

# ILLAWARRA WOODWORKERS GROUP INCORPORATED

PO Box 121 Corrimal NSW 2518

## SEPTEMBER 2009 NEWSLETTER

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### Events Coming Up

**9 September: 5.30pm Committee, 7pm Club Meeting**

Supper Roster: Peter Hansen and Don Gray

**11,12 September: Bulli Show Sales and Demonstration**

**14 October 5.30pm Committee, 7pm Club Meeting**

Supper Roster: J David and Barry Young

**31 Oct,1 Nov: Belmore Basin Sales and Demonstration**

**11 November: 5.30pm Committee, 7pm Club Meeting**

Supper Roster: Tony Hancox and Milan Oder

### Carving Workshop

Terry Elkins' carving workshops continue on each third Wednesday of the month, 7 - 9pm are proving popular. Currently some members are carving a fox from a twisty grain poplar, and others are making Christmas decorations using chip carving on painted MBF board.

### FINANCES

After a high amount recorded in the last Newsletter our finances took somewhat of a dive, causing deep frowns on the faces of the Treasurer and the executive. There was some steady income from sales of work, but as usual the bills kept rolling in.



Mal's first B-Dubb, and some of the boys

### B – DUBBS

The Committee decided, and their decision was endorsed by members at the last meeting, to make and donate two B-Dubb trucks and trailers to charities. The charities can then raffle the B-Dubbs or use them however they like. The two groups chosen are Camp Quality, working for Kids for Cancer, and the Angry Anderson's Prostate Cancer Organisation. Angry Anderson was recently the guest on the ABC's 'Talking Heads' Monday 6.30 pm

**Time pases.** I knew you would want to know this! At 5 minutes, 6 seconds after 4am on July the 8<sup>th</sup>, this year,(using American month-day system), was 04.05.06. 07/08/09 Milton Ulladulla *Woodchips*

## TREES and their WOOD SILVER WATTLE

by Ian McLaughlan

Along with Blackwood, Silver Wattle is the most easily recognized wattle in South Eastern Australia and Tasmania. When traveling through the higher rainfall areas between the Otways in Victoria and about Tamworth in NSW you can see Silver Wattle as a moderate or tall tree. It is distinguished by its sivery-green feathery leaves. Many trees also show silver patches on the trunk's bark. In moist gullies it may be 30 metres in height, but in open lower rainfall or exposed sights it may be only a shrub. I recall seeing a tall forest of Silver Wattles on the slopes of Mt Erica, in Gippsland. It was an impressive sight.

Silver Wattle goes under the scientific name of *Acacia dealbata*. The *dealbata* refers to 'white powdery covering or whitish' hence silver. Acacia derives from the Greek 'akis' a sharp point, because the species in North Africa, where it was first described, has thorns. Silver Wattle's bark is smooth on young stems, generally dark brown, sometimes with whitish patches, but becomes fissured and hard with age. Unlike many acacias it is a long-living species, possibly up to 100 years. Silver Wattle propagates by seed, but it excels at suckering from the roots. In fact in new pine plantations, that contain Silver Wattle, the new pines have to compete with it, to their detriment in time of drought, after this wattle densely regenerates from its roots.

**The Wood** While Blackwood has been heavily sought after, Silver Wattle has been largely ignored as a source of wood. While it doesn't have the appeal of Blackwood it is a good wood for many purposes, including craft. Its heartwood colour is pale brown, though pinkish streaks are common. Sapwood is paler. It is moderately tough, with density in the range of 500-600 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, straight grained, fine textured and of medium luster. It is easy to work with hand or power tools, takes stain readily and has good gluing properties. Altogether a nice wood to work with.

It has been used to make furniture, clothes pegs and shoe heels, even for making wood pulp. Seriously under-rated.

From the Bendigo Woodworkers June Newsletter 2009



## Mary Batty

Mary's home is choc-a block. I wasn't sure whether I'd come to an old fashioned country store or entered an Aladdin's cave of wonders. The garage underneath with narrow benches, so that her car can just squeeze in, is her official workshop. But upstairs, part of a back verandah is also her work shop/ hobby room. It's full to the brim.

Mary paints. She is in an oil painting class at the Ribbonwood Centre at Dapto. There are dozens of her paintings. Mary also went to a woodworking class at Ribbonwood, so there are stools, coffee tables and shelves here, there, everywhere. As well Mary has attended pyrography or wood burning class, and has numerous pyrographic pictures on ply. The room seems overwhelming, but Mary is happy in it. I asked foolishly, *When do you get time to do your housework?* Mary replied 'Who wants to do housework?' What she actually replied was somewhat more colourful.

Mary was born in South Grafton, lived in Carlton, then Grafton after the war, then moved Werris Creek, where she met Richard Batty at a dance. Mary's first name is Jean, and Rick's first name is Barry, but the family has a tradition of using the second given name.

Mary was greatly influenced by her father. He was a self-taught, aim-high, can-do man who worked for the railways. He built their own home, while his family lived in a big marquee. He was a great one for thinking problems through. At school Mary didn't

understand maths well. But her Dad clearly demonstrated to her how to do the sums. As a result she gained top marks in maths and other children came to her to learn her Dad's method of doing maths problems.

Rick, her husband, started work in the railways as a Call boy: riding around in the wee small hours to rouse the firemen and engine drivers. Later he became an Acting Fireman, then Fireman, Acting Driver and then an Engine Driver himself. Along the way, he and Mary married and had three sons, Michael, Robert and Colin. Rick and Mary also built their own home in Werris Creek, after living in a huge garage for four years. Then they sold the new home and built another 12 miles out of town. In turn they sold that second home, and moved back into town and renovated another home. Rick was good at English, but not strong on maths, so Mary coached him. So Rick sat for and passed the various exams and interviews to become a Chargeman. There was a vacancy for a Chargeman 3<sup>rd</sup> grade at Werris Creek, but Mary pushed him to aim higher. He claimed that he was 5<sup>th</sup> out of 10 to pass in all NSW. So he applied for and got a Chargeman - Special Class position at Goulburn.

That position lasted a 11 months, then the Goulburn depot was closed. He went to Sydney as a 'Special,' and stayed for almost three years. He moved back to Goulburn and then was transferred to the Port Kembla depot, where he stayed until illness led to an early retirement. Unfortunately he developed bad lung problems and a goitre grew on his leg. His leg was operated on successfully but more and more he needed oxygen in Prince Alfred Hospital. Eventually the doctor said he had two years, but Mary nursed him for six more years. Rick was in Prince Alfred hospital, and Mary stayed in a hotel down the road, and sat with Rick each day.

When Rick died, in Wollongong, Mary was emotionally and physically exhausted. This lasted for a few months. She had her three boys, but only Colin lived locally, and she had grandchildren

and step-grandchildren, and some great-grandchildren scattered in Tasmania, Queensland, WA, and in Indonesia. Eventually Mary thought, 'What am I going to do with myself?' That's when she went to the Ribbonwood Centre, and met Peter the art teacher, and then Arthur, the woodwork and pyrography teacher, and began a new phase in her life.

*But Mary, with all that your activities at Ribbonwood, why come to our club too?* I should have known. 'I met Kate at Ribbonwood. We were both doing classes. They had a lathe there too and we wanted to try it. But they wouldn't let us. They thought it was too dangerous for women. Then Kate heard about the Illawarra Woodworkers, and that they would teach us to use a lathe. So off we went.'

*And how have you found the blokes at the club ?* 'Fine. Dave, Kevin, Peter and Frank are good teachers and go out of their way to help us, but I think they are still a bit scared of letting us loose on the lathes!' Mary has her own GMC lathe downstairs, with numerous other machine tools she inherited or bought, and sooner or later, she is going to let fly!

## Canberra Wood Show

Four club chaps, John P, Peter H, Ken H, and Tony H travelled to Canberra together for the Wood Show at the start of September. While there, they saw 3 or 4 others from the club, including Keith G and Frank C. It was reported that there weren't so many exhibitors as usual (the economy again!), but unlike the larger Sydney Woodshow it was much easier to get into the front row to see the different exhibits

## Bunnings Warrawong

A Demonstration and Sales day at Bunnings Warrawong was held on Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> September. As an event it was so-so. The location in the store was poor, really in the left-field, rather than coming out of the left field. Though it was the day before Father's Day, John Parker said 'people seemed to have made up their minds on what to get Dad, and weren't shopping around.'

## SHOW AND TELL

**(July) Ken Smith**, who must have filled Santa's sack quite a few times with his numerous donations towards club sales, showed and donated 21 door wedges he had made. Thanks Ken.

**Don Gray** showed a Ladies' earing stand and a bowl he had turned. The earing stand has holes around the top edge for slip-through earings and a flat top circle for screw-on earings. Don donated both to club sales. Thanks Don.

**(August) Ken Smith** and **Don Gray** again contributed items for the Club to sell: door wedges, small bowls and earing stands. Thanks men.

**Rick Funnell** showed three bowls/trays he had carved: two from camphor laurel and one from Douglas Fir. Rick donated the items to club sales. Thanks Rick

**Frank Pyneburg**, though a comparatively new member, and new turner, is prodigious in his output. He showed some bowls and turned lidded boxes, from cedar, camphor-laurel, wattle, and pine and also donated these to club sales. Thanks Frank.

## SHOWCASE IN THE LIBRARY

Many thanks to Peter Hansen who arranged the two showcases of member's work in Wollongong Library on show throughout July. Very stylish! And thanks to those members who contributed their work to the show. These included John Parker, Rick Funnell, Bill Hedley, and Peter himself.

## CHRISTMAS IN JULY

Two long tables of members and their partners (20 all up) enjoyed the convivial company and very tasty fare of Ryan's in late July. Many thanks to Tony Sirotec, our VP, for organizing the event, and to Tony's wife, Mary, for selecting the venue.

**Re Richard Raffin.** There are two copies of his Turning Video in our Library. He has also recently issued an updated Turning DVD

## Richard Raffin.

Richard Raffin is known world wide for his turned bowls and boxes and as a teacher, writer and author of classic woodturning books and videos. Since 1973 his turned bowls and boxes have been aquired by many major public and private collections in Europe, North America and Australia. Since 1980 he has led over 400 workshops in North America and Europe and has significantly influenced the craft of woodturning, both technically and aesthetically. He is semi-retired now and living in Canberra.

To quote Richard, 'I took up woodturning in January 1970 at the age of 26. I knew nothing about the craft, but have earned my living from it ever since. I was looking for a sea change and woodturning was suggested, and it seemed the right thing for me to do. I assumed that I'd know if I was going to enjoy the craft within a couple of weeks, and if I might be any good at it within a couple of months. I negotiated a deal with a small country production workshop. I paid a small fee for a year's instruction, and they kept everything I made. After that I intended to set up a small factory with maybe six employees making a range of wooden kitchenware. I went out on my own five months later, selling bowls, scoops, chopping boards and lamp bases to gift and kitchen shops out of the back of a car. In the 1970s I made and sold 100 scoops a week, plus bowls, plates, trays, chopping boards, boxes with suction fit lids and spindles for antique restoration and the joinery and building trades.

As a designer – maker I try to think in terms of 'timeless. I want what I turn to last for centuries, otherwise, why bother!

One of my pet hates is Woodturners preoccupied with finish at pretty wood at the expense of form. I also hate furniture and turnings accompanied by pretentious and explanatory essays. Work should be able to stand on its own. *The Hobby Turner* June 2009>

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