

# NEWSLETTER APRIL 2025

## Editor

The next newsletter will be produced by Jane and Catherine as the editor will be overseas in May. Please forward any articles or information that you would like to go into newsletter to [jane.hammett@hotmail.com](mailto:jane.hammett@hotmail.com) or [cath@grevus.com](mailto:cath@grevus.com) by the 20th of May.

Annual General Meeting 7<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm  
Club Rooms Ironbark Road  
Followed by  
General Meeting and light refreshments

## President's Report April 2025

Ah Autumn in Melbourne! Such a wonderful time of year.

The Exhibition Committee met last week, but unfortunately, I have had Covid and was not able to attend. Eltham Village is booked for the Friday 24<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October and this year we are also setting up a stall at Coles in Diamond Creek on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October. Raffle prize production is in full swing, but we still need a few volunteers to spruce up the rocking horse. Please get in touch with Rado if you would like to help out with this.

The second Shed Networking meeting is set for the 6<sup>th</sup> of May, The Lalor Men's Shed is hosting in their brand-new facility. My 'sidekick' Peter Gannon won't be with me as he has managed to break a thigh bone. He will be out of commission for a while I think while he recovers from surgery and physio.

We had our first Kumiko session the other week, Peter was very organised and had pre cut our 'starter' kit, which we then went on and did some fine cutting/chiselling on the inner pieces. Fascinating and we had a lot of fun working on them. This will be on hold until Peter is able to take the class again. Speedy recovery Peter!

Jane

## Secretary's thoughts

As the weather gets cooler, it's a good excuse to do more inside tasks. Yay, more woodwork projects!!

We had a really interesting speaker at last month's General Meeting. Jake Russell came along to talk about his journey as a Woodworker, Maker, and Educator. He shared some impressive examples of his work

The Defibrillator has been replaced. It works the same way as the old one – open the lid and it tells you slowly and clearly exactly what to do.

## NEWSLETTER APRIL 2025

I've also circulated links to the You-Tube training video the supplier provided in case you'd like a bit more detail.

We're in the process of reviewing some of the hand tools and have purchased some new Speed & F-Clamps.

The Forstner & Router Bits have also been sorted through, with some replacements on the way.

If you come across any broken clamps or bits, please make a note on the sign-in sheets and throw the broken clamp away.

There's also a new Chisel Morticer that Peter Gannon and Davey sorted out for us.

There is the Eltham Bunnings Mother's Day Stall on Thursday 8th May from 6pm-8pm, this is a good opportunity to sell items. Talk to Kevin if you have questions.

And we have a working Bee coming up on Saturday May 31st, starting at 9am

Next month is the AGM – please send through your nominations for the Committee to Jane or I. Anyone and everyone is welcome to nominate for the Committee.  
Catherine

### **Mentoring on a Monday**

The busy workshop on a Monday morning persists and many are finding they need to share bench space this can be awkward with some large projects being worked on. So, we all look forward to the new benches that Charlie and Peter have promised.

#### **Skills and Techniques Session Second Monday of the Month**

The April session on routers benefitted greatly from Val questioning what the odd implements hanging behind the router were for. I had to admit most of the useful gadgets hanging there, like the finger boards, had not even been noticed by me. As usually happens I learnt lots from the session, maybe even more than some of the attendees.

I am running out of ideas so would love to hear suggestions from those of you who feel there are aspects of the tools and workshop you need more development on.  
**SUGGESTIONS PLEASE!**

I will be away for all of May so unless someone else wants to take on this session, it will not happen again till June.

#### **Monday the 9th of June at 1-00pm Planer, Thicknesser and Hand Planing**

It strikes me that a refresher on the use of planer and thicknesser and how and why would be worthwhile for some. It also may be good to do a bit of work with some hand planes to demonstrate their uses also.

## NEWSLETTER APRIL 2025

### **Carving Group** Friday 4/4/2025

Chris Boylen is away this week sharpening his carving skills up in N.S.W. with a different Group. Rowena is an apology, but that still left 13 of us crammed into the Clubhouse working on our various projects.

Hank is giving his 'small hand-held sculptures' a rest this week, and is working on a life-sized Raven in American Black Walnut. It's a big chunk of wood, so it's going to take some sanding when he comes to finish it.

Peter Gannon was cutting the decorative patterns into the handles at each end of his serving platter. Quite an attractive object, and coming along very nicely. Alwyn was also quiet as he studiously worked at his sitting figure in Huon Pine.

Wes was working on a large piece which will be a marquetry Squirrel when it's done. And that could take some time! David Green was doing a bit of fiddling with an African Mahogany Nut. David didn't explain much about it, so not sure what the outcome will be here.

Kevin was working on a Lighthouse Scene on a small square of Huon Pine. He has developed a distinctive style with this sort of little carving lately. I refer to it as "Rustic" in appearance, and has quite some appeal in its own right.

Rod Gorfine brought in a clock he had made from a chunk of Tassie Blackwood. Using various techniques, he grooved a circular trench around the clock face as an embellishment. Then sanded it for hours to blend it into the wood. It is an attractive addition to the clock and gives it a bit of character.

Jenny Ferguson, a new member, brought in a little hand-held bird she had started at home in some Radiata Pine. A few tips and some encouragement, and Jenny produced a charming little birdie for her first ever carved piece.

Barb was working on finishing off her "bearded man" and tidying up the details. And Maike was fitting her double-sided owl to its base. Tweaking it here and there to get it exactly where it should be. Soon to be another masterpiece!

Bernie was working on the raffle prize he elected to make for the Club raffle. When it starts taking shape I'll tell you what it is. (I didn't write it down as I was whipping about checking on what everyone else was doing.)

I was working (occasionally) on my small man face, as I aided/guided/tutored Kerrie in fitting the rebated hinges to her Sassafras Box. Finally ended up with a hinged lid that closed as it should, according to the plan from the start of the day, but by then the day was over.

Steve Mitchener.

## NEWSLETTER APRIL 2025

### **Scrollsaw Group** Sunday 13/4/2025

Jess was an apology, but the six of us here had a busy and productive day.

Rowena was cutting Leggo styled people out of ply to Pyro and paint at a later date. These were considerably larger than Leggo normally is. We are talking 250 to 300 mm sizing here, no tiddlers! Then moved to cutting a bushy tree in Radiata Pine, featured fungi and fox in the design. For carving later at another session.

Kerrie was working out a handle for her finished Sassafras Box. Just wanted a simple finger lift at the front, and the options were endless, the decision difficult. Once it was cut and fitted, Kerrie started on a smaller Sassafras Box.

Chris Hand spent a lot of time discussing options with me on a three-layer jewellery box. Decided to make the dividers for the top level to aid in visualising the final size. Then we'll come back and decide on drawers, ends, lids, doors and whatever. (Just love it when concepts are more fluid than water, and you don't know where to go with it!)

Val Sandeman was gluing patterns for the 'Playful Pug' segmentation piece that I did five years back. Taking a similar approach, cutting it all from Radiata Pine, shaping the pieces, sanding, then assembling and finishing. (Sounds so damn easy when you write it all down like that!) So, Val is in the cutting stage now.

Kevin was cutting a Christmas Tree which has a layered snowflake design and layers up when finished. Getting an early start on decorations this year.

And I cut some 'stacking men' to replenish the Wes' Workshop Exhibition Stock. One had gone AWOL (absent without leave) at last year's Exhibition, and one poor little buggler had a broken back. He's been put to rest, and a replacement substituted. I also cut a couple of spares while I was at it. (Between absenteeism and fatalities, I might need them this year!) Then I cut a simple looking Turtle Puzzle in ply. Quite an easy task. Only eight pieces, but instructions claim there are 22 solutions. I'll get back to you on that, once I paint it up and give it a go.

Steve Mitchener.

### **Carving Group** Friday 18/4/2025

As luck would have it, it was also Good Friday, so there were several absences. But six of us turned up and had a beautiful time together.

Kevin was working on reducing the background by hand for a 'Green Man Face' on another square of Huon Pine. Kevin is getting quite adept at these low relief carvings, but was having trouble working the edges back all around the block and keeping it level. (I was merciless in telling him I would have prepped the piece at home with a router. A man's got to take his fun where he can find it.)

## NEWSLETTER APRIL 2025

Jenny had her bird back today. The chosen stain used to finish it wasn't up to par, so it all came off with sandpaper. Slow, tedious, but necessary for refinishing. (Lesson learned I think. Always use a test piece when trying a new stain.)

Chris Hand was prepping a piece to carve linked rings (4 of 'em) to trial the carving technique. The finished item would be for display or as a talking point, has no useful purpose with only four links. But it's a fantastic learning/teaching piece. Chris already realises she needs a bigger bit of wood to start with. Back to the drawing board. Another lesson learned!

Rowena was in the hallway power carving the tree she cut at scrollsawing. Fungi looks good at the side, and fox is cheeky peeping around the tree. A fun little piece that teaches perspective.

Peter Gannon came in and bolted down the new Mortising machine, then kindly demonstrated it for us. Decided that little effort was enough for the day and left us to it.

I was working on my "little rotund man" when I could. He lost quite a bit of weight (proportionally speaking), and gained some detail. But nowhere near finished. Back into the box for another session. (I am taking a page out of David Green's book, "don't want to rush these things" is his mantra.)

Steve Mitchener.

### **Mallet and Gouge Carving group**

28.03.2025

This was the first of this carving group. A small but dedicated and high-quality group met. Rod came with a piece of what we thought might be Liquid Amber to carve a wombat. Luckily Maike was there to provide valuable help to start designing and preparing the drawing and then working on it. Maike worked on her owl in Huon Pine, working both sides of the board. Very effective. Hank made more of his hand-held sculptures in Osage Orange. He also sanded an imposing raven in American Black Walnut. I drew up and cut in the box-front for a raffle prize in Blackwood. It was a busy and successful day of carving making very little noise really.

12.04.2025

In our second session as the Mallet & Gouge carving group the same group gathered, and we made more noise this time! Rod continued to work on his wombat. The question of the type of wood remained unanswered. The feet proved difficult, and the grain made progress slow, but it is taking shape nicely. Maike made progress on her owl in Huon Pine. Hank worked on the hand-held objects in Osage Orange, sanding, sanding and more sanding. I marked out a new box front in Blackwood using a 17th century strapwork design. I made too many mistakes but learned a lot in the process so this work might end up being planed off and started again.

There is plenty of room for carvers new and not so new. Come along and make some noise!

Bernie McCarthy (0408 145 819)

### Council commemorative seat project

More than four years ago the Nillumbik Council and the Eltham Historical Society asked the club for assistance in replacing the commemorative seat situated in Alistair Knox Park near the Eltham library. It was agreed that we make the seat including reproduction of the inscription provided they supplied the timber. The council identified two very large iron bark beams under the Eltham library, that were meant for, but not used for roof trusses. On inspection, they were found to be riddled with termites and unsuitable not to mention that the surprise also set off alarms as the library structure is all wood. After quite some time, another opportunity to garner free timber was identified by Jim Conner of the Historical Society, when he learned of the council's plan to remove some very mature *Macrocarpa* trees from the Lower Eltham Gateway site. He persuaded the council to mill the trees on site with a view to providing timber to local bodies that could use it including local Men's sheds and, for his special interest, to be used for the seat. We asked for our share to be milled into 300 mm wide by at least 80 mm thick boards which were the required size for the seat but also suitable for re-milling into bespoke sizes for other club requirements. These were sawn and stacked ready for us to pick up, however, the next morning when club members turned up for collection, we found that overnight, our stack had been stolen. As a replacement, we were given some smaller boards and several slabs. The boards were eventually dispersed to members and the slabs were cut into boards by Stephen Shaw, Peter Davey and myself. So finally, we had the timber which still needed some time to dry. Then Covid hit and everything stopped for nearly two years. After other delays, we finally managed to get the boards shaped and with the excellent work on the lettering by our master with the router, Steve Mitchener it was finally done.

### Huon pine

A long-time member recently donated a piece of end grain **Huon pine** (pictured right) to our timber library. Measuring 118 x 118mm, what is immediately noticeable is the density of the growth rings. As best as I could count there are 360 on the 168mm diagonal, meaning that this sample took 360 years to grow at an average rate of 0.466mm per year.

Using a pencil attached to a length of string I traced the arc of the growth rings and so calculated the radius of the outermost ring as 279 mm. 279 divided by 0.466 means that this timber sample is 600 or so years old. The average Huon pine has a diameter of 1 metre and if this sample came from such a tree then it would be over 1000 years old.



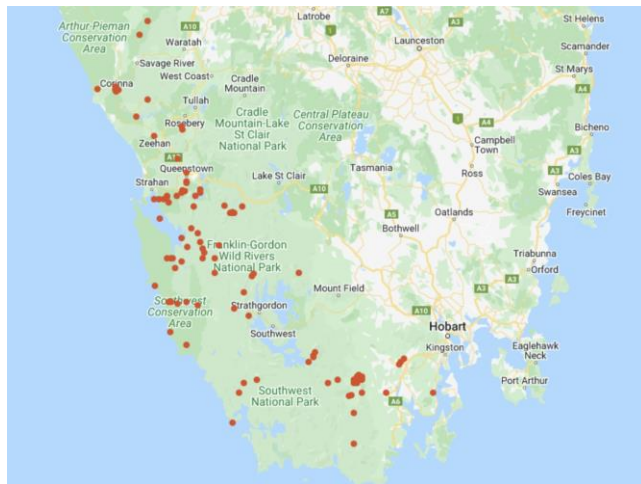
## NEWSLETTER APRIL 2025

Huon pine is probably the most well-known of Tasmania's 11 species of pine trees, 8 of which are endemic to the island. They have some wonderful names eg. celery top pine, King Billy pine, strawberry pine and the pygmy cypress-pine.

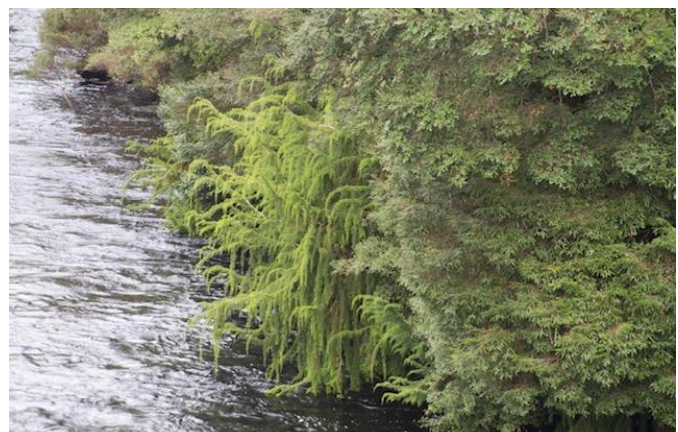
It shouldn't surprise that not one of these "pine" trees is in fact a true pine, belonging to the *Pinus* genus. They are all conifers though. Conifers are a group of cone-bearing seed plants and are sub-divided into families: pines, cypresses, cedars, firs, junipers, larches, redwoods, spruces and a few others. They were called pines by the early settlers because their timber had typical pine characteristics: the heartwood is yellow or light brown, grain is usually straight with a fine texture, the timber is light weight and of low durability.

Tasmanian pines belong in either the cypress (**Cupressaceae**) family eg. the pencil pine and King Billy pine or the podocarp (**Podocarpaceae**) family eg. the Huon pine and celery top pine. Podocarps are a group of mostly southern hemisphere conifers.

Huon pine (*Lagarostrobos franklinii*) is also known as **Macquarie pine** and is native to the wet and cold southern and western parts of Tasmania (mean annual temperature 9.6°C, mean annual precipitation 2016mm). It is usually 10 to 20 metres tall, exceptional specimens up to 30 metres. It is very slow growing but very long lived – some specimens more than 2,000 years. It is a **monotypic** species meaning that it is the only species in the *Lagarostrobos* family. *Lagarostrobos* comes from the Greek, *lagaros* "thin" and *strobos* "cone". The specific epithet *franklinii* is in honour of Sir John Franklin, 1786 – 1847, arctic explorer and governor of Tasmania from 1836 to 1843.



The tiny 3mm pine cone



Huon pine – a few lime green shoots hanging out over a river

Huon pine is found in Tasmania's cool temperate rainforests with myrtle, sassafras, celery top pine and blackwood as its companions. It grows along riverbanks,

## NEWSLETTER APRIL 2025

lakeshores and swampy locations and can be found from sea level to 800 m, but mainly below 150 m.

Huon pines are some of the oldest living organisms on earth. A stand of trees in excess of 10,500 years old was found in 1955 in western Tasmania on Mount Read. Each of the trees in the stand is a genetically identical male that has reproduced vegetatively from a common root-stock. The common root-stock can be considered the base of a multi-trunked tree. Although no single tree in the stand is 10,500 years old, the stand itself is a single organism that has existed that long. Individual trees in the stand are 2,000 and 3,000 years old.



The colony of Van Diemen's Land was only a few years old when explorers first found ancient tree trunks buried in the mud of the Huon River south west of Hobart. They were amazed that these logs had evidently been lying there for many years but were intact, untouched by the rot and insects that normally decompose fallen timber. They thought that this timber might be the solution to the age-old problem experienced by wooden boat builders – how to stop the voracious marine borer and screw-worm. They were right; it turned out to be the best boat building timber in the world. It can withstand rot for hundreds and even thousands of years.

In 1822 Governor Sorell sent two ships and 200 convicts and guards to Sarah Island in Macquarie Harbour to exploit the rich stands of Huon pine growing nearby. They quickly developed a boat-building yard and 131 vessels were built in 12 years on the island. In the 1800s teams of tough, resourceful 'piners' scoured the remote rivers of western Tasmania and floated rafts of logs downstream. Towns such as Strahan developed as a base for the timber getters. Two further waves of logging followed in the 1930s and the 1970s. By the time the felling of Huon pine was banned in the 1970s, 90% of the original forest had been logged.

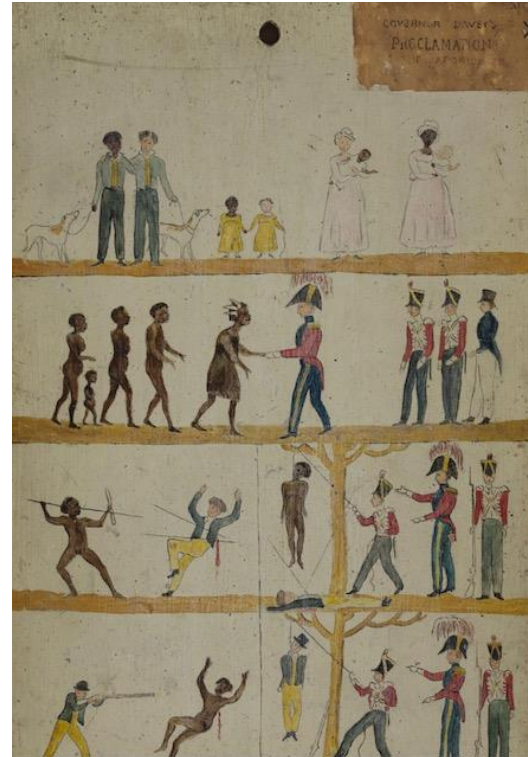
In addition to being very slow growing, Huon pine doesn't reproduce by seed until it is 600-800 years old. Talk about taking the long view, these trees are a renewable resource in theory only! Almost all Huon pine forests are now protected from logging and most of the timber available comes from logs salvaged from rivers and the forest floor and from a stockpile of logs collected prior to the flooding of their habitat by hydro-electric schemes. Logs cut over 60 years ago that have been floating on a river or lake since are still being utilised. Huon pine has the ability to float, even as a green log, unlike many Australian timbers. Supply is controlled to about 500 m<sup>3</sup> per year for craft and furniture industries and there should be enough for the next fifty years.

Huon pine has been called the prince of Tasmanian timbers. The richness of its golden colour and figure makes it a very desirable furniture timber. It has a fine and even grain that makes it exceptionally easy to work with hand tools. The wood contains a natural preserving oil with an unmistakable perfume. Its durability and workability make it one of the best boat-building timbers known and it was also used to make items such as



washtubs and pattern mouldings for castings. It turns, bends and carves exceptionally well. It can be difficult to glue due to natural oils and it is best to wash surfaces to be glued with an organic solvent. Formaldehyde glues usually give the best results. The oil that gives Huon pine its remarkable qualities is methyl euganol. It has been used as an insecticide and pesticide, a paint preservative and for dressing wounds and treating toothache.

In 1828 Governor George Arthur made a series of proclamations in an effort to reduce the number of violent interactions between the First Nations people of Tasmania and the British settlers, a period of violence often referred to as The Black War. Approximately 100 Proclamation Boards were produced as a visual tool to publicize the proclamations to those who couldn't read. On each board (36 x 23 x1 cm) was a four-strip pictogram that attempts to explain the idea of equality under the law. Those who committed violent crimes in Van Diemen's Land, be they First Nations people or British settler, would be punished the same way. Convict artists painted the boards, oil on Huon pine, and they were mounted on trees in remote areas where they would be seen.



The Boards did not achieve their purpose. In reality, equality under the law was non-existent. White people were seldom punished for the same crimes for which First Nations people were hanged. The Black War escalated, introduced diseases contributed and by the 1870s the First Nations people of Tasmania were decimated. Seven Boards survive, one each in the Tasmanian and Victorian Museums and one in the State Library of NSW.

Despite most Huon pines being safe from logging, they are still a threatened species. Huon pines do not recover after anything but the lightest fire but one of the effects of human induced global warming is that since 1990 bushfires are occurring more frequently in the Tasmanian forests. In February, this year a fire started by dry lightning created a fire ground about 100,000 hectares in size on



Still green, the high-conservation-value forest, including the 3,000-year-old Huon Pine, survived. (Supplied: NRE)

Tasmania's west coast. The photo shows how close a stand of Huon pines, including

## NEWSLETTER APRIL 2025

one thought to be 3,000 years old, came to being destroyed. Other Huon pines weren't so lucky. These plant ecosystems, not at all suited to fire, are relict forests from when Tasmania was part of the Gondwana supercontinent, more than 180 million years ago. When they're gone they're gone forever.

Even Huon pine that has been logged and floating on water isn't safe from fire. In 2003 a fire bore down on Lake Gordon and burnt all of the logs that were lying on the bank. For some reason, the log raft had not been towed to the middle of the lake and had drifted to shore. About 20% of the ancient timber stockpiled in the lake was burnt that day.

### Endgrain description

Resin canals absent: earlywood to latewood transition moderately abrupt, colour contrast medium; tracheid diameter medium-large.

Peter Goddard



Huon pine (endgrain 10x)

### Sources:

- Websites: Wikipedia, The Gymnosperm database, Atlas of Living Australia, Tasmanian timber.com.au, Tasmanian Special Timbers – Huon pine, Thw Wood Database
- C. Brack & M. Brookhouse. Where old things are: Australia's most ancient trees. The Conversation, 18/4/2017.
- ABC News. Aerial photos reveal how close Tasmanian west coast bushfires came to 3,000 year old Huon pine. 26/2/2025
- C. Machens. Tasmanian bushfires threaten ancient forests (again). Climate State, 10/2/2025.
- National Museum of Australia, The Black Line.
- D. Bowman, C. Kolden, G. Williamson. Bushfires in Tasmania: An Introduction. MDPI website.



## **CLEARANCE OF WOODWORKING ITEMS**

I am a former member of the E&DWC and have a HYCO Wood Lathe with all tools, instruments, face plates etc that should find a new home.

I have an ARTISAN Home Joiner (Buzzer, Saw & Separate Table), and a LEIGH Super FMT to move.

I have attached a photo of the Lathe and I can be contacted in Eltham on 0438 408 515.

I also have some turning blanks and carving timber which I can pass to the Club. Your assistance would be greatly appreciated, John Stevens  
[jste1308@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jste1308@bigpond.net.au)

## NEWSLETTER APRIL 2025

### WORKSHOP SCHEDULE:

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Second Sunday <b>Scrollsaw</b> 9.00 – 4.00pm  Steve Mitchener 0409 003 487	Every Monday <b>Mentoring</b> 9.00am-12.30pm  Charlie Camera 0413481699  Hamish Hill 0428 577 878  Second Monday <b>Skills Techniques                      and Safety Session</b> 1.00pm – 2.00pm  Hamish Hill 0428 577 878	Every Tuesday <b>Open Workshop</b> 9.00 am-12.30pm  Geoff Oliver 0417 375 782  Every Tuesday Instrument Group 1.00pm – 4.00pm  Frank Camera 0427 964 245	Every Wednesday <b>Wes</b> <b>Exhibition Toy Making</b> 9.30am – 12.00pm  Wes Weight 0478 021 269  First Wednesday <b>General</b> <b>Meeting</b> 7.30pm @ the club rooms  Third Wednesday <b>Committee Meeting</b> 7.30pm @ the club rooms	Every Thursday <b>Open Workshop</b> 9.00am-12.30pm  Paul Rushton 0417 017 347  Every Thursday <b>Wood Turning</b> 1.00pm – 4.00pm  Tom Laber 0429 439 833  Second & Fourth Thursday <b>Open Workshop</b> 7.00pm – 9.00pm  Shane Watson 0410 850 074	First & Third Friday <b>Wood Carving</b> 9.00am-3.00pm  Steve Mitchener 0409 003 487  Second & Fourth Friday <b>Mallet &amp; Gouge                      Carving</b> 9.00am-3.00pm  Bernie McCarthy 0408 145 819  Second Friday <b>Kumiko Lamp-                      making</b> 9.00am-12.00pm Peter Gannon 0419 136 235	First & Third Saturday <b>Open Workshop</b> 9.00am-12.30pm  Aurora Messina 0401 866 859  Second & Fourth Saturday <b>Open Workshop</b> 9.00am – 12.30pm  Toby Grant 0488 994 741  Fifth Saturday <b>Open Workshop</b> 9.00am – 12.30pm  Will advise <i>This will be a working bee                      on May 31</i>

## **NEWSLETTER APRIL 2025**

### **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**

Shane Watson	0410 850 074
Rado Starec	0409 997 948

#### **DATES FOR THE CALENDAR:**

Annual General Meeting 7th May @ 7.30pm followed by the May General Meeting

Working Bee 31<sup>st</sup> May 9.00am – 12.00 followed by a BBQ