to use, works on conventional chisels and planer irons, and is of modest price (from £6, or so). A shop-made gauge helps in setting it, and I'll cover that later. What it can't deal with is the traditional Japanese-style chisel, on which the thickness increases toward the handle, making the top surface out-of-parallel with the flat bottom.

As it happens, in Furniture and Cabinetmaking magazine, Issue 69, October 2002, David Charlesworth explained how he modified the Eclipse guide to accept the Japanese chisels. Although I had by then found my way of coping with these tools (using a modified Stanley guide, see later), I duly bought a further Eclipse with the aim of following up David's proposal. The opportunity came last year. What I found, however, was that the scheme wouldn't work on my set of Japanese chisels. This was because to achieve a sharpening angle in the usual range, the system of clamping, between the side edges of the tool, applied the pressure at a point where the width of the blade was reducing, curving round behind the section that was parallel, and therefore didn't hold the blade in place. I then made a further, not insignificant, modification to overcome the problem.
Talking to David, he thought he must have used the original scheme on a particularly long chisel; and I can only assume that not many others had tried it out. As a lesson, I can only say that had I first calculated the sharpening position of the chisel in relation to the guide, then the outcome would have been obvious. And although my revised version works, I don't find it as convenient as my alternative.

So what happens on the Stanley guide? Essentially, this applies pressure between the top and bottom faces of the blade, and the system has sufficient flexibility to accommodate Japanese

chisels.

But the clamping surfaces are polished chromium plate and allow slippage when one face is tilted. Fortunately, adding a friction strip to the underside of the top, fixed, surface, solves the problem. I attach (with Araldite) a piece of Perma-Grit sanding material, choosing the flexible version, which has tungsten carbide grit brazed to steel sheet. It's available in fine and coarse grades, from www.permagrit.com. Fine grade works well for me, holding even narrow Japanese and Western style blades securely, with a long life at my rate of usage. Strips are supplied 51 mm wide: a length of 70 mm is needed to cover the guide section.

I note that Axminster supply the Stanley guide as part of a set, including a combination oil-stone (which I wouldn't use), for £13: you may well be able to buy it separately, and more cheaply, elsewhere.

Both the Stanley guide and the Eclipse are easier to use with a shop-made gauge. I was first shown one of these on a visit to a member's workshop (that of David Fenton, who served for many years on our Committee, before moving to the USA, where he continues to make a great deal of excellent furniture in his spare time). The gauge comprises a rectangle of plywood with a second piece on top. The distance between the face of the lower piece and the top one is set at the required projection of the blade from the sharpening guide (which depends upon the chosen angle). With this gauge the angle can be re-set readily, and precisely - nothing short of a magic aid for sharpening!

May I add that the ways of sharpening both Western and Japanese edge tools are now covered by the comparatively-recently introduced Veritas Mk.II guide. Chairman Colin Waters demonstrated this during my talk. Its cost of £40, or so, is probably pretty good value, though I doubt if it will perform any better than the Eclipse guide with the shop-made gauge.

Another guide - the beautifully-finished Richard Kell version - comes into the reckoning, but I've no experience of using it. Member John Cain is the man to ask.

Peter Guyett

Public Events with Furniture and Woodworking Interest

NB It is advisable to check dates and times with the venue before travelling

English Heritage Open Days in mid-September are expected to include: **Ercol Furni-**

May 15-17th	The Craft and design experience	Fawley Court, Henley-on-Thames. www.craftexperience.co.uk
June 6-7th	Classic Hand Tools Show Top tool makers, woodworkers and your own Southern Fellowship Of Woodworkers will have a stand demonstrating an aspect of member's work. Please come along and support us at this event. More details will be circulated as they become available.	West Dean Gardens, West Sussex
August 16th - 25th	Celebration of Craftsmanship and Design	Cheltenham College.
September 11-12th	Yandle's Autumn show	www.yandle.co.uk
September 11-13th	Bentley Annual Woodfair	Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum. Lewes www.bentley.org.uk/#/woodfair/4525168793
November 6- 8th	D&M Toolshow	Kempton Park Racecourse, Surrey.

ture Ltd, Princes Risborough: Guided tours of this purpose built energy efficient manufacturing plant and showroom, located eight miles from the historic furniture town of High Wycombe. (**Ercol Furniture**, Summerleys Road, Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire, HP27 9PX)

FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

All winter programme meetings are held at the Mytchett community centre.

Fourth Start time 7:30pm.

Summer Visits

May 23rd

Member's Workshop visit at the home of John Cain (limited to 10 people)

John has kindly offered to host a visit to his workshop and to talk about the furniture he has made. John is a highly skilled craftsman and has some interesting tools and work to show to members.

John's wife, Jan, has offered to provide lunch to the group and we can talk about woodworking over lunch and into the afternoon.

147 Worting Road, Basingstoke, Hants, RG22 6NN.

June 17th a.m.

Wycombe Museum, Chair making in the Chilterns. (Min 10) 10:30 start.

Catherine Griggs, Furniture Curator will give an illustrated talk covering the history of chair making and describe how to discern a Chiltern chair. There will also be a tour of furniture exhibits and chairs kept in the store room.

Priory Avenue, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP13 6PX.

Packed lunch can be eaten in the Museum gardens if weather is fine or study rooms if not.

June 17th p.m.

Stewart Linford; Furniture maker.

Stewart started building traditional country chairs in 1976 in a small workshop at Little Kingshill, Bucks. These were of classic English Windsor Chair designs known as the Windsor Range. Later, complementary tables were added. At the end of the 1970's a less elaborate selection of tables and chairs were introduced called the Farmhouse Range. During the mid 1980's cabinet making was added to the repertoire, thus creating the Cabinet Range.

Today the company has over 40 people including turners, wood machinists, cabinet makers, chair makers and polishers as well as administration and support staff.

Kitchener Works, Kitchener Road, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP11 2SJ

July 15th a.m.

Hugo Egleston Furniture

Hugo Egleston established his workshop in 1980 after training at the London College of Furniture, and then working for three years in the workshop of Sandy Mackilligin, Surrey.

The main influences on his furniture are the work of English 18th Century Cabinet makers, which he thinks has never been surpassed in this country, and the Arts and Crafts makers, especially Edward Barnsley. He believes the study of nature is very useful for the designer, although he seldom uses natural forms directly.

He recently won a Gold Award in the Furniture and Cabinet Maker magazine competition.

Old Farm Yard, Lasham, Alton. GU34 5RY

July 15th p.m.

Museum of Modern Crafts, Crafts Study Centre.

The Museum's furniture and wood collections reflect the varied and closely connected nature of the early modern crafts movement. Furniture by leading Cotswold makers such as Ernest

Gimson, Harry Davoll, Sidney Barnsley and Edward Gardiner is represented alongside chairs from the workshop of William Morris. The curator, Jean Vacher, will give a conducted tour of the craft exhibits and bowls by art turner Jim Partridge., which are held in the reserve collection. Unfortunately the Arts and Craft furniture is in external store so we will not be able to see it but Jean will show us illustrations and talk about the collection.
University for the Creative Arts, Falkner Road, Farnham. Surrey GU9 7DS.

August 19th a.m

Edward Barnsley workshop.

Those members that attended the September 08 meeting will remember James Ryan who is the manager/ designer at the Edward Barnsley Workshop. Established by Geoffrey Lupton but purchased by Edward Barnsley in 1923. Edward followed the Arts and Craft traditions of this farther Sidney Barnsley. James will be hosting our visit around the show rooms and workshop where we will be able to talk to the craftsmen and apprentices.

August 19th p.m.

TBA.

September 19th

Member's Workshop visit at the home of Colin Waters.

Colin gave a talk about building his workshop above his garage. Here's your chance to see it and talk about the layout, machines, tools and all things woodwork. Colin will provide refreshments and members are welcome to stay into the afternoon but if you want a lunch then please bring a packed lunch and we can sit on the patio or downstairs in the garage if it is raining. Fridge available in the workshop Space on the drive is limited so please park on the road but Colin will provide resident parking tickets for all attending.

Note: It is very important that members wishing to attend summer visits notify Colin Waters prior to the event. Problems can arise with the venue if more than expected turn up.

Winter 2009 Programme:

September 24th
Speaker TBA

October 22nd
Speaker TBA

November 26th
AGM.