

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

December 2006 NEWSLETTER

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Events Coming Up

13 December. Club Meeting

No meetings in January.

7 February 07. Committee Meeting

14 February. Club Meeting

This Year!

At the last meeting our Secretary said that it had been ‘Not a Bad year,’ - some disappointments, with not a lot of support at times, but some good times and good things done too. And to all, **Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year !**

From The Committee.

*The Committee considered the suggestion that it's meeting and the Club meeting be held on the same evening/night. This would reduce the number of times blokes have to go out, but it was decided to continue with the present arrangement, which allows more flexibility for any late changes and more up to date info can go into the Newsletter. But thanks for the suggestion.

Brighton Beach Demo and Sales*

This was a reasonable weekend, though the weather was not kind to us. The old Courthouse is a good site, and member's works, slightly fewer than last year, still made an impressive display. Saturday was overcast and showery, and a thin but steady trickle of people came to view and buy. Mal had done a lot of work organising sausages, bread, onions etc for the BBQ and the results were happily consumed. The weather on Sunday was much the same, but there were thousands of bikeriders finishing their Sydney to Wollongong ride, so while sausage sandwiches sales netted \$44 on Saturday, they netted \$328 on Sunday! And club items sold netted \$172 for the weekend.

Ahh-Yaah-Eerk !

Our Treasurer, Bill Perry, reported that our funds as of 6 November stand at \$2,2582, with Brighton Beach expenses of approx \$320 and an unpresented cheque of \$60.00 still to be paid.

BarBQ

A smaller than usual group of members and spouses gathered at Mt Panorama lookout last Sunday, for the Christmas BarBQ. But what was lacking numerically was made up for with good company and pleasant conversation, not to mention, fine food.

Hoop Pine

Hoop Pine *Araucaria cunninghamamii* is named after the English Botanist, Allan Cunningham(1791–1839):appointed by Sir Joseph Banks to investigate the plants of Eastern Australia

Hoop pine gets its common name from the fact that in juveniles the reddish brown fibrous bark peels off and curls into horizontal sheets or ‘hoops.’ It is tolerant of a variety of soils, but likes the tropics. In maturity it is a magnificent symmetrical tree up to 60m tall and with a girth of 1 – 1 ½ m. In maturity each branch ends in a mop- like bunch of leaves.

Hoop Pine grows naturally in the drier parts of the rainforest from the NSW-Q border to Cape York. It also grows along the mountain ridges of Papua New Guinea. While investigating mammals in New Guinea in the 1980’s Tim Flannery came across a village where the men regarded the Hoop Pine as sacred and would not exploit it. Unhappily that taboo no longer applies.

The Wood is soft and light, with straight grain and no obvious growth rings. Sapwood is creamy white, heartwood is pale yellow-brown, and branch knots are dark brown. Texture is fine and even. It seasons well. Like other conifers it is attacked by blue-stain, a fungus which discolours the wood but does not effect its strength. It is of medium density. It is an excellent timber in terms of machining, fixing, gluing and finishing. It is used for framing, flooring, furniture, plywood, turnery and paneling. As flooring, it has a magnificent appearance because of its high lustre.

Hoop pine has been exploited extensively in Queensland for many years. The state’s forestry department has been planting it for decades, so its availability should be assured.

Ian McLaughlin. Bendigo Woodturners August 2006
Three

Milan Oder

Milan has displayed a number of items at the Show and Tell section of Club meetings, and they have covered a wide variety of woodcraft. Entering his and his wife, Rose's lounge room is like entering an Aladdin's cave of delights, with a sophisticated European touch: turnings, carvings, gourds, family photos, items from driftwood abound.

There is a wonderful wall clock crafted from a piece of driftwood, a metre tall, deep black in colour, like a great soaring pinnacle from 'The Lord of the Rings.' There is gold flashing among the ridges and holes of this piece. It's the shiny pendulum of the clock momentarily seen through slits in the driftwood. Nearby is a standard lamp, the base of which comes from a mangrove tree, with it's root buttresses reaching out like long gnarled sinuous fingers to grasp the ground.

Then there are Russian or Slovenian eggs: nine eggs made from a variety of timbers, that nestle inside each other. The largest egg is as big as a handspan, while the smallest fits easily on a five cent piece.

I am constantly amazed at the fine craftsmanship of the many club members who I have interviewed. Milan is no exception.

Milan and Rose both come from Slovenia, but they met and married out here. They have two children, Milan jnr, and Barbara, and four grandchildren. Milan was born in the North of Slovenia, near the Austrian border, and Rose near the centre of the country. He and Rose both speak and understand several languages. He skied in the Dolomites, and in winter the snow in his village was sometimes 6 feet deep. All the family ski.

Milan went to school in Slovenia and Austria, and then became an apprenticed patternmaker. After finishing his apprenticeship he came out to Australia on his own. He was only 20. Twice he submitted his papers to the authorities out here, but, after long delays, they were not recognized. In the meantime, because he could read plans, he got a job with EPT as a Boiler Maker Marker-offer, and often worked within BHP. But there he caused a one day strike, as he was neither in a Union nor had a Trade Certificate. Consternation ruled for a while, but then a Mr Ramsey from the Union came and talked to Milan, saw his work, and after Milan paid Union Fees, got him Union Tickets as a Boiler Maker Marker-offer and as a Pressure Welder. His boss at the steelworks took his patternmaker papers and soon Milan also had his Patternmaker Certificate. Milan stayed on as a Boiler Marker Marker-offer for 5 years.

Meanwhile Rose came out to visit her brother, to see the 1956 Olympics and to have a holiday. She and Milan happily met by chance at the Slovenia Social Club in Paddington. Rose says, 'I didn't run fast enough!' Not even in an Olympic year! Her mother was expecting her to return home, but Milan caught her instead, and they soon married.

After a while they launched into something completely different. They bought a delicatessen at Fairy Meadow, with a house at the back. *Were there many Anglo Saxons among your customers?* 'Not many,' they said, 'Australians were conservative eaters then, but not anymore. But there were 2-3000 Europeans then in the migrant camp at Fairy Meadow. So the shop was full on, seven days a week.' Curiously when Milan was at the migrant camp at Matraville, he and friends regularly went spear fishing. He caught lobsters too, but initially wasn't sure what they were, so either gave them away or swapped them for eggs. But now he

and Rose delight in having lobsters and seafood on the BBQ. But after eight years in the delicatessen with no holidays, the pace was telling, and Rose became sick

So they sold the shop, and again made another major change of direction. Milan bought a Taxi-cab and drove in the Wollongong area for 30 years. Then did some further part time Taxi driving. *Did you get any abuse?* ‘Some. Australians have been very good to us, but there was some abuse in the Taxi. Sadly, it was often from younger blokes too!’ At least in the Taxi they could take some holidays and the family regularly headed off to the snow in winter – in the Taxi-cab!

Since retiring Milan has equipped himself with numerous tools, and if he can’t get what he wants, he makes it. This is one multi-skilled man. He is often self taught in the skills he has acquired. Travelwise, he and Rose have also been back to Slovenia twice, but the links there are fewer now. What they have done in their caravan is take major trips around Australia, including Cape York, Tasmania and to the Centre. And they love this country.

Some thirty years ago Milan and Rose had their current house built on a sloping block, so there is a large very clean (by my standards) garage cum workshop and family room underneath. The house was built for them, but they made much of the furniture, and many of the internal fittings. Rose also is a fine needlewoman. She made Barbara’s wedding dress and Barbara won the ‘Bride of the Year.’ And a few years ago Rose took a TAFE course in sewing, and ended up winning First Prize in the State. Her fine needlework compliments Milan’s numerous creations. And there was morning tea as well !

Oops !

A carpenter was giving evidence about an accident that he saw. The judge asked him how far away he was from the accident. The carpenter replied. 'Twentyseven feet, six and a half inches.' 'How can you be so sure of the distance?' the judge asked. 'Well I knew I'd be asked about it by some clown. So I measured it,' replied the carpenter.

The Pleasure of wood

The woodworker is a fortunate man, having available to him one of natures most diverse materials. Here is something more than just dead vegetation, something alive and vital in its fibres: the energy and evidence of life. Wood can be split, cut, shaped, joined bent, smoothed and polished. See around you; the table top, chair back, floor boards, a salad bowl, fence palings outside, each with it's own pattern and movement of grain, subtle variations of grain and texture so that no two pieces are alike.

The pleasure a beautifully shaped piece of woodwork gives is more than visual. Involuntarily the hand goes out to caress the wood. It has warmth and texture which varies from timber to timber and with the technique used to finish the surface...

Another property of timber that sets it apart from most other materials is its smell. Stand in a workshop when the air is heavy with the spicy scent of cedar, the caramel sweetness of coach-wood or the acid tang of English oak! Wood has an appeal to sight, touch and smell. Endlessly fascinating it offers the craftsman a challenge in the selection of his material, in the use of its distinctive properties, and in shaping and finishing it to his own satisfaction.

Alan Wale *Craft Australia 1977*

Aristophanes

I was on my way to the forum... no actually I was waiting for another episode of Homer Simpson or something and idly picked up a book of Aristophanes' plays that had lying around for years. But I sat up when I read these words of the servant of Agathon, a poet, to Euripides and his offkick, Mnesilochus

He (Agathon) is about to lay the keel of a new drama, yea, with mighty crossbeams shall it be builded, with new arches of words shall it be constructed. For behold, he turneth the verses upon the lathe and sticketh them together: maxim and metaphor doth he hammer out, yea in melted wax doth he mould his creation: he rolleth it till it be round...

This play, "The Poet and the Women," was first performed about 440BC, but evidently lathe turning was well enough known for Aristophanes' audience to understand the metaphor.

Alas, gentle reader, Aristophanes did not continue in this noble mode, but, for soon lapsed into the bawdy....

Mnesilochus (Euripides' friend): *And stuffeth it up his fanny.*

Servant: *Who is this ill-bred provincial who presumes to profane these private premises with his proximity?*

Mnesilochus: *Someone who will take you and your precious poet and perforate your posteriors with his private protuberance!*

Gentle reader, I will not offend you with more of the bard

Oops ! The Fairer Sex, and a Good Spirit

* A woman has the last word in an argument. Anything a man says after that is the beginning of a new argument !

* It is said that married men live longer than single men, but that married men are more willing to die. (Shame!)

* New wine for Seniors – A winery which produces 'Pinot Blanc,' 'Pinot Noir,' and 'Pinot Griglo' wines has developed a new hybrid grape that acts like an anti-diuretic. It is expected to reduce the number of trips that older people make to the toilet at night. The new wine is to be called 'Pinot More.'

From the Kiama Woodcraft Group Newsletter Sept 06