



Strathalbyn Wood Craft Group Inc.

Sawdust & Shavings

December 2022 Newsletter

"RESPECT, ENCOURAGE, NURTURE"

President's report

Christmas is now just a few weeks away and the Shed has been busy as usual. We had a good turnout for our Fifth Friday of the Month lunch on 31 October. We feasted on tortillas and nachos, courtesy of John Owen. The food was very, very nice and a number of members now want John's recipes.



The Christmas party at the Bridge Hotel at Langhorne Creek on 25 November was great fun and a memorable way to get together and celebrate the year. Thanks to John Owen for organising the lucky tickets and prizes. See page 7 for photos.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Next Social Day lunch

12 noon
Monday 30 January

We acknowledge the generous support of the Member for Mayo, Rebekah Sharkie MP, whose office prints copies of this newsletter for us.

We acknowledge the Narindjerri and Peramank people as the traditional custodians of the Strathalbyn area, and pay our respects to the Elders past and present.

Our reason for being

When people join, we ask about hobbies, the things they enjoy, and what they hope to gain by joining the Shed. People generally join to enjoy themselves, make friends and develop their woodworking skills. To achieve these outcomes, it is crucial to remember the fundamentals of Shed membership:

Respect – be kind and courteous and respect other points of view. Disrespectful and bad behaviour has no place in the Shed and will not be tolerated.

Encourage – share knowledge and skills and be supportive of one another. Frame feedback in positive terms.

Nurture – help people to grow their confidence and skills and enjoy our facilities safely and effectively.

This is how our group (which is, after all, established for the benefit of the community) will continue to prosper and be known as a welcoming and supportive organisation.

Online sales now available

Products made by the Woodshed can now be purchased online through our website. This is a very easy process; have a look at the site if you have not already done so and encourage friends and family to consider ordering a Christmas tree or reindeer at www.orders.strathwoodshed.org.au.

Strathalbyn Wood Craft Group Inc operating as the Strathalbyn Woodshed



A non gender community facility based on the principles of the Australian Men's Shed Association

97a Milnes Road, Strathalbyn SA 5255 Phone 0418 418 995

ABN 85 162 313 315 Charitable Organisation ID 85162313315

President: Eric March Vice-President: Richard Carter Secretary: Neil Pokoney Treasurer: Bob Pritchard

President's report (continued from page 1)

Focus on induction and safety

The Committee has identified that we need more members who are able to induct new members. We have asked for more help, with only one person offering. Members may feel the role is beyond their capabilities but this does not necessarily need to be the case, so we have decided to clarify and simplify the responsibilities, bearing in mind our insurance requirements.



It is reassuring to keep in mind that, for a cost of \$26 per member, the Australian Men's Shed Association provides a safety net of \$40 million public risk and accident cover for out of pocket expenses in the case of an injury.

Meanwhile, we will continue to strive to maintain our very low incidence of accidents. Secretary Neil Pokoney has undertaken to present a report to the January Committee meeting on this topic. Neil has had extensive experience in Occupational Health & Safety which he gained while teaching in New South Wales. This will help in assessing our practices but we are also looking for input from members. Please contact Neil directly with any ideas you may have in this regard via email: secretary@strathwoodshed.org.au. Neil will consider all suggestions and will also research the requirements of our insurance company.

Duty Officers



The Committee is calling for more members to take up the role of Duty Officers, ideally so we have several "go to" members sufficient to cover the various Shed zones at each session. While Duty Officers oversee safe practices in the Shed, it is important to recognise that safety is the responsibility of everyone and not any single individual. You do not need to be an expert in everything to undertake this role and assistance can be provided.

A member recently described Duty Officers as an important 'comfort factor' when you are unsure of something and need assistance. Recognising this need, there is the option of adopting a model where all members actively help one another and keep a lookout for safety issues, rather than (or in conjunction with) having formal Duty Officers. If you have any ideas about how this could work, or another suitable approach, please talk with me.

Donated wood

John Owen and helpers recently collected three ute loads of 3x2" structural pine from a construction site at Lewis Fields in Strathalbyn. I sent a text to the site supervisor expressing the appreciation of our members for the donated timber, which will be used in future building work around the shed.

Please do consider the issues and requests mentioned above and, in the meantime, best wishes to all for a happy and safe Christmas season.

Eric March



We acknowledge the support of Alexandrina Council, the Australian Men's Shed Association and the Australian Government (ACNC).



AUSTRALIAN MEN'S SHED ASSOCIATION
Shoulder to Shoulder



Member news



Welcome to the following
new members:

Laura Saltmarsh

Conor Mason

Roger Marshall

Bill Williams

Pam Williams

Faolan Sawyer and his
carer Julie Townsend

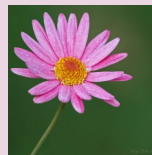
Bruce on the mend

On 2 November, Bruce Allnut lost his balance and had a fall at the Woodshed, and ended up in Mount Barker Hospital.

He was discharged that evening, after the hospital ran numerous tests to check for underlying causes. Bruce noted he recently suffered from a fairly severe virus, and this may have contributed to his loss of balance.

Bruce extends his grateful thanks to all the people who gathered around him following his fall, in particular Peter Broadbridge who took control of the situation and afterwards communicated with Bruce's children.

Bruce also acknowledged the caring attention by the paramedics who attended the Woodshed and the treating doctor and staff at Mt Barker Hospital. We are very glad you are feeling better, Bruce.



Graham Sandercock has recently been in Flinders Medical Centre, having stents fitted after a cardiac event. Best wishes as you get back up to speed, Graham.

Inaugural Woodshed member Stan Wurst moves to pastures new at Huntfield Heights

Stan Wurst, a Life Member of the Woodshed, and his wife Patricia have recently moved to Onkaparinga Lodge Residential Care at Huntfield Heights. Stan is the last surviving foundation member of the Strathalbyn Woodshed.

Stan came to be involved in the Woodshed following a 2003 call from Council for volunteers for a shared skills program. This program aimed to give school-age youth experience in woodwork using hand tools. Shared Skills started on 5 November 2003, with Andrew Soar as Leader and Stan as helper. Andrew resigned due to work commitments in June 2004 and Stan assumed responsibility as Leader, together with Richard Donhardt.



Shared Skills operated from the shed between the Library and the Bowling Green at Strathalbyn. The program started with simple hand tools, followed by the purchase of a wood lathe in June 2004. Local companies, service clubs and community members were encouraged to donate both new and second-hand equipment to the Shed. This led to an expansion of activities at the Shed, including the establishment of a woodwork based "men's shed" which operated alongside the Shared Skills program, and which eventually became the Strathalbyn Woodshed.

Stan continued with the Shared Skills program, working with students with disabilities, until 2016 and was subsequently made a Life Member of the Woodshed.

We take this opportunity to thank Stan for his work in helping establish the Woodshed and for his contribution over many years, and we wish Stan and Patricia all the best as they settle into their new life at Onkaparinga Lodge.

Banking challenges

Seems like we've all got our challenges dealing with banking institutions.

We have been unable to get our bank to facilitate a change of signatories on the Strathalbyn Wood Craft Group Inc bank accounts.

Community Not-For-Profit organisations usually change their officers and signatories every year. It is now three months since the Committee resolved to change signatories and we are still operating on the signatories from last year. In addition to the formal Committee resolution, the bank requires us to have all signatories/debit card holders attend the bank branch in Mount Barker at the same time, which can be almost impossible to organise.

We have now learnt our bank will close its Strathalbyn branch in the new year. Day-to-day deposits and withdrawals can be done using the bank's ATM, or we could switch banks, however there is no certainty about the longevity of that service in town either.

As a result of these difficulties, we have written to the Federal Member for Mayo to ask if the Australian Government could investigate requiring banks to provide a mobile service for rural and remote communities. In other words, the banks come to the customer by appointment, rather than requiring the customer to go to the bank.

These arrangements offer significantly reduced cost for the bank and some degree of service and convenience to the customer, similar to the model where some banks employ Loan Contractors on commission. Not sure what the outcome from this idea might be, if any, but it seemed worth a try.



NBN Connection update

In last month's newsletter we reported that the NBN technicians came to the shed on 6 October to install our Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) connection but found the pits were on the wrong (opposite) side of Milnes Road.

NBN undertook to lay conduits under the road sometime after 14 November.

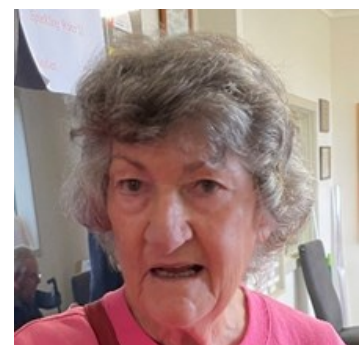
It was great to see that on 24 November the NBN contractors were on the job and to know that our connection is hopefully not far off.



Some of our new members

Top: Laura Saltmarsh, Bill Williams

Below: Roger Marshall, Faolan Sawyer & his carer Julie Townsend, Pam Williams



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: John Austin

A bit like Mark Twain's Tom Sawyer, my life has been full of adventure and opportunities.

My primary school years were spent at Clare in the mid north. I loved school and can remember getting there early to play marbles.

On a hot day I would often go with friends to swim in farm dams and catch yabbies. Can you imagine these days strolling around town with friends and a slug gun over one's shoulder? That's what we used to do. No one blinked an eyelid. The enemy were the birds that used to make a mess of the fruit trees.

After I completed grade 7, our family decided to take a trip to England by ship. Our first overseas port of call was Singapore. Singapore was still recovering after World War II and poverty was everywhere. Not like Singapore these days. I had never seen poverty before and it has had a lasting impression on me.

At school in England, my friends wanted to know if I spoke Australian, thinking we had our own language. News travelled slowly in those days and the English did not know much about Australia. My best friend was Phillip Levermore. He fancied being an actor and started out on the famous Jimmy Edwards radio program "Wacko!" (which started in 1956).

I enjoyed England but after two years of not much sun, we headed back to Australia, via the Atlantic to Montreal and by Canadian Pacific Rail to Vancouver. I came back from the UK with some striped shirts and winklepicker shoes with extremely pointed toes. It took three more months for the shirt and shoe fashion to arrive here.

My formal education was a bit of a mess once I arrived back to Unley High in Australia. I did not want to go back a year and so I struggled in Year 9. Later, I educated myself in the things that interested me. At one time I thought I would like to become an accountant. It was not for me.

Eventually, I started growing plants on ten acres at Bradbury in the Adelaide Hills which became the growing area for four more nurseries as well as a small Christmas tree farm. There are not too many plant types I have not had a go at over the years. Unlike these days, it was very difficult to find all the information needed to establish a nursery and most established nurseries kept their knowledge secret. Eventually, I bought a book from America called Plant Propagation and Principles, written by the University of California, which I still keep and is still relevant today.

When extended shopping hours and poker machines became part of everyday life, income for nurseries declined and quite a few disappeared. To survive, I built my own advanced propagating equipment. I could now grow all the hard to propagate varieties. My last retail nursery was at Verdun on 3 ½ acres which is still going strong, although the business has moved more towards landscaping.



A Japanese-style lantern lamp shade is still a work in progress.

While I had the nursery at Verdun, I started importing pottery from Vietnam in 1993, just after that country opened up to the West. As well as selling pots in my nursery, I sold them to other nurseries and Mitre 10.

Eventually, I became president of the Australian Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce for South Australia, a position I held for seven years. During this time, I developed a small consultancy business helping people in Australia wishing to do import/export business with Vietnam. One of the first companies I helped was BRL Hardy Wines, one of first companies from South Australia to export to that country.

I continue every day to study the Vietnamese language which I have been learning for nearly 30 years. I was called up during the war years to Vietnam, but luckily I did not have to serve there. I did my full national service and trained in signals and radio.

Hobbies and Interests include being a member of Lions International, Probus, the Woodshed, and the SA Bonsai Society. I also keep busy gardening and growing seedling pines for Christmas tree farms. I love Strathalbyn and was glad to find such a great community to retire in.

Right: Japanese stands for John's bonsai pots.



John with his partner Ingrid



Verandah posts for Milang Butter Factory

The Milang Butter Factory is being refurbished to its original character and appearance by the Milang Historical Society.

The Society required several heritage verandah posts for this project but a lathe capable of turning a 2.4 metre post is quite rare, and patterns for these types of posts are even rarer.

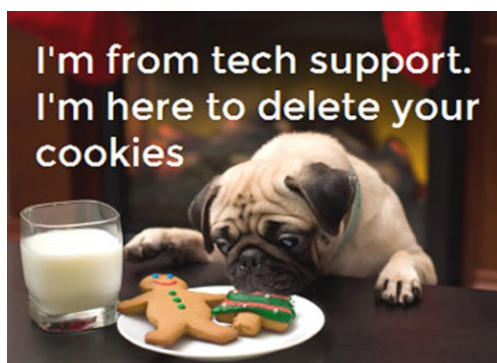
Always up for a challenge, Ken Knight agreed to make the posts. The Society supplied lengths of square Oregon and Ken copied the pattern of the original posts and used the Shed's large lathe to produce the posts. Ken also made-up special tools to facilitate accurate turning of such a long work piece.

Oregon has a notoriously coarse grain so shaping and turning the wood required considerable skill and patience. The Butter Factory restoration group was impressed with the results, especially as heritage wooden verandah posts are rare and expensive. Modern versions can be purchased commercially but cost around \$300 or more depending on the intricacies of the shape and matching availability of patterns.



ABOVE: Ken Knight with his handiwork and John Bradford and Ken with two of the finished posts.

LEFT: One of the posts in production on the lathe.



Committee meetings

The Woodshed Committee meets on the second Monday of each month at 7pm at the Woodshed.

Any member is most welcome to attend by invitation. Please contact Eric on 0418 418 995. Also, the agenda, minutes and financial reports for each Committee meeting are made available to all members.



instagram.com/ScottMelzgerCartoons

METZGER



Diary notes & reminders

Festive season opening days

The Woodshed will be open as usual on all Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays throughout December and January, including Christmas Eve (Saturday 24 December) and New Year's Eve (Saturday 31 December).



Next Social Day lunch

Monday 30 January

These casual lunches are held on the fifth Monday of the month (whenever occurring) at the Woodshed.

12 noon- 2pm.

Gold coin donation.



Christmas party @ The Bridge Hotel Langhorne Creek on 25 November

Clockwise from above: John Owen and Meredith Stock, Prue & Michael Bowman, Neil & Trish Pokoney, Arron Hender & his mum Rosemary Hender, Colleen & Eric March and Ken & Bridgette Knight.

