

Newsletter Editor

The next newsletter will come out at the end of April. 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 April.

General Meeting
Wednesday, 2nd of April
7.30pm at the clubrooms
Cnr. Ironbark and De Fredericks Road, Yarrambat
ALL ARE WELCOME

President's Report

The first month of Autumn is coming to a close. We have been treated to some cracking weather, my favourite time of year.

We have yet to have an Exhibition meeting, but we do have raffle prizes sorted!

Rado is going to head up the completion of the rocking horse that has been sitting in the kitchen for a good while now. But he does need a few helpers to complete this task.

We also have:

- Bernie making a carved box
- Peter Gannon a Kumiko lamp
- Maike a beautiful pyrography bird
- Paul Rushton has made a chess table
- Martin has offered to make something – as yet to be determined; and
- Hank has offered a carving of a bird

And yes, you are right, we have 7 prizes. The Exhibition committee thanks the generosity of these members.

We are also exploring having raffle ticket sales at St Helena Market Place and Diamond Creek Coles, as well as Coles at Eltham Village. We will obviously keep you informed of how this progresses. We are aware of the draw on volunteers to undertake these extra sales days.

Working Bee

Our first working bee for 2025 will be the 31st of May. This is the fifth Saturday of the month so it will have no impact on session times. Please note, the workshop will be closed for open workshop activities this day. There will be more information sent out closer to the day. As usual though, there will be a sausage sizzle at the end of the morning. Please come along and help out, bring your brooms, buckets, rubber gloves!

At the last General Meeting it was decided to go back to the past practice of members bringing their own sandpaper along with them. The club supplies the sandpaper for the Festool Rotex sander, and sells them at \$1.00 per piece to members. The same goes for the Domino biscuits and the other biscuits for the Makita machine. I am not sure of these

prices, but they are on the box lids I believe. Money can either be paid into the clubs bank account or, there is an honesty 'box' in the kitchen where you can put your coins etc in.

I'm still looking for someone to help out with kitchen purchases ie coffee, tea bags, milk etc.

I've been stymied lately with my computer not being happy, I've been unable to send emails to the membership, and now I can't open files or even save them to a USB! It's a long story. I've resurrected my old laptop, last used in 2019 – that was four hours of fun yesterday. It didn't help that I kept forgetting that it isn't a touch screen monitor, and getting cranky because it wasn't responding to my finger on it.....ah technology.

From the Secretary's Desk

The March General Meeting was another small but busy one. Would love to see more people attending and participating!

We're adding three more Workshop sessions:

- Second & Fourth Thursday 7pm-9pm, Shane is running an Open Workshop and will include Maintenance Training, Safety Training and Mentoring
- Second and Fourth Friday 9am-3am, Bernie is running Mallet & Gouge Carving
- Second Friday 9am-12pm, Peter is running a Kumiko Lamp-making session

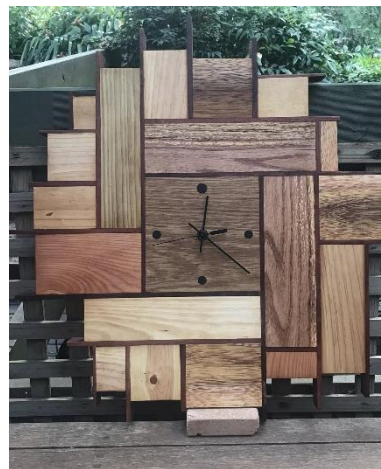
Gary has volunteered to take on updating and looking after the website, thank you!! But we're still looking for someone to look after the Facebook group.

We're also looking for people to help scope out and organise the next Car Boot Sale – if you are interested, let anyone on the Committee know.

Show & Tell was a great one – Joe bought in his "One" Legged Table and his Off-Cuts Clock, which includes pieces of oak over 120 years old!



One-Legged Table



Off-Cuts Clock

Finally, a reminder that the AGM is fast approaching, and will be May 7th at 7.30pm in the Clubrooms.

If you are interested in standing for the Committee, please reach out to anyone on the Committee. We encourage everyone to have a go. You do not need to have done anything like it before (I hadn't!) and you don't have to be a long-time member (I wasn't!)

It's a great way to be involved with the Club and get to know many interesting people.

Bunnings Sausage Sizzle

Sun 16th March

Overall, the day went very well. The barrage of emails sent out by Catherine Watson (at my request) meant that we had a full roster.

Support from the members who stepped-up was fabulous. Despite the cramped conditions Club members worked really well together.

I relied upon my 2 enthusiastic BBQ captains; Kevin Sevier and Mark Sandemann. Early Sunday morning Charlie Camera and I were pushing sausages & bread up the escalator at Coles Eltham so that all the goodies arrived on time at Bunnings for setup.

We didn't make as much money as anticipated, but the weather was against us. Drink sales were well down and sausages sales were also down.

The day went off well despite my nervousness because of the prevailing hot weather. It turned out being a cool/wet day. But not as bad as the restarts at the Albert Park F1 and the appalling vision for drivers.

With cheery smiles our willing members dealt with water dripping down their neck and customers locked out of Bunnings, as the Store experienced a poor sales day combined with power outages.

We made \$912.65 on the day and had a surplus of in drinks and sausages that are now in the clubhouse fridge.

Surprisingly, there still seems to be a lot of people able to produce cash for a Bunnings Sausage. But we were forearmed with our card terminal. I'm sure that in the near future we will not be able to find coins for the Christmas pud or a bank to take the piggy bank to.

The Sandeman's goats scored the leftover bread and onions. Apparently, the goats weren't even gracious enough to say "thank you", they just rudely guzzled them down.

Coles Eltham kindly donated a \$25 gift card which might be raffled at our next General Meeting.

"My learnings for the day"

Thanks for pitching in

Gary Burke



Mentoring on a Monday

The Monday group rolls along with benches constantly filled and machine shop roaring. I am constantly amazed by the variety of works that come from this workshop session and some of the skills being acquired. It was great this week to see Neil finally have his stool/side table completed, and many other works progressing rapidly. I hope others enjoy, as much as I do, the contrast between Charlie and myself, I almost always look for the hand tool solution to a problem whilst Charlie looks for the quickest and simplest way to machine a solution. Both methods generally work and just demonstrate the old adage about killing cats!

I have started drawing and thinking about details of stair/library chair, and anyone interested should come along.

There are a couple of thoughts that I have that may benefit some of the other workshop sessions as well as the Monday mob:

Firstly, I for one, would really appreciate it if we could all get into the habit of closing doors from and to the machine shop. We should all be doing whatever we can to maintain the hearing we may have, as well as others. Constantly taking ear muffs on and off is a necessary evil but well worth the effort.

Secondly, please take the time to think a bit before you turn on or adjust a machine. If you find you are using a modicum of force to make adjustment there is a good chance you are doing something incorrectly, so stop, think and consult.

Skills and Techniques Session

Second Monday of the Month

Monday the 14th of April at 1-00pm

Routers practice and uses

We will re-visit the use of the router and some of the possibilities it offers, both in the bench and freestanding.

Please come along and if you think you may have something to contribute, all the better

This month we had a very small group investigating the repair maintenance and tuning of hand planes, hopefully there will be some rejuvenated hand tools appearing in the workshop some time soon. Many thanks to Peter Goddard for sharing his knowledge and skills at producing a far more refined and perfected plane than I do. To plane the end grain the way Peter does for his wood identification, requires an extremely refined plane and it works!

New Classical Guitar, just finished.

Back & Sides - Tas' Blackwood
Soundboard - Sitca Spruce
Fretboard - Indian Redwood



Paul Rushton

Carving Group

Despite our fearless leader and mentor, Steve Mitchener being off crook and apologies from David Green and Rowen Thomson, we had 11 other carvers busy cutting, scraping, sanding and hammering away on a variety of projects. This group keeps getting bigger. It must be all that good humour, helpful advice and guidance.

As usual there were a variety of projects in progress:

Kerrie Phillips was working on a spoon out of some very hard wood and ended up with a sore wrist

Peter Gannon had given his Kumiko a rest and was making a platter/ dish that he will then relief carve the top

Alwyn, was putting the finishing touches on a walking stick with a carved Gargoyle handle

Hank Tyler working on some handheld objects

Maike was relief carving an owl

Graham Webb was putting the finishing touches on a small teaspoon

Bernie McCarthy had been banished to the equipment room so that he could hammer and bash away at his large mother and child work

Wes was doing repairs to a small lizard carving

Barb Knell was fine tuning the gnome that Steve had started her off with at the previous session

Kevin was working on a small relief Landscape

All in all it was a great session as usual

Kevin

Pyrography Group: 23/3/25

An early apology from Jess was the only one this week, so we still ended up with a full house and plenty of chatter.

Kevin finished off a country scene featuring a covered bridge (American pattern) and was real chuffed when both Maike and I told him his shading was good because his "blacks were black". Finished off his day doing picture of birds nest with three eggs in it, and again pleased with affirmative comments from Maike and I about shading improvements. (Not always dumping cold water on people's efforts!)

Beryl spent the day working studiously on her large circular serving platter. These flowers have to cover quite an area.

Kerrie spent some time assisting me cutting mitres for her next box, and putting rebate around the bottom for the base to insert into. Then she glued it up and returned to burning some cute flowers on her practice board, and making the shading darker.

Rowena turned out an excellent job on a wreath of flowers on a small cutting board. Going to try adding a little colour to this project as the next step.

Maike detailed a picture of two chickens where she had painted the wattles and comb in

already. A small picture but absolutely eye-catching with the splash of colour in it.

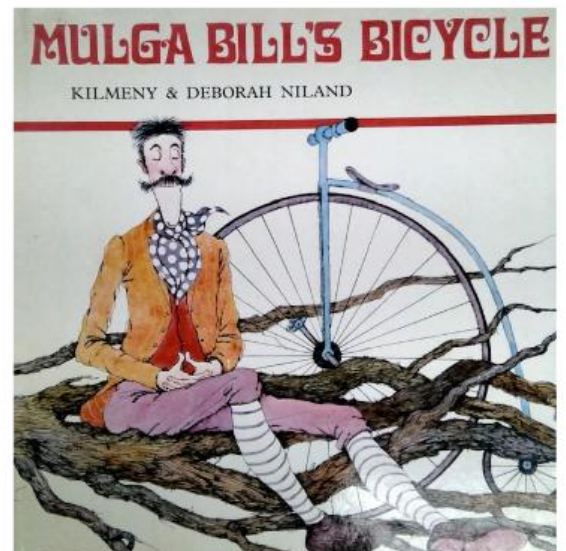
After working with Kerrie on her wooden box, I returned to the small sign I was doing, then moved onto my “Puppy in a boot” picture. (This has been my “fill-in piece” when I got nothing else to burn for a couple of years now. Might actually try and finish it someday!)

That’s all for now. We’ll be back next month. Stay tuned.

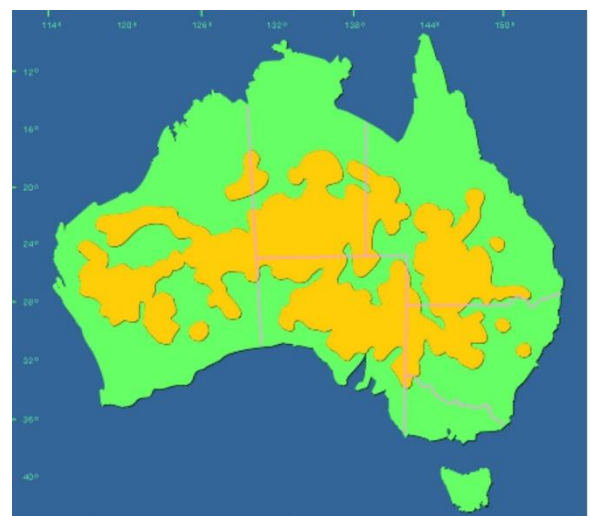
Steve Mitchener.

‘Twas Mulga Bill.....

“‘Twas Mulga Bill from Eaglehawk” is the first line of an oft recited bush ballad by Banjo Patterson. It describes the exploits of an overconfident young man and his misadventures on a bicycle. **Mulga** is a very common species of wattle (*Acacia*) found in the interior regions of Australia. The term has also been incorporated into Australian vernacular: ‘Go mulga’ - take to the bush or go off by oneself and the ‘Mulga madness’ of the bushman who has been alone too long.



The arid interior of Australia is characterised by vast tracts of mulga dominant ecosystems - woodlands, savannah and spinifex grasslands – that cover roughly 20% of the continent. Mulgas are single or multi-stemmed shrubs or small trees from 2 – 9 m tall. Both summer and winter rainfall are necessary for mulgas to grow, the species is absent from semi-arid areas that experience either summer or winter dry. The mean rainfall for much of their habitat is 200 - 250mm/year. Unlike most acacias they are slow growing and extremely long lived, 250 – 300 years. Aboriginal peoples of the Coober Pedy area of South Australia refer to mulga trees as *Umoona* - this means “long life”.



Distribution of *Acacia aneura* and its close relatives throughout Australia.



Mulga has a number of features that enable it to survive in arid conditions. It is readily recognised by its upward pointing branches and well-defined trunk - any rain that falls is diverted down the phyllodes (slim, flattened leafstalks) and branches and falls onto the ground at the base of the tree. Mulgas have long roots that access deep moisture - a 10cm sapling can have a 3m tap root. Mulgas often occur in large, almost pure stands and the even spacing of the trees can lead one to think that they were planted. But this is another survival mechanism - it enables limited nutrients and water resources to be evenly shared.

The story gets a bit more complicated. Just as stringybarks are a sub-group of 28 different species of eucalypt, mulga is a vegetation group that comprises 10 species of acacia, eg. Slender mulga (*A.*

aptaneura), Black mulga (*A. citrinoviridis*). The most common species is the Common mulga (*A. aneura*) and it has 10 varieties, eg. *A. aneura* var. *aneura* and *A. aneura* var. *intermedia* Pedley. A variety has some distinctive traits that set it apart but not so many as a sub-species, which is also geographically distinct. Mulga, therefore, is both the name of a plant and a vegetation type. Mulga woodlands are often a complex mosaic of mixed mulga species and varieties. Needless to say, distinguishing between the different mulgas is very difficult.

Mulga is an aboriginal word meaning a long narrow shield made from the wood of the mulga tree. It comes from the **Yuwaalaraay** language spoken near Lightning Ridge. Mulga formed a very important part of Aboriginal life because it was so widespread. It was used to make shelters, provided firewood and was made into nulla-nullas, boomerangs, bull-roarers, spears, bowls and digging sticks. The seeds, sap and lerps were a food source. Honey ants make their nests under the mulga tree. They are a popular traditional food as their abdomens are full of a sweet honey-like substance.



Following colonisation mulga was used to make fence posts and bullock yokes because of its high durability. It is still often used for fence posts in WA. Mulga has also been used to make ornaments such as bookends and inkwells for the tourist industry. It is great for furniture and cabinet making if you can get large enough pieces of timber. The sapwood is brilliant yellow and the heartwood dark brown to red-coffee with a very fine texture and usually straight grain. It is extremely hard, dense and durable. Woodworkers of the WA goldfields rate mulga as good for turning, machinability, drilling, screw-holding and gluing, and excellent for sanding and finishing. High-end tool manufacturers such as HNT Gordon have used mulga for the body of wooden planes.



In hard times mulga is an important fodder tree for livestock. It is not that nutritious but is widespread and abundant and can keep sheep and cattle alive for three years during serious droughts. But as old trees collapse and die this grazing, compounded by drought and the climate emergency, means that few young trees are replacing them. Introduced pests such as rabbits and goats also suppress growth of young mulgas. It has been claimed that it is unlikely that there was any successful mulga regeneration between the 1880s and the 1950s due to high rabbit numbers. This could mean that whilst mulga woodlands appear to be widespread and under no threat at the moment, this could change when they reach the end of their life cycle. What a depressing thought.

A. aneura Endgrain description:

Pores: Semi-ring porous, diffuse porous. Many vessels. Gums and other deposits in vessels.

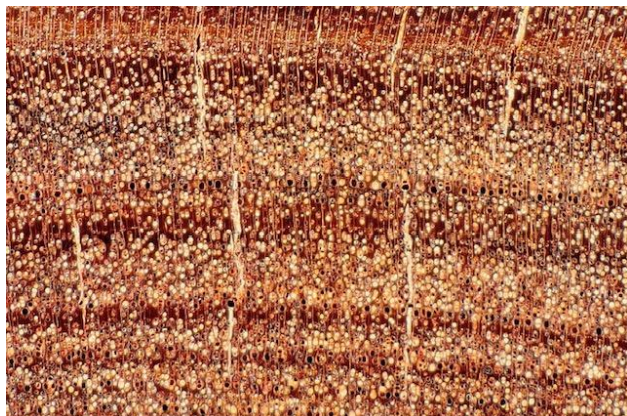
Growth rings: distinct

Rays: exclusively uniseriate, 4-12/mm

Parenchyma: scanty paratracheal

The Wood Database (see References) has a good explanation of these terms.

Peter Goddard



Sources:

Lake M. (2019). Australian Forest Woods – Characteristics, Uses and Identification. Clayton South: CSIRO Publishing

Moore G. I spy with my little eye: 3 unusual Australian plant ecosystems to spot on your next road-trip. The Conversation 26/2/2025.

Boote K. (2010). Wood in Australia – Types, Properties and uses. North Ryde: McGraw-Hill Australia

Websites: Wikipedia; The Wood Database; Government of South Australia - Mulga fact sheet; Forest Products Commission, Government of Western Australia - Species information.

Niland, K. & D. (1993). Mulga Bill's Bicycle. HarperCollins Publishers

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION:**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:

General Meeting	Wednesday 2 April
AGM	Wednesday 7 May
Working Bee	Saturday 31 May

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-12.30pm Charlie Camera 0413481699 Hamish Hill 0428 577 878	Every Tuesday Open Workshop 9.00 am- 12.30pm 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-12.30pm Paul Rushton 0417 017 347	First & Third Friday Wood Carving 9.00am-3.00pm Steve Mitchener 0409 003 487	First & Third Saturday Open Workshop 9.00am-12.30pm Aurora Messina 0401 866 859
Fourth Sunday Pyrography 9.00am – 4.00pm Steve Mitchener 0409 003 487	Second Monday Skills Techniques and Safety Session 1.00pm – 2.00pm Hamish Hill 0428 577 878	Every Tuesday Instrument Group 1.00pm – 4.00pm Frank Camera 0427 964 245	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	Second & Fourth Friday * Mallet & Gouge Carving 9.00am-3.00pm Bernie McCarthy 0408 145 819	Second & Fourth Saturday Open Workshop 9.00am – 12.00pm Toby Grant 0488 994 741
				Second & Fourth Thursday * Open Workshop 7.00pm – 9.00pm Shane Watson 0410 850 074	Second Friday * Kumiko Lamp- making 9.00am-12.00pm Peter Gannon 0419 136 235	Fifth Saturday Open Workshop 9.00am – 12.00pm Will advise <i>This will be a working bee on May 31</i>

* New Sessions