

# Shed Notes

Issue 318

November 2014



WOODCRAFT  
GUILD·ACT

**NEXT MEETING: Wednesday 26 November 2014, 1930 - 2130**

**Venue: The SHED, Lions Youth Haven, Kambah Pool Road, KAMBAH ACT 2902**

## Shedding Some Light

**Our November speaker, Ray Halpin**, has been a member of the Guild since 2006. He has mainly worked on making boxes under Fred Buckley's tuition, but has also tried his hand at making a Windsor chair; built a very nice side-table; and has successfully completed an Introduction to Woodturning course. *[As the photo at right shows, he can also lay claim to the title of gourmet cook — this was taken at the Windsor chair-making course run by Fred Buckley at Kioloa during December 2012. Ed]*

Ray will speak on the designing and building of his Shed. The project took 12 months to build, and was developed so that it would be sympathetic to the surrounding garden. Ray will also show the different types of work that he has undertaken in the three "sheds" that he has had since 2006.

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## Guild Xmas BBQ

**Sunday, 07 December 2014, at the Shed — 1200 for 1230.** The Guild will supply meat/fish, and a limited amount of light beer, cask wine and soft drinks; members are asked to bring salads/desserts to share — those with **surnames starting with A-M are invited to bring salads**; **N-Z please bring desserts** (no need to bring large quantities, there will be plenty from past experience). Members may bring their own extra drinks, but coffee / tea are readily available. Crockery, cutlery and glasses will be provided (thanks again, Owen & Margaret!). **NB: Volunteer BBQ chefs needed!**



### Contents

Presidential Palaver .....	2
Editorial / Coming Events .....	3~4
SIG Reports .....	4~7
The Front Bench .....	7
<b>Feature Article: Sharpening</b> .....	8~10
Off-Cuts: .....	11~14
• Going Round in Circles.....	11
• Raffan Recommends .....	11
• Snakes Alive.....	12
• Recycling Challenge / Explosion	13
• Toy-Boys / Marymead .....	14
<b>For Sale: Mitre Guide / Toolbox</b> ....	15
Sponsors .....	16~17

*Please note that the opinions expressed in articles in this Newsletter are those of the authors alone, and do not necessarily reflect the views, or positions, of the Woodcraft Guild of the ACT Inc as an organization.*

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# PRESIDENTIAL PALAVER



A lot has been happening this month and a there is lot more to come. The Guild participation in the Marymead Fete was amazing — the final contribution to the charity was a record \$1,147. Thanks to all the members who contributed toys, and to everyone who helped out on the day. The Guild does a lot in the community sector: schools program, displays and exhibits, as well as fielding commissions from the public — all testimony to the vigour of the Guild and the commitment of members. We certainly hope to continue the good work for a long time to come. Some of you may think that we could do more, or do it differently — if so let me know; an email to the presidential email address would be appreciated.

Thank you to all of those who have completed the current survey. We now have over a hundred responses, but a lot more of you could add your bit, and I encourage you, nay beg you, to complete it **before 24 November**. I hope to present preliminary conclusions at this month's Guild meeting.

The Guild's facilities are being used more and more, making competition for time and space fairly fierce. This is why we need to get our forward planning up to speed following consultations with you, the members. In addition, I plan to meet with all SIG coordinators soon to start mapping the timetable for 2015. This is important. SIG members should be vocal (to their individual SIG boss) regarding needs for courses, show sessions, meeting times, workshops etc. Otherwise, you will get squeezed.

As advertised on the front page, the Guild Christmas party is coming up soon. As you know, this is a great social gathering for members, wood-widows and wood-widowers, and others who may be here a lot, or a little, over the year, or who want to know about what really happens at Westwood Farm. Please come and join us on 07 December. Our thanks, as always, to Owen and Margaret for bringing the party together, and to Bill for supplies of North Coast reef plunder.

Finally, as this is the last Newsletter of the year, I wish all of you a great Christmas holiday, and, as a New Year Resolution, why don't you promise yourselves to become more involved with Guild activities, deepen your love affair with wood, and spread the word!

**Graham Reynolds, President 0413 053 978 [president@woodcraftguild.org.au](mailto:president@woodcraftguild.org.au)**

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## Christmas Cheer:



## EDITORIAL EFFLUVIA



I understand that some of my readers (with one predictable exception) enjoyed my last contribution on the rules of editing, so I thought I'd push my luck with the following snippets of battlefield wisdom, based partly on my own experiences, and partly on material gleaned from my military memorabilia. For the old soldiers out there, with their wonderfully sardonic sense of humour, and for the gung-ho Tony "Shirtfront" Abbott, here are **Rod's Rules of Engagement**:

1. Friendly fire isn't.
2. Suppressive fire doesn't.
3. Interchangeable weapon parts aren't.
4. Tracers work both ways.
5. Incoming fire has right of way.
6. Mines are equal opportunity weapons.
7. Never forget your weapon and equipment were made by the lowest bidder.
8. If the enemy are within range, so are you.
9. The best approach to the objective is always mined.
10. No matter which approach you choose, it will always be uphill.
11. If your attack is going better than expected, you are entering an ambush.
12. The only thing more accurate than incoming enemy fire is incoming friendly fire.
13. The enemy will always attack on either of two occasions – when they are ready; and when you're not.
14. Never deliberately draw fire – it irritates your closest mates.
15. Teamwork in a firefight is essential – it gives the enemy other targets to shoot at.
16. Try to look unimportant – if the enemy are low on ammunition, they may not shoot at you.
17. The more stupid a leader, the more important the mission he will be given – the most dangerous thing on the battlefield is an officer with a plan.
18. All plans turn to shit the moment the first shot is fired.
19. Being awarded a medal proves you were smart enough to conceive a plan; stupid enough to execute it; and lucky enough to survive the outcome.
20. Given enough data, the subsequent Board of Inquiry can prove anything.

**Editor**

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## COMING EVENTS

### *Internal*

#### **Next Monthly Guild Meeting:**

**Wednesday, 28 January 2015, 1930, at the Shed. Speaker TBA.**

#### **Guild Xmas BBQ:**

**Sunday, 07 December 2014, at the Shed – 1200 for 1230. See front page item for details.**



## External

### Next Triton Club Meeting:

**Wednesday, 03 December 2014** – (For further information, visit the club's website at <http://www.tocact.org.au>)

### Canberra Show:

**27 February ~ 01 March 2015, at EPIC** – Details of Guild involvement and calls for volunteers will appear in Newsletters nearer the date. Consider making an entry in the Woodcraft Section — they need the competition! **NB: Entries close on 19 December 2014.**

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## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG) REPORTS

(SIG Coordinators: please note the deadline for newsletter input: **2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of each month.**)

**Miniatures & Mandrel (aka Pen) SIG:** At the November meeting, I introduced two more unsuspecting people to the fascinating and sometimes challenging craft (art, some would say [*Well, Art was there ... Ed*]) of pen-turning. They both went home ecstatic with the fact they had made something so wonderful on the first try, with not a split in sight.

Also I demonstrated how to turn the humble slimline pen kit into something special, or different anyway, just by leaving out the centre band and adding a contrasting coloured timber. I also made a slimline pencil kit in one piece, instead of two pieces with a centre band. The method I used to do this needs refining a little, but wasn't too bad in the end. Some examples are shown at right.



At our **next meeting, 06 December**, the theme will, of course, be Xmas, and Richard “Santa” Raffan will be demonstrating whatever he chooses to in the way of Xmas baubles of some kind. Also don't forget to bring in samples of your own Xmas decorations to show us what you have been doing.

The shed will be open at 10 am, and the demo will commence at 1.30. To new Guild members who have expressed an interest in small-scale turning, come along and join us for either, or both, sessions. If staying on all day, bring your own lunch, but you can have as much coffee as you can drink for \$2.00!

**Gai Simpson 6231 4139** [mandrel@woodcraftguild.org.au](mailto:mandrel@woodcraftguild.org.au)

**Scrollsaw & Marquetry SIG:** Our final meeting for the year was well attended, and we had a harmonious and busy day.

A major contribution to this was a return visit from Anne Thurlow, an artist from Queanbeyan. We gathered around and asked many questions as she deftly demonstrated techniques for painting Santa Claus with rosy nose and cheeks, and stars with gold and glitter, using paint which was cracked, stippled, stencilled, striated and sanded. We learnt to prepare and pre-coat our productions; choose, clean and care for brushes; undercoat yellow with white, and gold with yellow; and highlight black with blue, and green with gold. All this and more, tinted with a great sense of humour, made for a very attentive audience. We now better understand some of our failed efforts! Thank you, Ann.

Much work was also done to finish Christmas gifts, fill our commission commitment, and progress longstanding projects. Thanks to all participants in this productive effort

The SIG will meet next on **Sunday, 18 January 2015**, at a time and place to be notified, for a planning session for the exciting year ahead of us. Meanwhile, may the deep peace and true joy of Christmas pervade all your celebrations. Blessings!

**David French 0428 121 934** [scrollsaw@woodcraftguild.org.au](mailto:scrollsaw@woodcraftguild.org.au)

**Between Centres Turning SIG:** Another amazing woodturning demonstration from Jim Reid at the November meeting — this time it was the production of fourteen finials (see photos below) in what could



only be called a production run. All finials seemed to our eyes to be exactly the same dimensions.

Jim illustrated just how it was done on a practice piece of square pine, with the aid of a plywood template, a detail gouge, and an amazingly fast smooth finish off the tool, with little sanding.



Guild members present realized this is the level of skill that can be developed from hours of practice, required for a professional turner.

Those present were encouraged to try their hand at a similar profile, and with a little guidance and patience it can be done — maybe. Note SIG members: next month's meeting, on Saturday, 13 December, at Jim Reid's, will be Xmas drinks and a BBQ.

*Jim Venis 6241 1465 [turningbc@woodcraftguild.org.au](mailto:turningbc@woodcraftguild.org.au)*

**Introduction to Woodworking SIG:** The November meeting of the SIG was well patronized, with five new attendees. Bill Thompson and Alan Guy helped out again, and their guidance was much appreciated by all.

The projects are developing in many different directions. although new members are still starting with a bench hook. Again another enjoyable learning experience for the coordinator as well as the participants. You can see some of the activities in the accompanying photos.



*Dave Callan 0407 930 303 [basics@woodcraftguild.org.au](mailto:basics@woodcraftguild.org.au)*

**Carving SIG:** The SIG meeting on 15 November was the last one of the year. There were only five members present, but the Shed was full because of Accreditation Courses going on at the same time. Some of the SIG members took the opportunity to gain some additional accreditations during the day.

Most of the SIG members continued their projects, and one member brought along his sheet of glass with wet-and-dry sandpaper attached. The glass he had obtained was not float glass, but a thick laminated glass of the type used in shop windows, but it was flat, and that is the main thing. He also had some second-hand carving tools which he had purchased a few years ago, which had been badly affected by loss of tempering from being “sharpened” on an electric grinder. I had to grind out the affected areas by hand, before the tools were usable again. This is primarily the reason I sharpen my carving tools by hand — it is far too easy to lose tempering, particularly on small tools.

Have a great Christmas, and I hope to see you all back in the Shed in the New Year.

*Paul Dunn 6251 1360 [carving@woodcraftguild.org.au](mailto:carving@woodcraftguild.org.au)*

**Furniture SIG:** The SIG met on Saturday, 08 November, and started with a presentation on box-making by Mathew Klein. An emphasis was placed on working with highly figured timber; glitches in the production process; and potential ways to avoid problems. Members then went on to work on their individual projects. Two new members attended the SIG.

The next meeting will be on 13 December, starting at 1pm. Terry O'Loughlin will present on the topic of wooden plane-making.

*Mathew Klein 6231 0475 [furniture@woodcraftguild.org.au](mailto:furniture@woodcraftguild.org.au)*

**Pyrography SIG:** In previous years, the Pyrography SIG has not had a meeting in December, but as a result of some interest from members, this year there will be a meeting on the usual second Sunday of the month — **Sunday, 14 December**. As I won't be able to attend the Guild Christmas party, am thinking of starting the SIG a little earlier, **around 11am**, to include some kind of lunch (probably BBQ). It will be a relaxed meeting, with a bit of food, a bit of music, and a bit of pyro. Hopefully, it won't be too hot, as the shed closes on extreme fire danger days, and the notices only go out the day before, so just be sure to check email on the Saturday night (13 Dec) just in case.

Also, another reminder about the bulk Ironcore pyro pen purchase offer. I have four interested people, and with only five needed, it won't take long to get one more, so if you are interested, let me know ASAP. For those who have already expressed interest, please let me know again (preferably via email), as my memory has been shot lately, and I often need reminding! *[It's called 'maturity', Vivien. Ed]*

As there is no December Newsletter, I want to wish everyone a very safe and merry Xmas, and a fantastic New Year. I hope to have a January Pyrography SIG to start the New Year, which should be **Sunday, 11 January 2015**, and we will be straight into projects for the Bungendore Show (end of January) and Canberra Show (end of February). Be reminded that Canberra show entries need to be in and paid by 19 December — the schedule can be downloaded at: <http://www.canberrashow.org.au/files/2015%20Craft%20Schedule%20web.pdf>; and the entry form at: <http://www.canberrashow.org.au/files/2015%20Craft%20Entry%20Form%20FINAL.pdf>.

Merry Christmas everyone, and happy woodworking!

*Vivien Laycock 0438 877 711 [pyrography@woodcraftguild.org.au](mailto:pyrography@woodcraftguild.org.au)*

**Saturday Turning SIG:** The last Saturday Turning SIG of 2014 was held on 22 November 2014. Although there was low attendance, the day was enjoyable and productive. In the afternoon, a few of the members completed a small number of candle-holders made from recycled furniture feet. These will be donated to the Guild Sales box to help with the fund raising efforts. Most of the turners were able to make good progress on their own projects, and a couple of neophytes were offered assistance and guidance as needed.

At morning tea, there was a discussion about next year's SIG meetings, and a number of issues were identified. Collectively, the four turning SIGs constitute the largest group in the Guild, yet the last year has seen a decline in attendance on Saturdays, in particular. There is also a delicate balance between catering for the needs of new members, and for those of more advanced turners.

A number of suggestions were made by those present, but I would like to hear directly from others about how the Saturday SIG can be made more attractive, and offer a wider range of services.

Next year, the SIG will be coordinated jointly by myself and Mark Hoare. Once we hear from other members, we will be able to prepare a schedule for the year.

A few things I would like to see happen are:

- 1) greater contribution by the turning SIGs to the Guild's charitable work;
- 2) donation of work made by members to the Guild sales stock;
- 3) greater ownership of, and responsibility for, the maintenance and upkeep of the lathes, tools, and turning consumables;



- 4) planned activities, support and mentoring for new members; and
- 5) skills development activities for more advanced turners.

I am sure there are many things we could do, so please send me or Mark any ideas or thoughts you may have for making the turning SIGs not just the biggest group, but also the most productive

Have a great Christmas, and if I have made any typos or grammatical errors, just remember: pobodys nerfect!

*Satnam Singh 0481 004 674 [turningsat@woodcraftguild.org.au](mailto:turningsat@woodcraftguild.org.au)*

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## THE FRONT BENCH

October's speaker from the Front Bench was Greg Peters, the owner-operator of Paginations in Fyshwick. Greg is in the business of restoring and conserving antique furniture.



Greg left school at the age of 15, and started an apprenticeship in cabinet making. He was dissatisfied, however, discontinued the apprenticeship and tried his hand at science. Again dissatisfaction crept in, and he obtained a position with an antique restorer in Oaks Estate. This was the job for him!

Subsequently, Greg won a Churchill Fellowship to study in US museums, and to work with some private restorers. Upon his return, he set up Paginations.

Greg outlined the philosophy behind the concept of restoration versus conservation. In restoring a piece of furniture, you are altering the piece, whilst conserving it keeps the piece as near as possible to its natural state.

Therefore, cabinet-making forms a small part of his work. The vast majority of his time is spent cleaning the work, and reapplying as near as he can get to the original finish, so the science behind the finish is crucial. Consequently, a piece is thoroughly tested to determine the finish used. If you apply the wrong finish, you can wipe away 200 years of history in seconds.

Experience is also a feature of Greg's work, as he has restored pieces from many different eras, and is cognisant of materials used during the various eras. For example, early 20th century Australian pieces used oil-based stain to darken the wood; Georgian furniture was finished with oil; and Victorian furniture was finished with shellac. Wherever he is unsure, a series of solvent tests on a hidden area determine the finish. Greg is reluctant to strip a piece back in its entirety, but sometimes this the only option.

Greg used two pieces brought to the meeting to demonstrate how he assesses a piece. A table-top was provided by Rosina Wainwright, and a water-stained stool by Richard Raffan. Greg first tries to ascertain whether the piece has sentimental, or financial, value to the owner. If it has sentimental value, then the issue is how much they want done to it — that is, they do not want it transformed into something else.

In dating the piece, the best clue is to look at the hardware used in the piece. Handles, hinges and screws provide important information. Also, viewing the piece under fluorescent light will reveal important information about the finish. The underside of the piece also reveals important clues, such as the red pigment often used to seal wood in early 20th century pieces.

Greg has also been engaged as a consultant to conserve the exquisite marquetry panels in the foyer of Parliament House. The primary problem was that in order to conserve them, a method needed to be used that did not involve any sanding. So shellac was used as an undercoating, so that the top finish could be removed easily with alcohol, and replaced.

Greg informed the group that he generally used Liberon waxes to improve the look of pieces, and provide a sacrificial coating to protect from minor damage.

*Ray Halpin*

## Feature Article

### SHARPENING STONES

This article follows on from my previous article, in the November 2013 issue of “Shed Notes”, which described a Basic Sharpening Kit. After the last article, I received an email from Alan Casimir about wetting agents for sharpening stones. You may remember I recommended Singer Sewing Machine Oil for oilstones, and water with a few drops of dishwashing liquid for waterstones. Alan uses concentrated dishwashing liquid for his waterstones — I must admit I haven’t tried this, but it might be worth a go.

Whilst I was talking to Alan, he showed me an old sharpening stone which belonged to his great-grandfather, who was a barber, and used it to sharpen straight (‘cut-throat’) razors. I researched this stone, and discovered that it was an old Belgian combination Blue Stone (2000 grit) and Yellow Stone (8000 grit). This is a natural stone found in a quarry in Belgium. The ancient Romans recorded that they used these stones, as they were the best that they could find for sharpening. Stones the size of Alan’s are no longer available, and you can only obtain smaller versions these days. Arie de Bear has two stones which he calls ‘Razor Stones’, which appear to me to also be Belgian stones. The quarry is still being mined, and I found that up until a few years ago you could buy these stones from CarbaTec, but they are not in their current catalog. These stones are usually used as waterstones, as they are not porous — their abrasive element is Garnet.

I had a talk with Jim Davey at the Timber & Working With Wood Show, as he has recently obtained a dealership in Arkansas stones, via Dan’s Whetstone Co., which I must admit look to be top quality stones. Jim told me that my Smith’s stones also came from the same quarry. Of course, both the Arkansas and Belgian stones are naturally occurring stones, and in recent years many man-made stones have come onto the market. **This all leads to the reason for this article: which stones should you select for your sharpening requirements?** There are so many on the market, the choice of the right ones is difficult, and can be expensive.

#### Oilstones or Waterstones?

This is the first question I ask myself when looking for a good set of stones. To be honest, you can use either, as they both sharpen tools well, but they have slightly different properties which make them suitable for different jobs. I personally use oilstones for sharpening my carving tools, and waterstones for my carpenter’s chisels and plane blades.

To separate the stones that I will be dealing with, I will talk about their properties. There are two properties which are important for sharpening which you need to know about: **grit** and **hardness**.

#### Grit

Each stone is made up of many small particles bound together, and the average size of these particles is known as the ‘grit’ of the stone. There are standards for the average size of the grit, but they vary in different countries and for different products (sandpaper, grinder stones, waterstones, and so on). So I will use a rough standard which is near enough for our purposes, but you will find that two stones with the same grit might still be slightly different from each other. You will not find this a serious problem, as you will only be using the grit as a rough guide. Also, many stones aren’t marked with their grits, so I will give an approximate idea in this article to help you decide which stones you need.

Firstly, you will need a couple of stones with different grits for your sharpening, as the size of the grit determines the quality of finish on your tool. The bigger the particle size, the coarser the finish.

The following is a rough guide table, remembering that the smaller the grit number, the larger the particle size. I have included on the table many different types of stones, as you may come across a second-hand stone which you can add to your collection. I also left off diamond ‘stones’ (which are, in fact, steel plates coated with diamond dust), but they will slot in roughly with the Crystolon stones — for example, Coarse Crystolon is roughly the same as Coarse Diamond. (Note: this is a very rough equivalence, and some diamond stones can be very fine indeed.) For some reason, almost none of the diamond stones available are labelled with a grit size.



Grit	Stone	Composition
100	Coarse Crystolon	Silicon Carbide
120	Coarse India	Aluminium Oxide
180	Medium Crystolon	Silicon Carbide
240	Medium India	Aluminium Oxide
320	Fine Crystolon	Silicon Carbide
360	Fine India	Aluminium Oxide
600	Soft Arkansas	Silicon Dioxide
1,000	Hard White Arkansas	Silicon Dioxide
2,000	Translucent or Black Arkansas	Silicon Dioxide
30,000	Green Strop Paste	Chromium Oxide

For the basic sharpening kit, I advised you to start with three different grits — a Coarse (300-600 grit); a Medium (1000-1800 grit); and a Fine (4000-6000) grit. Of course, you should also have a strop (10000-30000 grit). If you can only afford two, get the Coarse and Medium. You will be able to see the difference between these three stones when you look at the resulting surface of the metal under a magnifying glass. The Coarse stone will leave visible scratches on the surface; the Medium will leave a cloudy surface; and the Fine stone will leave a shiny surface. Finally, a strop will leave a brilliant surface. You can select any type of stone for each of these stones, but you need to ensure that when you move to the next stone in the sharpening process, you don't contaminate the new stone with liquid and particles from the last stone.

### Hardness

This topic is not covered well in books on sharpening. For our purposes, I will define hardness in the following way: if you rub two materials together, the softer one will wear away faster. Note that this means that diamond stones **do** wear, they just wear at a much slower rate than, say, waterstones. I have found that the cheaper diamond stones wear much quicker than the more expensive ones.

The measurement for hardness is in units called **Mohs** (you may find references to Knoop and Rockwell hardness, but they are just different ways of defining the same thing). Diamond is 10 Mohs and Talcum is 1 Moh. Silicon Carbide comes in at about 9.5 Mohs; Aluminium Oxide is about 9; Arkansas stones are about 7; and waterstones are about 5 or 6. Good tool steel is about 7.5 Mohs. This means that tool steel and Arkansas stones wear at about the same rate, and waterstones wear more quickly than tool steel. This means that you will need to flatten waterstones much more often than Arkansas stones, but on the other hand, they are much easier to flatten.

### Flattening Stones

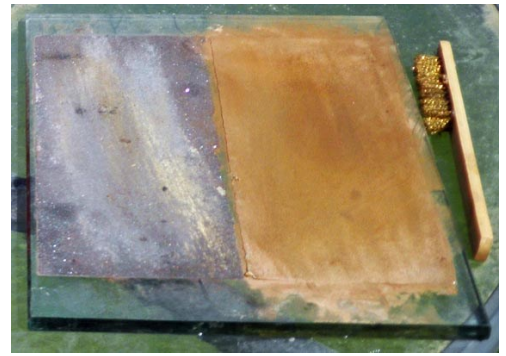
When you want to flatten a material, the process is called **lapping**.

Note that you can't really flatten a diamond stone, so if you have one which isn't flat, it is useless for carpenter's chisels and plane blades, but you might still be able to use it for carving tools. I'll cover this in more detail in a later article, when I describe sharpening procedures. I can't recommend the plastic-backed diamond stones, as I have one and it has a distinct curve in it, but mine might just be a bad one, so check all your stones for flatness (before you buy them, if you can). With a slight curve these stones might still be useful for knives with a curved blade edge. I noticed on Jim Davey's stall at the Timber & Working With Wood Show that he had some new diamond stones with a diamond plate on each side of the plastic, which should overcome the problem of these stones bending, so I might change my mind on plastic-backed diamond stones.

If you mainly sharpen carpenter's chisels, flat carving tools, knives with a straight blade edge, and plane blades, **YOU MUST HAVE A FLAT STONE**. If you like a slight curve on your edge, you can achieve

this with a flat stone and a jig. If you sharpen a chisel with a curved stone, it will take about three times as long to remove the curve than it did to grind the curve in — I learnt this courtesy of my bent plastic-backed diamond stone.

I use a plate of float glass, with Silicon Carbide sandpaper glued to it, to flatten my stones, and this is what I recommend that you use. It is cheap, and readily available — my float glass came from the recyclers, and only cost me \$2.00. Notice in the photo at right the thickness of the glass plate — if you can't find glass of this thickness, you can use thinner glass, mounted on a square of plywood to stop the glass bending. The sandpaper comes from the local hardware store, only costs a few dollars a sheet, and you can get a range from about 80 grit to 2000 grit. I don't use any liquid on the sandpaper — I use it dry, and clean the sandpaper with a brass wire brush, as shown. Make sure it is Silicon Carbide sandpaper which is grey in colour — it is sometimes called 'wet and dry' sandpaper.



Norton manufactures a flat Silicon Carbide lapping plate for flattening stones, and Veritas manufactures a steel lapping plate and abrasives of a range of grits for the same purpose. DMT also manufactures a special diamond stone (DMT Dia-Flat) designed specifically to flatten stones, and these work very well, but they cost about \$300.

You can easily flatten waterstones and Aluminium Oxide stones on Silicon Carbide sandpaper, but Crystolon Stones will wear out the sandpaper too often, so I don't recommend Crystolon stones for that reason. I have one, but don't use it at all. It could be used in its own right for flattening waterstones, or Aluminium Oxide stones. Don Orr tells me that tradesmen often flatten their Silicon Carbide stones on concrete paths, but it will heavily mark the concrete (and assumes the path is flat!)

Shown below is my collection of sharpening stones.

*Paul Dunn*



# OFF-CUTS

## Miscellaneous Items of Interest

### GOING ROUND IN CIRCLES

The Canberra Grammar School recently held a sculpture festival, for which a work of mine was accepted. I used ten of the tallow-wood bust stop posts which ACTION had given the Guild earlier this year. A big thank you to Stewart Storey and Terry O'Loughlin, who helped me extend three of the posts which had rotted at the bottom. I stencilled text on each post reading '*Light rail benefits*', '*Light rail study*', and '*Light rail costs*'.



Visitors to Canberra often complain of getting lost and 'going round in circles'; Canberra residents using the ACTION bus service the first time also complain of 'going round in circles'; and now the public debate about light rail is also ....

Fellow Guild member John Murphy also contributed three works. I thought his latest work was very good, and deserved a mention.

*Rosina Wainwright*

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### RAFFAN RECOMMENDS

This month, Richard draws our attention to the remarkable work of American furniture-maker turned sculptor, James McNabb, who has used the familiar and humble workshop workhorse, the bandsaw, to produce a collection of extraordinary wooden 'cityscapes' entitled "**Metros**":

<http://www.thisiscolossal.com/2014/10/new-wood-cityscapes-sculpted-with-a-bandsaw-by-james-mcnabb/?src=footer>

McNabb has described his work as "*sketching with a bandsaw*" — perhaps this could be an inspiration for the next Creative Weekend, or even a "Bandsaw SIG"?



## SNAKES ALIVE

I have recently been sponsored to do the Wildcare snake-handling course, which will qualify me to rescue (yes, rescue!) black, brown and tiger snakes with proper equipment. *[That's a relief, Vivien — I thought you were about to describe some sort of religious ritual! Ed]* In the last few years, a brown snake has been seen around the Guild Shed, and has again been spotted basking in the sun on the road in the last few months. From my recent education, I can assure members that it is HIGHLY unlikely it will attempt to enter the main Shed, but it may be spotted moving around the sheds, or having a snooze in the sun.

**If you come across this snake, please do nothing to it.** Do not attempt to chase it away, or capture and relocate it yourself. Remember, it is illegal to injure or kill a snake. If it is seen somewhere near one of the open roller doors, or the main door, close the doors carefully so as not to accidentally injure it if it sticks its head in. Snakes only move around buildings blocking the path they are travelling, so once this snake has worked its way around, it will move away. Snakes are not naturally aggressive, and are not attracted to people, or activity. Vibration through the ground, especially given the amount of operating machinery in the Shed, is a good deterrent.

If you spot a snake and want to keep an eye on it to see where it goes, they are very visible in short grass, so don't feel the need to get too curious and close. The chances of getting bitten by a snake in Australia is less than being struck by lightning, but most of those who have been bitten have been attempting something silly. Our snakes also have the choice to inject venom or not, so sometimes the first strike is just a warning, but if the snake feels threatened, the second strike won't be so subtle!

In the ACT, snakes are the responsibility of TAMS (Territory and Municipal Services) and the Parks and Recreation Rangers, but because they can be overloaded, Wildcare handlers are often called. Because of this, and my upcoming qualifications as a snake handler, there are a few options of who to call if advice is needed. The instinctive reaction of all humans even on just seeing a snake is fear — there is no shame in ringing someone for reassurance, or advice. Some handy numbers to know are:

Canberra Connect:	13 22 81
Wildcare:	6299 1966
Me (Vivien Laycock):	0438 877 711

All snake calls are handled with a series of questions to assess if a handler is required, or what action may need to be taken. Two of the most important questions are: *'Is it in a location that could pose a threat to human life?'*; and *'Do you have eyes on it right now?'*. A handler will not be dispatched for a snake just passing by, or if the whereabouts of the snake are unknown by the time the handler arrives, as it is often impossible to track it down.

If a snake enters a building, it may often be unable to find its way back out, but if it can be clearly seen, it is still worth standing back and giving it the opportunity to escape, before making a call. If this unlikely situation were to occur in the main Shed at the Guild, closing any doors behind it would ensure the handler would have a good chance of removing it. A similar principle would apply to the turners' shed, project shed, forge, chemical shed, or either of the containers — if you close the door when it is inside, its location is known. Mobile phone reception inside the Shed is not often reliable, so if you need to go outside to call someone about a trapped snake, go out one of the opposite doors to where you saw the snake and close the door behind you.

There aren't that many places for a snake to curl up and hide around the Shed, apart from the obvious timber storage area, so as a precaution, wear gloves if you are rearranging timber, especially at the back.

Remember — snakes are not out to get you, and are usually just doing their own thing. Let live, and live!

*Vivien Laycock*



**Eastern Brown Snake — *Pseudonaja textilis***

## RE-USE / RECYCLE CHALLENGE

The Section Head of the Crafts Expo at the Canberra Show, Kay Sharp, has asked me to draw Guild members' attention to a new feature being introduced to the Show. A **Re-use / Recycling Challenge** will be introduced at the 2016 Crafts Expo, and the 2015 Expo in February will be used to promote this new challenge.

The Crafts Expo are looking for examples of re-use or recycling of all kinds of materials and mediums into craft objects which can be displayed in the Craft Pavilion. Kay has said that it would be greatly appreciated if the Woodcraft Guild was able to provide an example of an object made from re-used / recycled wood. The display would ideally have 'before' and 'after' photos, and information about the recycled materials used.

If any member is able to contribute an object to this display, please contact me. The object would need to be ready by the third week in February, 2015.

**Rod Tier, Chief Steward, Woodcraft, Canberra Show 0408 278 460 [editor@woodcraftguild.org.au](mailto:editor@woodcraftguild.org.au)**

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## TURNING GETS EXCITING

Vice-President and woodturner of note, Les Fortescue, has sent in the following photographs with the comment: *"From large Jarrah Burl Bowl to ceiling sculpture — them's the breaks ..."*



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## COMMISSION REQUEST

The Guild has received a request for assistance from James Morris, who says *"I have a large one-piece chess board with leather tiles. I have been trying to find someone who would be able to basically cut it in half, to make it a foldable type and easier to store. The chess board is approximately 60cm x 60cm, but I am not sure what wood was used to create it. It is quite difficult to store at that size, so I am looking for someone to cut it in half, and dress up the cut area a bit. I am not looking for a hinged board or anything, just two separate halves."*

If anyone is able to help James with this project, please contact him direct on **0408 236 457**, or at [jamesmorris15@bigpond.com](mailto:jamesmorris15@bigpond.com) — he notes that *"email is best as I rarely have access to my phone"*.

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## TOY- BOYS

Toy SIG member Gai Simpson has sent in this snap of her “toy-boys” and their annual roundup of wooden toys for charities — over two hundred, I understand. Well done, Toy SIG!



## MARYMEAD

While on the subject of the Toy SIG and their annual good deeds, I should also mention that the Guild stand at the recent Marymead Fete sold a record **\$1,147** worth of toys and other woodwork, all proceeds being donated to the charity at the end of the day — and Yr Ed won a bottle of ‘Chivas Regal’ Cooking Whisky (that’s what my Scots uncle called any whisky which was not single malt) on the Chocolate Wheel!

***Editor***



### Marymead Scene:

Immediate Past President Dan Steiner attempts to turn spinning tops under the watchful supervision of Toy SIG member Ian Fitzpatrick, and the critical gaze of potential customers.

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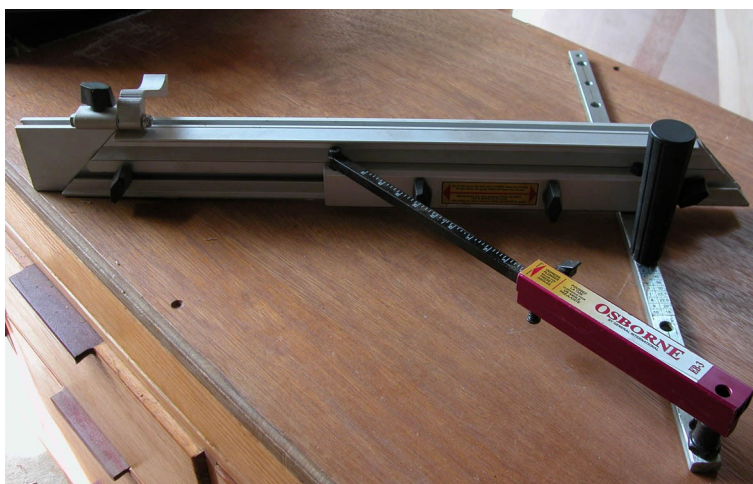
## FOR SALE

### Mitre Guide

**Osborne Mitre Guide**, little used, as I have standardized all my accessories to Incra gear. Comes with a manual.

Price: \$95

Contact: **Joe Czerwinski** on 6154 3065, or  
[hotbar@iinet.net.au](mailto:hotbar@iinet.net.au)



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### Tool Box

**Tool Box**, 660x380x380mm.

Price: \$50

**Trolley / Bench**, 920x530x760mm.

Price: \$10

Contact: **Richard Raffan** on 0408 566 673 or at  
[raffan@homemail.com.au](mailto:raffan@homemail.com.au)

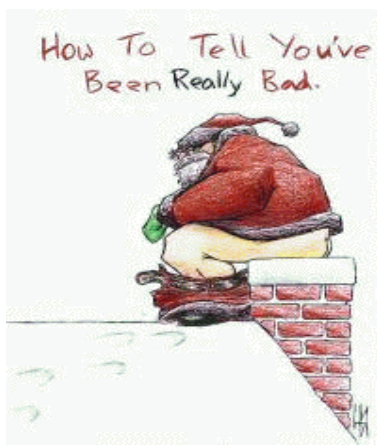


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### *Post Scriptum*

**Remember:**

**Santa Claus is Coming to Town ...**



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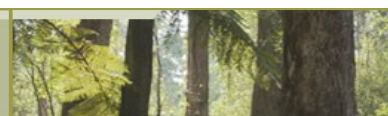
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