

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

**August 2006 NEWSLETTER**

**Committee.** The position of Vice President is vacant, but Kevin Parker has agreed to serve as Librarian. Thanks Kevin.

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

**Events Coming Up**

- \* 9 August. Club Meeting - Bob Lee on 'Turning Burls' or Terry Elkins
- \* 8 – 10 September Canberra Wood Show
- \* 13 September. Club Meeting – Terry Elkins on 'Carving Techniques' or Bob Lee
- \* 16, 17 September. Bulli Show. Demonstration and Sales
- \* 11 October. Club Meeting
- \* 4,5 November. Belmore Basin Club Display and Sales

**Thanks !** Many thanks to the Club members who rallied round at such short notice to provide a display for the Community day held at Bunnings. We didn't win a prize but our display of work was certainly as good as any other

Thanks also to Bill Body, Milan Oder and John Parker who provided the excellent items for the month long display in a cabinet at Wollongong Library

### **Ahh-Yaah-Eerk !**

Treasurer, Bill Perry, is feeling a little better, but there is still more room for improvement. The 24 unfinancial members has been reduced by half. If you are still unfinancial, clear your conscience, and help Bill's health. Pay Bill your \$25 direct, or send him a cheque at Illawarra Woodworkers, PO Box 121, Corrimbal, 2518.

Bill also reported that the club coffers have some \$1712.24, but there are also unpresented cheques of \$418, which leaves us with a book balance of \$1294.24

### **Show and Tell**

Last month Albert Seath showed a neat footstool. Albert was given some short lengths of maple from which he made this stool, which he has donated to the club, to help us reach items on those higher shelves.

Denis Hamilton showed his first attempt at scroll saw work - a silhouette of a standing deer. Dennis also showed some small jig saw puzzles, made on the scroll saw which feature pictures of his grandchildren. Personalised jigsaw puzzles ! A very neat and welcome idea.

### **Watch Out !**

A 40 tooth saw blade running at 1000 rpm has 666.6 sharp cutting edges per second passing within a few mm of your fingers !

## John Parker



John Parker is a Corrimal boy: Corrimal Primary and Wollongong Junior Tech. His house, which he built, with the help of some local contractors, is on the slopes of the escarpment, looking across Corrimal to the sea.

Where his house stands used to be a part of Owen's farm. They ran some horses, and had some citrus trees. There were other small farms nearby including Wonson's dairy farm. As a youngster John and his friends caught rabbits on the farmland with traps and ferrets too, and sent the skins to Sydney.

There was also a Two-up school on the farm. Some weekends there would be 40 or 50 men sitting on logs around the ring. The Police knew about the school, and occasionally came up, but they gave the players good warning, and the school had a cockatoo too. John and his friends used to hide behind bushes and watch, and after the men left, search for any dropped coins.

At the Junior Tech, John did fitting and machining, and electrical courses. From school he had four months as a 'Boy Friday' at Street's Ice Cream Factory, before taking an electrical apprenticeship at South Bulli mine. He qualified, and later upgraded to a Mine Electricians Certificate. Then they put him on nightshift. He stuck it out for a year, but as he was now married, as well as finishing off his house, he thought, 'Blow this!' So he moved to Huntley Colliery, where he was in turn, Maintenance Engineer, Chief Engineer, and then Consulting Engineer for Huntley and a New Zealand Colliery

Meanwhile, he had met and married Mary. He was friends with Peter Hanson from school. Peter's grandfather had a big house in Bellambi which was formerly owned by South Bulli Colliery where the Mine Manager could see the local steamers coming in for coal to Bellambi jetty. Peter's grandfather also had a tennis court, and it was a popular place for the young fry to meet and play tennis. Interestingly John and his younger brother, Ken, and Peter, were all married within an 18 month period, and each was either the bridegroom, the best man, or the groomsman at one of the three weddings. John and Peter's sons have carried on this tradition.

John and Mary have three children, Marette, Stephen and David, and eight grandchildren, six boys and two girls. Mary and John were involved in the local St Alban's church where they first met at the Youth Fellowship. Their children became involved in GFS and CEBS along with Peter's and Ken Hutchison's family. Like all families there have had a few ups and downs. And sadly, John's brother Ken died after contracting a virulent form of Alzheimer's disease, and John himself has had to have a heart valve replaced. Tennis has long gone, but now John enjoys a nice social game of bowls.

Prior to John being at Huntley colliery, it had been privately owned, and was then owned by the Joint Coal Board, and later by the Electricity Commission. During the time that John was Chief Engineer, there was a change of government and it was decided that Huntley was scheduled to be closed. John then chose early retirement.

Some occasional consultancy work followed, but he found that much of his time was spent in fixing up and improving the homes of his now adult children. It was useful and helpful work for them, but it seemed that, no sooner had they fixed one place

up, when that family decided to sell and buy another.... and John and the son had to start again !!

When Huntley Colliery closed, John was working there as a consultant, and the Manager told John to take one of the computers home, 'They will only dump them if we send them up to Sydney.' So John took a small Personal Computer home. He was only mildly interested in PCs, but Mary took to it like a duck to water. She has become interested in family history and genealogy, and is very efficient at it.

That little computer has long gone, and Mary is now on her much better and more powerful fourth computer! She showed me a substantial booklet that she has written and compiled about a great-uncle who was killed at the Somme in World War 1. She even included pictures of the pound notes that they used in those days. Mary and John were able to visit that great-uncle's grave on an overseas trip a couple of years ago.

John has had a lathe for many years: currently he has a Teknatool lathe, as well as other machine tools. He joined our club many years ago after seeing a display of woodwork in Beaton Park and hearing Bill Parker (no relation) speaking there for the club. He has stayed with the club ever since, and is currently our Public Officer.

John and Mary's home is commodious, especially now that their three children have left and established themselves, but his workshop is a small aluminium shed. There's not much room, so that some of his machine tools have to be mounted on small benches on castors, so they can be moved out of the way. John and Mary's house displays several examples of his work, such as turned bowls, lamp stands, and side-tables which incorporate lamp stands: a careful craftsman. And more recently John has

been involved in making and polishing jewelry boxes for the madames of his family.

He would not say it himself, but John is a humble man, a gracious man, and a gentleman.

### **Special Evenings**

- \* The Routing and General workshop evenings run under the leadership of Mal Stewart are 'on hold' until the weather gets a bit warmer.
- \* There is also the possibility, if there are enough starters, of another 'Introduction to Carving' workshop in the future.

### **Oops !**

A local construction company needed to hire another carpenter. Two applicants had completed an aptitude test, and the foreman was informing the second person that the first person would be hired.

"There was ten questions, and we both answered nine right, so how come he got the job? " the second applicant protested.

"Well." the foreman replied, " You both missed number five, but he answered, ' I don't know', and you answered, 'Neither do I!'"

### **Bits and Pieces**

- \* Several of our members went down to Kiama last weekend to join other Woodies in a turning workshop conducted by well known turner and author, Mike Darlow.
- \* Bill Body has had a spell St Vincent's Hospital. He has been home for a while now, but the doctor hopes Bill will follow his advice and take it easy for a while.
- \* We've been contacted by a lady, Olga, of 41 Barrack Ave, Barrack Point, who has husband's old CMF 3 or 4 speed lathe for sale.

## **Doing a Jig !**

This proved to be a very interesting section of the last club evening. Jigs can considerably help in various woodwork projects. Three members showed the rest some of their jigs.

- \* Bill Perry showed two jigs he had made for cutting tapered 'table legs' on his table saw. The timber is clamped in the jig, at the appropriate angle and the jig is slid against the guide onto the saw blade. Bill modified his second jig to enable him to cut longer legs and to use the slot in the saw-table.
- \* Bill P also showed two jigs to enable him to make better joints. A simple clamping device enabled him to accurately chisel out the bottoms of dovetail joints. Then an adjustable slot in a guide greatly helped when making mortices with a router.
- \* Bill Body showed us a variety of jigs he has made. First up was a very neat and simple jig for quickly marking the centre of a length of wood : two stops to go outside the wood with a centrally mounted pencil.
- \* Another neat jig for cutting 45 degree angles accurately
- \* A further jig for cutting slots at 6 and 12 degrees, vaguely similar to Bill P's tapered legs jig. (Great minds think alike!)
- \* Bill B also had some other jigs, including two for cutting round blanks of different sizes, initially using the table saw, and then finishing with linisher – guaranteed to let you make circles or wheels of exactly the same size. Great !
- \* Mal Stewart brought along a Scroll saw he had been given and that has sat in his workshop for some time. Mal gave us an interesting story of how it had been modified to take pinless blades and then spiral blades. Then Mal modified the switch, to give him more control, and he has ideas of further modifications

## Banksia

Joseph Banks, born in 1743 was a man of independent means and influence. He accompanied James Cook in his 1768-71 Endeavour voyage to Australia and other places. There they entered a bay and then called it 'Botany Bay' for it contained many previously unknown plant species. Banks collected plant specimens extensively, along with his fellow botanist, Daniel Solander. The specimens were taken back to England to be studied, and then one of the group of plants that we know today as the banksias, was named after him. He was later knighted.

There are about 75 varieties of banksias. They are woody plants - a few are prostate, most are small to medium sized shrubs and about six are trees up to 25m tall. 60 are found in the SW of Western Australia and the rest are found in the coastal areas of Q, NSW and Victoria, with just a few in Tasmania.

The banksia we are most likely to see is the Coast Banksia, *Banksia integrifolia*, which is common along the dunes from Fraser Island to Port Phillip Bay. It is often 25m tall, with a diameter of up to 60cm, with persistent square-blocky bark. Its leaves are 5-10cm long without any serrations. The 'flower,' like all banksias, is a cone containing hundreds of tiny pale yellow flowers tightly packed onto a central axis. Few of these flowers are fertilized and bear viable seed. The cones, from 5 – 12cm long become woody when mature.

**The Wood.** Banksias belong to the botanical family Proteaceae, noted for its large, easily seen, medullary rays. The wood of Coast Banksia is red-brown, is moderately hard and heavy, is easy to work with hand and power tools, glues well and takes a high polish. It is a good timber for the wood hobbyist, though it is not commercially available. When cut on the quarter, very pleasing grain patterns can often be seen, due to the prominent medullary rays. *from the Bendigo Woodworkers April 2006*