

# Woodworkers Association of NSW

## Newsletter

November/December 2011

PO Box 1016 Bondi Junction NSW 1355



ABN: 51 544 262 364

## Treasure! From the Chair

*I think of treasure as being something unexpected that gives a tremor of excitement and delight when it is discovered. It doesn't have to be gold coins in a chest dug up on a remote beach, it can be found on the side of the street at council collection time. And it can apply to people.*

It was with that in mind that I introduced Hugh Jones, harp-maker extraordinaire, as a national treasure when he attended our last general meeting. Hugh provided a fascinating account of how he has produced the world's first ergonomic harp, and showed us some of the techniques he used to craft the instrument.

We are fortunate in our association to have many people who are treasures. Some are well-known and have achieved recognition in one form or another. Many have not, and it is only when one takes the time to scratch the surface that one reveals the real treasure. That was one of the joys of reading David Hire's interviews with members and discovering more about them.

Now that David has retired from that activity, I would encourage others to take it up - to take a moment, ask a few questions and share the answers with the rest of us. Of course it requires willing participants. Most woodworkers are reticent about publicity, but this is more of an educational activity that benefits and inspires others.



## A shed starts to become a workshop

On Sunday 30 October 2011 Malcolm Macaulay brought two Domino cutters to the shed to demonstrate and make available to members. St Andrews Cathedral School kindly supplied the Domino cutters. Members provided the interest.

More photos on page 2.



... more next page

## ... More treasure

On the topic of treasures, Terry (HNT) Gordon has agreed to have a number of his planes on display, and for people to use, at our final meeting of the year (Monday, 5 December) at our workshop at Abbotsford. These planes are a delight to use (even by someone like me!) and Terry is offering a discount to members who place orders that night. Delivery is guaranteed by Christmas. So this is a special opportunity to help someone who doesn't know what to get you for Christmas.

Next year we are having our professionals' exhibition in August at Chifley Tower in the city and our first-ever all-members exhibition at the NSW Parliament House in September. As well there are the displays at the Royal Easter Show in April and the Timber and Working with Wood Show in June. I think we can re-name 2012 as the Year of Exhibitions for the WWA.

The requirements of the all-members exhibition are simple: each member contributes a piece that he or she has made, designed or commissioned (at any time) that is predominantly made

of wood and does not bring the association into disrepute. Easy.

But while you are thinking about that, why not think about going the next step and making something to enter into the Show competitions: the more entries, the greater the interest. And after all, we all know it is not about winning - it is the personal challenge, the sense of achievement and accolades from family and friends that count. -

Now that we have regular monthly get-togethers at the workshop (last Sunday of the month), we are arranging other workshops for particular interests. One is the workshop with Silas Kopf who is visiting from Massachusetts in March. More details appear later in the newsletter. From all accounts Silas is a superb craftsman with very special talents. For anyone interested in marquetry, it promises to be a fabulous opportunity to learn from one of the world's masters.

Best wishes to everyone for a wonderful Christmas break.

**Phil Greenwood**



**The association workshop  
is open every last Sunday of  
each month**

# What's your woodwork story!

What started it and what do you still love about it?

Too easy: 600 words, 3 images to [jhn@bigpond.com](mailto:jhn@bigpond.com)

Prizes for the best stories: watch this space for more late-breaking details

## Copy deadlines for next year's newsletters

Friday 6 January for the February edition

Friday 2 March for the April edition

Friday 4 May for the June edition

Friday 6 July for the August edition

Friday 31 August for the October edition

Friday 2 November for the December edition

## Next WWANSW meeting - 7 for 7.30pm, Monday 5 December 2011

@ the Abbotsford shed, Spring Street, Abbotsford

# Silas Kopf

## Marquetry Weekend

Focusing on instruction in the technique of double bevel sawing. Silas will demonstrate the double bevel technique by sawing a series of examples. Participants will then have the opportunity to practice cutting, using hand fret saws.

Silas will also discuss inlay, parquetry, banding, Boule technique, and using marquetry as decoration on furniture (and how it has been used historically). There will also be opportunity to ask questions about individual projects.

Silas Kopf is a leading practitioner of marquetry in the US and has been making furniture for over 35 years.

He apprenticed with Wendell Castle and studied traditional marquetry technique at the École Boulle in Paris.

He wrote *A Marquetry Odyssey* and produced the DVD, *The Master Techniques of Marquetry*.

Examples of his work can be found at [www.silaskopf.com](http://www.silaskopf.com)

Location and final cost TBA. Only 15 places available. Enquires have already been made so 'first in best dressed'.

Express your interest to Gordon Joseph  
secretary@woodworkersnsw.org.au  
or 02 9488 9191

## Wood courses at Sturt 2011

### Weekly Classes:

Mondays and Tuesdays 6-9pm (\$480 for 10 week term)

### Short Courses:

Power tools for women with Katalin Sallai  
13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> August 2011 (\$260 + \$30 materials)  
Easy Start: Intro to woodwork with Daryl Ingate  
9<sup>th</sup> September (\$40)  
Hand finishing (Tutor to be confirmed)  
22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2011 (\$260 + materials)  
Build a work bench with David Uphill-Brown  
7<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> November 2011 (\$1260 + materials)



### Winter School 4<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> July 2011:

Wood carving with Grant Vaughan (course full)  
Marquetry with Katalin Sallai (\$580 + \$45 materials)

### 12 Week courses:

15<sup>th</sup> August - 4<sup>th</sup> November with David Uphill-Brown (\$6300)  
30<sup>th</sup> January - 20<sup>th</sup> April 2012 with David Uphill-Brown (\$6500)

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[www.sturt.nsw.edu.au](http://www.sturt.nsw.edu.au)

## Sturt School, Mittagong

### End of student year Sturt exhibition

The exhibition will be opened by Leon Sadubin at 11am  
on Saturday 26 November 2011  
The exhibition runs until 11 December  
- an event well worth the trip.

### Summer School 2012 Courses

From 3 to 8 January 2012 - of most probable interest to members:

*Tool making: dovetail saw* with Paul Nicholson and  
*Woodwork: coffee table* by Leon Sadubin.

More details of other courses, costs and application procedures @  
[www.sturt.nsw.edu.au/course\\_summer.htm](http://www.sturt.nsw.edu.au/course_summer.htm)



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## Association Show Subcommittee

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bers to get involved  
with the sub-com-  
mittee to organise  
the association's  
part in the Timber  
and Working With  
Wood Show next  
year. This is a lot  
of fun so please let  
our chairman know  
if you can assist.

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- Allows for rapid retooling
- Solid cast iron planer tables
- 3 knife quick-change self-setting cutterblock system
- Very solid fence
- 2.5 hp/single phase



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## I own a piece of Parker furniture - integrity and perfection

Every year, as an apprentice cabinet-maker in the 1950s, and as a furniture designer and teacher during the second half of the 1900s, I eagerly visited the annual Furniture Exhibition, in Sydney, to see the Parker stand.

Parker, with a few other manufacturers, showed the lead in innovative design, new timbers, and veneers and hardware, which created design trends in Australian furniture. Making my own furniture in 1961, I was influenced by Parker design (and of others): teak veneered board, teak and Blackwood solid timbers, and oiled finishes in a Scandinavian Danish design.

Parker's showroom at Seven Hills was full of quality, well-designed, functional furniture. When I visited apprentices at Seven Hills as a Technical Teacher, the factory lay-out, with the latest machinery, gave apprentices the highest training available. And throughout the last half of the 20th Century, people were proud to say: I own a piece of Parker furniture.

Alan G. Perry

B.Ed.(Tech), Dip Teach.(Tech)

Cabinetmaker, Designer, Restorer

Alan Perry started at Sydney furniture manufacturer Ricketts and Thorp in 1954 as an apprentice cabinetmaker in the sewing machine section and cabinet shop. He went on to become a draughtsman and furniture designer, estimator and site supervisor.

In 1973 he joined TAFE, where he taught cabinetmaking to apprentices and tradesman of all ages in colleges in Sydney (as well as a year at London College of Furniture).

In 1989 Alan became Head Teacher of Cabinetmaking at Lidcombe TAFE, where he then taught for 10 years, only retiring in 1998. Alan was involved in the National Curriculum in Furniture Trades, visiting industry at as much as possible and working with employer groups and State high schools.

He has a special interest in late 19th Century Arts and Crafts furniture. He's published histories of several NSW 20th Century furniture manufacturers and he presents to societies and interest groups on the furniture industry and specific woodworking skills. He is a founder of the Furniture History Society (Australasia) and a Woodworkers Association of NSW member.

# A piece of Parker

A history of Parker Furniture: 1935-1995, by Alan Perry



Parker in 1987

## Part 3

So far . . .

By the end of part 2 in the last issue, we get to where Parker was one of the first to import new machinery to use with the new board. By this time Parker had approx 150 employees. In 1968 Parker introduced a range of traditional furniture in American walnut.

The 1970s: In 1971, the Parker family said "No" emphatically to a big American take-over bid. Tony, Ross and their family all said no, wanting to keep ownership within the Parker family. It would have been a pity to lose the individual company.

Furniture continued in the Danish style, using teak, with oiled finishes and introducing wall units with interchangeable modular sections, and buffets having top sections with display and cocktail falls. The doors had moulded edges and bases with trestle type legs.

In 1972, Jack Parker went into full retirement. In 1975 the company built a new factory and show-room at 45 Powers Road, Seven Hills. A visit to the

site saw great stacks of teak timber being air-dried outside for seven to eight months before use. This achieved stable teak components that would not move, shrink or crack. The complete range of furniture was displayed in a beautifully designed mezzanine floor showroom.

The factory was well set out with all the latest machinery and modern processes that provided top class training to many apprentices. Show-rooms were also established in Melbourne (40 Claremont St, South Yarra.) and Brisbane, (6 Mayneview Street, Milton).

Buffets had doors with heavily moulded edges and timber handles in the centre of the doors on a stool base or a solid plinth with mechanical levelling devices. Teak tables numbers 90,92,93,99,109 &140 were round, oval, square and rectangular with folding and drawer leaf extensions.

Chairs were made with turned front and back legs or sculptured legs, with an upholstered centre back splat and seat. A range of occasional furniture such as bars, bar stools, writing desks,

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## . . . more Parker part 3

tray mobiles, coffee tables and hall cabinets complimented the main range.

A range of furniture with heavier sized rectangular timber sections were advertised under the Australian trend names 'Squatter', 'Settler', 'Macquarie' and 'Nepean'. Wall units and buffets had generous timber proportions to the door, stiles and rails.

In the late 70s a classical collection in teak and walnut were sold, comprising elegant tables with round sculptured feet, nicely shaped chair backs with upholstered back splats and seats. Parker was still using teak, but some pieces used European oak veneer with Tasmanian oak solids finished in many colours. Clients found that they could mix and match most of their Parker furniture.

The 80s: Jack Parker died aged 78 in 1981. In 1983, Tony's son, Michael, joined the business in sales and his daughter, Vicki in 1985. The 80s saw Parker produce a series 'Options' for furniture buyers in 'Traditional', 'Cottage' and 'Rural' accents range, which

was a far cry from what modern meant in the 50s. Modern furniture was now available in lighter colours using Tasmanian Ash and elm. The sofas and chairs were larger and laid-back and soft with pastel coloured leathers used in the upholstery.

In 1984, Parker was presented with the 1984 International Furniture/ Europe Award, Paris, Tony and Ross Parker travelled to France to receive the award.

At the invitation of the Japanese Government, Parker mounted a presentation of modern furniture, modified to suit Japanese interiors at the Furniture Trade Fair in Tokyo in 1985

1985 Parker Furniture celebrated its 50th birthday as a family business of 'Integrity and Perfection' in fine furniture. It was the largest furniture manufacturer in Australia with a staff of over 300. The business was based upon stylish good looks and old fashioned craftsmanship emphasizing the quality

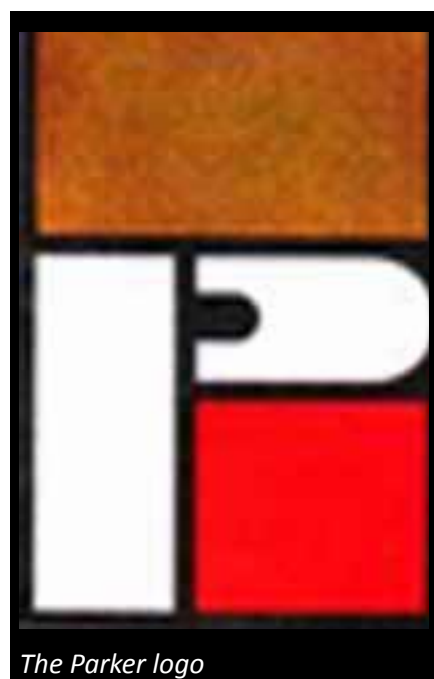
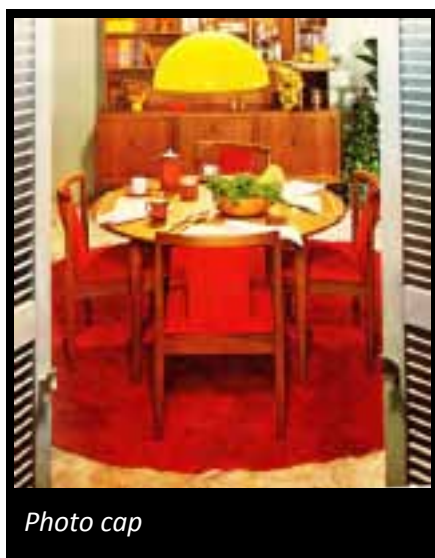
of manufacture.

On the 6th of August 1985 Tony and Ross hosted a dinner to celebrate the 50 years with guests from major retail stores and employees, some of whom had 35 years of service.

Emphasis was placed on dowel and tenon joints in leg and rail construction, machine dovetail joints in their drawers and beautifully crafted multi-tongued corner blocks to chairs and tables giving all Parker Furniture carried a 10 year structural guarantee.

Parker was selected to supply dining room and reception chairs to the new Parliament House in Canberra (opened 1988), individually designed by the architects. Each new Parliament house chair was upholstered to enrich the surrounding appointments and reflect the consistency and quality of workmanship of the House's interiors.

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# Member discounts

*These people generously provide discounts to members of the WWA NSW. Please support them in return*

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## For sale



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*\$100 for non-members*

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### • Triton workcentre and router table

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### • Terry Gleeson's

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F: 02 9651 1341

[thechairmaker@ozemail.com.au](mailto:thechairmaker@ozemail.com.au)

To update a listing and for new listings email [jhn@bigpond.com](mailto:jhn@bigpond.com)



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If you'd like to join the  
committee, or be more  
involved in the association,  
please call Gordon Joseph

## NSW WWA Committee

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