

Newsletter Editor

The next newsletter will come out at the end of January. Please forward any articles or information that you would like to go into newsletter to Richard Smith at richardasmith1955@gmail.com by the 20th of January.

General Meeting
Wednesday, 5th of February
7.30pm at the clubrooms
Cnr. Ironbark and De Fredericks Road, Yarrambat
ALL ARE WELCOME

President's Report

The end of the year is nigh!

It has been a busy one for me, learning the ropes as president, sometimes I felt like I was hanging from a rope....and a bit out of my depth. Thank you for your support during this period, I have been very appreciative of all I have been given. And the critique when required, I will be the first to say I do not know it all. And I even got some woodwork done this year, I very much enjoyed being back on the tools.

I've been a bit MIA over the last few weeks, which looks like it will continue into 2025 while I find a suitable home, move in etc. I'm getting buried in boxes!

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas, spending time with family and friends, or however you choose to celebrate this time of year.

I look forward to 2025, seeing familiar faces, learning about woodcraft, and my thanks to those who have shared their knowledge and experiences throughout the year. And I especially thank the key holders for turning up and keeping the clubrooms chugging along. I also thank those who do what they do quietly in the background ie the newsletter, helping out with the scouts activities, organising glue, lending a hand when a certain (silly) person cut her hand 😞 (no pun intended), maintenance, mentoring, website, working bees and those who put the bins out, it's all the little things that get done by club members that make a difference.

I wish you and your families all the very best for this festive season and a happy new year to one and all. See you in 2025!

From the Secretary's Desk

Our last meeting of the year was a great chance to catch up and meet some new faces. It was a short meeting, mainly focussing on the Shed and the Exhibition.

Raman was able to share the latest plans for the location out the front and the great work he has been doing with Council. Fingers crossed, by the time this newsletter comes out, he

will have had a successful pre-application meeting and will be able to share more specific plans as Council confirms what's possible. There was a lot of discussion around how we will use the shed and how it will be placed and accessed from the existing building, and we will continue to discuss in the new year.

The Exhibition discussion was also a lively one. Everyone agreed it looked great, but we definitely need to work out the signage for next year to encourage more visitors. One of the questions to ponder is how to get more members to contribute to the show – be it pieces to display or sell, more people to support doing the promotional work and selling raffle tickets, or more people to demonstrate and man the different sections on the day.

The conversation then turned to the fact the profit from the Exhibition is all going into supporting the Club's Day to day expenses, and as discussed earlier in the year, we will need to revisit the fees. As we all know, the cost of everything has been rising over the years and we've had very few increases to the fees to offset. While a lot of work has gone into looking at cost save ideas (Just this year we've changed electricity provider, re-investigated solar panels, changed website host and reviewed the insurance), we will need to increase fees next year. So, there was a lively debate with comparisons of what other clubs are charging (from Tennis, Craft and Men's Shed's) to alternate ways of charging fees, like adding a charge per visit. All options are open, and we'll have more discussion in the February General Meeting.

Reminder: The next General Meeting is February 5th, at 7.30pm in the Clubrooms.
Looking forward to seeing you there!

Session times over Christmas and the New Year

Monday mentoring

Finishing up for the year we go to Monday the 16th of Dec and then restart on Monday the 27th January.

Tuesday Open workshop

Last session 17th December, resume on 21st January 2025

Tuesday Instrument group

Finished for 2024 may restart February 2025

Thursday open workshop

The last Thursday session this year will be on the 19th of Dec. The first Thursday session for 2025 will be the 9th of Jan.

Thursday Turning Group

Closed from 12/12/24 TO 16/1/25

Saturday Open workshops

First and Third – Aurora

Sessions running as per normal

Second and Fourth – Toby

Sessions running for as per normal

Steve's groups

Sunday 24/11/2024.	Pyrography Group.	Operating as usual.
Friday 6/12/2024.	Carving Group.	Operating as usual.
Sunday 8/12/2024.	Scrollsaw Group.	Operating as usual.
Friday. 20/12/2024.	Carving Group.	CANCELLED
Sunday. 22/12/2024.	Pyrography Group.	CANCELLED
Friday. 3/1/2025.	Carving Group.	CANCELLED
Sunday. 12/1/2025.	Scrollsaw Group.	Operating as usual.
Friday. 17/1/2025.	Carving Group.	Operating as usual.
Sunday. 26/1/2025.	Pyrography Group.	Operating as usual.

Groups will run as normal from February 2025.

Kind regards

Jane Hammett
President

Glue Still For Sale

Several people have already purchased glue but there is still plenty left and we are considering purchasing more.

It's Titebond III glue. If you bring your own container it's \$12 per half litre or \$24 per litre. We'll supply the container for an extra \$2. It's less than half what you normally pay. The club makes a small profit.

If you want some give me a call on 0417 563 699.

Colin Groves

Maintenance

I'll start with a huge thank you to all the people that have helped this year with keeping the equipment and building afloat. Your efforts make a difference. It may be just my opinion, but I think the place is running pretty well at the moment. People are having fun while learning, achieving goals and completing projects.

A special thanks goes to the keyholders who show up week after week and oil the wheels you all love to turn. Please remember them when you do your work, don't leave them to clean up after you and if possible, ask if there is more you can do to make their lives easier.

So, the obvious. Keep doing what you're doing. Let us know when there are problems. And enjoy your time in the club.

For those wanting to learn how to tune a bandsaw, replace a blade or some sandpaper we will restart sessions in the new year. I am looking into some weeknight sessions for those who can't make it during the day or on weekends. Feel free to drop me a line if there is a preferred night that you would like me to attend. Note that it may not be doable in the short term but overall, I hope to equip as many people as possible with the skills to keep the club healthy so I will make the effort to make it happen.

Lastly, if you have already been to a session feel free to come to another to reinforce those skills further. It's a great time to practice and review without judgements made.

Merry Xmas and see you in the new year

Shane

MENTORING MONDAYS

Charlie and I have enjoyed the busy year that has been had on Monday mornings with lots of enthusiastic participation, learning, achievement and general good company. It is wonderful to see the variety of works being produced by all, and really enjoyable being able to take an active role in some of the creation that takes place.

As mentioned previously, in 2025 I am planning to change the Skills, Techniques and Safety session to the second Monday of the month, still at 1-00pm which I hope will work as well as it has this year, any thoughts or suggestions for these sessions would be very much appreciated. So, the first session for 2025 will be on Monday the 10th of February and we will be discussing and investigating fitting and using Hinges, Catches and Knobs, including some you can make for yourself as well as some of the varieties available commercially.



Above are a couple of images of a simple(ish) version of the Library Chair that I will be making in 2025, and if any of you would like to have a go at this project I will introduce the

topic at our first gathering on Monday the 27th of January, when hopefully I will have a model to show anyone interested.

Regarding the name Library Chair. I am aware that other people give such chairs other names, similarly, many names have been used to describe me over the years, however whichever name or title some may choose to use for me I remain much the same.

Below is another, of many possible variations on the theme.



I hope we all enjoy a relaxing break with loads of wonderful Christmas Cheer. See you on the 27th January 2025.

Hamish

Pyrography Group Sunday 24/11/2024

This was just a small group as expected for this time of year. Just five ladies and me, and plenty of chatter. At the head of my notes I have listed Jess, followed by 'dinosaur of tree'. I vaguely recall a small dinosaur picture and a couple of Xmas trees, but the cryptic nature of my own notes escapes me four weeks after the event. (Must be an 'age thing'!)

Then I have Maïke. Her most recent work, a platypus in a stream, brought along for display to a chorus of "ooh's and ahhh's" because it was so damn good. Maïke spent the day working on her next masterpiece, a flying falcon, which is coming to life on the wood in fantastic detail.

Then Beryl beavering away on the last panel of her 'pirate box' to get it finished for Xmas. Great little piece, it will be someone's "treasured chest" I am sure.

Then there was Rowena working on a 'Bee in a Hexagon' as a decoration on a box lid. At this stage the lid is still attached to the box. (Woodworking hint: if you build your box as a complete unit, then cut the lid off afterwards, it will be the exact same size as the box body. Guaranteed! All us old woodworkers know this trick!)

Then we had a visitor, Leonora (Rowena's daughter), potential future member, trying out Pyrography for the first time. Produced a 'Rabbit in the bush' as a first-time test piece. Very impressed with the result. Shows lots of potential.

As for me, amid the chatter and banter of which there was plenty, I finished the last Celtic panel for a square box I have been working on for some time. Now all I have to do is make a lid and base and put it all together. Maybe that's a 2025 project...

Steve Mitchener.

Carving Group Friday 6/12/2024

Last carving session for 2024. Three apologies for the day, Kerrie, Wes and Rod. All sorry they couldn't be here. But that still left eleven people cluttering up the room.

Alwyn was working on his gargoyle to be used as a walking stick handle. Charlie Littick was shaping an open cut form. Another delicate pod shape.

Maiké was carving two small horse shapes for a chip carving project. (For the unknowing, chip carving is a form of decoration created by slicing thin 'chips' out of an object or shape. Requires skill, concentration and patience.)

Hank was sanding the shape of a rather large Osage Orange Art Piece. I can't describe it, for as an 'art piece' it doesn't have a recognisable shape. And following Hank's example, Rowena was sanding a 'hand object' in Osage Orange. This is a small smooth fist sized object, looks like it would be great for throwing at someone. (So, I am keeping my head down!)

David Green was cutting out and starting to shape up a spoon and fork to become a set of salad servers. (This will be a long-term project. David doesn't rush anything.) And Chris Boylen used the carving horse to also shape up a pair of salad servers. (Was making more rapid progress than David. Just saying!)

Bernie has moved away from ornately carved chests for the moment and is gluing up a blank which will be carved into a bowl. While this was drying Bernie worked on a shallow serving platter which featured a raised edge.

And we had Melissa Foong cutting, shaping and carving some spoons. And Kevin sat quietly carving some stylised birds in the bushes on a nice wooden plaque. While I worked on my own 'art piece' in Jelutong between scribbling notes.

And to round out the day, we had a visit from Colin Groves and Peter Gannon who decanted some glue for sale. And then they promptly sold half of it to us Carvers. (Somehow, I think we were definitely a 'targeted group' for this activity. But it was at a good price!)

Steve Mitchener.

Scrollsaw Group Sunday 8/12/2024

Seven people turned out today for the last session of this group for 2024. I didn't bother humping my gear up, as I knew I would be helping others finish their projects for the year. And a surprise to me was the appearance of Val Sandeman at the Group, 'to give it a go'. Not a problem, unprepared as I was, we soon found some scrap to cut and we set about doing the basic stuff and 'having a go'.

Val took to it like a duck to water. Going through the basics Val was quickly onto cutting test/training pieces to get her eye in, then cut out three small animals with amazing accuracy for a novice scroller. (I better watch out. The way the Ladies are taking to the Scrollsaw I could be out of a job soon....)

Kerrie cut out two sausage dogs on her own. (See what I mean?) Then WE finished assembling her rabbit container. (Has a secret hinged compartment.)

Chris Hand cut out three Xmas tree decorations, which assembled into standalone units. Chris decided to remodel the pattern after cutting because it didn't look quite right. (I waited until she had finished doing the recut, then pointed out an easier and quicker way to do the same thing. Just to show that I am not redundant. Yet!)

Rowena, during all this, had cut out a 'man with dog' standalone puzzle thingy. Did get some advice from me at the start, but then went solo. (You see the trend? I think I teach too well.) But after that, I assisted/helped/aided Rowena cut the lid from her decorated box (see Pyrography report) with the use of a router.

Meanwhile Tony Orbe had cut a 3D compound bird. This item is done in three sections, wings, body and stand, and then assembled into a 3D structure. Did a great job. Only suggestion I could make at the start was to 'cut the wings a little thicker' than shown to increase the strength of them.

And unassisted in the background, Jess cut out two Bluey puzzles and a small Robin. (I'm thinking that word 'redundant' again.) Then Jess copied several of my animal stencils I had brought along. (I have amassed quite a stack of them over the last twenty odd years.) Planning to make some more wooden toys for her boys. Great stuff.

As I said at the outset, I knew I wouldn't get much done today. But overall 'the group' achieved quite a significant output, which makes me happy. So, we will be back on the 12th January 2025 to make some more sawdust, and have a lot more fun.

Steve Mitchener.

Christmas tree trees

Real Christmas trees are not very common in Australian households. A recent survey by the Australia Institute found that 61% of Australians had a Christmas tree at home last year. Of that 61%, 69% had a fake plastic tree, 22% had a fake non-plastic tree and 9% had a real tree. So surprisingly, to me at least, only 5% of Australians had a real Christmas tree in their home (9% of 61 is 5).

Of the real Christmas trees, the most widely grown commercial variety in Australia is the **Monterey pine**, *Pinus radiata*. It has a mild and pleasant scent and long, soft dark green needles. It takes four years to grow to size and there is much pruning and skilful shaping to get the right conical shape. There are a number of companies selling **Douglas firs** (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) – soft blue-green needles and sweet fragrance - but they are roughly twice the price of the Monterey pine.

In the northern hemisphere, home of the conifer forest, they are spoilt for choice. In Britain the **Nordmann fir** (*Abies nordmanniana*), **Norway spruce** (*Picea abies*) and **Fraser fir** (*Abies fraseri*) are popular choices. In North America the Fraser fir is the most popular species – hardy, excellent needle retention and pleasing piney scent.

Other popular species include the **Douglas fir**, **Balsam fir** (*Abies balsamea*), **Colorado blue spruce** (*Picea pungens*), **Scotch pine** (*Pinus sylvestris*), **Eastern red cedar** (*Juniperus virginiana*), **White spruce** (*Picea glauca*), **Eastern white pine** (*Pinus strobus*) and the **White fir** (*Abies concolor*).

Christmas trees have been in the news recently, no surprise there. The Trafalgar Square Christmas tree has been an annual gift to the people of London from the city of Oslo as a token of gratitude for British support to Norway during the Second World War. The tradition dates back to 1942 when a Norwegian resistance fighter cut down a conifer and transported it to England where the Norwegian king was in exile. A 50 – 60-year-old, 20m



tall **Norway spruce** has been an annual donation since. Trees of that size are straggly compared to cultivated Christmas trees and in recent years it has copped some criticism for appearing “half dead”. And this year there has been some disquiet about the carbon footprint involved in transporting it across the North Sea – “tree miles”!

In Italy environmental campaigners in the northern province of Trentino have started a campaign to stop the felling of a 200-year-old fir tree intended for St Peter's Square in the Vatican. Since 1982 a tree has been gifted to the Vatican, either from a region in Italy or another European country. More than 53,000 people have signed a petition asking the Pope to stop “a useless sacrifice” and reminding him that some of his encyclicals have focused on caring for the environment. But the mayor of the town close to where the tree is to be felled said that it was in a forestry coupe scheduled to be felled anyway and that he had not

expected “such malice”. The petition failed and the tree now forms the centrepiece of the Vatican’s Christmas celebrations.

In Australia there are a few plants associated with Christmas. In the southwest of Western Australia there is a giant parasitic tree whose roots steal nutrients from any plant up to 110m away.

The **Christmas tree**, *Nutsia floribunda*, has showy orange flowers that bloom prolifically summer. They have been likened to “a bushfire without smoke”. The plant, a member the mistletoe family, uses blades for slicing into the roots of other plants, and these are sharp enough to cause power failures when they attack buried cables by mistake. It is believed to be the world’s largest parasite.



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There is a mulga that grows in the arid land of central Australia called the **Christmas tree mulga**, *Acacia pteraneura*. It grows as either a shrub to around 3m or a tree with a height of 6 – 8m and sometimes resembles a conifer.

There are several types of ‘Christmas bush’ but the most recognisable is the NSW **Christmas bush**, *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*, which grows to 5m tall and produces sprays of white flowers in spring followed by deep red sepals in around Christmas time – the ‘flowers’ it is known for. A Christmas bush that grows locally is *Prosthathera lasianthos*. A shrub or small tree, it has sprays of white, pink or mauve flowers in summer.



Of the non-tree species, there are two types of **Christmas bell**. The most common is *Blandfordia nobilis* that has red cylindrical flowers with yellow tips and is native to eastern Australia. And there is a **Christmas orchid**, *Calanthe triplicate*, most readily found in Queensland, which has spikes of white flowers.

And then there are the living Christmas trees. Some people like their tree to come already decorated and tea-tree species such as the woolly tea-tree, *Leptospermum lanigerum* fit the bill, flowering at Christmas time and so creating a natural decoration amongst the baubles

and tinsel. If you want a traditional tree go Tasmanian. The **Oyster Bay pine**, *Callitrus rhomboidea*, has an attractive conical shape and is aromatic but it is a fast-growing species. Some slow growing conifers that can remain potted for many years include the **King Billy pine**, *Athrotaxis selaginoides* and the **pencil pine**, *Arthrotaxis cupressioides*.

The **Norfolk Island pine**, *Araucaria heterophylla*, is a popular species in a pot but makes a spectacular Christmas tree when decorated in situ, as at Point Lonsdale. In 1952-53 three local men strung up lights on the tree and did so until 1995 when the Council and various community groups took over. The tree is now close to 40 metres tall.

Peter Goddard



FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE:

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Second Sunday Scrollsaw 9.00 – 4.00pm Steve Mitchener 0409 003 487	Every Monday Mentoring 9.00am-12.00pm Charlie Camera 0413481699	Every Tuesday Open Workshop 9.00 am-12.00pm Geoff Oliver 0417 375 782	Every Wednesday Wes' Exhibition Toy Making 9.30am – 12.00pm Wes Weight 0478 021 269	Every Thursday Open Workshop 9.00am-1.00pm Paul Rushton 0417 017 347 (Paul will also assist with Hands on Safety Training) Sylvester Konieczny 0407 009 951	First & Third Friday Wood Carving 9.00am-3.00pm Steve Mitchener 0409 003 487	First & Third Saturday Open Workshop 9.30am-12.00pm Aurora Messina 0401 866 859 Second & Fourth Saturday Open Workshop 9.00am – 12.00pm Colin Groves 0414 795 347 Toby Grant 0488 994 741 Fifth Saturday Open Workshop 9.00am – 12.00pm Colin Groves 0417 563 699 Second & Fourth Saturday 4.30pm Safety Training Hands off *notify Raman or Kevin if you wish to attend Raman Rao 0433741753 Kevin Seviar 0413 831 742
Third Sunday alternate months Date will be announced in the preceding weeks 2.00 – 4.00 Maintenance training *Notify Martin if you wish to attend 0405 783 592	Hamish Hill 0428 577 878 Fourth Monday Skills Techniques and Safety Session 1.00pm – 2.00pm Hamish Hill 0428 577 878 (An email prior to this session will be sent with details of subject matter)	Shane Watson 0410 850 074 Jane Hammett 0408 19 59 65 Second & Fourth Tuesday Instrument Group 1.00pm – 4.00pm Frank Camera 0427 964 254	First Wednesday General Meeting 7.30pm @ the club rooms Third Wednesday Committee Meeting 7.30pm @ the club rooms	Every Thursday Wood Turning 1.00pm – 4.00pm Tom Laber 0429 439 833		
Fourth Sunday Pyrography 9.00am – 4.00pm Steve Mitchener 0409 003 487						

Committee Members for Eltham and District Woodworks Club Inc.

President	Jane Hammett	0408 195 965
Vice President	Raman Rao	0433 741 753
Secretary	Catherine Watson	0449 294 814
Treasurer	Peter Gannon	0419 136 235

Committee

Martin Ganter	0405 783 592
Shane Watson	0410 850 074
Rado Starec	0409 997 948

DATES FOR THE CALENDAR:

General meeting Wednesday 5th February