

**ILLAWARRA WOODWORKERS  
GROUP INCORPORATED  
PO Box 121 Corrimal NSW 2518**

**May 2008 NEWSLETTER**

President	David Lipscombe	Oak Flats
Vice-president	Tony Sirotich	Figtree
Secretary	Mal Stewart	Thirroul
Treasurer	William Perry	Cordeaux Heights
Coordinator 1	Ric Funnell	Fairy Meadow
Coordinator 2	Ken Smith	Thirroul
Public Officer	John Parker	Corrimal
Librarian	Kevin Parker	Woonona
Newsletter	John Cashman	Fernhill

**Events Coming Up**

**14 May. 6pm Demonstration of Gabbett Machinery  
followed by the Club Meeting**

**11 June. 5.30pm Committee, 7pm Club Meeting**

**9 July. 5.30pm Committee, 7pm Club Meeting**

**Workshops** will be held at the club: on alternate Saturday mornings starting on May 24<sup>th</sup>, June 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. from 8.30 approx to just after lunch. Some items that we have had for a long time were sold at the Thirroul Festival, Our stocks of items for sale are low, so we need to make and stock up for the Bulli Show later in the year.

---

**AGM.** Secretary Mal Stewart, backed by President Dave Lipscombe threw down the gauntlet at the AGM. Either they get more help from Club and a full Committee or they would resign. It was blunt! Whether it was fear of the club folding up, or a vote of confidence in Dave and Mal, the six existing members of the Committee: President, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Officer, Librarian and Editor were all re-elected unopposed, and happily the three vacancies on the Committee were filled: Tony Sirotych was elected Vice- president, and Ric Funnell and Ken Smith were elected as the two Coordinators. All are long-time members of the Club. Tony is the quiet one, often at the back at club meetings, Ric is famous for his wonderful mirror and walking stick carvings, as well as his matchless collection of Matchbox cars. And Ken is the Six Minute Man: who has produced and donated hundreds of small turnings (at 6 minutes an item) for our \$2 box for shows and exhibitions. Ken was a spear fisherman before it became popular. And I like the story of young Ken and Audrey turning up to a Mystery treasure hunt, dumping the friend each had come with, and running off together into the blue. It seems Ken is a man who knows what he wants. It is most pleasing to have all three on the committee.

Bill Perry gave notice that he is getting towards his 10<sup>th</sup> and last year as Treasurer. New member Michael Groves offered to assist and be a stand-in for Bill. Great! Bill reported that income for last year was \$3357.45 and expenditure was \$3452.37, a slight loss. Currently we have \$2587.63 and club fees are now due.

It was decided to hold the Committee Meeting at 5.30pm on the same Wednesday as the Club meeting

## **Thirroul Seaside Festival**

Overall, this went quite well. Sales from Club Items brought some \$350. And the raffle of the Thomas the Tank Engine and truck brought in over \$400. Thomas was a quarter made and sat on a shelf at the club for ages. Mal, and Wendy, his wife, finished the engine, made the truck, and painted both in attractive colours. Mal thinks that the club could make other 'Thomas'es' and donate them to various charities for them in turn to raffle.

Our weakness at the Festival was that virtually the same crew was on duty for the whole weekend. We need to share the load, have more volunteers and organise effective rosters for our displays. Local artist Christine Hill painted an oil sketch of Mal, Wendy and 'Thomas,' which she donated to Mal and them.

## **Other News**

**Bunnings** have donated two tables to the Club. Some of our tables are getting a bit rickety. Many thanks to them.

**New Power Tools.** Recently Dave and Mal, bought a Thicknesser, a Jointer and a large Dust Extractor for the club from Hare and Forbes. Mal and John McMahon made a trolley for the Jointer. Thanks.\*

## **Show and Tell**

Last meeting **Barry Long** showed a Sorby plane, made of English Elm, that his eager eye had spotted at a sale.

**Milan Oder** showed a Clock he had made that cunningly used some semi circular mulga tube in section pieces.

**Frank Cescon** brought along a Swiss Cuboro wooden puzzle. The puzzle consists of several wooden cubes with apparently curved tunnels drilled in them through which a marble can be rolled. But how are the tunnels formed ??

**Ric Funnell** showed a model of the new Wiseman's Park Bowling Clubhouse. Ric built the model from cardboard. Ric has served on the executive committee of the club.



## **John Cashman.**

I grew up at Waitara, north of Sydney. My best subject at High School was Tech Drawing: that seemed to point to engineering. I got a Cadetship with Government Transport and went to Sydney Tech College at night. But I was never great at maths, and failed it often. (with hindsight engineering wasn't the best choice) I finished eventually. It took me 8 years part-time and in the meantime the STC had been taken over by the UNSW. I worked for several years with engineering firms, on the drawing board mostly.

In the meantime I was involved in a church group: leader of this and that. I met Robyn, my wife, through family and church. I wanted to do something for God and eventually went to Moore Theological College. Financially it was a struggle, for we had children, but Robyn worked part-time when she could, and I found work in holidays, often with CIGases. The course at Moore was stimulating, but hard work. There was no maths, but there was Greek and Hebrew. I had as much success with them as I had with maths. On Sundays you worked as a Catechist, a kind of apprentice minister, supposedly to learn the ropes

We had four years at Blacktown as an Assistant Minister, followed by six years at Paddington and 24 years at Balmain. I met some great people, kind, forbearing, helpful, faithful, and some ratbags too, both inside and outside the church. I thought I could help change the world. Oh well! Following Jesus has plenty of ups and down, but overall I find it invigorating and am thankful for so much grace being shown to us.

Balmain was a great place to live, by the harbour, with a big old sandstone church and a rectory that was falling to bits. I'd love to say our time there was a success. We had some great times but it was often hard work. I had little success with the newer people moving in. BESSYs I called them Balmain Educated Successful Secular Yuppies. They weren't real Yuppies. They were business people during the week, but liked the larrikin image at weekends. Mostly our small congregation was made up of remnants of working class people. We did some good things together, plays, performances and dinners, and there were some fizzes too. But we kept the church going, and I got used to writing a weekly Church Newsheet.

Frequently my interesting experiences were with people on the margins. Mick was an ex-British paratrooper. Short but stocky. In his day he had won his weight division in boxing in the British army. When I knew him he had bad growths on his legs and was overfond of the bottle. He'd occasionally come to church with Ruby his dog: swagger down to the front row: interrupt the sermon with a couple of timely remarks and then take himself off. One time he got into an argument with a neighbour and took a swing at him. I appeared for Mick in the Magistrate's Court and he was released on good behaviour. After that I could do no wrong. He frequently wrote to the Archbishop saying how wonderful I was. Ahh!

The Juggler was another character. He was skillful. He could juggle seven oranges at once,(nine in his prime) but drugs had affected him. He was a cross-dresser. One time he appeared in a wig, a blouse and a tight skirt, claiming to have been making an advertisement in the park, but his clothes had been stolen. His part, as a stuntman or stuntwoman, was to fall off a horse. 'How could you ride a horse in a tight skirt?' I asked. Quick as a flash he answered, 'Easy. I rode sidesaddle!!!'

People often dropped in-to the rectory: plenty of conmen, and some genuine ones. To try and sort them out a bit I offered them work, and paid them for it. Sometimes there were interesting consequences. The "Three Musketeers" were all fond of the bottle. I showed them the axe and the woodpile. After a while they came in. "We have filled the woodbox for you." I had a look, but the woodpile was just the same as before. But there had been a pile of garden stakes nearby. They were now in the woodbox: 12" long. Much easier to chop. I had to laugh. Later we learnt to offer the Three Musketeers just sandwiches and cups of tea. They liked to sit in our garden and dine there.

One time I saw a rosewood bowl with gold trim in a Cabinet makers exhibition at the Mitchell library. It was beautiful. 'One day...' I thought. I did a six week turning course at Leichhardt High, and wanted to do more. I was Secretary of Balmain High P & C, and the Deputy Head allowed me, unofficially, to go in to the school workshop on Saturday mornings. That was great, but then he moved on and I had to surrender the workshop key.

We retired to Fernhill, near Corrimal, six years ago. Eventually I found out about the club, and a year or two later bought a lathe, a second-hand Nova TL1200. I'd call myself an average turner. I enjoy turning but still have a lot to learn, especially about sharpening tools. I still prefer turning bowls, especially from pieces of 'found' wood. I really like to turn banksia.

We have five children, one in Canberra, the rest in Sydney. Jeremy is a computer whiz, Susan a p/t midwife, Tim, a surveyor, Kate a p/t curator, and Ben, at present a film-set painter. The elder four are married and we have nine grandchildren. We still often end up babysitting in Sydney.

## Brush Box

As a young forester I was introduced to many trees including Brush Box (now *Lophostemon confertus*) It's surprisingly common. It makes an excellent street tree, because it is hardy, survives most droughts, is free from disease and doesn't grow too quickly.

It's natural habitat is the coastal fringe from Newcastle to Fraser Island with isolated groups further north. It grows best in deep fertile soils, but will grow in a wide range of soils, including fairly infertile sands. It is a component of 'the brush' (semi-tropical rainforest) and extends to dry eucalypt forest on exposed slopes.

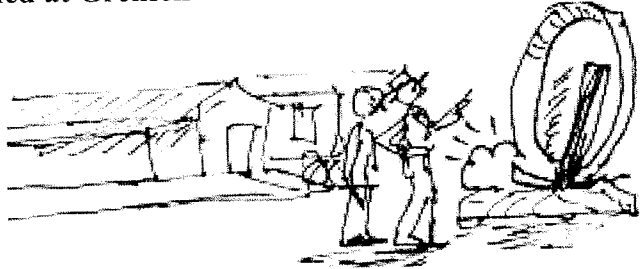
The bark on upper branches is shed leaving a smooth red-brown surface. It's an evergreen. In its best development it grows with a single straight trunk to a height of 40m and a diameter of 2m. Its dark green leaves are grouped at the end of branchlets, and are elliptical in shape, about 12 cm long. The white flowers have petals and feathery bundled stamens. The fruit are like gumnuts, woody when mature, about 10cm wide and long, bell shaped, and in clusters of up to seven.

**The Wood:** The heartwood is pinky grey to reddish brown, the sapwood being distinctly paler. It has fine texture and even grain, often interlocked, which can make it difficult to work. At an air density of about 900kg/cubic m, it is a heavy timber. It is strong, hard and tough. It contains crystals of silica which results in blades being blunted, requiring frequent sharpening. It is 'waxy' making it unsuitable for some highly solvent floor finishes. Otherwise it will take other suitable finishes and smooths to a fine surface.

It has been used for flooring, scantlings, weatherboards, paneling, mallets, bridge decking and turnery. Altogether its a pretty useful timber.

Ian McLaughlin *Bendigo Wood turners* Feb 2007

## The Men's Shed at Grenfell



We, Robyn and I, recently camped at Grenfell with the Illawarra Bird Observer's Club. The town itself is struggling. Water is what they really want. But nevertheless they made us really welcome. We saw stacks of birds, but one free afternoon I visited the Men's Shed. .

Its in an old Goods shed on a disused railway station. Attached to it is an old railway dining car. The shed is narrower than our clubroom but about twice as long and is choc-a- block with numerous machine tools, often donated. These include a wood lathe, table saw, thicknesser and drill press. There is also loads of timber and steel and stacks of recycled bits and pieces.

Colin was painting a large wooden feed-box, made for one of their supporters. He trained as a mechanic but then got into media. He's a jack of all trades with welding being his specialty. Outside is a huge gold pan complete with a 15' mattock which he and club members made. The mattock handle was three old oxy bottles welded together. A yard of concrete was dumped by the pan, punched into shape and painted gold. That's the bush ! Colin teaches welding, to anyone who wants to learn. He and a couple of Shed members have also shared their skills at Condobolin and other outback towns.

The Shed opens three days a week. The carriage has a meeting room, a library of magazines, shower, toilet and a small kitchen. Shed members provide a \$3 meal for anyone whether they come to work in the Shed, or come to enjoy a yarn and some company. Shed members often do maintenance work for widows and the elderly. Recently they have replaced the wood slats and repainted some garden seats. The owners pay for the materials used and give a donation towards the Shed. The Shed may not be sophisticated, but the members are open and ready to help and share together. A great addition to the town!

---