

This week's
TUTOR'S TIDINGS



Week 14

Friday 6th May, 2016



LIGNUM VITAE
(Guaiacum Officinale)

BEAUTIFUL WOODS of the WORLD
(No 8 in a series of 10)

Lignum Vitae the national tree of the Bahamas.



The Meaning in the Name

Its name, when translated from Latin, means "wood of life" – probably adopted because of its medicinal qualities.

Description of the Lignum Vitae

- The Lignum Vitae (*Guaiacum Officinale*) was found by Christopher Columbus.
- The short, compact tree is native to continental tropical American and the West Indies.
- In Jamaica, it grows best in the dry woodland along the north and south coasts of the island.
- Lignum vitae resin has been used to treat a variety of medical conditions from coughs to arthritis.
- Chips of the wood can also be used to brew a tea.

The plant is extremely ornamental, producing an attractive blue flower and orange-yellow fruit, while its crown has an attractive rounded shape. The tree is one of the most useful in the world.

Uses

The body, gum, bark, fruit, leaves and blossom all serve some useful purpose. In fact, the tree has been regarded for its medicinal properties. A gum (gum guaiac) obtained from its resin was once regarded as a purgative. It was exported to Europe from the early sixteenth century as a remedy (combined with mercury) for syphilis and has also been used as a remedy for gout.

The wood was once used as propeller shaft bearings in nearly all the ships sailing the 'Seven Seas'. Because of this, Lignum Vitae and Jamaica are closely associated in shipyards worldwide. It is a very heavy wood which will sink in water.

Due to the density of the wood, cricket bats, in particular "heavy bats" used in windy conditions, are sometimes made of lignum vitae. It is also sometimes used to make lawn bowls, croquet mallets, and skittles balls. The wood also has seen widespread historical usage in mortars and pestles and for wood carvers' mallets.

The belaying pins and deadeyes aboard USS *Constitution* and many other sailing ships were made from lignum vitae. Due to its density and natural oils, they rarely require replacement, despite the severity of typical marine weathering conditions. The sheaves of blocks on sailing vessels were made of lignum vitae until the introduction of modern synthetics.

It was the traditional wood used for the British police truncheon until recently, due to its density (and strength), combined with the relative softness of wood compared to metal, thereby tending to bruise or stun rather than simply cut the skin.

Sometimes it is used for furniture.

A Healthy Lignum Vitae Tree



CLUB NEWS



Wow ! What a weekend we had. Club members and fellow woodies from Cambridge, Te Awamutu and Hamilton were treated to a highly informative **Saturday morning** with **TERRY SCOTT**, the woodturning extraordinaire from Papakura. **This special event was made possible with a generous grant from Hamilton City Creative Communities.**

Forty-three (43) interested folk gathered at the club's workshop to hear the benefits of adding **embellishments** to turnings and watch demonstrations by **TERRY**, the master craftsman.

Our expert presenter showed what could be achieved with a Dremel tool by using it as a cutter, a carver, and an abrader. Artistic skills were shown to advantage using a pyro wood burner with its range of nichrome-tipped hot nibs. The addition of colour to turnings using guilders' paste was another aspect to the choice of embellishment techniques. Terry brought with him a large display of woodturning equipment items for sale. There was a raffle and morning tea. **A busy, productive morning. But wait.....there's more!!!!**

The Saturday afternoon and all of Sunday involved ten **really super-lucky turners** who had enrolled for the extended "embellishment" workshop, which was to be facilitated by Terry. Dremel tools hummed, Pyro machines blew smoke and a wide range of colours adorned carefully turned platters. Ideas were shared, one-on-one assistance provided and heaps of ooooohs and aaaahs, indicating peer approval, could be heard around the workshop.

The event culminated in a group photo shoot of the **TEN TURNERS** proudly showcasing their taonga.



Hamilton members and visitors look on as Terry develops Dremel tool ideas for embellishments to turnings



For someone who states he “can’t draw a straight line” Terry’s artistic work on wood is truly remarkable.



Our Andre’s work as camera man behind the scenes was superb. The large TV monitor enabled everyone to closely follow the demonstrations. Many thanks Andre`.

What follows is an article about **TERRY SCOTT's** work with the **Dremel tool**.

For this week's TT Terry has granted me permission to include an account written about an aspect of his work.

The story that unfolds closely mirrors the content and activity of the turning seminar held during the weekend.

Happy reading. *Clive*



A FINE finish

WOODEN WORKS ARE TRANSFORMED BY DREMEL ARTISTRY.

By Terry Scott



Terry Scott at work.

When I first started turning as a hobby around 18 years ago the mainstay works were salad bowls, pot-pourri holders and a number of other utilitarian items. As a member of the South Auckland Woodturners' Guild (www.sawg.org.nz) part of the club's calendar was to hold a sale over the three weeks prior to Christmas.

This has become a popular event for customers who can choose from more than 2800 items that are for sale over this period. As you can imagine the shop can be a bit daunting for those trying to choose what to buy.

One day I had a light-bulb moment when I was wondering how I could add value to my work and also make it different from the hundreds of other bowls on sale. As it happens I had just been given a second-hand Dremel. This is where my love affair with the Dremel began.

Being a self-confessed toolaholic many have said I could start my own Dremel resale centre.

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Recently I've added some mates to the nine or so I have as Dremel have brought out the cordless range which now allows me to take one away on holiday—great fun sitting on the beach and being able to pick up a piece of driftwood and start carving.



Terry's Dremel collection.



Using a small burr on a bowl edge...

Grinding stones have other uses too.

I started using the Dremel tool to add some fairly basic squiggles or dots to the rims of small platters and bowls. This soon advanced to whole works that were embellished with texture and then colour added.

Bad workmanship

What I soon learnt was that texturing was no excuse for bad workmanship as when a finish was applied, any chisel marks or sanding scratches along with bad form would only be enhanced by the embellishment. It may seem a strange thing to say but the finished surface is better to be removed entirely wherever you are adding texture because when a finish is applied all you will see are the shiny areas like stars in the sky that you have missed texturing. It does take a bit of practice so you don't get lines of texture which can also look ugly.



Colour is a big part of the presentation.



Roughing out a design.



Relieving large portions with a sanding accessory.



Carving directly from nature.



Paraglyphs can help to help the rotary tool. Try it using a Dremel gas-powered sanding disc.

But the dremel didn't stop so it was flying around like a fantail above my head until I pulled the plug out of the wall.



Future inspiration.



Freehand carving with a rotary burr.

For 90 percent of the time when I am using a Dremel it is with the flexi shaft as the pen-like hand piece gives more freedom and accuracy of movement. It's important to hang a Dremel so that the flexi shaft is kept as straight as possible. Essentially the cable is the same as a speedo cable and if the radius is too tight this puts load on the Dremel motor and creates friction which means heat is transferred to the hand piece. Have I had mishaps or failures with a Dremel? Yes but always through my own doing or by using it in a way that

Mr Dremel would not approve, such as the time I was in my workshop in the winter wearing a large bush shirt. I tend to tuck a piece into my chest if I am unable to hold it in a carving jig. I slipped off the work and the bit came to a sudden stop, wrapping itself in the woollen material of the shirt and breaking the shaft. But the dremel didn't stop so it was flying around like a fantail above my head until I pulled the plug out of the wall. Adding texture or embellishing and now carving to my work has been an enjoyable learning experience. I can.

however, spend days on a work and still not be happy with it. In this case there is only one thing to do but sand it off and start again.

Texturing a bowl or hollow form is not just limited to a stationary object. Using the Dremel bits on a turning piece of timber can create some amazing effects by using different bits and burrs and running the Dremel against the running wood. It is wise to exercise care in this and don't try it with the lathe running at speed.

I have built a fitting to allow me to use the Dremel on a piece that is chucked so I can add texture or embellishment as if the piece is indexed.

I tend to be a bit unconventional in my use of the accessory bits:

- The diamond burrs make great sanding accessories for timber and allow me to shape incredible detail.
- The cut-off wheels leave a crisp, burnt line on any timber.
- I use the wire brushes in the hundreds as they give a sandblasted effect and

also take off any burrs of timber that have been left by conventional bits.

Aged look

I call this texturing texture—basic pattern then wire brush followed by a light burning with the Versatip soldering iron and you have a real aged look. It is recommended to run the wire brushes at a low speed as they tend to disintegrate with the speed on high.

As a builder I am always finding other uses for a Dremel. Just recently I used a



Jig mounted to allow the Dremel to be used with a bowl chucked in the lathe.



Working directly on the lathe...

...and in close up.

Some of the special effects that can be achieved.



Craft expert

Terry Scott is one of the best-known woodturners in New Zealand who also has a formidable reputation overseas and is often asked to speak at forums and symposiums on the craft. His work is distinctive and characterised by its often elaborate decoration. Terry today spends nearly all his time involved with the craft as owner of Timberly Woodturning which sells tools and lathes to enthusiasts all over the country. An active member of the South Auckland Woodturners' Guild, Terry has been turning since his teens. Terry is also an inveterate collector of and user (and abuser) of Dremel tools. At last count he had nine but that was rapidly increasing with the acquisition of the new reflex Dremel Micro.

Different trims on bowls.



grinding stone to ease a door striker plate that I was unable to take off the jamb. My wife's kitchen knives have also had the Dremel treatment.

I make my own sanding discs by using an old Dremel bit, inserting a small wooden disc turned on the lathe, then adding Velcro and a piece of closed-cell foam rubber.

The inspiration for a lot of the texture and the shape in my work is from nature. We are fortunate living in New Zealand to have such a variety of shapes and textures present in the bush. I don't consider myself an artist in the sense that I can draw well so I adapt natural forms either by tracing them directly or creating large collages of forms of leaves, for example, and reproducing them via photocopying or scanning to create shapes that are recognisable and in a format that I can trace onto the work. Sometimes I paste the image directly and carve around it.

The texturing work can be driven either by the shapes and effects I can derive from the Dremel bits, particularly when I use them in unorthodox ways such as using grinding stones to derive relief form, or from natural inspiration such as tree bark or the fine texture of a leaf.

Inspiration is everywhere—from the clouds in the sky to the blooms and leaves you see on your morning walk. You just need to open your eyes and breathe it in. Sometimes it helps to talk to others who are creative to get ideas about what gets their creative juices flowing. I have also learned that my best work often comes when I don't really care about the

outcome, when I am just messing around in my workshop with the art supplies trying new techniques or just making shavings at the lathe.

True creativity requires a willingness to play with the raw materials, whether those materials are timber, paint, pyrography or creating new textures with the Dremel or carving chisels.

The standard utilitarian pieces I originally turned operated within basic stylistic conventions, however I eventually felt that to achieve my underlying desire of shaping wood into exciting and progressive forms I had to look beyond the traditional. So I have diversified towards enhancement of the basic grain and texture, carving and coloration. I delight in successfully making the viewer pose the question: "Is that form crafted from wood?" The versatility of the Dremel rotary tool and its attachments has played a major part in this progression. 🍷

See more of Terry's work at his website www.timberly.co.nz.



Enhancement with a new dimension to the design.

BLACK WALNUT wood gathering. Please note that the arrangements for this activity have changed.

ROBERT WISELEY has offered to pick up all the walnut wood and bring it to our workshop for processing by club members interested in taking some of this wood for storage at home. Date for this working bee to be notified.

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Remember, if I cannot break it, no-one can!

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Terry : THANKS for a highly informative learning time.

From all of us who spent time with you at the Hamilton Woodturners' workshop during the weekend.

**New Turners
Make Great
Progress.**

*Ross, Shane and Chris
have made a flying
start to their turning
journeys. Top effort
guys!*





Look what we made!



Cutting, Carving,
Burning,
Colouring.....

Special thanks to
you Terry.

We valued your
input, enjoyed
the weekend
and learned
heaps.

Cheers

Clive et al