

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

**April 2006 NEWSLETTER**

**Committee.** The current Committee is as follows, but as April 12 is the Club's Annual General Meeting, all positions are declared vacant.

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

**Events Coming Up**

- \* 5-7 May. Display & Sales at the Neighbourhood Centre, Dapto
- \* **10 May Club Meeting:** Barry Long on French Polishing
- \* 10,11 May. Trend Timber Open Day at Mulgrave
- \* 2 - 4 June. Sydney Wood Show
- \* **14 June. Club Meeting**
- \* 1 - 31 July. Display in Wollongong Library
- \* **12 July. Club Meeting**
- \* 16,17 July. Bulli Show. Demonstration and Sales

**Maintenance.**

- \* Many thanks to John Parker, who installed three extra double tube fluorescent lights in the clubhouse. 'Let there be light !'
- \* The toilet in the Clubhouse is taking a while to clear. We think the problem is due to roots from trees getting into the drain lines. Bill Body offered to check with an 'electric eel' man.

## **Finance**

Our Treasurer, William Perry Esq. will present the Annual Financial Statement at the April Meeting. It shows that we held our own, just, with income exceeding expenditure by just \$26 for the year. Phew !

Please note that Club Fees are now due. See our Treasurer, cough up your \$20, and take a load off your mind.

## **Bruce Keats**

Bruce has served on the Committee and is both Club Librarian and Leader of the Monday Toymaking group (currently this group is making simple colourful toy buses, both to give to charities and to sell). Bruce however, over the next few months, will be selling up at Primbee and moving to Queensland. That's their gain !

Bruce hopes that volunteers will take over his two positions ! Offers ? As well as his positions and numerous Show and Tell items that he has shown, Bruce has been very conscious of safety issues. He moved to have us fill in holes in the concrete floor, and to get electrical leads off the floor. Bruce also shopped around to get our table saw. Many thanks for your work for the club, Bruce.

## **On the Down Side**

- 1 It was No Show at the Thirroul Beach Festival, as the hall we displayed in was been allocated to an Arts group. Our Secretary tried hard to find an alternative, but results were zilch. But a letter is to be sent about the situation
2. Due to the unavailability of commercial presenters, we have put our Open Day on hold, until other arrangements and / or presenters can be found.
3. Ken Hutchinson protested that Club presenters often were not listened too well. Ken's criticisms were endorsed by several other senior club members. So folks, **some quiet attention** please !
- 4 Both the Monday Toy Group and the Tuesday Evening group have reported rather modest attendances.

## **Workshop**

The Tuesday evening group, Mal's router group, will be in recess for a while. But many thanks, Mal.

## **On the Up Side**

There was an interesting Show and Tell at the February meeting. Barry Long showed a 100 or so year old fret saw, he had purchased. Interestingly it has two blade tensioning mechanisms. Barry said that it still works well.

Bill Hedley displayed another intricately scroll-sawn wall clock with ibis in the greenery on both the pediment and understorey

Ken Smith rescued some old Cyprus floorboards from a neighbour and made 24 cooking spoons from them, for our \$2 box. Many thanks Ken.

John Parker showed a nice first Jewellery box, made from various timbers. John asked advice on improving later boxes.

Milan Oder showed a fine box with an inlaid star in the lid, and also a cameo clock with a scene of musicians, made from marine ply and cedar. Milan, ever the perfectionist, was unhappy about an 8 thousandth of an inch hole he had made !

Bruce Keats brought along some boxes and steel shelving supports for anyone who wanted them.

A good show of implements and items, finished and on the way.

## **PROSTATE ?**

Denis Hamilton, ably assisted by Albert Seath, spoke of their experiences of having Prostate cancer. Denis has had surgery and Albert has had radiation and hormone therapy. It was very moving to hear them speak. They are to be congratulated for their openness about such a 'forbidden' area.

Prostrate cancer kills as many men as breast cancer does women, but women are more concerned and open about it. So, see your doctor and get regular check ups is their advice. It is not fatal, if caught early. And because the cure can have side effects on love life, take your wife or partner along too.

Many thanks to Denis and Albert

## Ken Smith.



Ken served his apprenticeship as a patternmaker with AIS (BHP) Port Kembla. Patternmakers weren't so concerned with finish, but you had to be accurate to 1/64". More, Ken says, 'A good patternmaker can make anything.' Then to Sydney to work for Bradford Kendall and Charles Cooper, patternmakers, where the pay was better.

He and Audrey met. They both went on a treasure hunt at Minnamurra. They actually went with different partners, but somehow they lost their partners, and ended up together, and they were the last of the couples to come back from the treasure hunt. (That's what they said, but it all sounds a bit 'sus' to me.) They married, and are still married 58 years later. (Is this a club record ?) They have two children, Lawrence, a guitar maker who has spoken at the club, and Vicki, who works with Wollongong Council, and five grandchildren, Benjamin, Mathew, Julian, Amanda and Alex all working in various interesting professions.

They moved back to Wombarra and Thirroul and Ken worked as a carpenter. Early jobs were the Power House at Port Kembla and then the migrant igloos at Balgownie. But a slight slump saw him out of work, and with a wife and child, and another on the way, things didn't look good. Ken travelled hither and thither looking for work. But no luck. Then his father-in-law, a welder, said he would put in a word to Jimmy Potts, a boss at the 36" mill, at BHP. Ken then crawled through a hole in the fence, and

presented himself to Mr Potts, and the mixture of being desperate, cheeky, and a kindly father-in-law's word got a job as gear driver on the 36" mill. Later he drove the 26,000 HP Galway steam engine for many years. His last official job was as Supervisor of the ACIR Laboratories at Bellambi which involved lots of travel to many coal mines.

Ken and Audrey bought a bull-nosed verandah cottage in Thirroul, without stepping in the door. The place was occupied by an old soldier who hadn't paid rent for years, though he sublet rooms to other tenants. Getting him to move was dicey for a while, but with a little prodding from a solicitor, he suddenly left. The house had good floors and walls, but rotting roof timbers and was pretty much a mess inside. But they set to work and completely re-roofed the house (in a different style) and carried out numerous other improvements, and they have lived there now for 53 years.

Ken was a spearfisherman from very early on. In those days he made goggles from old wartime gas masks, and made his own spearguns. One time Ken was swimming along and realized something big was swimming near beside him. It was a giant ray, but from side-on, at first sight, they look like sharks. Another time he met a 1 1/2m wobbegong shark almost head on. Surprised, he headed for the surface, and then realized that he didn't know where the shark was. However, a friend shot the shark, put it in a chaff bag and slung it over his shoulder to take home. The shark however wasn't quite dead and began to snap at the friend's legs and backside ! Ken's friend took off !

Ken played 5-a-side roller skater hockey for many years. In those days they wore very little protective equipment, but their team was fast, and they had good instinctive backing up. One

time they played a team from the US Army, who came out in full protective gear. 'But it really slowed them down, and we beat them hollow !'

In retirement, Ken looked forward to a life of leisure, but then came cancer. He has had many operations at Wollongong and Westmead hospitals as well as ongoing treatment, but it knocked some of the stuffing out of him. But Ken reached his four score years last month. He may not be playing hockey or spearfishing now, but 'never say die !'

Ken has a Record lathe in his commodious workshop. He is an independent man and has at times, differed with other club members over sharpening and cutting techniques. Differ he may, but he makes a good argument for his methods. He makes beautiful platters; some I particularly liked are from 'Native Frangipani.' And all Ken's works are beautifully finished. Over the years Ken has made dozens, hundreds of items for the club's \$2 box ; wedges, small vases, and recently two dozen wooden kitchen spoons from cyprus pine floor boards. Ken also does quite a bit of off centre turning, ending up with some toadstools, vases and platters that have a distinct shape and could easily fit into a land of 'little people.'

Audrey has decorated some of Ken's platters using pyrography: a method of burning pictures and scenes into wood. She specializes in things native, so aborigines, koalas, echidnas, kookaburras et al decorate their home, along with lots of Ken's cute toadstools, cups, goblets, plates and bowls. Audrey also does punch embroidery, which gives a nice thick feel to her embroidered flowers and greenery. As well as a classy afternoon tea, Audrey wouldn't let me leave without a couple of Ken's little goblets. It's a hard life !