

The Woodworkers' Association of NSW Incorporated

January/February 2018

From the Chair

A very happy New Year to all members and their families! I hope it has been a joyous and relaxing time for everyone, with an opportunity to reflect on what is important and to consider priorities for 2018.

You will see that this Newsletter is a little different from past editions. We welcome your feedback.

The article on the Henry Kendall Collection exposes a concerning state of affairs and raises the question of what action our Association should take, if any, to encourage the Forests Corporation of NSW to preserve, display and enlarge this significant Collection. It also serves to remind us of the extent and diversity of

talented

woodworkers in

Australia who deserve, and require, our respect and support.

They enrich, inspire and educate us.

The priority for our Association is to make sure we pursue each of the objectives in our Constitution (listed overleaf). We are doing that in a number of ways - through our meetings, our Workshop, our Newsletter, arranging courses and visits for members and participating in shows and exhibitions.

We are looking to make some changes so that our Association is catering to all our members - professionals and amateurs. We would appreciate your suggestions and involvement.

Our next meeting (see below) will involve some reflection and ideas for the future. I hope you can come. It may be a very important meeting for our Association.

Phil Greenwood



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WWA objectives

The objects of the Association are:

- to provide a forum for networking and to encourage camaraderie amongst all those who work in wood
- to promote public awareness and appreciation of fine woodwork
- to encourage creativity, design and development of skills and application by all woodworkers
- to represent professional woodworkers and promote sustainability of fine woodwork as a career
- to promote awareness of environmental issues including encouraging the judicious use of our precious native timber resources and use sustainable harvested, recycled and reclaimed timbers.

WWA Life Members

Richard Crosland

Phil Lake

Kim Larymore

Leon Sadubin

Richard Vaughan

Our next meeting

Monday, 5 February 2018 from 7.15pm

Guest speakers: Leon Sadubin and a distinguished panel of professional members

Please note the venue for this meeting is not at the Workshop but a few streets away at the **Chiswick Community centre**, corner of Blackwall Point Rd and Parkview Rd, Chiswick, pictured below. Plenty of parking is available in the surrounding streets.

The venue is being used immediately before us so we will not be able to start until **7.15pm**



Our guest speaker is **Leon Sadubin**, master woodworker, designer, furniture maker and sculptor.

Leon was one of the founding members of our Association. Now 40 years on, Leon will recount how and why it all started and the changes that he has seen over that time in woodworking in Australia.

Leon's talk will be followed by a panel discussion about what such changes mean for our Association. Panel members will include some of our distinguished professional members - Darren Oates, Scott Zeller, Stuart Faulkner and Peter Stibilj.

We are keen to hear your views as well, so we hope you will be able to join us and have your say.

The Henry Kendall Collection

For some years I have heard people refer in passing to the wonderful “Henry Kendall collection” of Australian woodwork. However, when I asked about it, no-one seemed to know what was actually in the collection, where it was or why it was called the “Henry Kendall collection”.

With the help of Tim Parkes (Forestry Corporation of NSW in Coffs Harbour), John Vanderkolk (gifted woodworker and sculptor based in Woolgoolga near Coffs) and some of the artists represented in the Collection, this is what I have found out, so far...

Henry Kendall (1840-1882) is widely known as an Australian poet with an abiding love for the Australian bush. But that was not all he did.

In 1881 the Premier of NSW, Sir Henry Parkes, decided it would be a good idea to create a Forestry Commission for NSW and appoint an Inspector of Forests to supervise and protect the colony's forest reserves. Henry Kendall was a friend of Sir Henry and he was appointed as the first Inspector of Forests.

Kendall had worked for some years for William and Joseph Fagan in their timber business in Camden Haven on the north coast of NSW (now known as Kendall). He was an excellent horseman but did not enjoy good health.



He took his role as Inspector very seriously and travelled extensively by horseback to remote NSW forests. The work was arduous and after 16 months as Inspector he collapsed whilst in Wagga Wagga and passed away shortly thereafter. He was just 43 years old when he died.

In 1981, to celebrate the centenary of his appointment and the creation of the Commission, the Forestry Commission of NSW showed great foresight in deciding to establish a permanent collection of unique pieces to display the variety and aesthetic qualities of Australian timbers.

The stated purpose of the Collection was to encourage the development of Australian culture as expressed through creative work with Australian timber. The work was to demonstrate a *high*

standard of artistic expression and craft capability. One of the conditions for inclusion in the Collection was that each article *must express Australian attitudes and aspirations.*



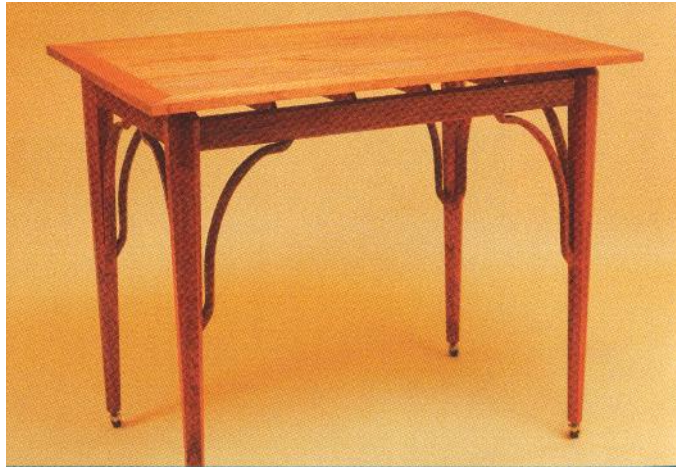
It was necessary to develop further criteria for the selection of pieces for the Collection. Other conditions were:

- *the piece must be unique and the original work of the creator*
- *at least 75% by weight of the article must be Australian native timber*

- the creator must be resident in Australia whilst the work is being created
- the work done on the article must be by hand. Instruments used to create the article must be guided personally at all times by the creator and the work must not be done by any machine operating without constant human surveillance.

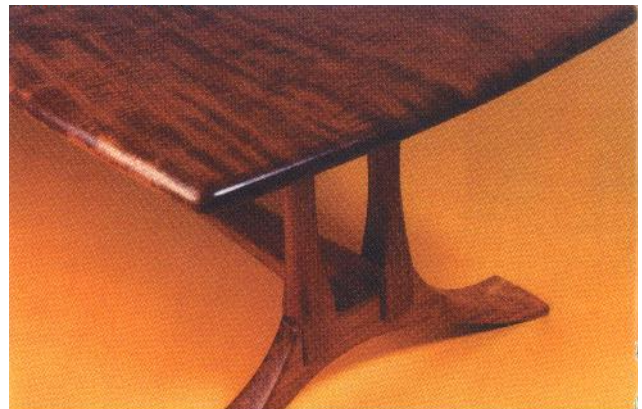
A committee was appointed by the Forestry Commission to oversee acquisitions to the Collection and to receive expert advice. It was intended that the collection would grow steadily through an annual acquisition to ensure *both the collection's growth and its continuing relevance to the appreciation of contemporary work*. A fund was established to achieve that end.

Seventeen pieces were acquired from 1982 to 1990. The first item in the collection was a solid red cedar *Champagne table* made by Alain Babinard (*pictured right*), a member of our original association, the Woodworkers Group of NSW.



That was followed shortly after with the purchase of a sculpture by Gerard Evers, one of Australia's leading stone and wood sculptors from the 1930's until his passing in 1962. It was entitled *Flight of Birds* (*previous page*).

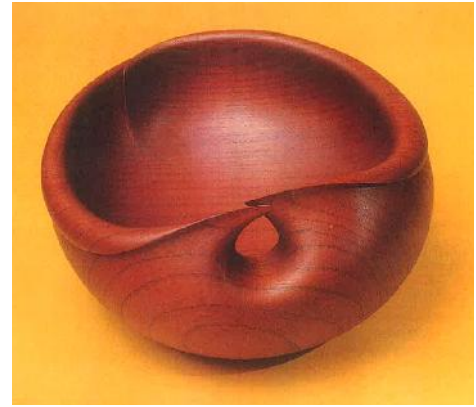
Officers of the Forestry Commission attended exhibitions conducted by our Association and purchased items for the collection from renowned woodworkers. These included Peter Freeland's sculpture, *Life on Venus* (*next page*) which was acquired in 1983 at the Association's exhibition and a blackwood and sally wattle coffee table by Tony Kenway (*right*) at the 1987 WWA Opera House exhibition.



Both functional and decorative forms are represented in the collection, with carving and sculpture predominating. The sculptural pieces include Peter Carrigy's intricate works *Life springs eternal* and *Night Heron* (below), Adrian Delpreat's *Reeds* in coachwood and a *Hermit crab* by Clive Price incorporating Queensland maple and silky oak (also below).

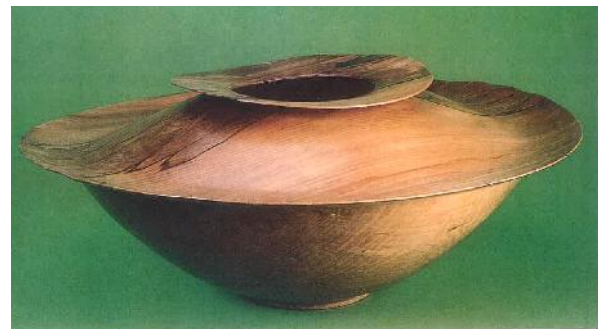


Stefan Bruggisser sculpted *Guardians of the Forest* from river red gum to symbolise the care of our forests by indigenous people and latter-day foresters. The work was built into the Forestry Commission's office in Albury in 1983. That building is now owned by Sturt University. Grant Vaughan carved a superb red cedar bowl (right) which was purchased at the Craft Expo at Centrepoin in 1985. Sadly it was stolen at an exhibition in 2002.



Nick Hill is represented in the Collection with an octagonal occasional table of blue gum and spotted gum. The Collection also includes bowls turned by Gene Wilsford, Neil Cromer and Bob Harris using huon pine, river red gum and celery top pine, and a red cedar platter by Don Lee.

The last acquisition was in 1990. It is a sculptural work *Waves of Excitement II* by Lex Whadcoat (right) turned from a single piece of southern sassafras.



The collection was housed at the Forestry Commission headquarters in Sydney and then the library of the Forestry Commission at West Pennant Hills. However when the library was closed many years ago, the collection was dispersed and some of

the items were placed in storage. One piece remains at West Pennant Hills (*Life on Venus*) (left), five are in the office of the Forestry Corporation at Coffs Harbour (*Flight of Birds*, *Reeds* (next page), *Hermit crab*, *Champagne table* and the cedar platter), two are currently on display at the Wauchope Historic Society Museum (*Waves of Excitement II* and *Night Heron*). The others are in storage at Sawtell.



In 2011, Paul Gregson was engaged to inspect the Collection and report on the condition of each item. He assessed the available items, recorded the damage that some items had sustained and specified the work that was required to restore each item. That work has not been completed. John Vanderkolk undertook some painstaking restoration of *Hermit crab*.

The future of the Collection is uncertain. It has no home. For the past 27 years there have been no acquisitions. It has not been displayed for more than a decade. Some items remain damaged, others continue to deteriorate. The status of the fund established for the Collection is unknown but it does not appear to be utilised for the benefit of the Collection.



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If you'd like to join or assist the Committee or be more involved in the Association, please call a Committee member.

It was a visionary move in 1981 to establish this permanent Collection but now, with items scattered and in storage, it is hard to describe it accurately as a "Collection". It is certainly no longer contemporary or meeting the original objective of showing the public the depth and variety of the craftsmanship of Australian woodworkers.

There are several issues that require addressing. First, the restoration of the existing collection. It needs to be done expertly and, wherever possible, should involve the original artists.

Secondly, a home for the Collection needs to be found so these public assets can be on permanent display or, at least, regularly displayed to members of the public. The Australian International Timber and Woodworking Festival in October 2018 at Queanbeyan and Bungendore could be an excellent opportunity to display the collection and invite the represented artists to view their works and speak about them.

Thirdly, consideration needs to be given to the future of the Collection. Australia has a wealth of amazing woodworkers who deserve recognition by having pieces of their work included in such a collection. The original intention of the Collection can still be achieved if adequately resourced and with an appropriate governance structure.

Few people know of the Henry Kendall Collection. The Woodworkers Association of NSW is perhaps the only interested group in a position to make representations to the Forestry Corporation to save, expose and enhance this Collection. It seems a worthwhile activity for us to undertake on behalf of the artists represented in the Collection, the entire woodworking community and all members of the NSW public.

Phil Greenwood



At our last meeting ...

Paul Gregson shows some stunning restorations

Paul Gregson is a practising conservator/restorer, traditional furniture maker, polisher, woodturner, upholsterer and gilder among other disciplines. He has been a long-standing member of our Association

Paul kindly gave an interesting talk at our December general meeting about his work and the approach he takes and the decisions required. Over the years, Paul has acquired an extensive knowledge of timbers so he can faithfully replace any broken or missing components with the same timber. All objects are photographed before being dismantled (as necessary), glue is removed, joints cleaned and rebuilt using the purest of hide glue.

Dismantling may involve loosening joints by injecting warm water, steaming the joint, heating with a hair dryer or even using a microwave oven. Care and attention to detail are always a high priority as many of these objects are unique, often valuable and mean a lot to their owners.

Paul brought and displayed antique boxes and chairs for discussion and showed a series of photos that covered some of his work.



Amongst the boxes was a Germanic folk art painted box, an Australian Tea Caddy of Musk and Casuarina and an 18th century tortoiseshell and silver inlaid English caddy

The chairs included a 19th century French gilded salon chair (*pictured above*) which was one of four needing re-upholstery and an early 19th century Anglo-Indian sabre leg chair with cane seat and press inlay. The frame was made from Beech but had been overgrained in faux Rosewood-style.

He also showed a c1720 English Wing chair on cabriole legs in "Virginian" Walnut which needed complete structural rehabilitation and traditional re-upholstery and a 19th century French Oak chair in original condition with stamped leather of Pan and foliate pattern to the backrest and seat and trimmed with beautiful original brass studs (*pictured above, behind Paul*).

Photographs that Paul showed included Dorothea McKellar's bookcase (c1820-1830) that Paul and his client flew to California to purchase and repatriate. It now is located in the Mint building in Macquarie St, Sydney.

He also showed a 1720 William and Mary chest of drawers which he worked on over a period of 11 years.

One of Paul's unusual projects was the re-gilding of the herald Moroni, playing a trumpet, atop the spire of the Australian Temple of the Church of the Latter Day Saints in Carlingford. This prominent and well known feature needed scaffolding to work on and could only be re-gilded at night when there was little or no air movement. About 100 leaves of 23ct gold were applied.

Other major projects Paul has worked on include the dining table at Kirribilli House which came from The Vineyard at Rydalmere (later named Subiaco) and was probably owned by Hannibal Hawkins Macarthur. The table was acquired from the Benedictine nuns in 1988 missing 5 leaves and "travelling/support legs". Paul made the 5 leaves and legs and associated hardware from Cedar to match exactly the existing table.

He has undertaken extensive work at "Swifts", Darling Point - described by the Australian Heritage Council as "perhaps the grandest house remaining in Sydney" - including making replicas of the dining chairs and attending to restoration and polishing of the joinery.

Paul had also made the Wardroom Table for HMAS Brisbane which carried a magnificent inlay of the ship's mascot, a panther. Also shown were photos of the wardroom table he made for HMAS Success.

Paul's decades of study and work gave him the traditional skills necessary to perform this work. Paul's confident approach attracts many commissions. He impressed everyone with the variety and amount of work he had undertaken. He is a man of extraordinary erudition but, as he said, "I'm always studying and learning".

Oliver Addis

Some interesting websites

One of our members, Steve Townsend, has recommended these Youtube links for your edification and enjoyment -

Fixing woodwork mistakes. Of course you don't make them but watch this and you'll be able to advise people who do:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-TWPIUI2jM>

Forgotten joinery techniques

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMg46pwSlc0>

Please send your recommendations and we will publish them in upcoming newsletters.

Equipment in the workshop

Members are reminded that our Workshop at 1 Spring St, Abbotsford is equipped with a wide range of fine equipment for your use including the sliding table saw, 2 band saws, jointer, thicknesser, lathe, router table, wide belt sander, finisher and a good range of hand tools.

The Workshop is open every Wednesday and Sunday from about 10am to about 3pm, and other times by arrangement with a Committee member.

For the safety of members and guests, members do need to be accredited to use the powered equipment. Accreditation can be simply arranged with one of the Workshop supervisors or by contacting a member of the Committee.

There is a daily \$5 fee for using the Workshop which goes towards the maintenance of the equipment. Any inquiries to David Palmer secretary.woodworkersnsw@gmail.com.

Dates for your diary

As well as our General Meeting on **5 February** and the Workshop being open to members each Wednesday and Sunday...

Saturday, 17 Feb - Make a trivet - Steve Townsend and John Kirkwood will conduct a workshop to develop members' skills using the tablesaw, crosscut sled and router to produce perfect lap joints. The skills will be used to make a trivet which will be completed at the workshop. Limited to 6 members. Cost: \$90. **FULLY SUBSCRIBED**

17-18 February - Tools and Techniques Weekend at Sturt Gallery, Mittagong

18 Feb - 8 April - "Chatoyance", new work by members of **Studio Woodworkers Australia**, Sturt Gallery, Mittagong. An exhibition on collaborations and mentorships. Opening 18 Feb at 10am by Richard Munao, Founder and Managing Director of Cult Design.

23 March - 3 April - Sydney Royal Easter Show at Olympic Park.

Monday, 9 April - WWA Annual General Meeting and the presentation of members' boxes and prize-giving. Please come along.

Saturday, 12 May - WWA Annual Sharpening Day will be held at the Workshop from 10am-2pm.

Come and observe and try different techniques of sharpening. Bring along some chisels or plane blades that need fine-tuning.



22-24 June - Sydney Timber and Working with Wood Show is on at the Sydney Showgrounds at Olympic Park.

Saturday, 14 July - WWA Plane Day.

At the Workshop from 10am-2pm. All about how to restore and tune a plane, and what plane is best for which job. Planing techniques and strategies.

Saturday, 4 August - AWR Live, Sydney CBD. A half day conference for woodworkers interested in design. More details available at www.woodreview.com.au.

4, 6,7, 10,11 September - WWA Annual Box-making Workshop will be conducted by Peter Harris. Limited to 6 members. \$250, payable in advance. Please register interest to David Palmer at secretary.woodworkersnsw@gmail.com.

17-21 October - Wood Dust, the Australian International Timber and Woodworking Festival in Queanbeyan and Bungendore, NSW. An opportunity for all Australian woodworkers, professionals and amateurs, to meet and share stories, techniques and wisdom. Featuring woodworking classes, lectures, displays, stalls and local and international celebrities. More details available at www.wooddustaustralia.com.



November - Making complex patterned bread boards. A workshop to be conducted by Brian Dawson.

www.woodworkersnsw.org.au

More about hinges ...

At our October general meeting, Angus Greenwood and Peter Harris gave a talk about hinges that was summarised in the last newsletter. **John Brassell** has this additional advice for members...

I can also recommend some small brass hinges that are ideal for small box lids. They don't have the finish of expensive hinges but this is not considered to be a problem because when mounted, the only portion of the hinge visible is the hinge barrel.

I purchased these hinges for \$19.00 for a pack of 10, so they are an economical choice for boxes of various types. The supplier was The Woodworks Book and Tool Co (see *advertisement later in the newsletter*).

The hinges are 25mm wide and 27mm high when open, the barrel is 3mm diameter. They require no screws to mount, instead they are inserted into slots cut into the lid and carcass, and are held in place by diecut or pressed barbs on each leaf.

Once mounted it is basically impossible to remove the hinges without tear-out of the slots. Accordingly it is recommended that for test fitting that the barbs be ground off one pair of hinges, also you can check the distance from the edge of the box to cut the slots, they have a bit of side ways movement for adjusting the carcass and lid.

To cut the slots a small scale blade and arbour are required, similar to those provided for use with a rotary tool like a Dremel. I purchased mine from the same place for about \$11.00.

I made a right angle MDF jig which I use when cutting the slots. I insert the cutter in the drill press, either raise the table to the required position with the cutter about 3 mm below the edge of the box or lid. The other way is to lower the quill down to the required position and lock the quill at the same setting, clamp the work to the jig and just slowly move towards the cutter and cut the slot before inserting the hinges.



You need to plane a small 45 degree chamfer on the back edge plus a small rabbet only where the barrel sits (*pictured above*). It sounds a lot but it is very simple and very quick once you are setup.

John Brassell

Special thanks to...

Peter Hunt for sending out all our membership renewals and our Workshop supervisors for December and January - **Gordon Joseph, John Brassell, David Palmer, Brian Dawson, Peter Harris, Peter Dunn** and **John Kirkwood**.

Welcome to our new members

Peter Jackson

Steve Farr

Stephen Hearn

Meet a member - Matt Dwight

How did your interest in woodworking begin?

I have a strong appreciation for nature and the magnificence of trees. My brother and our friends in the street that we grew up in were always making something - cubby houses, billy carts, skateboards etc. My interest in woodworking began formally when I started high school and was introduced to Woodwork and Metalwork in Year 7. I elected to study Woodwork from Year 8 through to year 12 and Technical Drawing up until year 10. I was lucky enough to see Leon Sadubin's work at his workshop and gallery in Thornleigh as a 14 year old. That was an inspiration.

How did you end up teaching?

I had great teachers at Epping Boys High School. I was head down bum up during woodwork and technical drawing classes. Those teachers and the fact that going to university and studying subjects that I enjoyed fitted in with my heavy involvement with Track and Field and at the time led me to study Industrial Arts Teaching rather than do an Apprenticeship.

I taught for three years while completing the Trade course in Cabinetmaking at night at Lidcombe TAFE. My teachers there again were great and included Jim Littlefield, one of the original members of the Woodworkers Association who encouraged me to join.

After three years teaching I took a year off and worked for a company in Manly Vale making furniture, office and hotel fit outs and cabinetmaking and joinery for architecturally designed homes. Since then it has been a combination of teaching, making furniture and woodturning.

Where is your woodworking career at the moment?

I am teaching at Pennant Hills High School three days a week and producing work for galleries the rest of the week - mostly woodturning and the odd piece of furniture to commission.

What do you find rewarding about teaching?

I think it is important to share knowledge and continue to learn. At any point I could have students bending and laminating timber, turning, carving, veneering, making musical instruments etc.

Over the years I have had a number of students go on to complete apprenticeships in Cabinetmaking or Carpentry and a few go on to study at Sturt.

What are you doing when you are not teaching or woodworking?

Walking the dog, surfing, diving, practicing meditation, spending time with my wife.

What is your favourite object that you have made from timber.

At the moment I am having a ridiculous amount of fun riding some Paipo's (traditional Hawaiian belly boards) that I made from Paulownia a few years ago. They are thin (12-16mm) and flex with the wave. It is a bit like body surfing at twice the speed. I get out of the water with a grin from ear to ear every time.

Other than that I like making useful objects that are also beautiful. I eat breakfast from turned timber plates and bowls using a wooden spoon that I hand carved with axe and knife. Our dining room table made from recycled Kauri Pine from when the science labs were flooded at the first school I taught is also a favourite.

Favourite timber.

I try to always work with salvaged, recycled or sustainably sourced timbers. As far as woodturning goes I work a lot with green timber, completing bowls and allowing them to warp or rough turning bowls and leaving them at least 6 months to season. Timbers like Claret Ash and Camphor Laurel work beautifully both wet and dry and move very little during the drying process.

Hand Tools or Machines?

I like to use machines to quickly and accurately get to the point of a project where the hand skills that add value to a project and distinguish it from the mass produced can be applied.

I enjoy the challenge and quiet of cutting dovetails for drawers and other joints by hand.



In terms of teaching my students they always start with hand tools. Hand tools are closer to the wood and they get an understanding of the difference between sharp and dull tools, cutting with as opposed to against the grain and how different timbers work when cutting, planning and chiselling. Once they have experienced hand tools, power tools and basic machines are introduced.

Favourite Hand Tool

My No.5 1/2 Stanley Plane.

Favourite Machine

Currently my Vicmarc VL300 Lathe.

What is the best advice you've received?

One of my TAFE teachers said - *Master the ability to cut to a line.* Once you can mark out accurately and cut to a line, you can make anything.

What is your design style?

Less is more. Clean lines, nice proportions, weight and balance. I like Shaker and Scandinavian furniture and pieces that show that timber comes from trees.

Who's work inspires you.

Woodturning - Richard Raffan, Terry Baker and Robin Wood.

Furniture - George Nakashima, Leon Sadubin, Tony Kenway's chairs and tables blow me away every time I see them, Jan Saltet's greenwood chairs.

Too many to mention really.

Where do you see yourself in the future?

A combination of making and teaching outside the education system.

I have a drive to be the best woodworker that I can. At the moment I am working out how I am going to make that happen. But I have also come to the conclusion that I also enjoy teaching and believe that it is important to share and give back.

For me whatever I do has to be sustainable. Less stuff, but better quality from sustainable materials. A move back to people making, growing, repairing what they need. People enjoying the experience of learning, making and using things rather than mindless consumption. MD



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