



WAD NEWS

The Newsletter of the Woodcrafters Association of Durban

Issue 15

October/November 2005



*July Being & Show.
Left: Miniature dining suite and side dresser
Below: Folding top pedestal table.*



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Membership

Application forms are available at the monthly meetings from the treasurer, Albert Patterson.

Joining Fee: R200.0

Annual Subscription:

Normal R130.0

Pensioners R85.00

Woodturning Section:

In addition to the fees above: R65.00

Visitors:

During my absence I apologise that I will not be able to personally welcome any visitors as is the norm.

CHAIRMAN'S TURN

Charles Thatcher

Well I am still alive and still in Texas/Mexico and the Spanish is coming along nicely, more swear words than I should know but that goes with the territory. Luckily I have been able to spend a little time away from the job and see and sample some of the area. The tequilas and margaritas are a must and I have had my fair share along with the beans and Tacos (local fair in Mexico), but it has not been all play and long hours and hard work are the norm. I am now ready to come home and hopefully will see you at the next meeting.

This last weekend I managed to get to San Antonio a beautiful city, one of the main reasons was to be able to visit Woodcraft (eat your hearts out) well I wasn't disappointed (well maybe my bank balance is). I spent 4 hours there and had a long talk with the manager and shop assistants all of whom are avid woodworkers. Woodcraft is also the home of the San Antonio Woodworkers Guild and they had a class on at the time which I was able to wander around. What interested me is that the guild in a city the size of San Antonio only has about 30 members who attend meetings compared to our meetings of 70 plus. It definitely made me realise what a strong association we have.

I have not managed to find a woodwork club around McAllen, although there is a Woodturners Guild but time has been a problem and I don't think I will get time to visit them.

I am pleased to hear that the Hobby X show was a great success, thanks to all those that helped out and managed the event, I am just sorry that I missed out on it.

Once again thanks to all those that have taken over the reins in my absence especially the committee and Perrie.

I look forward to seeing you in a couple of weeks.

Happy Woodworking

Charles

HOBBY – X 2005

Due to obvious reasons I was not able to enjoy and participate in the Hobby –X show this year, but from all accounts it was a great success, thanks to a lot of hard work from the committee and all those that volunteered to help. Thanks to Denzil and Bruce for the photos.



WEB REVIEWS

By Charles Thatcher

Name:- Funzi Furniture

Link: <http://www.funzifurniture.com/intro.htm>

An African wood working site for a change and a very inspirational one at that. Based in Kenya on the Indian Ocean, the furniture is very ethnic and all made using hand tools only. It is just a pity that the graphics are not as clear as they could be, but apart from this the site is a must to visit, especially as it is my home country.

Name:- Woodworkers Auction

<http://www.woodworkersauction.com/index.html>

Why this site has been named Woodworkers Auction I could not find out as there is no evidence of any auctions. That being said the site has some very interesting and unusual links that are out of the norm (such as the Baobab Bar featured in this issue. Try following the Woodworking Stories and Projects link, there is some interesting stuff there. This site also has plenty of links to some pretty cool articles, tips and resources. Give it a try.

BAR IN A BAOBAB

The Majestic Baobab Tree

For centuries, humans have developed inventive ways to use trees ----- for fire, for furniture, for weapons and a multitude of other ways. But few have been more imaginative or resourceful than the 'Bar In A Baobab' created by the Van Heerden family in South Africa. Now that's one amazing woodworking project.



Ga-Modjadji (Rain Queen's Land) in South Africa is home to a supersized Baobab tree. The Baobab is indigenous to the semi-arid part of Africa. Any distribution to the dry parts of Africa is thought to be the work of humans. The Baobab is a huge tree, growing up to 82 feet tall and 39 feet in diameter. Its grey, smooth bark is used by the native people to make ropes. The wood of the Baobab is pulpy with no growth rings. Known by species as 'Adansonia Digitata' it sports large, scented, white flowers with purple stamens. From these white flowers a long, woody, hairy fruit is produced which earns it the name of 'Dead Rat Tree'.

The needles on the fruit of the Baobab tree are known to itch and irritate human skin. Yet the natives harvest the fruit and mix the white pulp (which holds the seeds) with sugar and water to make a sweet natural drink. Seeds found in the pulp resemble a hard black nut and these are dried and ground into a powder that is used in a soup called "chereh". The fruit shell is cleaned by rubbing sand over it, causing it to resemble stone. This shell is used as a fuel for preparing meals.



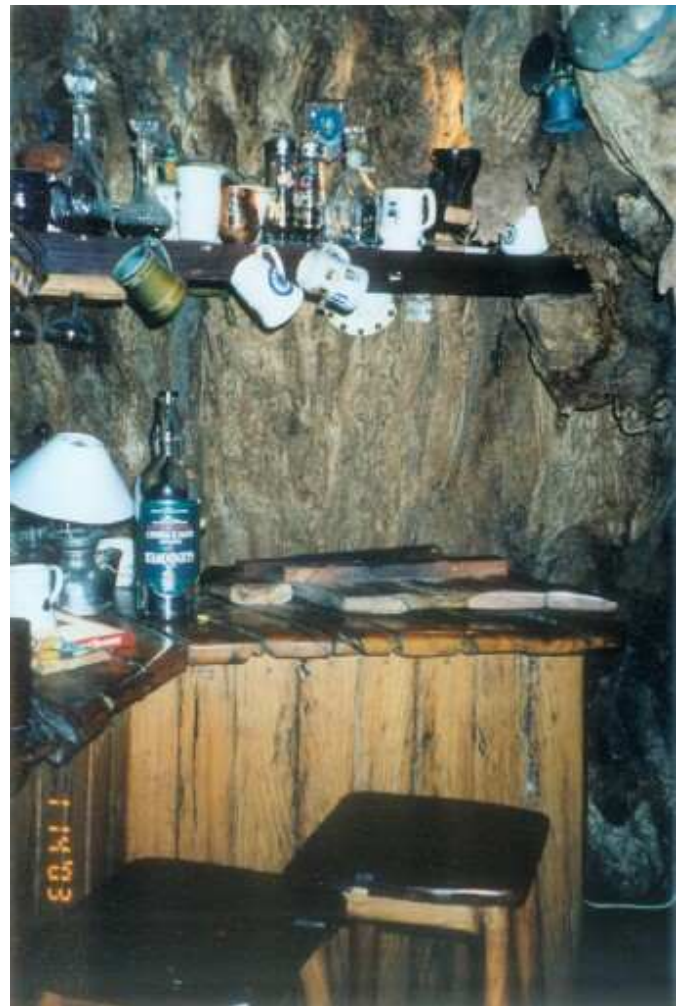
There isn't much information about this tree being used for building, but one family has made a "Bar In A Baobab" providing a whole new concept in home recreation areas.

On the Van Heerden farm in Go-Modjadji is a 6,000 year old Baobab that is about the size of an average dining room. Baobab's are known to reach an age of 1,000 to 2,000 years old, but this one is of exceptional age. In fact, the *Ripley's Believe It Or Not* TV show recently claimed it to be the oldest living thing in the world.

When the Van Heerden's carved open the Baobab, they found a great hollow inside. Now, we all know how you can see things in wood and the Van Heerden's saw a bar in their Baobab. Even though they have

installed electricity to service and light the bar, the tree is still very much alive. Every Spring, it grows leaves and then sheds them in Winter. Just to the right is a shot of the interior of the Baobab Bar. (Sounds like a popular night spot doesn't it?)

The Bakgaga people of South Africa claim that the land the Van Heerden's live on is theirs. The Van Heerden's reply that they are prepared to give up the land, because they want to do the right thing. But, before they relinquish their rights, they want the tree to be declared a national heritage or maybe a world heritage. That sounds like a great plan to insure that a wonderful world treasure is not lost.



WOOD OF THE MONTH

By Brian Coetzee

Thanks Brian for your contribution once again. We trust that by now you will have settled in and are back into your box making. It is very kind of you to carry on contributing to the Association even though you are such a distance away we truly appreciate it.

Panga Panga *Millettia stuhlmannii*

National Tree List No: 228

Common Names: Partridgewood (Eng), Patryshout (Afr),

Common Uses: Furniture, flooring, panelling, musical instruments, inlay work, was used for sleepers. Probably not ideal for turning.

Distribution: Southern to Central Mozambique and Eastern Zimbabwe. Isolated pocket in NE Limpopo province.

Tree Biology: Deciduous with spreading crown. **Bark:** Smooth, yellow to grey-green. **Leaves:** Imparipinnate (odd number of leaflets) 7-9. **Flowers:** Pinkish purple. **Fruit:** Flat woody pods, golden brown in colour with a velvety texture.

Wood: Air-dry weight approx 880 - 1000 kg/m³. Although this wood is very porous, its very close annular rings and relatively straight grain give this wood a particularly delicate figure especially when flat sawn. The overall colouration varies from dark brown to grey to almost black. This wood is very stable.



Durability: It is moderately hard and very durable – borer resistant.

Workability: Splinters in fingers seem to be an occupational hazard when working with this wood. Blades are quickly dulled and very fine dust is generated whilst machining. When using hand tools keep blades very sharp. Be aware of the possibility of hairline checks (cracks) that are sometimes only apparent after applying finish. In my view it has very similar physical properties to Purple Heart (*Peltogyne purpurea*).

Propagation: Unknown.

Remarks: Other woods in the same genus (*Millettia*) are very similar and can sometimes be confused with each other, namely Wenge (*Millettia laurentii*) from Central West Africa and Umzimbeet (*Millettia grandis*) from Kwazulu Natal.

References: Keith Coates Palgrave; 1990; Trees of Southern Africa; Struik Publishers.
Braam van Wyk; Piet van Wyk; 1997; Field Guide to Trees of Southern Africa; Struik Publishers

Photograph: Brian Coetzee

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Please let me know of any events that would be of interest to our members, I need to know when and where and I will endeavour to include it in the next newsletter.



OCTOBER 10 TH	18h00	WOODCRAFT
Furntech Woodwork Training Centre		Furntech
Furntech is a furniture making training centre backed by the government. There will be machine demos and the opportunity to learn about resources that may be available to the members. The meeting will be held at their premises at 63 Willowfield Crescent, Springfield Park		
OCTOBER 17 TH	18h00	WOODTURNING
Bowl Turning		4 Turners
Very similar to last months meeting but the focus will be on bowl turning rather than spindle turning. There will be several turners and lathes in operation to demonstrate and answer your questions with hands on experience.		
NOVEMBER 14 TH	18h00	WOODCRAFT
Indigenous Hardwoods of South Africa		Rob Scott
A repeat of a very popular demo by Rob a few years back. Rob will share his knowledge of our local woods and why they are so important to us.		
NOVEMBER 21 ST	18h00	WOODTURNING
The Three Turners		Fred Wright, John Mills & Bruce Mcphail
You will have to wait and see what the theme of this demo is but don't miss it, it will be good!		

BREAKING NEWS

End of Year Challenge

Yes you heard right. This event will be held at the end of the year to coincide with our Christmas bash on **5th December**. There of will be lots of prizes for both turners and cabinetmakers. All levels of craftsmanship will be catered for. So don't delay start making your masterpiece/s now!!

More details will be forthcoming shortly

THE CLASSIFIEDS

Woodworking Machinery for Sale

- KITTY BESTCOMBI 5 in 1 machine (circular saw, spindle moulder planer, thicknesser, slot mortiser) in good condition -- R7500-00
- RYOBI 5 speed bench drill press, hardly used - R280-00

Contact Bill Kruger at
031- 4641196

Machine 'O' DIY/Craft Show

Machine 'O' is staging a Craft/Hobby/DIY exhibition on weekend of 10th & 11th December., The Association has been requested to exhibit and demonstrate at this show, much along the lines of Hobby X

Further details will be forthcoming shortly

TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Tablesaw Kickback

Many have experienced it, but few know why it happens

Ask many woodworkers if they've had a kickback on the tablesaw and a fair number say yes, but few of them can tell you what happened. And often those who have had the unsettling experience of carving a nice, deep furrow in a piece of wood and having it fly across the shop don't usually know what caused it. It all happens so fast that it's over by the time they realize it's occurred.

The potential for kickback is inherent with any circular saw, and on a tablesaw, kickback can occur when either ripping or crosscutting. Unlike a bandsaw, where the cutting force drives the stock into the table, a tablesaw can lift the work off the table and throw it with tremendous force. Under normal conditions, teeth on the back of the blade, which are rising out of the table, don't encounter any resistance because they are in the kerf. Kickback results when stock comes into contact with the teeth at the back of the blade.

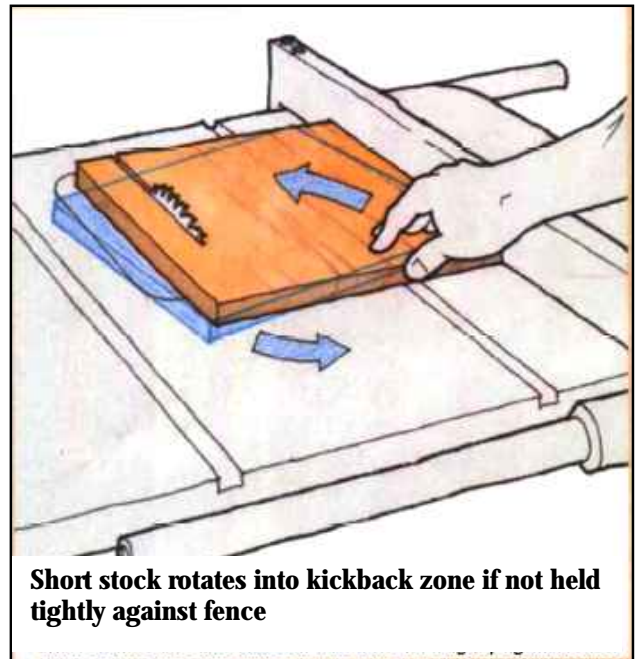
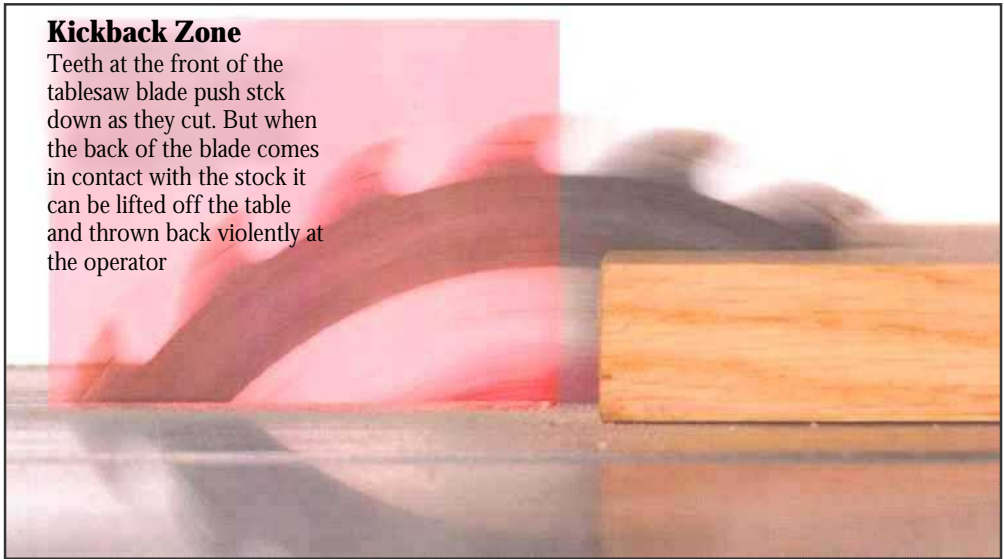
This occurs when the leading corner of a piece being cut rotates away from the rip fence. The piece then gets caught up between the back of the blade and the fence. As the back of the blade -- the part that cuts upward-- begins to gnaw into the freshly cut edge of the piece at up to **160 Kmh**, the piece quickly rotates, getting caught diagonally between the fence and the blade. The piece then acts like a pole-vaulter. Rotating further and moving faster now, the piece rides up and over the blade and is hurtled into the air like a missile to the left side of the blade. If you're lucky, it will fly over your left shoulder. If you're not lucky, a board, with kilowatts of force behind it, will hit you. This is also why it is such a bad idea to stand directly behind the saw blade

Afterward, you'll usually spot a crescent-shaped cut on the bottom of the piece. This crescent cut is the result of the piece rotating as it crosses over the top of the blade. It's as if you drew a circle with a compass, putting the center point at the corner closest to the operator and against the fence.

Even though tablesaw kickback is most commonly associated with ripping, it also can occur when you are crosscutting. Cutoff pieces that vibrate or are pushed into the back of the blade can be launched toward the operator. But if the piece is kept solidly against the rip fence and pushed all the way through the cut and beyond the blade, it's unlikely that a kickback will occur. Keep your eyes on the rip fence just past the blade to make sure the piece is firmly in contact with the fence throughout the cut. The critical time is often just after the front of the blade has cut all the way through the piece. The waste lies on the table rattling against the blade, distracting you from the very real task of keeping the piece firmly against the rip fence until it is well past the blade. A moment's inattention and ...!!

Kickback Zone

Teeth at the front of the tablesaw blade push stock down as they cut. But when the back of the blade comes in contact with the stock it can be lifted off the table and thrown back violently at the operator



Short stock rotates into kickback zone if not held tightly against fence

A good splitter

Preventing the workpiece from contacting the back of the blade is the only foolproof solution to kickback. This is the job of the splitter. This is because the splitter prevents the rotation of the piece away from the fence.

Other precautions

Besides a good splitter, other commercial and shop-built fixtures can help prevent kickback. Your strongest ally may be care and common sense. The tablesaw is an easy tool to take for granted, especially when you're tired or in a hurry.

The fence

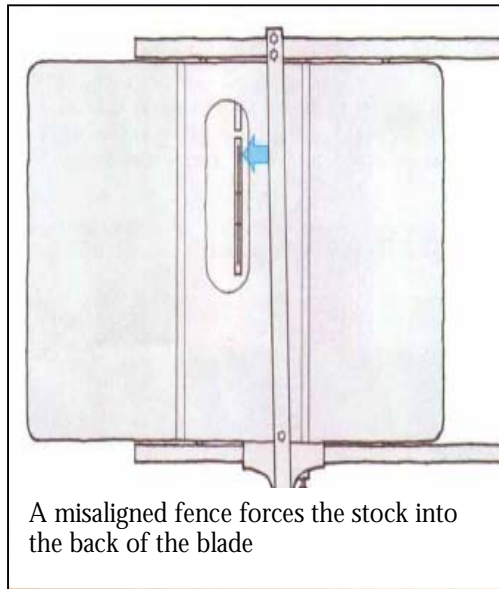
A fence that angles toward the blade encourages kickback, so make sure the fence is parallel to the blade or angled away from it slightly. For crosscutting, a crosscut box or a fence attached to the miter gauge keeps cutoffs away from the blade.

The Push Stick

A well-designed push stick is a must for keeping your hand out of danger. A good push stick holds down the work on the saw's table and allows you to steer the work against the fence (see the photo at right). The type that I prefer is shaped like a shoe and is much



The best splitter closely hugs the back of the blade and can be left in place for all operations



A misaligned fence forces the stock into the back of the blade

better than a stick with a bird's mouth in the end

The featherboard

A featherboard clamped to a table is a low-tech but effective way of preventing kickback. The featherboard has a series of closely spaced kerfs cut into one end. The spring-like fingers hold the work tightly against the fence, and they act like a pawl to prevent the stock from being pushed backward.

Shop practices help, too. A sharp blade cuts with less resistance, reducing the chances of kickback, so it's a good idea to check your blade regularly. Don't stand directly in line with the blade. By standing off to the side, you'll be out of the way if the blade catches a piece of stock and throws it. And it pays to know when to quit. When you're tired or when someone breaks your concentration, it's time to turn off the machine. Kickback happens instantly and seldom when you're expecting it. There are several types of fence-mounted, anti-kickback wheels, but they all operate on the same principle. The wheels only allow rotation in the feed direction, and they lock when the stock is pushed toward the operator. The wheels are angled so that they force stock against the rip fence.



Large push stick keeps stock against fence and holds it on the table. Note that the author is not standing in line with the blade.



Simple but safe. A splitter is essential to any safe shop, but it doesn't have to cost a thing. Flip a zeroclearance insert end for end and raise the blade to elongate the slot. Fit a piece of hardwood tightly into the slot and then glue it in place.