



Tutor's Tidings

No 13 - Friday 17th April, 2015

A long time between projects it seems. Our new member GAIL showed us the last turning project she completed. This was a lidded pot, which was done about 25 years ago when she was at school. Even that long ago Gail demonstrated her potential and now has finally joined a club to carry on what she can excel at. Woodturning!

GARTH, JAN, JAMES: Thank you offering to assist with the oak-wood working bee but please note there will be a week or so delay to gathering the wood from the fallen oak tree. *Postponed from this Sunday 19th April.*

Gail's rimu bowl



It's lunchtime for the Tuesday turners after a busy morning making rimu pots, rubber stamp holders, macro burl bowls, pepper mills, highly figured rimu bowls and large totara bowls.

TUESDAY TURNERS



***JAMES** cuts a round from a slab of tanekaha wood. Always the adventurer turner with a creative bent we all look forward to the outcome of this project.*



***MALCOLM** is determined to get the pepper mill mechanism fitting correctly . His mill is one of the best parts-aligned and finished mills completed this year. Well done Malcolm! (see photo above)*



***GARTH** was lucky enough to win his large macro burl in a club raffle. This week and last he rose to the challenge of turning his prize piece of wood. Carefully and slowly this masterpiece is taking form. The burl has everything odd you'd expect to find in a burl including figured grain patterns, irregular shapes, bark inclusions and lots of knobby bits.*





***JAN** takes a rest from making rubber stamp holders and launches into turning a 7mm pen.*



***DAVID** has to figure out how to refit the faceplate so he can remount his bowl to adjust the size of the spigot to fit a 35mm power jaw.*

***RESULT** - Success!*



***DAVE** has mastered the long-hole drilling problem finishing with a bored hole in his soon-to-be pepper mill that is long and true.*

Anyone needing help with using a scraper to achieve a fine smooth finish..... please have a chat with Dave.



*New member **GAIL** has now decided to stick to the Tuesday day team rather than switch to Thursday evenings sessions as originally planned.*

Her bowl project was completed today in the last few minutes of the session. (An outstandingly beautiful piece of highly figured rimu wood).



Trees of New Zealand

The Mighty Totara

The Maori prized this forest tree more highly than any other because of the remarkable qualities of its timber. The heartwood is very durable and the Maoris found the wood could be readily split and shaped with primitive stone tools for canoes, building, and carving. The same properties made it a valuable timber to the first European settlers for house and wharf piles, and for those parts of buildings requiring durable members.

The tree is a conifer with a wide distribution in North, South, and Stewart Islands. It occurs more sparsely than rimu, the main large forest tree, but is plentiful on shingly river flats. It is closely related to another species *P. hallii*, or Hall's totara, which is a somewhat smaller species growing at higher altitudes. The prostrate or shrubby species of *Podocarpus*, *P. acutifolius* and *P. nivalis* – the former sometimes a small tree – are related to the extent that groups of hybrids occur.

Totara is a tree reaching 120 ft high and has a diameter of up to 6 or 7 ft through. Along with other conifers, in particular rimu, it usually forms the scattered, emergent storey stretching above the dense canopy of broadleaf trees. The bark is thick and stringy – that of *P. hallii* is thin and papery – and the leaves, linear and sharp pointed, are less than an inch long and very dark green-brownish in colour. The flowers are dioecious, the female being on short peduncles which turn red and often become swollen. The nuts are embedded in these.

The Totara is one of the majestic forest canopy trees. A mature Totara tree reaches up to 30 metres, although this takes over 100 years. The leaves are 2.5 cm long, narrow at both ends and are dull brownish-green. They are stiff and prickly to touch. Totara is also recognised by the distinctive bark, which flakes off in thick brown slabs. Like all podocarps, Totara trees have cones – male and female cones grow on separate trees. In autumn the female trees produce tiny green seeds which grow on top of the distinctive juicy red base. This is particularly attractive to birds.

The Totara is found in forests in both the North and South Islands, although it is most common in the northern half of the North Island. In mountain areas above 600 metres, Totara is replaced by the closely related Thin Barked Totara. The Totara is a particularly hardy tree, and will grow in almost any soil and situation. It is tolerant of both wet and dry conditions, and can withstand windy sites. Totara is a common sight in paddocks in Northland, where it survives because stock don't like to eat the prickly leaves.

The huge Maori waka taua, capable of carrying 100 warriors, were often hollowed out from a single Totara log. Often the tree was chosen long before it was felled, and the east side of the trunk cut at the base to make it easier to cut the tree down in the future. The Maori also used the wood for large carving and framing for whare (housing). The inner bark was used for roofing and for storage containers – the outer bark as a splint for fractured bones. A pointed Totara stick could be scraped on a slab of softer wood such as mahoe to make, fire. Medicinally, the smoke was a cure for a skin complaint, and boiled bark was used to reduce a fever. A valued food, the Maori collected the bright red fruit which are sweet and juicy with a slightly piney flavour. Since European times, huge areas of Totara have been felled to supply general building timber, railway sleepers, telephone poles etc.

Did you know?

After the Kauri, the Totara may be the longest living tree of the NZ forest – attaining an age of 1000 and more years. The botanical name, *Podocarpus totara*, is an example of blending the old Latin names – *Podocarpus* – for the genus, with the Maori – Totara – for the species.

Tuesday and Thursday groups.

This week's demonstrations/tips and information included:

- 1. Small projects for cash sales to generate income from your turning projects.**
- 2. Maximizing a large wood slab to extract the greatest number of woodturning rounds. (Gail)**
- 3. Procedure for re-fitting jaws onto a Supernova2 chuck. (Jan)**
- 4. Power sanding techniques (Gail)**
- 5. Procedure for finishing/preparing an internal spigot for turning a large burl (Garth)**
- 6. Shortening the shaft on a pepper mill for a correct fit. (Malcolm)**
- 7. Using a Sorby roughing gouge (Paul)**
- 8. Procedures for snug-fitting a ferrule on a tool handle (Paul)**

Turning for fun and profit

This week both groups spent time discussing ways to generate cash from turning projects. Last weekend's Waikato Show was a good example of a selling opportunity for turners who converted their projects into cash. (I have been doing this for several years now and cash received has been exchanged for a lot of turning tools and machinery).

The selling display needs to be an eye-catcher with plenty of turned projects, a wide range of styles (wood colours, finishes, shapes and designs).

A good idea is to have the article labelled with the maker's name, wood and asking price. The price is important and should be tailored to the event. For example items between \$10 - \$45 are more likely to sell at a family fair day. Items priced at \$100- \$1000 would be better placed in an upmarket arts and crafts outlet

Small project such as pens, yo-yos, spinning tops, kaleidoscopes, etc sell really well at craft shows, fairs, farmers markets and the like. One of our Thursday turners regularly exhibits his projects at these kinds of functions and is turning over a healthy profit from pen sales and small bowls.

Clive



The paper- knife making project has seen many outstanding examples of craftsmanship. The adventurous Thursday team has produced a variety of shapes and designs with each one expressing interpretation and individuality.

A few examples of carefully made, superb turning work





SHARING IDEAS among members is an important part of club operations.

***CHRISTINE** and **PAUL** check out one another's turning project progress.*

***COLIN** started the session with a block of yellow-heart kahikatea and before the session ended he had produced a mid-size, well-constructed bowl.*



Many thanks to ROBERT for checking out the oak tree wood we had been offered. After a close look at the size and quality of the wood it was decided not to proceed with the wood recovery idea on this occasion.