

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

**FEBRUARY 2006 NEWSLETTER**

**Committee.**

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

**Coming Events** – Peter Hansen announced these were  
February 8: Club Meeting – Peter Hansen 'Tips for Green Turning'  
March 8: Club Meeting  
April 2 – 9: Seniors Week display  
April 12: Club Meeting and Annual general Meeting  
May 8: Club Meeting  
May 12: Club Open Day

**Work Groups at our Clubhouse**

The Toymaking Group will start on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February, 9.30am until 2 pm. Most Mondays. Volunteers are always welcome. For more information, see our Librarian, Bruce Keats. The Router & Joinery Group will start on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> February, 6.30 to 9.30pm. Advice and guidance to make your own pieces, with our Secretary, Mal Stewart, to steer you on the right track.

## **Finance**

Treasurer Bill Perry reported that at the end of January our bank balance, with no cheques uncashed, or bills outstanding was \$1,645, somewhat lower than this time last year. However, during the year we bought the table saw and a number of hand tools.

Bank fees are going up, (When weren't they ?), but Bill is investigating possibly moving our funds to a community bank that has minimum fees for Club accounts

## **Bill Hopton's Gift**

If you found it difficult getting into the Clubhouse because of bits of timber here and there, we are pleased to say that former Secretary Bill Hopton has donated numerous bits of timber, branches and bits of tree trunks to the club. Our thanks Bill. Nor is the rumour true that Jodie, Bill's wife, threatened "Get rid of that load of jun... or I won't come up to Mackay with you.' In fact, were it not for their move North, Bill would still be drooling over these pieces of wood, waiting until they were truly seasoned, and he had just the right job in mind for them. Many thanks Bill ! And best wishes for the year !

## **Bill Hedley**



I entered Bill Hedley's house through his garage and workshop. It's a fine workshop, equipped with machine tools and lengths of steel thread into the rafters overhead. 'I like a good length of steel.' Bill is a welder by trade. But more impressive than the variety of machine tools is that Bill has made or modified several of these machine himself. These include his lathe, router table, finisher (with a impulse starter motor and cut in motor), a wood press for gluing veneer to composition board, a device to ensure that when steel is cut, the cut is an exact right angle, and a dust catcher system with fixed and flexible pipes that reach every tool he uses. Bill is an inventor as well as an artisan: and is especially good at recycling materials.

Inside the house, Rowena welcomed us to morning tea. The house contains pieces of Bill's carvings, turnings, clocks and furniture, and is tastefully decorated with Rowena's embroidery, crochet work, sewing and patchwork cushions. Plus, photos aplenty of their five children

and thirteen grandchildren. Christmas and birthdays are moveable feasts each year; from one family to another. This year Bill and Rowena will celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary. The numerous photos show their healthy and confident offspring, of whom they are justly proud.

Bill did his trade as a welder for BHP, and after many years wanted a change. Pig farming ? No. Someone suggested a pub ? Well, they decided to give it a go. Their first pub was at Bungendore. It was a steep learning curve for them. It was rough and run down, but Bill and Rowena set about improving it. As well as being the publican, Bill was barman (he had never pulled a beer before), cellarman, handyman, odd-job man, bouncer, And Rowena, who had worked in dress shops, was cook, waitress, cleaner, girl Friday. Their popular children helped too. From early morning till late, often very late, it was full on. The locals really celebrated on Friday nights, and in season they were joined by shearers. Then in winter, the waterpipes often froze and split, and the toilets went bung. Bill was his own plumber. It was hard work, but satisfying, and when they finally got to bed each night, they slept well.

After 2 years, they moved to the Argyle Hotel, at Taralga. 'What's it like ?' Rowena asked, after Bill had a look at it. 'You'll like the kitchen. It's well equipped,' Bill replied, but the rest of the place, was...a challenge ! But Bill and Rowena don't shirk challenges, and they moved to the Argyle. Again they got stuck into renovating, maintenance and improvements. Their customers appreciated it, and more came. Their two daughters and three sons all married during their ten years at Taralga. Four of their offspring, with spouses and families, still live in the country.

But with their children married, there weren't the hands to help when needed, and Bill and Rowena needed a change. So they took over a Motel at Warren. It was still plenty of work, but was more realistic for two to manage, except that after a few years, Bill often felt tired and lethargic. It was cancer! 'Only two weeks more and you would have gone !' the doctor said. Bill was rushed to Dubbo Hospital for surgery...and retirement had to follow.

They bought a house in Coniston which an uncle had built. They modified it to suit their needs. Bill played bowls and became

interested in woodworking; carving with En Muller ('though carving is not really my thing !'), turning and cabinet making. Then an old leg injury played up. He has to wear specially made shoes that cost a mint, and can't stand up for too long. Sadly, his bowling had to go. So did wood turning. But Bill is adaptable. He made a stool so that he could work his scroll saw, and he was away. 'You've really got to concentrate.' He found that composition board with veneer glued to both sides, avoided the problems of timber only, where the scroll saw blade wants to follow the timber grain.

Bill has scroll sawed pictures of Christ on the cross, and other religious texts and scenes. But scroll sawed clocks are his 'pieces de resistance.' There are 14 clocks in the house ! Club members may have been lucky enough to see his Strasbourgh type clock, his Venetian bridge clock with a gondola as a pendulum, or his fantastic 'Jennifer' clock: hundreds and thousands of hours concentrating, tracing, cutting, painting, assembling. Incredible workmanship. Bill doesn't go in for easy stuff. One I was really taken with was a scroll saw picture of a pianist at a grand piano with a lady violinist, and a small clock above right. Simple outlines, but stunning. It could have been at the Opera House.

I have written briefly in copies of the News, about three or four mostly senior club members. I am suprised and feel humbled by their skill and craftsmanship. Congratulations Bill Headley !

## **Some Future Dates**

Possibly in July - Display in Wollongong Library

Bulli Show 15 -17 September. Display and demonstration

Old Court House 3 – 5 November. Display and demonstration

## **YES !**

Woodcarving offers the home craftsman a satisfying means of adding warmth and individuality to his surroundings. With a little practice he can add beauty to utilitarian objects, produce decorative focal points for every day living or create carved and sculptured art for the sheer joy of it.

James B Johnstone *Woodcarving*