

# THE CUTTING- EDGE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

NO 21 JANUARY 2021

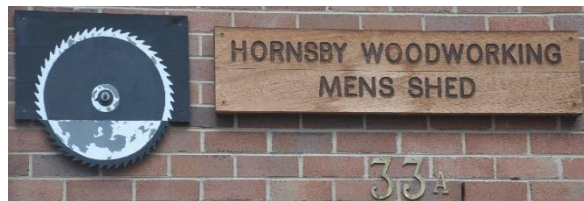
JOURNAL OF HORNSBY WOODWORKING MEN'S SHED INCORPORATED

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**HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL  
MEMBERS**

FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

A new year has begun, we wish you all the best for 2021.

The Shed reopened last Monday still under the cloud of COVID19. We urge you to take all necessary precautions to help halt the spread of this insidious disease. Following government guidelines, masks must be worn in the shed. Please maintain social distancing. We know you like to have a chat but please do not congregate. Keep doorways and aisles clear if you are helping someone please avoid contact.

Mentoring

The Shed has seen some resignations from our newer members because they were not getting enough help. While the activity of the Shed is not to teach, we do have a responsibility to encourage our new members to enjoy working with wood. Sometimes a new member is reluctant to ask a question because they feel they are intruding on someone's time or feel intimidated asking. Your committee has decided to set up a program for mentoring new members. A new member will be assigned a mentor who, for the first month, will monitor their activities and, if a novice, assist them with a starter kit. The new member will be encouraged to get help from their mentor. Your committee is looking for volunteers to take on this mentoring role. We would be looking for a mentor for each day of the week I.E at least 6 volunteers. If you are interested, please contact a committee member

## New Equipment.

Each year your committee applies for grants from different organizations. Hornsby RSL and Waitara Magpies have provided valuable grants, through Clubs NSW grants program, that allow your committee to upgrade equipment. This year a member has suggested the Shed upgrade the jointer and we are currently examining the feasibility of a new jointer. If you feel the Shed needs a new piece of equipment please put in a suggestion. Among the things we will consider when investigating new equipment are space requirements, usefulness I.E will members use it, safety, and electrical requirements, dust collection etc.

## Toys

Assuming the Shed's activities are not affected by COVID19 restrictions we aim to get back to full production of toys – with a target of 400 toys for the Salvation Army and Wesley Mission. Also, we propose to make a small number of toys for the Bendigo Bank at Turramurra for their Christmas appeal. In 2018 Bendigo Bank gave the Shed a \$500.00 grant, thanks to Jim Swain. When they were told that HWMS makes toys for the Salvation Army and the Wesley Mission they asked if HWMS would assist them. Unfortunately, it was towards the end of the year and the Shed was fully committed and unable to assist. The events of 2019 prevented HWMS from doing anything for them. Given their assistance to the Shed your committee will contact the Turramurra branch and find out what we can offer them. This will put a greater demand on the Shed, but if we expect the community to assist us then we should see what we can do for the community.

## Club Projects

The Shed gets many requests to make different things. We believe we can use this to our advantage. Sometimes a member is at a loss on what to do. If a request does come in and your committee believes we might have the capacity to do it, we will advise members of the opportunity and if someone is willing to take it up, we will take it on.

## Equipment for Sale

The Shed receives many donations of equipment. Often these are put on eBay to raise funds for the Shed. Your committee is adopting a policy of making these items available to members at the eBay reserve price. They will be advertised in the Monthly Cutting Edge and then, put on eBay one week later if not purchased i.e., members have one week to purchase before it is offered on eBay. This month we have a router and table at \$150.00. If any member is interested, please contact a committee member or supervisor.

## Email Addresses.

Your committee has finalized the policy on the distribution of member's data. Only the Secretary and Membership Office will have full access to member's data. The rest of the committee and the Welfare Officer will have access to member's data EXCEPT for email addresses. While this is not a perfect solution it helps to minimize the spread of your information. The unfortunate fact is this does seem to cast aspersions on some of our loyal members. That is not the intent and if the President does not have access then we are sure the rest of the membership will appreciate what is being done.

## Unauthorized use of the Shed

On a disappointing note, we have observed that there has been unauthorized use of the Shed. Last year the Shed was used out of hours and the culprit did not even have the decency to clean up their mess. This year, when the Shed was being readied for the reopening it was discovered that both dust collector bins were full and if they had not emptied on the Saturday before reopening, they would have

overflowed last Monday. Using the Shed out of hours contravenes our lease agreement. It also poses a possible safety issue. The other concern is the volume of dust/shavings collected; someone may be using the Shed for commercial use. If anyone has any knowledge of this, please advise the committee

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### THINGS WE DID DURING LOCKDOWN

**Bo Linsdrum, one of our colourful, and long- time members, has spent nine months in his remarkably comfortable and cosy fitted out shed, creating this masterpiece. The detail is exact and to scale. Such work would test the patience in the best of us, gluing, sewing, and drilling, on a very minute scale indeed, but the big Swede has done a remarkable job as can be seen. We are hopeful he will bring it along for our next show and tell.**



DETAIL



## LADY LOUISE

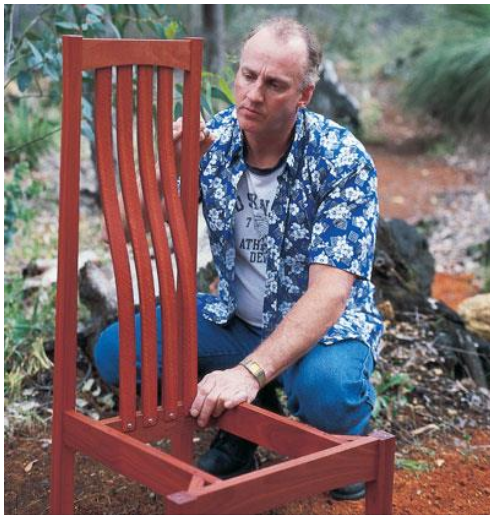
Another one of our valued members, Louise Pollock provided Christmas morning tea for members. A delightful gesture indeed with a touch of class. Thank you, Louise. The cakes were very well presented, and delicious.



## Words and photos: Neil Erasmus

Does this sound familiar? You have just drilled a large hole in the wrong place, and it will be impossible to replace the section without making an entirely new piece of furniture. After some colourful language, you calm down enough to decide that a repair will not compromise the integrity of the piece. You just need to make sure it is an invisible repair...

But just how do you do this? In furniture making it is the polisher who is the master of disguise, and it is to his or her techniques and tools of trade that we turn to at these times. However, with some woodworking skills and practice, we can restore harmony to both the piece of furniture and to ourselves. These techniques should not be a substitute for good workmanship or materials, but they are invaluable when we are reminded by our mistakes that we are human. Of course, work that has been compromised structurally will require another approach altogether, perhaps even a 'start all over again' one.



*West Australian French polisher Mark Masser*

Sometimes too we are dissatisfied with nature's preference for the imperfect in the form of knots, cracks, and gum veins, and we want to disguise these features. To achieve a flawless finish, we can again combine the woodworker's and the polisher's skills, the latter being provided for this article by West Australian French polisher Mark Masser.

## Unwanted holes

Repair work of this nature needs to be carried out very methodically and cannot be rushed. The first stage is to fill the hole, but that does not mean slapping in a spatula full of car body filler. While this product has some uses in woodwork, it is not always suitable as it does not expand and contract

with the surrounding wood when humidity changes. It also has no grain, making it a dead give-away in reflected light. There are a few effective ways to fill unwanted holes.

## Wooden plugs

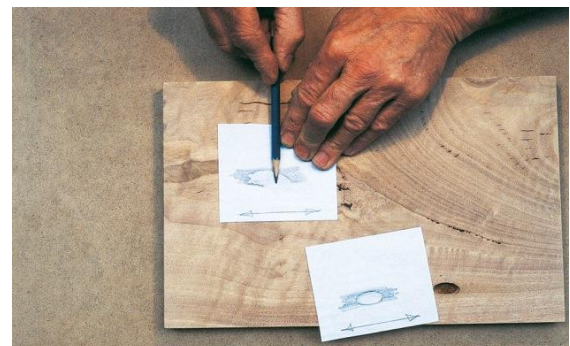
Holes that occupy a large area and are deep are best filled with tight fitting wooden plugs. These may be round or specially shaped to fit an irregular hole. To make one, find a matching piece of wood, preferably from an off-cut, and shape a snug fitting plug making sure to match the grain direction. Do not make a plug from end grain to fill a hole on the long grain face of a piece of wood.

Glue the plug, in place, with a structural glue such as epoxy or urea formaldehyde. Do not use PVA glue as it may creep, revealing the edges around the plug? Sand the plug flush to the surface of the timber. If any pre-finishing treatment is desired, such as bleaching, staining, fuming, liming or even texturing, do it at this stage.



*Larger defects may need to be cleaned up first.*

Sometimes larger defects, such as those shown in the above needs to be cleaned up with a router and a matching plug made. To do this, fit a small, manageable router with a small diameter straight cutter (about 3mm diameter) and carefully remove the waste in the affected area to the desired depth, operating the machine to and fro by hand and eye.



*Shade the edges of the void to trace the*

*shape.*

Now, stretch a piece of thin paper (0.05mm) over the area and shade it with a sharp 4B pencil. This should highlight the edges of the hole. Prepare a piece of suitable wood to fill the hole, glue the tracing on its surface with paper glue, then cut out

the insert carefully on a scroll saw or by hand using a coping saw. Glue this in the hole and fill any gaps with wood dust filler before sanding flush.



*Match the grain and colour of the plug as closely as possible.*

It is important to match the grain, texture and colour of the applied plug or piece as closely as possible (photo 3) The less touching up required at the finishing stage the more natural the repair will appear over time, as all woods change colour with exposure to natural light – some turn darker while others lighten.



*Cutting a plug on the scroll saw.*

### **Car body filler**

This needs to be used with a healthy amount of discretion and needs to be carefully doctored to camouflage itself and the damage or defect below its surface. So, when is it appropriate to use it? Some natural defects such as surface gum vein or borer holes would benefit from this method, long as the area to be filled is not too deep.

All loose matter needs to be scratched out before filling and any smooth surface needs to be roughened to assist adhesion. Once the filled surface has been sanded down to the desired finish, Mark Masser scratches 'grain' on it to blend with the texture of the surrounding wood, using either a razor blade or a scalpel. Before adding hardener to the filler, it should be coloured sparingly with a natural ochre powder.

### **Sawdust filler**

Very small borer holes can be filled with fine sanding dust from the surrounding wood thickened

with nitro-cellulose lacquer. The colours should blend perfectly, so any further disguising work is not needed.

### **Superglue**

Minor, non-structural cracks and surface flaws can be repaired with superglue. Drip the superglue into the cracks ensuring it chases entirely through, adding more if necessary. This process may require several applications until the crack is filled completely. As this method also bonds the walls of the crack together it makes a very sound repair to fine cracks. Larger, non-structurally flawed ones need to be filled differently. I deal with these by band sawing several thin slivers of matching material, sharpening one edge, and tapping these in place with a little glue. Do not tap them in end first unless you are filling end grain.

### **Colouring**

I chose a particularly bad piece of WA blackbutt from my firewood heap to demonstrate the techniques shown here, and all credits go to Mark Masser for wielding his magic with his pencil-brush and colours.

The chosen offcut contained part of a forking branch, fine cracks, a large crack, two large borer holes, gum vein and some burl figure interspersed with pockets of bark. The soft, pithy bark and loose gum vein was picked out and the underlying wood roughened, then filled with coloured body filler, again carefully masking up all the surrounding wood.



*The matching inserts have been glued in and sanded flush.*

The two borer holes were routed out by hand and plugged with matching inserts which were sanded back flush, while the large crack was fitted with thin veneers placed on edge. Several fine cracks were filled with a sawdust and lacquer mixture and, when everything had cured, the entire piece was sanded back to 240 and a coat of single pack lacquer applied.



*Fine cracks were filled with a sawdust and lacquer mixture.*

The areas that require attention are doctored by brushing on several layers of ultra-thin stain or pigment, each fixed in place with a fine coat of sprayed finish. Single pack, nitrocellulose lacquer is suitable under an oil finish, while shellac must be sprayed on under a rubbed French polished finish. A split second, burst of spray is all that is needed to fix the pigment to the surface, as too much build up will draw attention to the area.

### **Materials**



Mark Masser's tools shown above are a palette of colours on a white tile, an assortment of brushes, methylated spirits or thinners and a spray fixative. He always colours by natural light rather than artificial light. Mark suggests that those who are keen to try out these techniques should first practise on scrap wood.

A basic understanding of colours is required: black and orange are opposites, as are red and green. So, use orange to lessen the effect of a dark area, and green to take the edge off an area that appears too red. The latter is a practice often used on timbers with a red hue, the green helping to blend several planks together such as on a tabletop. Conversely, when a dull, brown finish needs a little lift to blend it with more lively material, wipe on a heavily

diluted mix of red. These wipe on applications are done with primary colour spirit stains diluted with metholated spirits or thinners.



Prominent grain lines are extended through and well beyond the defect area and may be highlighted to help the eye move away from the area under repair.



Lighter woods are generally more difficult to treat as they absorb and reflect more light, much of it from just below the surface. This three-dimensional effect is hard for the polisher to match with his brushes which is why careful wood selection is important at the repair stage. If you ever need to work with light coloured highly figured fiddleback timbers, Mark suggests filling the defects with perfectly matching pieces of wood and trying to 'lose' only the edges through very fine applications of colour, leaving mostly wood visible.

Mark emphasises that stains, pigments, and fixative must always be used sparingly, as the multiple applications that are sometimes needed can cause excessive build. To this end, he uses the 'wash' from the pigment or stain mixtures, applying them by brush in barely distinguishable strokes. He then moves around the area, checking the effect.



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## Acknowledgements

Hornsby Woodworking Men's Shed acknowledges the support provided by:

- the Hon Matt Kean, local state member of parliament for Hornsby
- the Hon Alister Henskens, local state member of parliament for Ku-ring-gai
- the Hon Julian Leeser, the local federal member of parliament for Berowra
- Hornsby Shire Council
- Hornsby RSL Club
- Magpies Waitara
- Westfield Hornsby
- Bendigo Banks, Turramurra, and Lindfield
  
- Bunnings Warehouse Dural and Thornleigh



- North Shore Timber
- Orangelime Web Design
- Coca Cola Amatil
- Bakers Delight Hornsby

Please support the organisations that support HWMS.

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Members have expressed a desire, to be able, to have ideas, and opinions, published in the Monthly Magazine.

An excellent concept, providing, it is constructive, not detrimental to individuals or our organisation.

The items can be sent to the editor of the “Monthly” Cutting Edge Magazine.

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