

Newsletter Editor

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

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

Peter Goddard from the Timber ID group will give a presentation about using end-grain anatomy to identify unknown species of timber. The usefulness of the Clubs ever expanding timber sample board collection (currently 227 species) will be demonstrated.

President's Report

Only seven weeks until the Exhibition!

The Wattle Festival has been and gone, with thanks to the volunteers who turned up on the day, especially Wes who as always was there with his trusty trailer, carting everything required for the day. There were constant weather updates! Everyone was watching the looming clouds build and many exhibitors started to pack up early. So we did too. I think we just made it to our cars before the rain came down.

We had our first car boot sale on Sunday 15th September, a relatively small turn out but for a first-time event I felt it went well. It was advertised just as an in-house event, hence the small turnout. There were some lovely pieces of timber on offer that found homes to go to. There were also some tools, magazines and books available. I picked a good Beginners Woodwork book – I have a long way to go! The sun came out and thankfully none of the rain that came down on Saturday. We had the BBQ going and there was quite a bit of socialising which was also an important part of the day. My thanks to all who attended.

There is a wooden box in the kitchen for the raffle ticket butts and money for those who have sold theirs already. And if you want any more just get in touch with Val or Mark Sandeman.

The exhibition committee is meeting again on the 23rd September, the Exhibition Newsletter will be issued after that meeting. Things are moving along quite well. Maie is doing a great job in organising the exhibition. It is a big job with many aspects involved, but thanks to Geoff Oliver for his foresight in putting together many years ago a comprehensive guidebook, the tasks are all stepped out.

Coming up is the Eltham Village weekend from the 11th to 13th October, volunteers will be needed to run the table. The raffle prizes will be on show, hopefully they will draw people in to purchase raffle tickets. The schedule for volunteers will be sent out very soon.

I have no doubt that you are busily making items for the exhibition and the sales table. I'm even getting some woodwork done and hope to have some items for the exhibition myself.

Jane Hammett

From the Secretary's Desk

September 2024

Somehow the year seems to be speeding past and the project list is still too long!

Obviously, our focus right now is on the upcoming Exhibition, so the General and Committee meetings have been largely devoted to that. We still found the time for a great Show and Tell session in the last General Meeting and Peter Goddard will be doing a presentation from the Timber ID project in October's meeting.

We discussed it would be good to have members attending events like Father's Day Stall, Raffle Ticket Selling, and the Exhibition wearing the Club T-shirt and their Name Badge.

There are samples in the Club Room if you want to have a look, and items can be purchased via Jane or by going to Global Embroidery in Watsonia direct.

If anyone needs Wax for their projects, Digby has range of blocks he is more than happy to give away. Please let him know if you are interested

We're starting to plan for a Christmas Lunch – it will be a in a weekend near the end of November or start of December. Please let Jane or I know if you are interested so we can gauge numbers. We'll then sort out the exact date and location.

One important reminder:

Please remember that all members are responsible for clean-up after the sessions. Just a few people left to finish the sweeping and vacuuming for all at the end is not fair.

So thank you to those who regularly stick around to do the tidy-up, but to everyone else, keeping the club clean and tidy for everyone is an important task that we are all responsible for. Please tidy as you go, especially if there's no one waiting to use the machine or bench after you.

Catherine Watson

WORKING BEE

Our next working bee will be next Sunday, the 6th October. It will be a general clean up working bee, with cleaning up work to be done both inside and outside. Inside we will need rags (or dusters), cleaning potions (not Love Potion Number 9), and some more inside cleaning stuff. For those who like to work outside we will need some outside cleaning materials such as shovels or spades. mattocks, rakes etc.,we will definitely need a few wheelbarrows. **Don't forget to put aside this Sunday**

Colin Groves

WHIPPERSNIPPERING

Many thanks for the efforts in the past of our whippersnippering members, the grounds are certainly looking good. We have the occasional visitor, as well as people wanting to join us and the first thing they see are the grounds and the building, fortunately this group has been keeping our site in good condition for those visitors and all members. First impressions are vitally important.

We have about 16 members who belong to this group. Unfortunately, due to attrition the numbers have decreased somewhat, and I am looking for members to join us. Members who are part of this group generally help out about once per year. The more members who want to join this group will cut down the number of times you need to help out. All you need is a whippersnipper, (these can be borrowed) or a mower can be used. Members work in pairs which change often. Please let me or Jane know if you are willing to join this group.

Colin Groves

Carving Group Friday 6/9/2024

Had apologies from Steve Hood, Kevin Sevier, Bernie McCarthy, Chris Boylen and Kerrie Phillips, but still had enough people turn up to make this an interesting day. Alwyn was with us working on his Mother and Child carving. It's coming along slowly as it's 'stylised' and not a true human shape, which makes it hard to conceptualise and carry out.

Wes Weight has returned to the carving Group after a lengthy absence. Wes is doing some restoration work on a low relief horse picture he has which has suffered some 'white ant interference.

Charlie Littick and Rowena Thomson were both working on spoons through the day. And Hank Tyler was sanding his Osage Orange shapes. (A seemingly endless process.)

David Green spent most of his day in discussion with Hank regarding a pending project they have both been drawn into. My advice was to stay away from it. The outline of what is required is way too sketchy for my money.

I worked on my crocodile and my bear in a log piece. Not in a rush. And we had Peter Gannon join us for a while.

Steve Mitchener

Scrollsaw Group Sunday 8/9/2024

We had Jess Brackenridge pop in for a short time to cut some of my 'stacking men' for her boys. I brought in my template, and some trial ones I had cut from home, and Jess brought in some wood. So, Jess marked out and cut a small stack, and plus my 'donation' to the cause, she took 21 stacking men home after sanding them all quickly here at the Club. Great days' work (couple of hours actually), and a great hit with the boys when she get them home.

Tony Orbe cut down some ply for an Elizabethan clock project. Wants to mock it up in ply before using some "real" timber to make the finished piece.

Kevin Sevier spent his day doing some training of new members Marie and Alex on his Scrollsaw. I didn't bring mine as I had nothing to cut, so I just did a little carving and watched the fun the Kevin was having.

We had Martin Ganter drop in for morning tea and leave some stuff for the Club. So it was a reasonably quite day. (At least for me for a change!)

Steve Mitchener.

Carving Group Friday 20/9/2024

Had apologies from Charlie Littick, Steve Hood and Kevin Sevier, all occupied with other matters.

Rod Gorfine was back with us after being on the sick list for a bit. Put in a great effort on a couple of spoons and had good outcomes pretty quickly. Alwyn worked on his mother and child piece. We had a discussion on the interpretation of the drawing he was working too, and hopefully resolved some minor issues going forward.

Chris Boylen spent most of the day working on some hardwood with natural edge for a unique natural vase for dried flowers. A different concept!

David Green was power carving a possum face into end-grain. Good to see that he listened to me when I said it would be impossible to hand carve it. (I tried it once, never again.)

Wes was working on his repairs to the low relief horse carving and started on his 3D lizard carving. And Hank was endlessly sanding his Osage Orange pieces. He really must love doing it, because he made quite a mess.

And Rowena Thomson split down some salvaged Cherry Tree branch to see what could come out of it. Nothing this week! Rowena then spent some time working with Hank on the techniques involved in shaping an Osage Orange handheld object. (Seems Hank obsession is contagious. Glad I sit down the other end of the room.)

As for me, I sat quietly isolated and carved a little snake out of a nice soft piece of pine. So, my day was successful too. And Peter Gannon dropped in for morning tea and promised to find something to do for the first October carving Group. Be nice to have him back in the group.

Steve Mitchener.

Pyrography Group Sunday 22/9/2024

I have had apologies from Maike, Jess and Kevin for today, but that still leaves a few to come

along. Had a visit from three gents (names with-held) who had popped in to do some Sunday work. I explained that as this was a “dedicated group day”, and that option wasn’t available for them. So, we discussed alternatives and resolved the issue with no problems. The lesson here: please check the schedule. That’s why it’s provided in the newsletter.

Beryl turned up as they were leaving, and we were quickly joined by Rowena and Kerrie. Beryl got straight down to work on her ongoing ‘Pirate Chest’ decoration and showed us her results from her ‘laser burning’ efforts from home. With a little touch of colour here and there, these items really “popped” visually. Great little puzzles for younger children made from thin ply. Really great work. But I hasten to add, that since you download the patterns and the machine does most of the work for you, I don’t consider this “REAL WOODWORK.” (Just saying. That’s my opinion.)

On the other hand, Rowena was doing ‘real woodwork’. Rowena had scrollsawn two little nameplates from Radiata Pine and was decorating one with flowers and the other with Star Wars characters and images. Then after cutting up some scrap radiata pine wood, proceeded to create some small Christmas table-top decorations.

Kerrie marked out and started to Pyrography a flower design on a large cutting board of some timber I neglected to identify. Then I assisted Kerrie in cutting down two different hardwood timbers into strips, which was promptly reglued in alternating format to be remade as a chequerboard cutting board. (This is an ongoing project.)

Pyrography was resumed as the glue dried. (This also qualifies as ‘real woodwork’.)

I quietly worked on the last side of my Celtic box sides after finishing off the third side earlier, before the wood cutting started. There was a lot of chat and banter, and a good productive day was enjoyed by all.

Until next time,
Steve Mitchener

Mentoring Monday October 2024

Hamish is still away on his “world trip” and though absent we have not missed him too much as we are getting many updates on his adventures via “post cards from Norway” where he has sent photos of items of interest such as in those below. For anyone wanting to see them, I have put all of Hamish's photos on the club’s computer as MS presentations.

His very interesting photos include these which he captioned “a pair of interesting chairs with chip carved decorations” and “a very interesting table”. Perhaps he can give a talk on his travels when he returns. A house in Norway that Hamish helped build in the 80’s is also currently for sale if anyone would like a move to a really cold climate.



And in all that we are seeing many projects reaching completion with lots of mentoring input including from Paul Rushton, who on one occasion, made a surprise guest appearance to help out which was most welcome. Amongst our regulars, Chris has now only finished her, very complex to put together, glass topped table but has even found a very willing recipient in her son for his city unit. Neil has finished his tiny wooden horse featured last time. Kerrie has nearly finished her first ever wooden box about which she is totally thrilled. Other projects in train include Val's stool and Marks, very nicely coming along, hall table. Gillian is about to embark on adding breadboard ends to her tabletop and Kara is making a wooden handle for a knife. Variety really is the spice to life on Mondays!



Chris's glass topped table

Charlie Camera



Kerrie's wooden box

Cassowaries in the Desert

One of the highlights of the long drive from Port Augusta to Alice Springs is the first glimpse of a grove of **desert oaks** about 160 kilometres south of the Alice. They are a dramatic sight - statuesque trees with drooping green foliage and black trunks, scattered across the deep red sand.

Allocasuarina decaisneana, commonly known as **desert oak**, **desert sheoak** or **kurkara** by the Anangu peoples, is a slow growing tree found in the swales between red sand dunes. The roots have nodules that contain nitrogen-fixing bacteria that allow them to survive in sandy soils with low nutrient levels. They are incredibly tough, surviving the searing heat of summer, frosty winter nights, recurring decades-long droughts and frequent bushfires. They typically grow to a height of 10-16 metres and some are likely to be more than 1 000 years old. Young desert oaks look like hairy candles while mature trees form large, spreading canopies. The species was first formally described by Ferdinand von Mueller in 1858 and *decaisneana* honours the Belgian botanist Joseph Decaisne who had never visited Australia or ever seen the tree.



Anangu extract desert oak seeds from the woody cones for roasting and eating. In the warmer months the cones exude a sweet, white fluid that is good for drinking. Surface roots can be broken off in sections to provide potable water by draining the root when held vertically. The dense, resinous timber makes an excellent firestick because it does not easily go out once alight. The hard and durable wood was also used to make weapons and other implements.

Of course, desert oaks are not an oak at all, though they do belong to the same Order (*Fagaceae*). They are one of the eighty or so species that are commonly called 'oaks' in Australia because of the propensity of the early colonists to link any new plant they found to something from their 'old country'. In this case the large medullary rays of the sheoaks were

similar to the true oaks of the home countries (*Quercus spp.*). These rays form very prominent lines on the end-grain.



Endgrain views, left to right: bull oak, hairy oak, rose and river sheoaks.

Sheoaks were once all categorised as casuarinas but then a Sydney botanist got to work in the 1980's and split them into four different genera. Two are of interest here:

Casuarina species are found in Australia, SE Asia and much of Polynesia and their seeds are brownish coloured. 12 species. **Allocasuarinas**, on the other hand, are endemic to Australia and there are about 60 species. They have blackish seeds. (*Allo* means 'other' or 'different'). name casuarina comes from the Malay word for cassowary "kasuari" and refers to the similarities of the trees drooping foliage to the feathers of that wonderful bird of New Guinea and the north Queensland rainforest.

The needles of sheoaks are really branchlets, with the leaves reduced to whorls of tiny 'teeth'. As they have cones they superficially resemble conifers, but in fact sheoaks are flowering plants and so are classified as hardwoods. Some of them are amongst the hardest timbers around. **Bulloak** (*A. leuhmannii*) has a Jankah hardness of 16 700 N and **belah** (*C. cristata*) a whopping 20 000 N. As a point of comparison, river red gum has a Jankah hardness of 9 600N.



Ribs and teeth on Drooping She-oak branchlets

Some claim that the 'she' part of their name comes from the sound of wind swishing around in their foliage - sheeeeeee. There is an alternative view: 'she' being used in a derogatory sense, that is, they were second-class oaks. **She-oak** and **sheoke** are occasionally used variations on the name. **Bulloak**, **bull-oak** and **buloke** are common names for *A. leuhmannii*. One can only speculate why, I like the theory that this species is a bit thicker and scrappier than other, more elegant sheoaks.



Which is the buloke?



Since most sheoaks are extremely hard this meant that in the early days of settlement they were more likely to be used as firewood than for construction and furniture. **Rose sheoak** (*A. torulosa*) was used for making roof shingles (because of its easy splitting properties) and for furniture, mostly as veneers. Most other sheoaks are small trees or shrubs and so not good for milling. A few species do grow to sufficient height to be useful. **River oak** (*C. cunninghamiana*) is the largest of this group but mostly grows on riverbanks and harvesting is not permitted. In Western Australia the **western sheoak** (*A. fraseriana*) is similar to the **rose sheoak** and is about the only one of the sheoaks regularly harvested commercially for timber. It has a straight grain and a moderate density and so is generally easier to work than denser *Allocasuarina* species. It is used for flooring and panelling, roofing shingles, furniture and turnery and is available in limited quantities in W.A.

Sheoaks have a high tangential to radial shrinkage ratio, making them very difficult to dry, but once dry many are stable, tough and durable with spectacular grain patterns. Ian Wilkie has written an excellent article about the woodworking usefulness of small billets in the November 2022 edition of Australian Wood Review – ‘In Praise of Casuarinas’. His saw handles are things of beauty.



Thanks to the fact that they tolerate drought, fix nitrogen in the soil and have a high timber value, some casuarina species have been introduced to Central and South America, the Caribbean and the Middle East. There they have become another invasive species issue.
Peter Goddard

Sources:

Ian Wilkie – 'In praise of casuarinas'. Australian Wood Review, November 2022

'Desert Oak: an icon of inland Australia'. Blog: Yorkgum, July 25, 2023

'Desert oak'. Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park brochure

'Sheoaks are great bulokes'. Blog: Talking plants, December 15, 2020

'Meet the She-oaks'. Blog: In defence of plants, January 6, 2019

Wikipedia

Peter Goddard

Definitely the next boat. Maybe

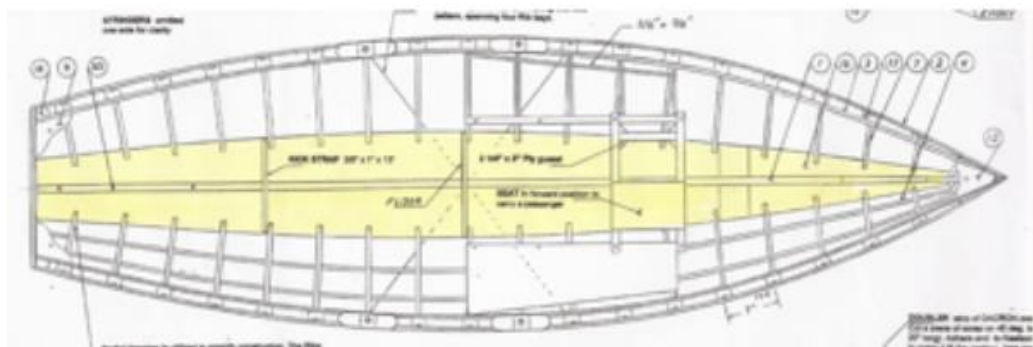
I was thinking about making a dedicated rowing boat with these attributes:

- Big enough for two people, or one person and camping gear for a week
- Light so it could be carried on a roof rack
- A proven design.

Therefore:

- The carrying capacity needed to be about 170kg
- The roof rack is 1.2m wide, so this limited the beam
- Construction had to be either plywood or skin-on-frame.

I looked at a number of designs for skin-on-frame boats, but I did not know hybrid boats existed until I stumbled on a design sold by Geodesic Aerolite Boats, now marketed as GA Boats. The figure below shows the plan, with the plywood garboards (the planks attached either side of the keel) coloured yellow, where they form a shallow v-shaped floor. It may not be the easiest floor to walk on, but it avoids having the weight of a separate floor in the boat. The model is called Ebenezer.



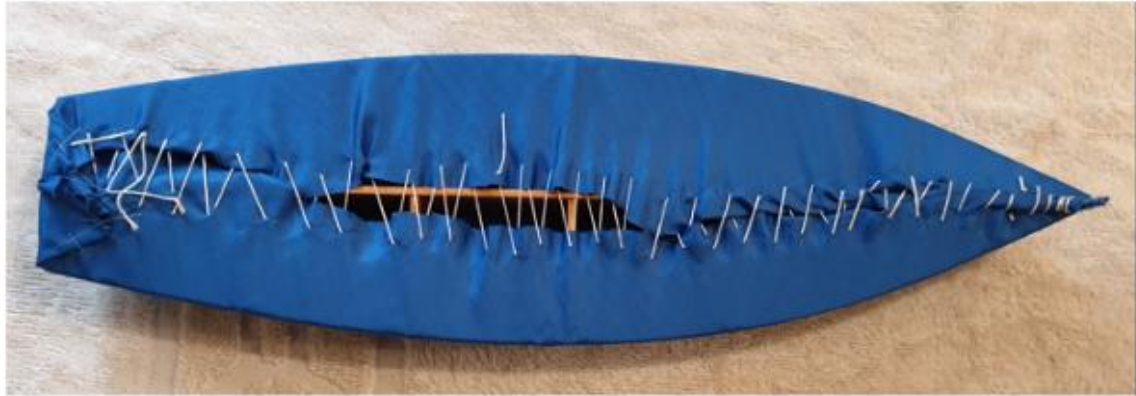
The owner of GA Boats, Larry LaLonde, was kind enough to send me a digital file which could be printed at my local print shop. This saved \$130 in postage plus the delay in waiting for the plans to reach Australia.

So what is the next step? To make a model of course. As always, I'm working at one-tenth scale, so 1 gram in the model is equivalent to 1kg in the full size boat. As the boat is only 3.4m long, the model is only 340mm long and fitting the 10mm square stringers (1mm in the model) was going to be fiddly for someone with fat fingers. The photo below shows the main backbone pieces ready for assembly.



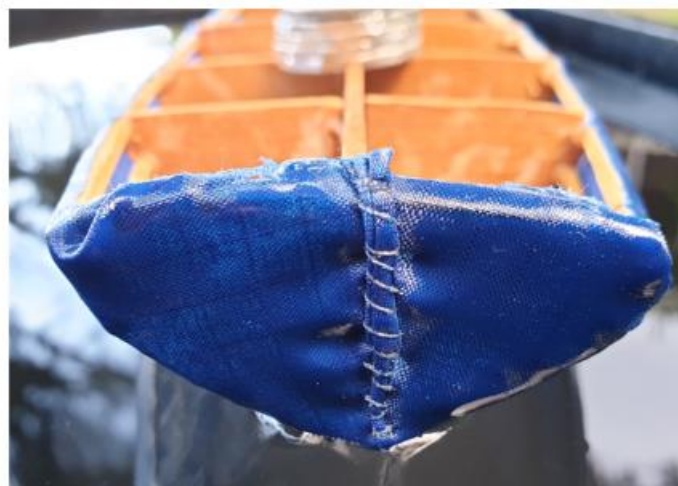
It turned out that the balsa stringers were too fragile, so I tried using bamboo skewers. They worked, but it was challenging to glue up a scarf joint in a 2.5mm skewer. For the gunwale, I planed down some larger 3.5mm skewers.

The next job was the skin, which is a piece of light nylon cloth fitted on the cross, which is sewing jargon for having the weave at 45% degrees to the axis of the job. This idea, from the designer's notes, allows the fabric to stretch more easily around the three dimensional curves of the boat. Definitely going to use this in the full size boat.



This boat is so small that the testing was in a bucket.

With weights equivalent to 70kg to represent one person, the boat sits on its lines and the transom is clear of the water, as shown in the photo.



With the equivalent of 140kg representing two people in the full-size boat, about 50mm of the transom will be submerged and mid-ship freeboard will be reduced to between 100 and 150mm. I'm not sure if this is enough if you have to deal with the wake of a passing motorboat.

Before moving on, I'd like to mention another novel feature of this design. Instead of sewing or stapling the skin to the gunwale, this design uses a heat sensitive tape call Heat N Bond, which is available in local fabric stores. This is definitely worth trying on the next build.

So far in my quest for the next boat I have made four models. From left to right in the illustration, they are a Gentry Wherry, a Gentry Whitehall, a GA Boats' Ebenezer and a Morris pram. Their dimensions, load and design weight are summarised in the table.

Designer	Model	Length (m)	Width (m)	Load (kg)	Design weight (kg)
Gentry	Wherry	5.5	0.84	171	21
Gentry	Whitehall	4.1	1.17	273	27
GA Boats	Ebenezer	3.4	1.02	140*	13
Morris	Pram dinghy	2.2	1.13	100*	No data

*Estimated from the model



So back to the selection criteria:

- Big enough for two people, or one person and camping gear for a week. The pram dinghy is too small.
- Light so it could be carried on a roof rack. All are car toppable, but the Whitehall is a bit wide for the roof rack and the Wherry is a bit long.
- A proven design. All are published designs that have been built.

Of the four, the Ebenezer design is closest to what I was looking for, but... It's still a bit small and this brings me to the reason boat designers hate amateur boat builders. First, we pester them with questions and then we want to modify their designs.

At this stage I need to introduce another designer of skin-on-frame boats, Hilary Russell, whose website offers the following suggestions:

- To make a larger or smaller boat add or remove up to 90mm between frames
- To make a sleeker hull, add 50mm at the ends
- To make a wider hull add an extra frame in the middle and make it 25mm wider.

So, it's beginning to look like there is a lot of latitude in these designs and it's time to return to the design criteria. I wonder what will happen if I stretch the length to 4 metres, increase the beam by 50mm, add a few more ribs and beef up the longitudinals? Will it still be a proven design? Will I be struck by lightning?

Sources:

GA Boats' plans for the Ebenezer design

Gentry's plans for the Whitehall and Wherry designs

Hilary Russell's designs at <https://www.berkshireboatbuildingschool.org/store>. Last accessed: 28 August 2024

Morris, R 2001 Building skin-on-frame boats. Hartley & Martin Publishers

Jim Stockton.

HOUSEKEEPING

Please respect the session times set aside for each discipline, such as scrollsaw, pyrography, turning etc

These are not open workshops.

Please refer to the schedule for session times.

If you want to attend the club rooms outside of the allotted sessions, please contact Jane. The code to the key lock box can be made available. Conditions apply.

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:

Maintenance Night	Thursday 26 th September
General meeting	Wednesday 2 nd October

WORKING BEE

Sunday 6th October 9.00 – 12.30 followed by a BBQ

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE: UPDATED 23 SEPTEMBER 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Second Sunday Scrollsaw 9.00 – 4.00pm Steve Mitchener 0409 003 487	Every Monday Mentoring 9.30am- 11.30pm Charlie Camera 0413481699	Every Tuesday Open Workshop 9.00am- 12.30pm Geoff Oliver 0417375782	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	First & Third Friday Wood Carving 9.00am-3.00pm Tom Laber 0429 439 833	First & Third Saturday Open Workshop 9.30am-12.00pm Aurora Messina 0401 866 859
Fourth Sunday Pyrography 9.00am – 4.00pm Steve Mitchener 0409 003 487	Hamish Hill 0428 577 878 Second & Fourth Monday Skills Techniques and Safety Session 1.00pm – 2.00pm Hamish Hill 0428 577 878	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		Second & Fourth Saturday Open Workshop 9.00am – 12.00pm Toby Grant 0488 994 741 Fifth Saturday Open Workshop 9.00am – 12.00pm Will advise