

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

APRIL 2010 NEWSLETTER

President	David Lipscombe	Oak Flats	
Vice-president	Tony Sirotich	Figtree	
Secretary	Mal Stewart	Thirroul	
Treasurer	William Perry	Cordeaux Heights	
Coordinator (Organ.)	Ric Funnell	Fairy Meadow	
Coordinator (W'shop)	Frank Pynenburg	Corrimal	
Coordinator (W'shop)	Pat Keefe	Towradgi	
Back-up Coordinator	Ken Smith	Thirroul	
Public Officer	John Parker	Corrimal	
Librarian	Kevin Parker	Woonona	
Newsletter	John Cashman	Fernhill	

Events Coming Up

14 April: 7pm Club AGM

Supper Roster: Rick Funnell and Bill Hedley

5 May: 5.15pm Committee Meeting

12 May: 7pm Club Meeting

Supper Roster: Tony Sirotich and Terry Elkins

2 June: 5.15pm Committee Meeting

9 June: 7pm Club Meeting

Supper Roster: Ken Smith and Barry Long

Equipment Audit

Pat Keefe produced an Equipment Audit at the March Committee meeting. Pat has listed all the machines and associated equipment that the club owns, together with the manufacturer, model number and serial number. Our Treasurer, Bill Perry, will add to the list by supplying the cost of each piece of equipment, where it is known. The list will be most useful for replacement and insurance purposes. Thanks Pat!

Time Gentlemen please!

After some debate, it was decided that Committee meetings should start at 5.15pm. There were some less than subtle hints, that with an agreed starting time, Committee meetings should start reasonably 'on time.' Will this also apply to the 7pm start for Club meetings?

AGM

April 14th is the Club's Annual General Meeting. Reports and the Financial Statement will be given. All positions for the Committee will be declared vacant. A new position of Club Sales Coordinator is hoped to be filled. Club Fees are due at the AGM. Bill Perry suggested that someone with the 'know how' be elected to search the Internet looking for possible financial grants for the club. Also of importance is that this year our lease of the clubroom finishes and we will have to renegotiate with the school.

Buzz in Burg

This was our first venture to this Helensburg Fair run by the local Lions Club. It was a relaxed afternoon, low key and modest. Profit was \$250, roughly a third each to the \$2 box, Toy Train raffle and club sales. The school band and then a jazz band played all afternoon while people wandered among the 30 or so stalls. The new club gazebo, 3m by 3m, looked very smart, and with care should do us for many years to come. Of course we would have liked to have sold more items, but it was a pleasant afternoon yarning with each other and with customers as they browsed around.

Congratulations

To Bill Headley and Tony Hancox who both won prizes in the woodworking section at the Dapto Show earlier this year

River Red Gum

Timber aficionados with foresight have been snapping up fine river red gum furniture as the vibrant timber rapidly gains in popularity and value.

A visionary partnership between a sawmiller and a furniture maker Barham in the Riverina is turning the once humble river red gum timber into highly prized works of furniture.

The owner of Bonum Sawmills, Gavin Rowe, and furniture maker Glen Gray joined forces to promote locally grown river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) at the high end of the furniture market

'Not long ago red gum was only used for sleepers, garden landscaping and fence posts. But now it is recognized as a high grade furniture timber in both Australia and internationally,' Glen said.

State Forests of NSW *The Bush Telegraph*

Thirroul Seaside Festival.

The report on our stall at the Thirroul festival, in two new locations will appear later as this Newsletter had to go to the printers early.

OOPS!

Bob had a lot of work ahead of him so decided to hire a part time helper. " Your first job will be to sweep up the sawdust," he said, handing him a broom.

" Look, I'm practically a university graduate," the young man protested.

" No problem, I'll show you how to do it," Bob replied.



John Totenhofer

There used to be a nice fruit shop in Balgownie. We would sometimes walk up there, the back way. There were a couple of big houses going up where little old miner's homes had been. There was also a small house on a small block slowly going up looking interesting and different. 'Maybe an architect,' we said to each other. It was a pleasant surprise to find that it was the home of John and Jedda Totenhofer and 12 year old Simon. And the home is indeed interesting and different.

The double garage is on the street (It's been completely taken over as the workshop) then there is a small garden, which has lots of interesting follies of wood, stones and glass, and then stairs to a deck. There are three decks, one above the garage and two at different levels on the house. Inside there is a large open area, kitchen, dining room and lounge room combined, glass walls facing north and understated wood paneling. This large room feels Scandinavian, clean, neat, restful and without ostentation. An open stairway made from recycled timber catches the eye. It takes three turns and leads to the bedrooms. It has 1.5m platforms at these turns, useful for sitting on, putting things down on, whatever. Gradually the furniture

catches your attention. The dining table is of slats, made from recycled wall studs of 6 or 8 different timbers and beautifully finished. There are a couple of cupboards, though calling them cupboards sounds pedestrian. They are works of art. The music cabinet John showed to the club last year, has curved sassafras doors with neat catches. Another has several doors of cedar and hoop pine opening to smaller compartments for family bits and pieces. The house is a testimony to John's interests and skill.

John's father had managed a saw mill at Batlow, but then moved to Blaxland where he had a hardware shop. With his wife, there were six girls and two boys in the family. Both parents taught their children to be independent. The young John was keen on woodwork and had a small shed at the back. He asked his mother how much sleep he needed a night. 'Eight hours!' John suggested that if he worked to midnight in his shed, he could sleep till 8am and then be dressed, have breakfast, and get to school by 9am. 'Would that be all right?' His mother thought that would be OK. So John did that, and on weekends and holidays worked in his father's shop.

He left home when he was 16, securing an apprenticeship with a stair-maker down this way. He lived with some Uni students. *Was your Dad sorry when you left?* 'No. He wanted all his kids to make their own way.' John learnt a lot from his boss, though the relationship was fiery sometimes. He was Apprentice of the year often and after the third year went to WA for the Work Skills competition. After coming third in this competition, John thought he needed to learn more about building, so finished his apprenticeship with a builder. His new boss gave him a lot of freedom, and saw that he was competent, and left him to it to roam his own jobs. John finished his apprenticeship and then stayed on for a further 10 years. This was all good training for self employment.

While this was going on, John set about building his home in Balgownie. He worked at weekends, allowing himself two brief tea-breaks and a $\frac{1}{2}$ hour for lunch, work until dark, or more. The house grew slowly but surely. He is a collector of timber and has stacks of it. He is passionate about timber; its colour, grain, strength, and finish.

He met Paul, a builder, and they agreed to go into business together, mostly home building, but some extensions. Initially there was just the

two of them, with a \$40,000 limit on jobs they tendered for. That initial limit only lasted 6 months. They now have two apprentices and two tradesmen (previously their apprentices) working with them. John prefers to build architect designed homes: something with a bit of flair.

In the meantime too, he had met and married Jeddha and Simon joined the family. Jeddha is an Environmental Project Officer with the Council and often has to assess the impact of development on bushland and threatened species. Jeddha sings in a small choir: folk, blues et al, plays piano, and she and Simon play and learn guitar. Simon goes to school at Smith Hill High School.

And what do you do together? 'We love the beach: surfing, surf kayaking, camping and bushwalking. The Illawarra is a great place to live'. Last year John took five weeks off and went sea-kayaking with a friend, up north from Fraser Island. 'I guess we covered about 40k a day and then would paddle in to a beach and camp at night.' *See any sharks?* 'A few, and saw some beautiful whales too.'

This man loves timber, and loves displaying its beauty, and enhancing its inner qualities. He believes that you should try to capture the beauty of the living tree in whatever you build.

Woodchop

State Forests supplied logs of Silvertop ash for the woodchopping at the Royal Easter Show. The Silvertop ash was harvested from the State forests near Narooma on the south coast. The trees used in the competition were cut into 6 m logs. These logs were then cut into 8 to 10 blocks, and tagged to ensure that the timber used in each race came from the same tree, making a fair race. Thousands watched as the champion axemen competed in different events including underhand, standing block, tree felling and single and double handed saw. Also popular was the women's woodchop, first held in 2002.

State Forests of NSW *The Bush Telegraph*

SHOW and TELL

(February 2010)

John Totenhofer showed some neat salad tongs which he suggested could be easily made as a ‘for sale’ items.

Don Gray showed and donated some carry bag handles

Kieth Smith ever busy as usual, donated some play-doh rollers and door wedges.

Milan Oder showed two small neat vases he had turned from Mulga rock maple. Again beautifully finished.

Rick Funnell showed some woggles and a diarama of a school of fish swimming above and beside sea weed (made from old palings).

(March 2010)

Barry Long showed a large interesting book of his projects for the last 15 years: plans drawings, detailed instructions of how he made different items or solved different projects, and lots of photos.

Bill Perry showed photos a blackwood desk he recently finished, together with his jig to make gentle curves on two sides of each desk leg, a mock up for the five different depth drawers in the desk and the final shape for each red cedar drawer handle. Very stylish

Bill Headly showed a nice carved scroll of some simple but helpful ‘Home Rules’ for the club or for any family or group.

Keith Guy showed the ‘piece de resistance’. A beautiful rocking horse made from thick ply and wonderfully finished. As well as making the horse, Keith also sewed the harness for the horse and donated the rocking horse to the club. It will take a child’s breath away. Congratulations Keith!

Ken Hutchison

Chatty and cheerful Ken Hutchison had an operation just before Christmas and all seemed to go well, but then he proved to be allergic to the anesthetic and had to be given another drug. But on New Year’s Eve he started to get the wobbles. After numerous tests it was found that the second drug had affected his inner ear balance. It is sadly non-reversible! As Ken says, ‘You never know what is round the corner!’ Ken has been having rehabilitation sessions at Lawrence Hargraves Centre and is slowly improving a little bit.

TREES and their WOOD

Ian McLauchlin

The tropical rainforests of Queensland and Northern NSW are home to a large range of trees. Mostly the forests are made up of a number of unrelated species, with individuals of one species being scattered. One such is the **Crow’s Ash**, *Flindersia australis*

Crow’s Ash belongs in the Rutacea family, the members of which usually have numerous translucent oil dots in the leaves. The genus name, *Flindersia* was named after the sailor/explorer Captain Matthew Flinders, and the species name means ‘southern.’ Australia was so named after the search for the ‘Great Southern Land’ in the 16th and 17th centuries.

There are about 14 other species of *Flinderosia*, all large shrubs or tall trees and all producing fine wood. The origin of the name ‘Crow’ is a mystery, and it has been called ‘teak’ locally in the trade. The ‘ash’ as with Mountain Ash is the early settler’s opinion that the wood is similar to the European ash, genus *Fraxinus*, but is unrelated.

Crow’s Ash grows in rainforests from northern NSW to Gladstone in Qld, often in association with Hoop Pine and Bunya Pine. It grows to a height of 40m and a DBH (diameter at Breast Height) of 150cm with a good straight trunk in a closed forest. Open-grown, the lateral branches remain alive, and as a full-crowned tree it is an attractive ornamental. The bark is scaly grey-brown, and the tree has a slight buttress swelling. The dry mature fruit is a spiky 5-fingered pod which might look like a crow’s foot.

The wood. The sapwood is a pale yellow, the heartwood a golden brown. Texture is moderately fine, but it doesn’t have much figure other than being interlocked and sometimes wavy.

It has a low shrinkage (3% radial, 4% tangential) when drying, so there is less tendency to check. It is heavy (945kg/m³) hard, durable and tough. It can be worked with machine and hand tools with moderate ease. The heartwood is somewhat greasy, which makes it difficult to glue and it doesn’t hold nails well. But it finishes well. Being hard and greasy it is an excellent timber for dance floors. It has also been used for decking, boat-building, and when formerly plentiful, for general building purposes. It is now scarce on the market.