Hornsby Woodworking Men's Shed

THE CUTTING EDGE

20th Anniversary Edition

Volume 1 No. 25 **Spring 2021**

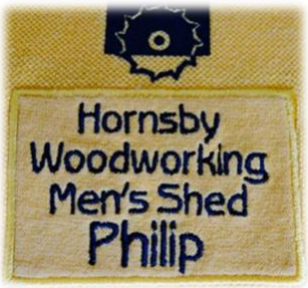
How It All Started

My interest in woodworking was piqued in 1977 when we decided to add another storey to the house that we had built in Castle Hill in the early 1970s. To save money, I decided to do all the internal finishing woodwork myself, despite little experience in this area and having an electric drill as my only power tool. It took 3 years and, after installing 13 doors, I got the hang of it.

This was the start of building decks and pergolas etc so you can imagine my interest when an Australian inventor came up with the Triton Mk3 Workcentre saw table in 1981. This started an almost cult following as a number of unique accessories followed plus excellent educational videos by George Lewin who was the 1976 ABC *Inventor Of The Year*. This culminated with The Series 2000 Workcentre in 1997.

Early in 2001, the company I was working for was becoming increasingly unstable so I knew that unemployment was inevitable. On the positive side, I looked to join a local woodworking club in the Hills area but there was nothing. Around this time, Triton was giving support to the formation of Triton Owners Clubs. At the end of 2000, there were only two clubs – Newcastle and Oyster Bay, now called the Shire Woodworking Club. I made an enquiry to Triton's head office in Cheltenham Victoria. This resulted in a meeting with the Sales Manager, Gordon Heggie, the next time he was in Sydney. He came to my house where we had dinner before developing a plan. He asked me to let him have the surrounding post codes so that he could contact registered Triton owners to invite them to a meeting with the formation of a local club on the agenda. This resulted in a Triton sponsored event at Dural Mitre 10 on 9 May 2001 at 6.30 pm that was very well attended. There were also demonstrations of the new router table, biscuit joiner and mini extension table plus light refreshments.

I had not given much thought to the possible outcome of that meeting but there was significant interest and sufficient volunteers to form a committee and so the Hills District Triton Club was born. Much to my surprise, I was voted in as President. The developments from there on were only possible with the support of Triton and Robert Evans as Secretary.



The following documents tell the story of how the Club was established.

Quality Endorsed Company

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Proudly Australian

May 2001.

Dear Triton Owner,

You have probably read in your current copy of the Triton Times that we have a thriving network of Triton Owners Clubs. Owners Clubs are independent and embrace woodworkers with all levels of competence who want to meet in a friendly environment and learn from others as well as sharing their experience.

We have had some discussions with owners in Castle Hill who are interested in "testing the water" to see if there is enough interest amongst owners in the Hills District in starting a club.

In association with Dural Mitre 10 we are going to hold a meeting to gauge the interest of owners (and even non-owners) who would like to be involved.

Where: **Dural Mitre 10 - 827 Old Northern Road, Dural**
When: **Wednesday 9th May 2001 – Time: 6.30 – 8.00 p.m.**

To make the evening more interesting we will be demonstrating our new Router Table, Biscuit Joiner and Mini Extension Table as well as answering any questions you may have. We will also provide light refreshments.

If you can come to Dural Mitre 10 on the 9th May 2001 please speak to one of the Triton personnel in attendance and register your interest by leaving them your details below.

If you can't make the night of the 9th but are interested in the Club phone Melanie on 1300 655 686 and she will take your details for any follow up.

We'll keep you informed of a venue, date and time for the 1st meeting of the proposed "Triton Owners Club Hills District".

Gordon Heggie

P.S. We would also be delighted to hear from you if you think you would like to help in the initial stages of getting a club going by making yourself available for an initial committee.

HILLS DISTRICT TRITON USER GROUP

PRESIDENT: Philip Hirshbein
Phone - Work: 9248 0613
Phone - Home: 9634 6037
e-mail - Work: p.hirshbein@cpadmin.com.au
e-mail - Personal: philh@mbox.com.au

5 June 2001

Notice of First Committee Meeting

Date: Friday 8 June 2001
Time: 7.30pm
Place: 1 Carnegie Place Castle Hill
RSVP: 7 June

left into Parsonage 1st right into Cadong 1st left Kees Rd 1st right Carnegie

Topics:

1. Elect Office Holders:
Treasurer (keep books of account, open bank account, insurances etc)
Secretary (keep minutes, member records, organises meetings etc)
Publicity (member recruitment, sponsorships etc)
Premises (organises club site, Triton equipment, security access etc)
President (establish club constitution, structure, guest speakers, Triton liaison etc).
2. Triton follow up letter to database about club formation.
3. Discussion on club location.
4. Tentative date/s for first member meeting.
5. Other issues.

A list of proposed members from the Mitre 10 evening & office holders is attached.

Philip Hirshbein

Convenors' Programme - First member Meeting 3 October 2001

Time	Activity	Convenor
7.00pm to 7.30pm	Turn on lights (entry & main hall) & hot water. Give all food, cups, plates, serviettes, platters etc to Jackie with instructions & this programme. Committee & sponsors to wear red labels. Set up tables Membership Officer (Greg) to man the front desk greet people, give them label & black pen. Secretary (Gordon K) to assist & hand out Survey forms. Indicate a copy of the Draft Constitution available for their perusal.	Committee
7.30pm	Registration Record names on Member Listing Distribute Survey form Members to write names on labels (black pen). Tea/Coffee Meet Committee & other members	Committee
8.00pm to 8.15pm	Discussion of the Club's objectives & the role members must play to make it a success. Refer to Part 1. of Survey. One objective is our own Club House, well equipped with wood working tools, for all members to use (eg Oyster Bay Club). Summarise the Draft Constitution. Take note of any proposed changes & amend for vote at next meeting. Request nominations for vacant Committee positions. Where to from here?	Committee
8.15pm to 8.25pm	Role of Triton as sponsor - details of support to the Club & benefits of being part of a growing network of clubs across Australia. Announces: Woodworking competition Lucky door prize drawn from Application forms at end of evening. Position available for Triton demonstrator.	Gordon Heggie
8.25pm to 8.30pm	Introduction of other sponsors	Committee & Sponsors
8.30pm to 9.30pm	Light refreshments Socialising	

HILLS DISTRICT triton USER GROUP

PRESIDENT: Philip Hirshbein
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Mobile: 0401 068 666
e-mail: philh@mbox.com.au

SECRETARY: Robert Evans
Phone: (02) 8850 0476
Mobile: 0402 336 602
e-mail: robevans@ozemail.com.au

TREASURER: Gordon Kidd
Phone: (02) 9651 6894
Mobile: 0421 667 839
e-mail: brodes@optusnet.com.au

INVITATION TO THE FIRST MEETING OF MEMBERS OF THE HILLS DISTRICT TRITON USER GROUP (the Group)

- **Location - Dural Memorial Hall** (On the left hand side of the Old Northern Road half a kilometre north of Dural Mitre 10 (from the round-about at the junction of New Line Road). Plenty of parking at rear.
- **Date and Time - Wednesday 3 October 2001 at 7.30pm.**
- **RSVP by 27 September** (your name and phone number) to assist with our catering. Please telephone one of the Committee (refer above) or e-mail to *philh@mbox.com.au*.
- **Programme** - Statement of the Groups aims, consideration of a draft constitution, members' feedback, refreshments/socialising, presentations by Triton and suppliers of timber products.

Since the inaugural Triton meeting held at Mitre 10 in May, Gordon, Philip and Robert, the first Committee members, have put in a lot of hours to put the framework in place to form the basis of what we hope will be a successful and rewarding Group for all members. We have selected a location that we hope will accommodate most members' needs, at a minimal cost.

The primary objectives of the Group are to have fun in a social and learning environment while we expand our skills and knowledge of the world of wood working and enjoy each other's company.

We stress that this is your Group so it needs all our support to make it work. Please complete the survey forms that will be provided at the meeting so that we can find out about you and what you need from the Group.

The first meeting will determine if there is sufficient interest and support to establish the Hills Triton Group. Our next task will be to establish the infrastructure - to adopt a constitution, to set the fees, establish a bank account, annual budget, books of account, a membership register, nominations for sub-committees etc. This is a non-profit organisation. The fees will be set just to cover expenses. We may also consider some fund raising activities to help with the costs and also to buy equipment for members' use.

The first meeting will allow us to assess members' needs and will result in a timetable of events for the next 12 months. If there is sufficient support we will also consider a regular newsletter.

We would like to acknowledge the support of Triton (especially Gordon Heggie) in sponsoring this meeting and ongoing support.

On the reverse is a membership form for your convenience.

We look forward to seeing you there

Philip Hirshbein
President

THE CUTTING EDGE

JOURNAL OF THE HILLS DISTRICT TRITON USER GROUP No 1 31 Oct 2001

Please address all correspondence to: Philip Hirshbein at:
1 Carnegie Place Castle Hill, Phone 9634 6037, e-mail philh@mbox.com.au

Next meeting: 9 November 2001, 7.30pm at Dural Memorial Hall (on the Old Northern Road half a kilometre north of the roundabout at the junction of New Line Road).

Programme for the Meeting

7.30 - 8.00pm refreshments, socialising & raffle.
8.00 - 8.30pm Presentation by Deni Farrugia of 3M. We are very fortunate to have Deni contribute her time - she is trying to cut down her 60-hour weeks.
8.30 - 9.00pm refreshments, socialising & discussion on our Club project.
9.00 - 9.30pm Show & tell. Our members show some of their work & explain the techniques used.
9.30 - 10.00pm Raffle draw, clean up & close.

Editorial

Welcome to the first edition of our Club's newsletter. This is an informal communication, designed to let members (& potential members) know what the Club is doing & our future plans.
In this edition, we report on:

- What kind of club do our members want? The results of the initial member survey. For those people who did not have time to complete one, we attach another copy for completion & return to the next meeting.
- Triton Competition
- The search for our own premises.
- To incorporate or not incorporate that is the question.
- Finances
- Membership statistics
- Presenters
- Plus much more.

Survey Results

27 surveys were analysed by Greg, our membership Officer:
95% agreed with the Objectives of the Club. These will be incorporated into the Rules.
74% were happy with the meeting venue (Dural Hall). However, our major objective is to have our own premises for security of equipment & ease of access, see the Secretary's report below.
Only 1 person rated 4 on the proficiency scale, the balance was centred between 1 to 3. Our medium/long term objective is to increase all members' skills over level 2.
Demonstrations of Triton & other woodworking products & accessories were equally popular. The majority were in favour of the fees & agreed on raffles as the main source of raising additional funds for Club equipment etc.

Member Profile

Our current membership includes the following professions:
Engineers (6), Printing, Pharmacology, Computer, Carpenter/Builder (2), Finance (2), Management (2) Sales (2), Pilot, Massage, Custody. = 20

The Triton Club Competition

Triton has offered a valuable prize to the winner of our Club woodworking competition. The rules will be discussed with members. A Triton representative will be involved in the judging.

Triton Club Equipment

Triton will shortly supply a 2000 Workcentre. We plan to supplement this over the next year. See Treasurer's Report below.*

Sale of Used Woodworking Equipment

Members can advertise any equipment they have for sale through this Newsletter or at Club meetings. The Treasurer will allocate 10% of the proceeds for Club funds.

Woodworking Questions/Problems?

Submit them to the newsletter & we will publish the answer.

Treasurer's Report

I will be keeping you up to date with the state of our bank balance and our expenditure. Plant and equipment, fixtures and fittings are on the list of purchases over the next year. My forecast is that we should be able to earn in excess of $1,000 pa from our fund raisers and our $5 entry fee will contribute a small surplus over the cost of refreshments & rent of the hall. In time, I will provide a budget so in the mean time: ....measure twice, cut once, *Gordon Kidd*.

Secretary's Report

Club Accommodation - the quest for a permanent place for us to reside has not yet been resolved.

- I have approached a couple of High Schools but unfortunately they are already overcrowded.
- Scout hall at Headon Park, Thornleigh. We have applied to use this hall as a shared facility and have received acknowledgment of our application from Hornsby Council. Hopefully we will hear from them soon.
- Balcolm heights Community Centre. We have applied to have access to one of the many buildings on this site. Again we are waiting on the Committee responsible for a reply.

Guest Speakers For our November meeting we have been fortunate to have Deni Farrugia, OH&S Manager from 3M to speak about the hazards to avoid when working with wood. December's speakers at this stage will be from Trend Timbers and Carba-Tec.
Name Badges In order to encourage members to communicate, the committee believe that it is in our best interests to have some sort of personal identification badge. However, we are yet to find an economical solution and we would be pleased have feedback from members regarding any ideas.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting, *Robert Evans*

President's Report

This newsletter is being distributed to 77 people, made up of 40 members plus 37 people who have expressed an interest in the Club but were not able to attend the first meeting.
Our first meeting was a great success. We now need to plan our future to ensure that the Club is a success. To make that happen, everybody must be involved. This is a "hands on" group. That is the only way to learn & improve your woodwork. I am waiting for a call from Triton (Gordon Heggie) to arrange the supply of a 2000 Workcentre & accessories for us to assemble at a meeting.
Part of being involved is to volunteer for a committee position. The current office holders have found the last few months most enjoyable, working together for the good of the members.
The positions available are:
Equipment Officer, Training Officer, Librarian, Safety Officer, Catering, Newsletter Editor, Project Committee, Publicity, Recruitment & Fundraising Officers.
At the first meeting we had nominations for Legal assistance - Michael Fitzgerald and Web Site assistance - Bruce Walker.
Looking forward to the next meeting on 9 November, *Philip Hirshbein*.

Constitution/Rules

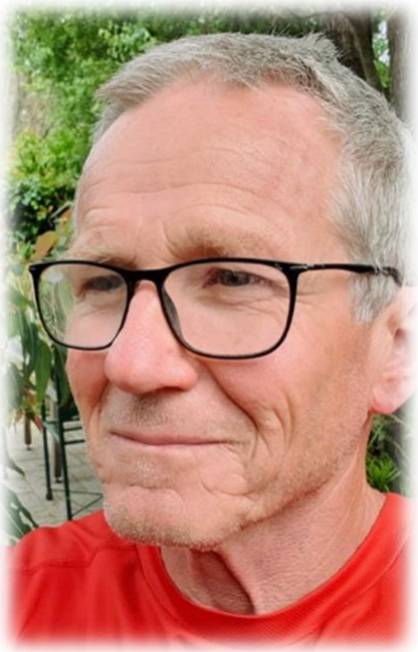
Michael Fitzgerald is holding a meeting to discuss this topic on 2 November.

Just reading those documents again brought back the sense of achievement and excitement that we felt in those early days of creating a great club and dealing with so many enthusiastic and helpful people. We shared experiences with other Triton Clubs and I even joined the Qld South-East Districts Club during my temporary re-location to Queensland, a year later. There is something about working with wood that provides much creative enjoyment.

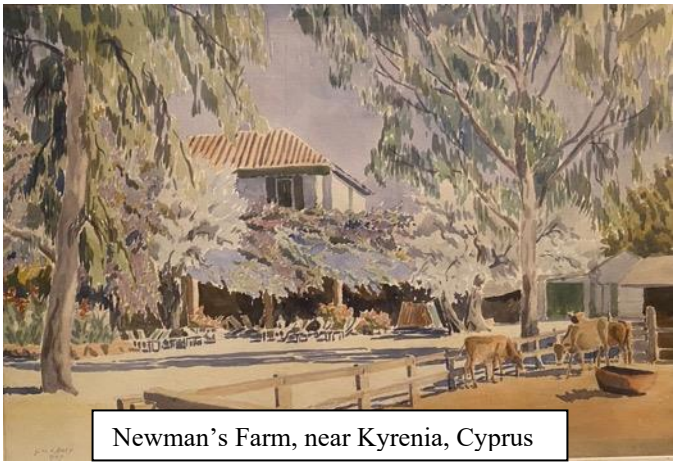
I am pleased to say that, managed by very able Committees, supported by a host of Supervisors and all the others who have contributed to its success, it has evolved over the last 20 years, especially becoming more involved with the local community as a Men's Shed while retaining the original objectives of bringing together people with a common interest of working with wood. Personally, I still have that feeling and will be very pleased to be able to resume my regular visits to the Shed on 26 October.

Philip Hirshbein

Member Profile ~ Philip Newman



My life started in a Nicosia hospital. My father's parents had moved to Cyprus after the first World War and had built a dairy farm stocked with Jersey cattle, providing the only cows' milk on the island. My father, Charlie, was also born and educated on the island and, following the death of his father, managed the farm and café known as *Newman's Farm*, a very popular destination for the expats and armed forces personnel who were keen to enjoy a cream tea or milkshake. My father had developed a relationship via correspondence with a young lady from Durham, named Joan Veitch, who flew over to visit him and never left, becoming his wife and mother to my elder sister Penny and me. We were both born via caesarean, a risky operation in those days. Unfortunately, my mother contracted an infection during my birth which claimed her life 3 days later - my father's 31st birthday.

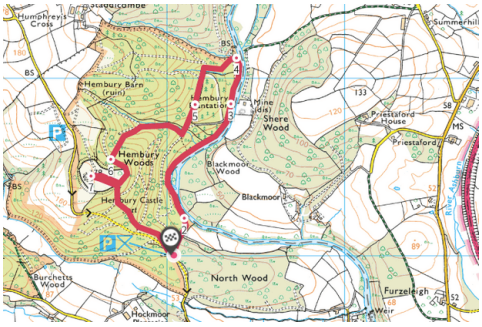


Newman's Farm, near Kyrenia, Cyprus

A very special day, Charles Newman married Joan Veitch

After only 3 years of marriage, my sister and I were cared for by a young local girl, Keko, until my father remarried 2 years later, to Rosalind Patti from London. He had corresponded with her after his brother Christopher, who lived and worked in England, had met and introduced them. Charlie and Rosalind had a child Patricia who was still a baby in 1959 when Rosalind flew my sisters and I to Durham to stay with my maternal mother's parents while she returned to Cyprus to sell up the farm ahead of the military conflict between the Greeks and Turks.

Six months later, they both arrived in England with my father's mother's mother and we were reunited as a family. My parents purchased a combined café, general store and post office in Buckfast, Devon, in the southwest of England. It was named Dovecote Café and my father added a sign, *Newman's of Cyprus*. It was the scene of many reunions of ex-servicemen over the years. It was an amazing area to grow up in, beside the River Dart and near a large forest known as Hembury Woods, on the edge of spectacular Dartmoor. I was rarely home with so much outdoor country to play in and, even when I was at school, my heart and mind were still roaming the countryside. My parents worked very hard to grow the business in the little abbey tourist town. Unfortunately, my father worked too hard, resulting in his death from a heart attack in 1967, at the young age of 43. We stayed for a few years in Buckfast during which I travelled a long way each day by bus to a school in Torquay where I was a very keen rugby player, playing hooker, and spent many weekends running cross country during the winter and running the 1500 metres during the summer. When I was fifteen, the family moved to Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire to be near my



father's brother Christopher and his family and to be in an area where there were more opportunities for work for my mother, and the rest of us as we grew up. With no rugby played at my new school, I took up hocky and pole vaulting.

I dropped out of school after completing my GCE O Levels, at age 17 and decided on a career with the Royal Navy. I successfully completed an aptitude test at the R. N. careers office which led to me signing up for 12 years doing an Artificer apprenticeship. I was stationed at the HMS Fisgard training establishment, located in Devonport, in England's south-west, for 15 months, followed by HMS Caledonia in Rosyth in Scotland, for three years. During this time, I took the opportunity to explore Europe during my leave periods, particularly enjoying the South of France, Italy and Greece. I learned that if I joined a band in the Navy I was excused all the banal, mundane tasks such as guard duty etc. so I joined the pipe band. This was a wonderful decision, while I did have to spend many hours on a practice chanter and playing the pipes, it also found me travelling to many Scottish towns at the weekends to march at the front of local parades blasting out Scotland the Brave and many other rousing Scottish tunes then, of course, ending up in the pubs afterwards sharing many bevvies. I had continued to play hockey with the Navy and travelled around the country representing the Navy against the Army and RAAF. I was then drafted to HMS Fife, a guided missile destroyer and spent many months in the Mediterranean, constantly in and out of Malta and Gibraltar. After a period, when I was shore based in Portsmouth, I was drafted to HMS Tiger, a helicopter cruiser on an eight-month world deployment with several other ships. Visiting Turkey, Jordan, Pakistan, India, Australia, the Philippines, Singapore and Hong Kong we were heading back to the UK when I was drafted to join the Tiger's sister ship, HMS Blake that was part-way through a US deployment. I joined her on the west coast before steaming down to and through the Panama Canal, spending time visiting Caribbean islands before heading for Florida and then back to Portsmouth.

I was due several weeks leave so took the opportunity to fly to Sydney for a month. While we had visited Perth and Brisbane on the Tiger, it was Sydney that had stolen my heart, particularly Christine Thomas, a young trainee nurse. We caught up and found there was still a very strong bond and committed to catching up again in the UK when Christine had finished her training. Eighteen months later Christine joined me back in Rosyth in the Firth of Forth on the southeast coast of Scotland where I was back at HMS Caledonia as a Chief Petty Officer. I was undergoing a conversion course from steam turbine specialisation to become a shipwright, looking after ships' hulls and services. Following this, I was drafted to HMS Neptune where I maintained Polaris Submarine hulls for two years.

Christine and I lived first in Clynder and then Helensburgh while I completed my Naval service. Christine worked as a registered nurse at the Vale of Leven Hospital by Loch Lomond. Six months before my discharge date, we bought an old VW Kombi transporter that I converted into a camper that took us across

to Europe, touring until our savings ran out. We then returned to London where we waited for my application to emigrate to Australia to be processed.

In January 1983 we arrived in Sydney and were married in the following month. For a year we rented in Manly while I worked in Brookvale for Aluminium Engineering and went to TAFE there to get my Australian welding certificates. Christine worked at the Manly Hospital and then for Sydney Council, based in the QVB. Unable to afford to buy on the Northern beaches, we purchased in Merrylands where we lived for 6 years before buying our current home in Westleigh. In the meantime, I had worked for five years at Australia's Wonderland maintaining the rides before moving into the wool industry, working at Yennora maintaining wool sampling machines, dump presses and associated equipment. This gave me a great opportunity to travel around, helping with maintenance in the Elders wool stores, located in Goulburn, Newcastle, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. I left the wool industry in 1999 to take up a position in maintenance with BridgeClimb where I stayed until 2016.

Our Family

In 1986, Christine and I had our first child, a beautiful daughter, Lara, born at the SAN hospital, who changed our lives forever with the love she gave us and evoked in us. Then, in 1990, our son Tom was born at Westmead Hospital. Our family was now complete. How fortunate we were to have two such wonderful children who both started their schooling at Thornleigh West. Lara then moved to Beecroft before going to North Sydney Girls and the Conservatorium of Music to study music and education. Tom went to Normanhurst Boys and Macquarie Uni before following his heart and passion resulting in an electrical career that started with an apprenticeship with Ausgrid.

I joined Sydney Bushwalkers in 1985, doing many walks with them, my favourites being the Six Foot Track in a day, the Kanangra to Katoomba, the Kowmung River area and the Grose Valley.

In 2007, a great friend, Richard Barnes, and I had spent 53 days circumnavigating Tasmania in our kayaks. One of the many highlights of the 1850 km journey was paddling out to Maatsuyker Island off the SW point of Tasmania and after exploring the Needles, landing, visiting the lighthouse and camped the night there.

The very high noise levels associated with spending many hours down in the steam turbine engine rooms of ships had taken its toll until I no longer felt confident to reliably hear, understand and act appropriately to the communications that I would receive by radio, phone or in meetings so it was time to retire my position as maintenance manager.

I was not sure what I wanted to do career wise. Emotionally, I was challenged by the lack of confidence my hearing loss had brought and my sense of low self-esteem within the community. I felt periods of depression and I learned that too many Australians, especially young Australians, were taking their own lives, so I wanted to raise awareness in this area and re-establish my own confidence within the community.

I felt it was time for another adventure, so I decided to ride to Perth on my bike. Towing a Bob trailer I cycled for 50 days, raising over $21,000 for the Black Dog Institute and met hundreds of wonderful Australians who reignited my faith in the warmth and support that engaging with the community can give.

After returning to Sydney, I was challenged by the isolation of retirement and, while this somewhat relieved by joining the Hornsby Woodworking Men's Shed in January 2017. The shed was a godsend, giving me the opportunity to use and develop many of the skills the Navy had taught me during my time as a shipwright.

I jumped at the opportunity to accept an invitation of part-time employment at BridgeClimb. Unfortunately, I found that my heart and that of the new owners of BridgeClimb pulsed to a different beat, so I decided to retire completely in July 2020.

Since then, I have focused on spending one day a week at the Men's Shed, spending time with my family, looking after my grandchildren, assisting others grow at Toastmasters and working with the community.

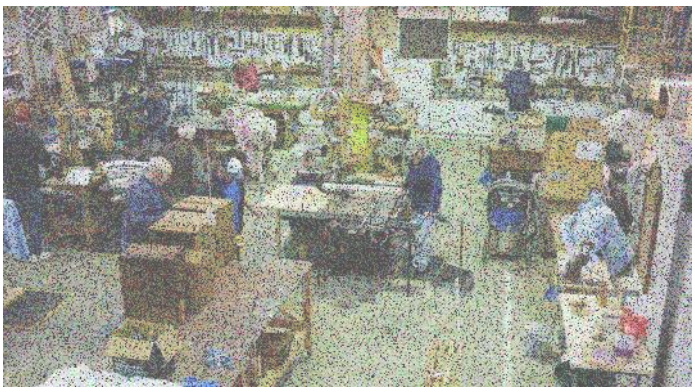
Recently, I took some time out to cycle up to Cairns to raise funds for RUOK, meet members of other Men's Sheds and support an adventure race. It was a great opportunity, once again, to test my metal and re-engage with the community who are always so very supportive of someone on a journey.

I am very fortunate that, as a regular carer of two of my grandchildren that live in Hornsby, I am still able to care for them during the current COVID lockdown but, as my son and his wife live in Padstow, I have not seen their daughter, Sadie since I left for my ride to Cairns in mid-June. I am very thankful for the technology that enables me to witness her development, albeit not in a situation where I can hold and cuddle her.

One of my favourite areas to walk is on the Water Board land where the new season of orchids is just starting. If anyone reading this story wishes to join me for a walk, when we are free to do so, I would be very happy to have the company. (*Contact Philip Hirshbein via email – phil@bein.id.au*)

Philip Newman

How Are You Occupying Yourself During the Shed's COVID Close?



I did not want to miss producing an edition of this magazine just because of our enforced "lock-down". I have occupied myself with this magazine, keeping in contact with members and a host of other activities, see my contribution below. I thought that if we all shared what we have been doing over the past few months it would be a way of keeping in touch and, maybe, some inspiration.

Thanks to those members who responded to my email with the following stories:

1. **Ian Stewart**

Hi, Phil.

Thanks for the chance to display our work, even if it is by pix only.

For two years, I have been building a low-line TV unit. It is essentially finished and is in use, except for the drop-down door that encloses the electronics. Why there has been a delay with this item in the job is that I needed glass for it, which I bought yesterday. So, in only a few days from now it will be complete. *See below for the full story*.

I've also done a couple of smaller jobs — a small coffee table, that has a story attached to it, a newspaper and magazine holder and a 1929 Bentley stand.

Cheers,
Ian. *16 Sept*

2. **Ivan Bosnich**

Hi Phil, hope you and Joyce are both well.

I have started curing and smoking food to pass time away. Pictured are my home-made smoker and end-product.

The food is pancetta. The bottle speaks for itself.

Cheers Ivan

3. **Peter Sexton**

Phil,
Toys I have made. Couple of cars for grandsons, others plus Thomas the Tank Engine for Shed toys.
Waiting on Shed opening to get & fit wheels.

Also found our house name on original survey papers, so made one - out of timber, of course.

A few days later..

My little helper-grandsons.

Cheers Peter Sexton

4. **Philip Hirshbein**

I have to say that, while the spectre of COVID-19 portrayed constantly in the news, was enough to depress life that was largely limited to home, I found that being constantly occupied helped enormously. I aimed to achieve something worthwhile every day. Following are some of the activities that helped me survive the last four months:

Woodwork – building shelves for kitchen appliances.

Gardening -

Landscaping –

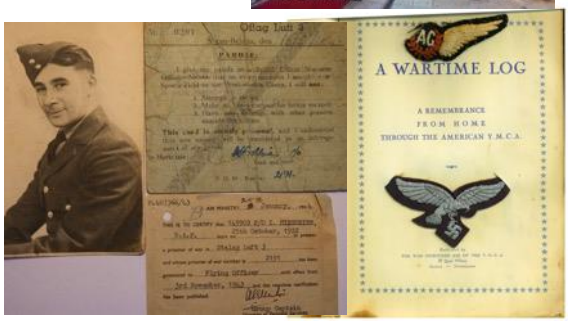
Catching up with the Tour de France

Enjoying my wife's wonderful baking -




Watching YouTube – the walks around Paris and Rome are almost as good as being there (as we were in September 2019).

Re-visiting my father's war time log – an account of the three years that he spent in a German prisoner of war camp, Stalag Luft 3.



Utilised the local library's home delivery service

Pioneered home haircuts

HWMS tasks – reviewing the Constitution and associated documents; this magazine and preparation of invitations for the Christmas party.

Map Navigational Beacons – a Shed Project

During the time when we could actually meet at the Shed, we were asked if we could build 2 sets of navigation training models – one large set and one small set – for a gentleman named Tony who teaches nautical navigation. The markers included North, South, East and West Cardinal Marks, various danger marks, and Port and Starboard channel markers. Tony also asked for model boats and wind and current direction arrows.

After some discussion, the project started with John Gillespie preparing a set of scale drawings for the large models, which were great, *thank you John*.

Making the Small models – Colin Hunter

After turning some of the large navigation marker models and handing them over to Greg Croker, I found myself thinking about the small ones which, we understood from Tony the client, were to be 50 mm high. We didn't have any other dimensions from him, but we did have some photos of previous versions. So, the first job was to scale down John's drawings.

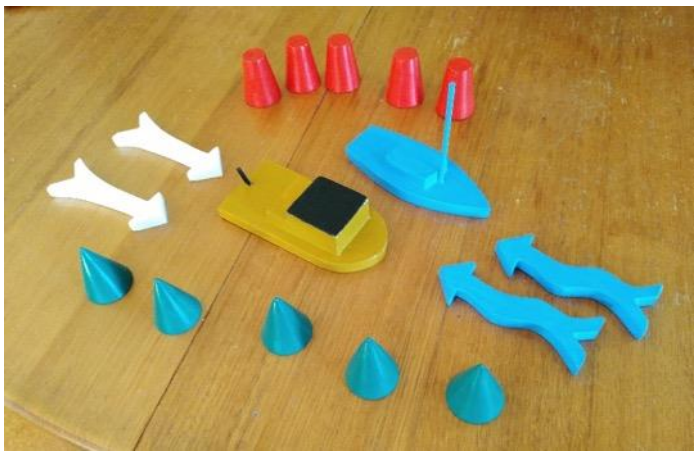
I could see an immediate challenge in these small models – how to turn them to achieve the thin column required under the hats or top features, while making sure they were durable enough for regular use.

I exchanged several emails with Tony which helped the process but didn't give me a clear answer, so I decided to make up a couple of prototypes and send him some photos. The first ones were turned from some available hardwood – see the centre four in the adjacent photo – with the bases about 30 mm diameter and the top features about 12 mm. A photo of these went to Tony for his comments, which were that the bases were too big and the top features not prominent enough.

This led to version 2 – the two outside ones in the photo, with the twin balls. He was happier with the size of the tops but the bases were too small to be stable and I was worried that the necks between and under the top features were too thin so would break if handled roughly. After some more emails, I offered him a third version which was now 80 mm high, with the base about 30 mm diameter, the tops about 20 mm diameter and using a steel nail as the thin section of the column. He was happy with this design and gave me the go-ahead to proceed.

The bases are turned from available hardwood, 32 mm diameter x 8 mm thick, the columns are 6 mm diameter dowel and the tops are also turned from available hardwood to about 20 mm diameter. I used 50 mm x 2.5 mm steel nails with the head ground down to the same diameter as the shaft, superglued into pre-drilled holes in both the tops and the dowels. The three crosses were cut from 6 mm ply, also available in my store.

I was pleased to have resolved both the design problem and the production problem for these items.



The Port and Starboard markers, the green cones and the red cans, were easily turned from pine offcuts, being 45 mm high and 35 mm diameter at the base.

The wind (straight) and current (wriggly) arrows were cut from 6 mm ply using a coping saw, while the boats are also 6 mm ply. The mast on the sailing boat is a kitchen skewer.

This was an interesting project, involving us in all of the stages of the design process; determining what the client actually wants, prototyping and evaluation to find an agreed design that is functional, durable and can be built using sensible techniques and then making the pieces. As with many one-off projects – by the time you have finished, you have just about mastered the process.

The icing on the cake was client Tony's feedback:

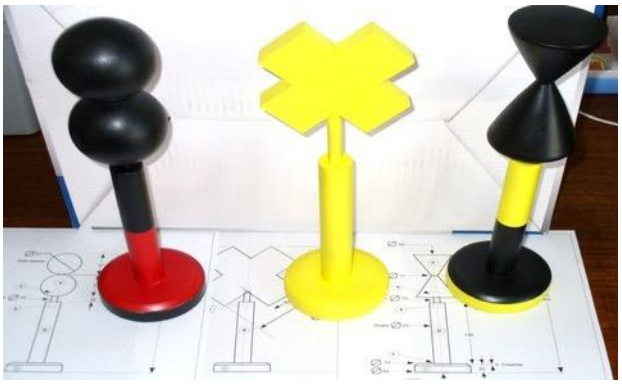
"I have been working with the small models for a few days now and they are robust and working well."

Thanks to all involved for allowing me to be part of this project. Cheers, Colin Hunter.

Making the Large models – Greg Croker

The larger beacon models were based on the drawings agreed with Tony and worked out by John Gillespie. The wind and sea direction arrows and the boat models were based on up-scaling of the smaller models also agreed with Tony. The two beacons containing sphere 'hats' were especially turned by John Edwards using his ball turning jig. Colin also turned the port and starboard cans and 'cones'.

As with the small models, 25 larger models were requested, making 50 models in total.



Colin, John Gillespie and myself began constructing the initial larger beacons virtually the day the COVID lockdown was proclaimed, so with the band-sawn bases (from wood reserved for honey dipper production) and a length of one inch diameter broom handle, this part of the project moved home to my unit terrace to be cut, turned, assembled and painted.

Turning and construction was straight forward following John's plans. The larger beacons were all to be 300 mm tall, necessitating some dowel length adjustment to match in style with the developing smaller beacons.

The initial plan was to spray the models at a member's home workshop facilities, but, since this was now impossible, the paints were selected and diluted to suit my available airbrush unit. With two undercoats, three or more colour coats, a final clear protective lacquer coat and a lot of edging tape later, the models were complete. Sadly, the process was delayed by windy and wet weather which made spraying on the terrace impossible for a number of days.

During the production time, we were in contact with Tony to ensure that we were on target and that he realised that some difficulties were experienced, but all went well and, by August, the smaller models were paid for, posted and greatly appreciated.

The larger units are now complete and, with the 'tight' Covid lockdown having ended, the models will be delivered ASAP and hopefully received with the same happy result.

As Colin remarked, this project was challenging and enjoyable, with a number of new experiences, particularly for me. It was also a good project for Shed members and I would like to thank those listed above as well as Ian McKay, for his liaison and assistance. Needless to say, the $1,750 will be a welcome boost to the Shed's finances.

Regards, ...Greg Croker

On 9 October, I received the following email:

David Tarren, as President has asked me to pass onto you Greg and the rest of the Turners his and the Committee's thanks and appreciation for the work that has gone into the Navigation aids.

The quality of the workmanship is just outstanding and the attention to detail in these teaching aids is a credit to all concerned.

In addition, the funds that you have raised for the Shed during lockdown will partly offset the dip in revenues that would have normally accrued during this period.

You can't get a better win win than that.

Regards, Ian McKay

My Low-Line TV Unit

I started building this project about 2 years ago, and with what happens, holidays, family, grand kids, etc. It is often neglected. This self-isolation time has enabled me to get stuck into it.

The timber used is grey ironbark that I was given and to some degree, I'm "making a silk purse out of a sow's ear" to use an old phrase. I started by getting my wife's approval for the dimensions, somewhat ruled by the number of DVDs that we have, and the equipment that it has to accommodate, apart from the TV sitting on top.

Another thing – the TV that we now have is much slimmer than our previous one, and the depth of the cabinet was designed for the old one, a rear projection type. I was happy with the picture, and it ran through a set-top box as it was an analogue unit, but when the 2nd projection globe went, we decided that it had to go.

This is the unit, basically all the frame; 2,070 wide x 570 high x 600 deep. The light sections in the job are sapwood, and it is just the same as heartwood to work, but I should have avoided using it particularly on the front space frame. The face frame is morticed and tenoned and half jointed as appropriate.
The drawers will just slide in the openings (no steel slides) since they won't be opened too often. There will be 2 large drawers each side, 3 small ones in the centre section one of which may become a centre speaker one day. A shelf for the electronics is above these drawers. The shelf space (and so the whole upper half opening) was at bit narrow, with fitting the amp, and connecting all the devices was very cramped and hard to do. I should also have maybe bigger holes in the back ply and one in at better place for the power point on the wall behind.

The top – I have just done the breadboard ends. I won't be doing this again – not an easy job! Why do it at all? Because the two outer boards are 30 mm thick, the centre ones are 24 mm thick, so it was necessary to have the top appear as all the same thickness. I've yet to trim the ends. I glued only the front tenons, so that any expansion due to humidity can go to the rear, where it won't be noticed. On at table-top, you normally glue the centre tenon.

The left end view: there are 3 construction rails, top and bottom, glued, screwed and dovetailed into the ends. These rails are a mixture of Tasmanian Oak/Victorian Ash/Douglas Fir; just using what I had around. The plinth is 2-piece. Note the sapwood again.

The interior construction of the drawer runners and guides is all mountain ash; I had scraps of this around and wanted to use it up.

The thickness of the guides is such that if I want to install steel runners later, the space is 12 mm, which will accommodate them. When the drawers are full of DVDs this might be a must do.

The ironbark has been easier to work than I thought. The weight is the problem: e.g. I can't lift the top.

The next job was to make the drawers. For this job, I decided to just use radiata pine for the sides and back/front, except that I made one drawer properly, as a true cabinet maker, that one having the front made of ironbark, with the sides half blind dovetails, and the back through dovetails. This one "proper" drawer is the centre lower one. Picks of two are at left.

The dovetails were cut using a Keller style jig from Carbatec. These jigs only cut through dovetails, but for the "true" drawer, I spaced the tail section with a 3 mm ply packer to reduce their size then I hand-cut the pins. This drawer took at least twice as long to make as any of the false front drawers

Drawer fronts were spaced in their openings with old club membership cards, so making an ideal gap at about 0.75 mm, if you get it right.

For the inside lacquer, I used water based clear – Monocel from Bondall in WA. It dries quickly. I'm not seeking a first-grade appearance.

The job after spraying the outside with lacquer. I tried one-pack "domestic" Wattle polyurethane with poor results; firstly because I'm out of practice with spraying, and secondly, because the dilution rate that is recommended for spraying still has the lacquer at too high a viscosity.

I re-did the top with Pylon Chemicals Hi-Tech lacquer, designed for spraying (we used it at TAFE) and finished with a far superior job!

The drawer handles were made using more ironbark. Their lighter colour will darken in time.

Good job in the end!

Questions or comments?

Ian Stewart, 0407 016 460.

Community Libraries - Revisited

I completed libraries for 2 pre-schools and installed them in December 2020 and May 2021 at Wahroonga and West Pymble, respectively.

Recently emails were received with updates on how they have been decorated and used.

Good morning Philip.

Thank you for emailing me, Covid restrictions have definitely changed a lot for everyone. We are still operating but no families are coming into the centre.

The Community Library has been a wonderful addition to our service and the families have loved borrowing and returning books but due to COVID we have stopped this for the time being.

As for painting the Community Library, we decided to keep to your colours with just a coat of white paint. We thought the aesthetics of it matched the colour of our centre ☺

Keep well and we loved seeing the article in the Shed magazine. ☺
Kind regards,

Keli Speering **Director/Nominated Supervisor** NEXT GENERATION CHILDCARE Wahroonga

Good morning Philip,

It has been a while – I hope yourself and all lovely individuals at the shed are well.

I just wanted to re-connect with you guys to see if you are ok. As the lockdown continues, the families and communities have been enjoying using the library the shed has built for us.

Are you guys still operating? – I was thinking of dropping some care packages made by the children, some time.

Sure, I will ask my assistant director to send you a photo – I still consider it being not finished but it has been a great start to have it repainted.

A few days later .....

Please find attached our street library, courtesy of our art teacher, as well as a local children's book illustrator, Asiyeh. She spent a day giving the library a face-lift.

I hope these photos help contribute to the spring edition of the Shed's magazine – Look forward to it,

Chat soon Philip,

Kind Regards,
Yifan (Evan) Hu Centre Director goodstart early learning 29 Sep 2021, at 3:52 pm, West Pymble

Do You *Really* Know How Nails and Screws Are Held in Wood?

How? Wood is made up of fibre like grains that can be thought of as a tightly packed bundle of straws. Since these straws (wood grain fibres) are so tightly packed together, if you try to insert something between them, like what happens when you hammer a nail into wood, the nail is forced between the fibres of the wood - those fibres now must stretch to go around the nail. This puts them under considerable tension - and that means that they press inwards against the sides of the nail.

In classical terms, friction is proportional to the "normal force" - the force pressing against the sides of the nail. This resists any force that attempts to pull the nail out of the hole.

In the case of a screw, there is something more complicated going on. The shape of the screw (once it's screwed in tightly) is like a set of triangular teeth set into the wood. It's like a worm-gear that cannot be driven backwards. No matter the force pulling on the screw, it won't "unscrew" and come out that way.

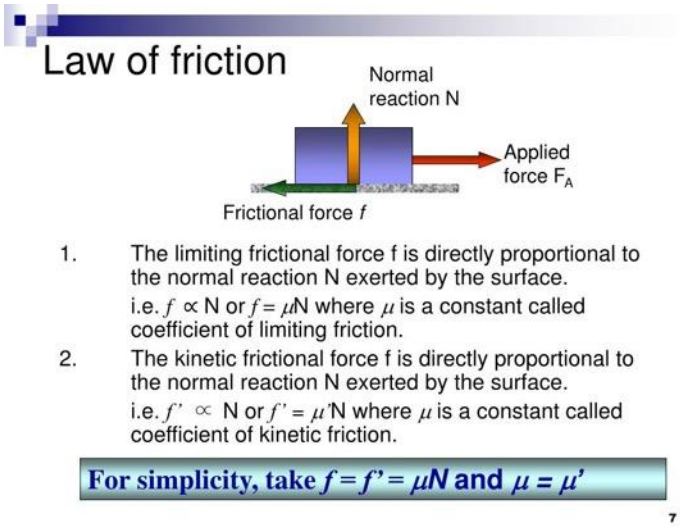
The only way for it to pull out is to physically break the material all around it.

The principle is similar with a screw, except a screw has threads. The tip of the screw is pressed into the wood and as you turn it, the spiralling threads of the screw wedge themselves in between the grain fibres and pull the screw down into the wood.

In short: nails are held in by pressure/friction of the wood fibres.

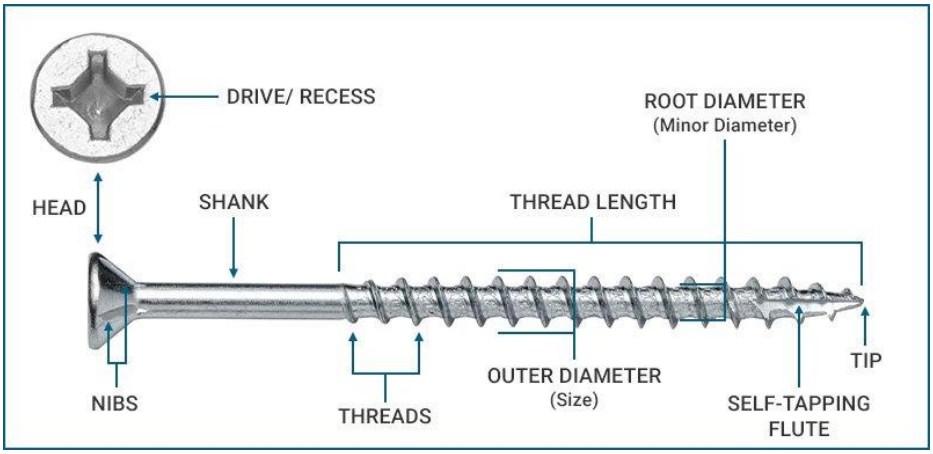
Screws are held in by their threads being wedged between the fibres.

To simplify the scientific definition of coefficient of friction, see the following:



Wood Screw Buying Guide

Source; Woodworker's Journal, America. Posted: August 13, 2021



Wood screws are available in a huge variety of types, making them incredibly versatile, but that can make the correct choice for your needs somewhat confusing.

This guide will help you sort out the differences so you can choose the right screw for the job, whether you're fastening decking boards, hinges, joining face frames or casework. To make it easy to follow, we'll start with the basics and work our way down to the nitty-gritty details.

The Basics

How Long is Long Enough?

First things first, choosing the right length. If the underlying material is very thick and drill-through is not a concern, a good rule of thumb is that at least 2/3 of the screw should end up in the underlying piece for sufficient holding power. If drill-through is a concern (the underlying material is thinner), then your screw should pass through the first layer and come within no more than 1/8" of the far side of the underlying material. If you get any closer, the tip can create a small, raised bump that you likely won't see until finishing your project.

Screw Tip

To ensure that the screw pulls the two parts together snugly, drill a "clearance hole" in the piece you are fastening. The clearance hole should be a bit wider than the widest part of the screw shank. This will prevent the threads from biting into the top piece and pushing the two parts away from each other.

What About Screw Size?

This refers to the thickness of the screw shank and is designated with a # sign followed by a number. You should scale your screws to the job at hand—the larger the number, the thicker the shank of the screw and the more load it can support. Generally, #0 to #5 screws are smaller and used for delicate projects and hardware installation. Screws from #6 to #10 are used for general-purpose joining of panels and are also popular sizes for pocket hole screws. Thicker screws such as #14 screws are used for decking, construction and cabinet installation.

Will Your Screws be Visible or Hidden?

If your screws are used to attach hinges and other hardware, then they'll be at least partially exposed and should match the hardware whenever possible. For this reason, screws are made of in zinc, nickel, polished or bright brass, antique brass, statuary bronze and more. For screws that will be hidden, finish is less important, but screws are available with a low-friction "Lube" finish, which makes it easier to sink long screws.

Will Your Screws be Used Outside?

If your project will be exposed to the elements, you'll need screws that are specifically labelled for exterior use. Screws come with finishes such as galvanised and exterior bronze ceramic that are designed to withstand rain and humidity. For the ultimate in rust protection, use solid stainless steel screws.

What Material Are You Screwing Into?

Some screws are optimized for specific materials. Examples include special screws, which are designed for strong joints in particleboard. There are also screws which help prevent melamine materials from chipping around the screw head. Pocket hole screws are often offered in your choice of coarse threads, which are better for softwoods and fine threads which are better for hardwoods.

Screw Tip

Never use a plasterboard screw in wood. Plasterboard screws are made from hardened steel that is brittle and prone to breakage. Wood screws are less brittle, and have more metal around the shank, giving them far greater strength under torque.

A Note on Solid Brass Screws:

Most screws are made of carbon steel, however, solid brass is the traditional choice for reproductions, restorations and high-end furniture. Be aware, that solid brass is soft, prone to breakage and always requires a pre-drilled pilot hole. *I have had success with using a self-drilling screw of an appropriate gauge to thread the hole.* For this reason, some woodworkers opt for steel screws with a plated finish.

The Nitty Gritty

Now it's time to drill down to the details. Every screw is made up of the same basic parts: a head with a recess for the driver bit, a threaded shaft and a tip. Each of these parts can have different features for different applications. Let's go through them from head to toe.

What is "Head Type" and Which Should You Choose?

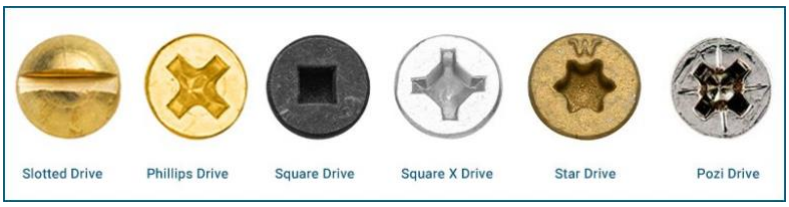
Showcase of Different Head Types.

Head Type refers to the overall shape of the screw head. If you want the screw to be flush with the surrounding surface, a flat head countersink screw is your choice. Some flat head screws also feature "nibs," ridges under the head that mill out the wood, allowing the screw to countersink itself. If you need more holding power and resistance to racking, the flat bearing surface of pan head screws will provide it. If the screw will slide in a slot for adjustment purposes, consider truss head screws and washer head screws, both of which offer a flat bearing surface and a wider head that works well in adjustment slots.

Two additional head types are commonly used for cosmetic purposes. Round head screws have a prominent half-dome head that is sometimes used for decorative effect and trim head screws feature a small head that is easily sunk below the surface and the hole filled with putty. These are often used in trim carpentry applications.

What is "Drive Type/Recess" and Which is Best?

Showcase of Different Drive Types.



"Drive Type" indicates what type of screwdriver or driver bit you use to install the screw.

Options now include much more than just Slotted or Phillips drive. Drive types like Square, Square-X, Pozi and Star offer enhanced performance that make cam-out and stripping a thing of the past. Square-X Drive is a newer hybrid recess that can be driven with either a Phillips bit or a square drive bit. This means you get the durability of square drive, with the customer serviceability of Phillips drive.

Screw Tip

If you own a cordless drill, be sure to use the torque clutch on the drill to protect against breakage and stripping. Using the clutch also lets you select a screw recess with less cam-out, further reducing the risk of stripping the head.

Shank/Thread Considerations:

Showcase of Different Thread Types.

The shaft of the screw can be fully or partially threaded. Longer screws are often unthreaded below the head; the additional metal here makes them stronger and helps disperse heat. Threads can be coarsely spaced for soft woods or for fast driving, or they can be finely spaced, which some prefer for harder woods, or for slower driving. Some screws feature threads with tiny serrations for easier driving, more holding power and less risk of splitting.

Screw Tip

Traditional wood screws (this includes most solid brass screws) have a thick shank that is as wide, or wider, than the threads. This thick shank helps prevent the soft brass from breaking under torque. Be sure to drill a separate pilot hole to accommodate the shank.

Tip/Point Considerations:

Take a look at the tip of the screw. If it has a flute cut into it, it acts like a drill bit, boring out material as the screw winds its way into the wood. Often, this eliminates the need to drill a pilot hole. A high-quality screw will also have threads that go all the way to the very point. This makes it easy to start the screw, with less wobbling.

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