

# ILLAWARRA WOODWORKERS GROUP INCORPORATED PO Box 121 Corrimal NSW 2518

## JUNE 2005 NEWSLETTER

**Committee.** The permanent position of Secretary wasn't filled at the May meeting of the Club, but Bill Hopton kindly offered to fill the position until he moves North later in the year. Bill's offer was enthusiastically accepted by the members.

President	David Lipscombe	Oak Flats
Vice President	Bill Body	Balgownie
Temp. Secretary	Bill Hopton	Farmborough Heights
Treasurer	William Perry	Cordeaux Heights
Public Officer	John Parker	Corrimal
Librarian	Bruce Keats	Primbee
Coordinator	Peter Hansen	Corrimal
Coordinator	Mal Stewart	Thirroul
Newsletter	John Cashman	Fernhill

**Survey** Mal Stewart distributed survey forms last meeting to find out what members want from the club. 32 members answered. The most wanted areas were -Turning demonstrations(19), Cabinet making (15), Routing work(14), Carving (9), and Scroll saw work (5)

**Woodturning** Bill Body announced and ran a woodturning course for four Saturday mornings. Attendance each day was 8 to 12, a mixture of experienced, average turners and starter turners. The course included setting up, safety, tool sharpening, various cutting techniques, as well as hands on demonstration, and helpful critique. 2 or 3 lathes were working each Saturday, and there was also lots of standing around and yarning. Bill and Peter Hansen have offered to extend the course for a further 4 weeks if there is a demand for it

**Coming Events.** Peter Hansen announced these were

June 8:	Club Meeting. Mal Stewart with 'Router Techniques'
July 4 - 23 :	Club Display in Wollongong Library
July 13:	Club Meeting
August 10:	Club Meeting

**Quiz** Les Miller is one of the experts on 'The Woodies' a talkback radio show on the ABC, Saturday 10 to 11am. Recently Les has also appeared occasionally on a show on TV. What show is it ?

### **Show and Tell**

Barry Long showed a small electric drill purchased from Bunnings. It came in what looked like a large biscuit tin. Barry caused some mirth over the question of how you get shavings out of a drill hole. Last year Barry showed a very small hand plane he had bought from somewhere. Is it *The Day of Small Things* ?

Tim Manton showed two pieces he had turned from Black Wattle while the wood was green, but both had split on drying. Various members offered advice about turning wood while green

Bill Hopton showed a pen he had turned from a tree root. Classy !

Milan Oder showed another chair cum step ladder he made from Tasmanian Oak. Third club member to show this item. Milan varied the back of the chair to give it a European look. Stylish !

### **The Dolphin Man**

Bill Hopton gave a fine demonstration of carving dolphins at the last meeting. Bill's idea was not of coming home on the sheep's back, but at least of hitching a ride on a dolphin's back. Watch out Kerry Packer ! But between the cup and the lip !

Bill might not be a millionaire, but he is a very good demonstrator: modest, humorous and knowledgeable. There was a helpful survey of tools, wood, and especially safety factors ( who can forget Bill's winning entry in the Push Stick competition - that hand with two fingers missing !). Bill also had items of the major stages in making a dolphin: marking out, band sawing, initial cuts, final cutting, and finishing. Great ! Many thanks Bill.

**NF** on your address label means you are **Not Financial**. June is your last chance to pay or you will be dropped. Ahh! See Bill Perry or post your 20 bucks to the club at PO Box 121, Corrimal 2518

*Quiz Answer* The New Inventors. First prize is a personal tour of the club workshop with your own choice of a guide ??

### **The Old Rocking Horse**

The old rocking horse we have just had restored  
It was the one our son adored  
On it he would always play  
As to and fro it would sway.

And now our grandson on it will play  
And to and fro it will again sway  
To see the smile on his face is our reward  
Now that it has been restored. KH



## Ken Hutchison.

Ken Hutchison has been a long time member of the club, and is known for his jovial personality and ready smile.

But Ken didn't get a good start. His father died when he was a baby, and his mother died when he was five, so he was brought up by an aunt. She was kind, but not emotionally warm. His elder brother went to another aunt, and though they both lived in Uralla, south of Armidale, they saw little of each other.

At 15 Ken went to work, a brickie's labourer, then a carpenter's offsider, then at 16, he got a job as an Assistant Porter with the railways, helping to load goods, wheat, whatever. In those days the railways stretched all over NSW like a giant cobweb. Ken was often at faraway places during the week, and home for some of the weekend. Bigger places had barracks for railway workers, and in smaller places you stayed in a pub.

He stayed in a pub at Ballata for 18 months. It took most of Saturday to get home, and most of Sunday night to get back to his workplace. He and a young school teacher who also stayed at the pub became friends. The waitress at the pub was a nice comely lass. His friend was a bit of a wag and once asked her, 'Brownie, are you a good girl, or a Good-O girl?' He got a jug of milk in his face!

Ken did an Ambulance course too, and this helped him when he applied to become a Guard, the youngest the railways had. As a Guard on goods trains he travelled all over the North of the State.

He met and married Jill, and after a while they moved to the Illawarra, and had two daughters and a son, Annette, Wendy and Rob.

Thirrour had a big shunting yard at that time where trucks were sorted into trains and taken to Bulli, Corrimai, Wollongong, Conniston etc. Then diesels took over from steam, but Ken said, 'some of the comradeship seemed to go. Steam engines sometimes had to be coaxed along, but they were alive, and rewarding; very hands on! But with diesels you just pressed a button.'

Then electricity came. Ken's last few years on the railway were spent as a Guard on passenger trains. There were benefits. 'You had your work timetable for 2 weeks ahead, instead of the next day. But people often saw you just as a Guard, not as a person who is a Guard'

'Hey You' a chap once called Ken, 'what does a guard do?' Too easily people called out 'Heh You', but between stations Ken wrote out what a guard's duties were, and showed it to the 'Heh You' chap, who was

impressed. That started a friendship. Later, inspired, Ken wrote a poem about it, which was published in the railway's magazine, *Statewide*. Lots of other poems have followed, since then about work, people, and life.

Ken is a collector. From the wood used to support the steel on trucks, which was usually thrown out, he built an 8' by 8' shed for his mower etc. But one day he found the mower and tools all over the lawn. Annette and Wendy had taken over the shed for their dolls! So a 'lean-to' was added. Later again, Ken was at a garage sale, and found out that the owner was leaving that weekend. 'How much do you want for the garage?' 'Take it down, and you can have it!' Ken did, and rebuilt it at his place over the next few months. It gave him a 20' by 10' shed. People sometimes ask, 'Where did you get your garage?' Ken smiles, 'At a garage sale!'

In retirement Ken was Caretaker at the Cathedral; lawn mower, verger, odd job man. Some nice people there, but others who only treated him as a Caretaker. The saints, particularly some higher up ones, too easily forget that they are also still sinners. Ken finished, a bit less than happily, but still goes along to help the pre-school at the Cathedral.

Peter Hansen, a friend, asked Ken to go to a wood turning class at Dapto. They went. 'That first night I think I used the chisels like an axe! I'm sure the teacher hoped I wouldn't be back!' But Ken is a sticker, and came back, and now has become proficient. He has a German Elu lathe, and a Leady lathe on loan to him. He likes finding pieces of wood and seeing what he can make from them. Clocks are one of his specialties. "I guess I've made over 100 clocks. I could go into the export business. One of my clocks is in Canada, and one in England.' When Ken asked Jill what else he could make for her, she replied, 'No more clocks!'

Ken has, in times past, done some fishing and camping. Just after he retired, he and Jill went to Perth. By train of course. A poem about that was published too. There have been other trips too, and his poems. And Ken likes having a yarn. He is really a people person.

And nice things happen too. A while ago he was able to contact a distant cousin in Tasmania. She said, 'You know we still have two aunts alive?' Ken's grandfather had married again after his first wife died, and had two more daughters, but the family had lost touch. Ken was able to contact the aunt in Canberra, who gave him the address of the other aunt in Bexley. Ken wrote a somewhat formal letter to this aunt. She promptly rang back. 'Ken! It's your Aunt Florence. Ken, you come right over here. The door will be wide open. I've been thinking of you, and wondering how you are for 50 years!' Ken went over!