

# The Woodworkers' Association of NSW Incorporated

September/October 2019

## From the Chair

Spring is certainly in the air! We have lots of new members and there are woodwork activities galore.

Recently our annual box-making course was run at the Workshop by Alex Springall with help from Peter Harris. That was followed, a couple of weeks later, by our first Spoon-carving course with Carol Faulkner. Judging by the smiles on the faces of those who attended, both were great successes. Unfortunately our Letter-carving course had to be cancelled. We hope we can entice Kerryn Carter, one of our very capable, talented and busy members, to run a course in the future.

Coming up this weekend we have the Tongue Drum-making course with Robert Towler and then our annual Veneering course on 14, 15, 17 and 18 October with Peter Harris. Phil Nanlohy and Clare O'Reilly are conducting Introduction to Woodworking courses in November and December that are proving very popular. Phil and Clare are doing a great job looking after all these courses and developing new ones.

Please contact them if you have any suggestions or ideas, especially if you want to help out. Their contact details are on the Committee listing on page 3.



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At our last general meeting we had some fascinating discussions about getting precision in our woodworking and also the notion of "Flow". Tony Anderson has kindly allowed us to publish an excerpt from his paper on Flow - thanks Tony.

Continuing the theme of practical discussions about woodworking, Steve Townsend will be speaking at our next meeting on **Monday, 7 October** about the impact of water on woodworking. As well, several members will be bringing and demonstrating the use of clamping cauls to solve sticky problems and get a great result. More details are on page 2.

Please join us for dinner beforehand in the Bistro if you can. Otherwise I look forward to seeing you at the Workshop or at one of our many upcoming courses.

*Phil Greenwood*



## WWA objectives

The objects of the Association are:

- to provide a forum for networking and to encourage camaraderie amongst all those who work in wood
- to promote public awareness and appreciation of fine woodwork
- to encourage creativity, design and development of skills and application by all woodworkers
- to represent professional woodworkers and promote sustainability of fine woodwork as a career
- to promote awareness of environmental issues including encouraging the judicious use of our precious native timber resources and use sustainable harvested, recycled and reclaimed timbers.

## WWA Life Members

Richard Crosland

Phil Lake

Kim Larymore

Leon Sadubin

Richard Vaughan

# Our next meeting ...

**Monday, 7 October 2019 - 7.30pm**

## 1. Wood and Water

The way moisture affects wood is one of the most important challenges that woodworkers confront. We asked **Steve Townsend** to research the issue and report back to us. The result is a most informative and useful, illustrated talk. Steve will cover the following topics:

- ✦ The problems that water causes
- ✦ Why it is so damaging
- ✦ How to predict how moisture affects wood
- ✦ What you can do to prevent disasters in woodworking projects.

Members with moisture meters are invited to bring them to show others and discuss the pros and cons of each. If anyone has an example of a problem that they have encountered with moisture affecting woodwork, please bring it to show the meeting.

## 2. Clamping cauls

Clamping cauls can take the stress out of gluing up panels and table tops. Cauls be purchased but it is easy to make your own.

Several of our experienced members will bring cauls to the meeting and talk about making and using them effectively.

Members are welcome to invite family and friends to attend the meeting.

Please bring your membership name tags to make it easier for people to say hello. We will also have name tags to write on for visitors.

As usual, the venue for the meeting is the **Canada Bay Club, 4 William St, Five Dock**. Plenty of parking is available. We will be meeting in the William Room on the first floor.

**Please join the Canada Bay Club when you arrive - it is only \$11 for 5 years! More details of the benefits of joining are on page 14 of this newsletter.**

Meals and light snacks are available at the Club if you would like to partake before the meeting.



## WWA Committee 2018

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**If you would like to join or assist the Committee or be more involved in the Association, please call any Committee member.**

## News, news, news ....

### A very warm welcome to our new members

**Maxime Balzeau, V. Berkhout, Lester Cantem, Marc Cuscino, Darin Landry, Troy Sellers, Michael Sladeck, Matthew Smith and Alvin Yeap.**

We look forward to meeting you at the next general meeting and at our Workshop. Please make yourself known to as many members as possible. We hope you will immerse yourself in the activities and spirit of the Association.

**Keiren Brandt-Sawdy**, the Conductor of the Sydney Male Choir has written to the Association expressing his appreciation :

*Dear Phil,*

*I'm writing to you to express my deep gratitude for the two conductor's batons made by Richard Leniston and John Evans. I caught up with Terry recently and he presented the two batons to me and wow! They are both beautiful and absolutely perfect. I was really fascinated to read about the two different approaches of Richard and John.*

*Once again, my sincere thanks*

*Kind regards,*

*Keiren Brandt-Sawdy*



**Want to sharpen your hand saw?** You can learn to do it by reading books or watching videos like the one at <https://woodandshop.com/how-to-sharpen-hand-saws-for-woodworking/>.

Or you can pay someone to do it and you can do some more woodwork in the meantime!

Some recommendations from members include - **Peninsula Saws** at Warriewood, **Skipper Sharpening** at Villawood, **Jim Scott** at Hornsby (9482 3334 or 0412 479 009) and **Henry Brothers** at Vineyard.

The **Australiana Society** is holding its 40th Anniversary Symposium at the State Library of NSW on **14-20 October 2019** entitled "Made in Australia". You will get to hear and see presentations on all manner of Australiana and decorative arts like Julian Bickersteth from ICS discussing *A working lifetime on conservation of Australian furniture* and Greg Peters from Patinations discussing *The Riley Cabinet - an investigative discovery of timbers*.



Richard Neville, Mitchell Librarian and Director of Education & Scholarship from the State Library of NSW will be talking about the library's collection and showcasing its treasures. For more information see [australiana.org.au/symposium](http://australiana.org.au/symposium).



If you have a **Festool Domino tenon joiner** and want a really good manual, you can download it by going to the Festool USA website or clicking [here](#).

**Steve Toscano** has introduced violin making classes on a Thursday night at his **Sydney Guitar Making School** in Hornsby. To find out more you can call him on 0467 647 936.

**HNT Gordon** have released a [video](#) on how to mount their aluminium **precision bench vice**.

Whilst aimed at their American customers (who still use imperial measurements) it provides a helpful insight into what is involved and might encourage members to make the plunge.



We'd be interested to hear from members who have purchased and installed this bench vice. Terry Gordon makes beautiful gear and if his excellent tail vice is anything to go by, the bench vice may be a real winner.

The mountain spruce forest in Northern Italy where the famed violin-maker **Antonio Stradivari** sourced his wood was badly damaged last year in a violent storm. Winds of 120 miles per hour knocked down almost a million trees.

To save the precious timber an online fundraising campaign came to the rescue. Hundreds of tons of wood have been milled and are now stacked to dry before being offered to local instrument makers.

The highly sought-after spruce growing in the Fiemme Valley has been the preferred timber of famed luthiers such as Stradivari, Guarneri and Amati. They handpicked the trees that would become some of the world's finest instruments.

Thanks to a serendipitous combination of the altitude and climate, these have come to be called // *Bosco Che Suona*, the Musical Woods.



## Searching for the 'flow zone'

**Dr Tony Anderson** enjoys precision and accuracy. He is pictured below in his workshop at Hunters Hill beside his computerised metal lathe and just a short distance from his computerised drill press. Above the lathe you can see 4 black discs with a green light above - they are targets for pistol-shooting visualisation practice! At our August meeting, Tony gave a fascinating talk on Flow. Here is an excerpt from his writing on the topic...



Experiencing 'flow' or being in the 'flow zone' refers to a mental state where actions are carried out automatically, that is, without conscious decision and with considerably faster response speed and high achievement. However, 'flow' is a transitory phenomenon to which voluntary entry is barred, meaning it is not possible to simply step into 'flow'. The brain can initiate muscle movement several hundred milliseconds before it registers in the conscious mind (1 second = 1000 milliseconds). In automatic mode, the brain can start actions before we know they have begun. A sprinter can be three metres down the track before realising that the race has started. Behind the phenomenon of 'flow' lies the awesome power of the human brain which has some hundred billion neurones, each with a thousand or more synaptic connections to pass messages along neurone pathways and perform complex skills.

Some of the key concepts relating to 'flow' are discussed next in the context of elite target shooting which, like woodworking, involves aiming, fine muscle control, intense concentration and considerable skill. The shot delivery process during 'flow' is given in Figure 1.

It shows the shift from conscious to automatic control of the physical actions needed to perform the task and is a key to understanding 'flow'. This shift is represented in Figure 1 by the arrows running through the centre of the Figure.

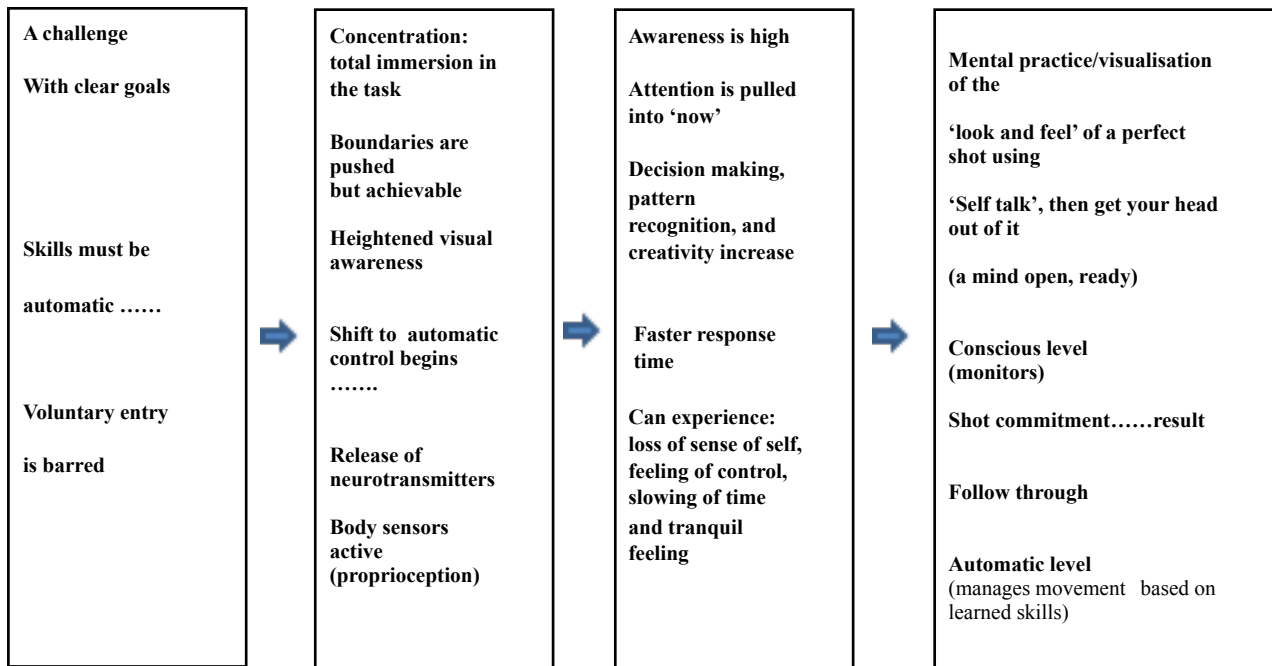


FIGURE 1: THE 'FLOW ZONE': STAGES AND CHARACTERISTICS

Note that experts can switch between conscious and automatic modes of mental processing depending on the situation. How 'flow' can enhance performance is summarised in Figure 1. Reading from left to right, the first box gives what is thought to be two preconditions for entering 'the flow zone': the presence of a challenge with clear and achievable goals, not too easy and not too hard, and being able to perform the required skills automatically.

The research into 'flow' has implications for how to approach the gaining of skill and how this might be accelerated. First, find out what key skills should be made automatic by doing a skills analysis of what is required to excel in the task. Encapsulate this in a checklist, written or held in the mind, to help build awareness and focus concentration when setting up for the task. Strip the checklist down to the minimum, necessary elements so as to avoid the danger of overthinking what you are doing. The checklist is used to generate pertinent instructions to self as to what works best: called 'self talk'.

Practice the new skills in a relaxed state but with heightened concentration and visual awareness; aiming to achieve total, energised, immersion in the task. Have the conscious mind in a supervisory role but able to step in at any time to correct an error by retrieving actions or strategies developed through analysis and practice. To avoid overthinking the movements needed to do the task, arrange for the mental process of setting up to do the task to end with the mind open, in a high state of anticipation, and ready to act. This moment, when instructions to self talk ceases, can be brief since the brain can initiate muscle movement within several hundred milliseconds.

Progressively learn to make the key actions automatic and execute these as a smooth flowing process. Follow-through when making tool movements, that is, go past the end point of the movement as if still doing the movements need to complete the task.

Correct technical errors as they emerge. Errors which are not corrected are likely to become 'trained in'. The brain can detect errors about 50 milliseconds after we make a mistake' and our awareness of it 'comes between 100 and 500 milliseconds later'. Removing errors requires extensive practice to rewire the brain neurones and pathways which have become encoded with the errors (the mistakes).

Add the element of challenge. Learning benefits from setting a challenge which is within reach but just above our existing skill levels. Achieving total immersion in the task, requires practice in learning to concentrate

deeply and to be calm, e.g. using relaxation and breathing techniques which would also help learning to 'get your head out of it'. It is recommended that you should perform the complete sequence of actions, with the actions similar to the actual event and done in the same time frame. This is to capitalise on the boost (neural plasticity) given by training to changing the brain's neurone pathways as new skills are acquired. Note that repetition is required to move this new knowledge into long term memory for fast retrieval.

The full text of this article and references are available on the WWA website. © Dr Tony Anderson, 2019



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### Richard Crosland's

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# How not to come unstuck!

## Gluing tips from Richard Vaughan

*Some years ago this article by one of our life members, Richard Vaughan, appeared in the Australian Wood review. I read it again recently and thought it was worth publishing again. AWR and Richard have kindly agree to its re-publication...*

Choosing the right glue for the job is only the first step. Modern glues are remarkably strong and durable, but to achieve a lasting bond you need to understand both the wood and the glue. The belief that the glue is stronger than the wood applies more to softwoods than Australian hardwoods. Acknowledging that wood has personality, and even attitude, is essential to achieving a lasting bond.



One thing to be aware of is that Australian hardwoods are much denser than woods typically in use in the northern hemisphere. The following examples of densities from *Wood in Australia* by K R Bootle show this. The numbers refer to kilograms per cubic metre of the dry timber:

American walnut 600, European beech, ash, and oak 700, rock maple 730. Tasmanian myrtle 700, messmate (one of the Tas oaks) 780, jarrah 820, Sydney blue gum 850, river red gum 900.

The density of hardwoods resists glue penetration, the 'wetting' required for a good bond. The extractives of hardwoods also tend to come to the surface and physically and chemically resist the glue. With the notoriously difficult-to-glue spotted gum this can be as soon as 15 minutes after machining.

The high level of shrinkage in our hardwoods also needs to be considered. AV Syntec's research in 1998 into laminating Australian hardwoods found that shrinkage stress from drying is the greatest cause of bond failure. Here are some tips to help prevent your work from disassembling.

## Glue Tips

The wood must be at the correct moisture content for the glue. Generally this is between 8% and 12%. Buy your wood from a reputable supplier, then put it in your workshop with stickers between boards for several weeks to acclimatise and bring all the boards to a uniform moisture content. This precaution allows for the way the timber has been stored or transported after seasoning. If you can't resist the occasional slab at a show or bundle at an auction you should consider investing in a moisture meter. *(Ed: This will be further discussed at our next general meeting on 7 October!)*

Surfaces to be glued must be freshly and properly prepared. If the jointer knives are not sharp they will tend to burnish the surface and make glue penetration very difficult. The surfaces must also make full contact. Soft woods may be compressed to meet, but hardwoods depend on accurate mating. Very few glues offer more than slight gap filling without compromising bond strength.

When preparing boards for edge to edge gluing, especially the longer ones needed for a table top for example, it's worth using a sharp hand plane after the jointer in order to get a truly snug fit. It is also strongly recommended you prepare the edges on the same day you glue them.

Once the clamps are set up and you are ready to open and mix the glue it's good practice to give the surfaces to be glued a brisk sand using a hard flat block and 240 grit sandpaper. This is not done in the mistaken belief that 'keying' the wood will improve the mechanical grip. If anything the torn fibres will reduce the glue's effectiveness. You use a finer grade of paper because the intention is to prepare a fresh surface for the



adhesive. Take care not to round the corners and brush or blow to remove all the dust. Don't lovingly stroke the edge afterwards as you'll probably contaminate the surface with grease from your hardworking fingers.

### Temperature Issues

Reading all the instructions and any technical data sheets you can get for the glue is a really good idea. Two essential bits of information are the temperature range for using the glue, and the assembly time at a standard temperature. The data sheets for PVA glues refer to 'chalk temperature'. If the glue or wood are below this temperature during glue-up the result will be more like chalk than glue. Using PVA below 10°C is not advised though there are formulations that accommodate the cold.

A thermometer is essential in any workshop to ensure you are working within the tolerances of the glue. If you can't be certain that wood and glue will remain at an acceptable temperature for the full drying time, and can't leave a heater on, it's far better to leave the glue-up till you can. Colder temperatures slow down the curing of most glues so you need to extend the time in the cram before putting any stress on the joints. Conversely, hotter temperatures speed the process so you need to watch out the glue hasn't skinned before you bring the surfaces together.

### Be Prepared

If you are still adjusting the components beyond the recommended assembly time you risk weakening the bond. This is particularly the case with PVA. It's essential that you are fully prepared before you apply the glue. It's best to do a full dry clamp up to be certain everything is as it should be.

My advice from industry sources is that the recommended storage life given for adhesives is conservative - litigation being so popular. However, it is good practice to write the date of purchase very clearly on the container if a use-by date is not obvious. That way you can at least be aware how much you are pushing the declared limits.

Extremes of temperature for the container reduce the storage life of most woodworking glues so guard their environment. PVA also becomes less reliable after being frozen.

Part-time woodworkers in particular may well have glues sitting on the shelf for months at a time. PVA type glues have the potential to separate, a bit like cream and milk, so if in doubt shake or stir. Pay attention to the needs of both the glue and the wood and you should be set for long term bonding.

### Richard Vaughan

*Photo right: These are Gordon Joseph's clamping cauls, based on John Brassell's design, which he has used successfully to glue panels, table tops and even small cutting boards. They will be available for inspection at our next general meeting on 7 October, together with other designs.*



## Tape measures - what to look for

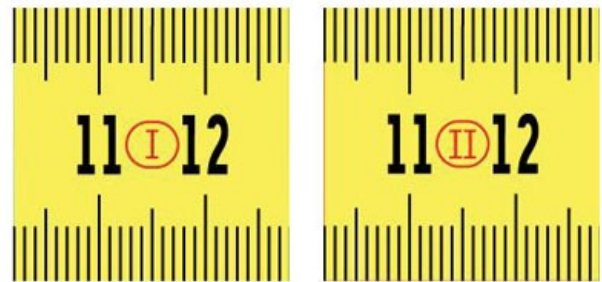
There are masses of tape measures on the market - some very cheap, some very expensive. How do you pick a reliable tape measure that is good value for money?

The first thing to know is that they can differ markedly in accuracy. The materials used and the way that the markings are made on the tape can result in a surprising range of variation. But there is a helpful way to be sure you are getting a tape measure that is as accurate as you need.

The European Community has standards for tape measures that most manufacturers around the world now use. There are three classes - class I, II and III. Class 1 tapes are the most accurate - a variation of only 1.1m is permissible over 10m (0.001% margin). Over the same distance a Class III tape may have a variation of 4.6m. The details are set out in the table below.

Deviation $\pm$ mm over total length			
Length	Class I	Class II	Class III
2 m	0.30	0.70	1.40
3 m	0.40	0.90	1.80
5 m	0.60	1.30	2.60
8 m	0.90	1.90	3.80
10 m	1.10	2.30	4.60

The first thing to do is only buy a tape that has been classified. You can check easily by looking at the markings on the first 200mm of the tape. If there are no markings, then you may be buying (or have bought) a cheap and nasty unclassified tape. Being unclassified means that it has not been tested and guaranteed to perform to a particular level of accuracy. The classification is shown as a roman numeral, as depicted in this photo.



The testing is undertaken at 20 degrees C using a pulling force of 50kn on a metal tape or 20 kn on fibreglass tapes.

Most woodworkers are content with a Class II tape measure. These are made by all the well-known manufacturers - Stanley, Irwin, Bahco, Sola etc). They provide a good quality tape that you can confident in using. Carbatec stocks Class I tapes manufactured by Sola. Other makers are Fisco, Hultafors and Advent.

Conventional printing methods are mostly used for Class II tapes but, for a Class 1 tape, ultra-fine inkjet printing is usually required in order to achieve the necessary level of accuracy.

Since 2014, the EU directive requires markings on tapes to show length, CE marking, year of manufacture, mark from Office of Weights and Measures, accuracy class and manufacturer's name or identification mark.

The year of manufacture mark (circled below) has an M before the year - indicating here that the tape was made in 2013.



If the tape measure is being used in temperatures other than 20°C or at a pulling force of more/less than 50 Newtons then the accuracy of that tape cannot be guaranteed.

Two additional things to mention in closing. First, tape measures without these markings may be very accurate. The maker may have decided not to conform with the EU requirements. Secondly, you can still gain precision with an unclassified tape if you use that same tape on each occasion.

*Information obtained from The Tape Store, Advent and Sola websites.*

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## 2019 WWA Box making course

Over four days in July, woodworker **Alex Springall** conducted a box making workshop with six participants - **Antony Gleeson, Geoff McLelland, Malcolm Blomfield, Matthew Smith** and myself. **Peter Harris**, also skilled at making boxes, provided assistance.

Firstly Alex presented an array of design considerations. He instructed us to sketch our boxes, then select from a range of reclaimed timber.

A flurry of table saw cutting and router slot making ensued. Once the sawdust settled, box sides, lids and bottoms emerged. We gingerly

placed them together. Sanded the surfaces. Painted shellac. Taped mitres. Clamped rabbets. Glued up.

During the second half of the course, the pace relaxed. Contrasting splines were cut. Brass hinges slid into mortices like legs into skinny jeans. Linseed oil perfumed the air. Magnets pulled the lid tight shut. Box!

Thank you Alex and Peter for your generosity of time, spirit and fittings. We walked out with new skills, square joints and big smiles. While boxes are made to house objects, ours are imbued with the memory of fun times!

**Sharon Lee**





## 2019 WWA Spooncarving course

On Saturday afternoon, 7 September a group of members spent several hours sharing the gentle art of spooncarving under the guidance of **Carol Faulkner**. Carol was ably supported by the first aid and tea-making skills of **Clare O'Reilly**.

Carol is a relative newcomer to this art form, and was reticent about being a "teacher". So this course was a "pilot" only. The happy "passengers" were **David Seddon, Paul Newitt,**

**Charlie Kingsford,**  
**Clare O'Reilly,**  
**Peter Luscombe, Sid Edwards,**  
**Gwen Brassell and Stewart Einfeld.**



From all accounts, everything went really well - until the inevitable, first cut of a hand! Nurse Clare was quick into action and spirits remained high. Everyone took home either a finished or almost finished spoon, and all their fingers. (*Notice in the photo below how participants are only showing one hand or are covering the other?*). Carol did a great job and was a natural teacher - encouraging and patient. We hope this will be a regular event on our WWA course calendar.





# Useful ways to use up bits of timber -

## #1 Make a Christmas tree (that is easy to store)

I find it hard to discard pieces of timber, so they tend to accumulate. When the pile gets too high, it's time to find a useful way to use the bits of timber.

Here is idea #1.

A couple of years ago I made a Christmas tree. The only equipment used was a dropsaw and a drill press. The only materials were "scrap" timber. There was no skill involved.

I decided on the approximate height, width and shape I wanted and then started finding pieces of timber that fell within that shape. Then I trimmed them to size, using offcuts for the smaller pieces at the top of the tree. The photo to the right gives you the idea of what I was trying to achieve.

Then I found a broom handle (diameter about 21mm) and a drill bit (diameter about 22mm) and drilled holes in the centre of each piece of timber and placed it on the handle. That's all there is to it, almost.

You can rotate the timbers to whatever design takes your fancy - aligned and at an angle or scattered with decorations attached, as per the photos below.

One extra step is necessary to make the tree stable. You can place a small piece of timber under the second "rung" to keep it balanced or you can shorten the bottom piece and glue a "foot" to the second rung for neatness (see right).

After Christmas you can fold the tree flat for easy storage... or you can put it on the bonfire. This and another tree will be on display at our next general meeting.





## Dates for the diary

Our Workshop at 1 Spring Street, Abbotsford is open to members each Wednesday and Sunday...

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| 27-28 September 2019 | Tongue drum making course with Robert Towler                                      |
| 5-6 October 2019     | Lost Trades Fair at Hawkesbury Showgrounds, Clarendon                             |
| 12-13 October 2019   | Illawarra Festival of Wood at Bulli Showgrounds                                   |
| 14, 15, 17, 18 Oct   | Members' course: Veneering with Peter Harris                                      |
| 9 November 2019      | Open Day at the Powerhouse Museum: Free entry - Showcase of Affiliated Societies  |
| 10 November 2019     | Members' course: Introduction to Woodworking with Clare O'Reilly and Phil Nanlohy |
| 2 December 2019      | WWA General meeting and Christmas celebration at the Canada Bay Club.             |
| 6-24 January 2020    | Australian Guitar Making School Workshop with Steve Toscano, Hornsby              |



### Canada Bay Club membership - Just \$3.30 pa or \$11 for 5 years

Benefits of membership include - reward points every time you swipe your membership card to purchase food, drinks and other services at the club, discounted food and drink benefits, free parking, birthday rewards, health and fitness classes, discounted holiday accommodation in NSW's beautiful Forster

Join at reception next time you visit the Club.

More details at <https://canadabayclub.com.au/membership.html>

## Many thanks to...

Our Workshop Supervisors for August/September - **Peter Harris, Peter Dunn, Peter Munro, Phil Nanlohy, David Palmer and John Kirkwood.**

Our Course Instructors - **Alex Springall, Peter Harris, Carol Faulkner, Kerryn Carter, Robert Towler, Clare O'Reilly and Phil Nanlohy** - and Course Organisers - **Clare O'Reilly and Phil Nanlohy.**

Our speakers at our last General Meeting - **Darren Oates, Alex Springall, Andrew Downie and Tony Anderson.**

The Workshop August working bee team - **Richard Leniston, Steve Townsend, Jacob Grossbard, Bronwyn Vost and Frank Duff.** In just a few hours they were able to fix the crook vice, fit suction to the lathe and belt sander, complete the green flooring at the far end of the Workshop, place flooring panels under the drum sander and bandsaw and tidy up under the shelves at the end of the Workshop. Good effort!

**Clare O'Reilly** for organising a First Aid Course for our Workshop Supervisors conducted by her wise and helpful brother, a senior member of the St John Ambulance Australia.

**David Palmer** for being Secretary of the Association and the Workshop Supervisor Organiser (WSO)); **Peter Hunt** for undertaking the Membership Secretary duties and sending out this newsletter; and **Oliver Addis** our Treasurer who looks after our financial commitments and well-being, even when overseas.

*And thanks to everyone else who  
lends a hand,  
shares their wisdom,  
or offers a kind word of support.*



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### Boutique Timbers

**256 Spokes Road, Ballengarra**

16km west of Pacific Highway, turn onto Rollands Plains Road at Telegraph Point. Follow road for 16km, turn left at Spokes Road and travel 2.5km of gravel road. Visitors welcome from 7 to 7, 7 days a week.

**Phone Mal or Greg - 02 6585 8296 or 0416 096 827**

**Sydney enquiries - 0407 613 002**

**boutiquetimbers.com.au**

