



# WOODCRAFT MATTERS

THE NEWSLETTER OF WOODCRAFT MANNINGHAM

MARCH 2026

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello Woodcraft Manningham members,

It has been a busy start to the year, and it's wonderful to see the workshop buzzing with activity. We have a lot coming up this month, along with some vital safety reminders to ensure we all keep our fingers (and heads!) intact.

**February Meeting Wrap-up** Our meeting on February 16th was a fantastic success. A huge thank you to Mark Thompson from the Eltham Woodwork Club. His presentation on the intricacies of guitar making was both inspiring and highly technical—it's amazing to see what can be achieved with precision and patience.

### Upcoming Events & Notables

**Warrandyte Festival** – March 28th, 2026 The festival is fast approaching! We've been hard at work preparing, and a massive thank you goes out to Phil Leach for his stellar organization. We've already cut and drilled 150 kits ready for the day. Check out the flyer for more details and come along to support the club.

**Bacchus Marsh Carve-In** Lock in the dates: May 1st – 3rd, 2026. This is always a highlight for the carvers among us. Full details and registration info are posted on the club notice board.

**First Aid Course** We will be conducting a first aid course at the club soon. We are just finalizing the schedule, so keep an eye out—the date will be announced shortly.

**Safety First: The "Safety Off" Switches** It's time for a refresher on our emergency procedures. We have Safety Off Switches located at each end of the workshop. Pushing these will immediately kill power to all machines in the room. Why do we have them? These were installed following a serious accident involving a lathe. A member was turning a segmented piece of timber when a glue joint failed. The timber struck the member in the head, knocking them unconscious. Because the lathe was out of balance and shaking violently, members couldn't reach the local motor switch and had to crawl across the floor to reach the wall power point.

How to use them:

- In an emergency: Don't hesitate. Hit the large red button at either end of the workshop.
- To Reset: Once the area is safe, simply twist the red knob.
- Be Aware: While most machines will stay off until manually restarted, some machines may restart immediately once the safety knob is twisted back. Always check the individual machine switches before resetting the main power.

### A Special Thank You

A big shout-out to Mel Forbes for editing this newsletter. These publications don't happen by themselves, and Mel's hard work ensures we all stay informed and connected. Thanks, Mel!

And thank you all for your continued support and your dedication to the craft.



*John Paine*

## Woodcraft Manningham

[www.woodcraft-manningham.org.au](http://www.woodcraft-manningham.org.au)

Opposite 8 Anderson St, Templestowe  
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Members' contributions to the Newsletter are always welcome. Please note that contributors are responsible for the accuracy of any information they send in for publication. The Editor takes no responsibility for correcting spelling and punctuation errors.

*Our clubhouse was once Templestowe Primary School, originally built in 1874. It is situated on the lands of the Wurundjeri people and we wish to acknowledge them as traditional owners. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.*

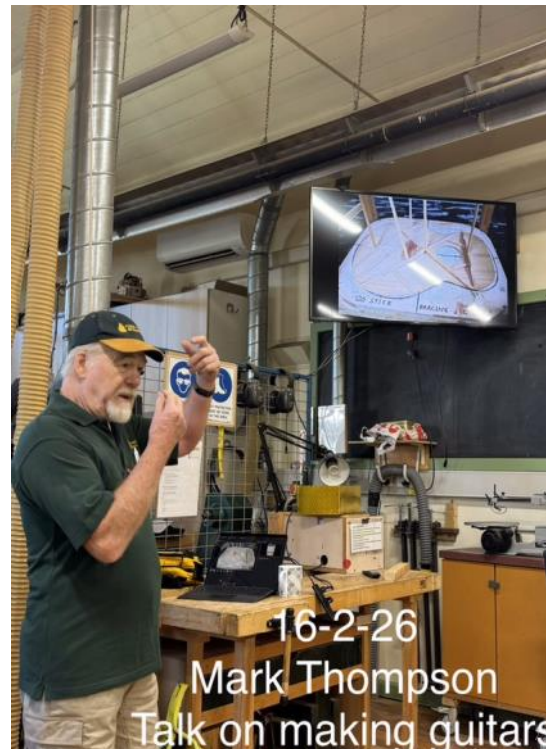
Front Page logo image: Valerie Forbes, 2016

## Report on Meeting 16 February 2026

**Guest Speaker: Mark Thompson Eltham District Woodworkers**

Mark Thompson spoke very informatively on his work hand making acoustic guitars. He talked about the selection of the materials to make the guitar and how that is critical in the quality of the sound produced. He was able to show the internal structure of the guitar body and he talked about the bracing structures within the body which have not been changed for hundreds of years. The head of the guitar, which was once made of rosewood, has had to be changed as the traditional rosewood has become increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to source. His handmade guitars are items of real beauty, and take many, many hours to create and his skills are clearly in demand. If you are a guitarist and have a couple of thousand dollars to indulge your musical passion, then he is your man.

### Trevor Jenkins



## CLUB ROOM EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**IF AN AMBULANCE IS CALLED TO THE CLUB ROOMS, QUOTE THIS LOCATION:**

**OPPOSITE 8 ANDERSON ST, TEMPLESTOWE, BEHIND THE MANNINGHAM/TEMPLESTOWE LEISURE CENTRE.**

**MAKE SURE SOMEONE IS WAITING AT THE STREET TO GUIDE THE AMBULANCE IN, AS THEY MAY MISS THE ENTRANCE. (These directions are also posted above the phone in the foyer of the club rooms)**

## LOVE YOUR LIBRARY

Woodcraft Manningham has a superb library of books, magazines and DVDs, and I encourage members to make full use of it. At the same time, it would be really nice if you actually returned whatever you borrow, within a reasonable time. I've noticed recently that a lot of books that were in the catalogue seem to be missing.

So, could you library users please have a dig around at home, and bring back any "overdue" items? As you return them, check them off in the Loans book too. I'm intending to get all the books back into their proper order on the shelves and to do a full audit and rationalization in the near future. Then I'll update all the book, magazine and media catalogues. All of this work will be more worthwhile and meaningful if it reflects the collection as it currently exists.

When you do return borrowed items to the library, could you try to put them back in the right position on the shelf or within magazine holders? That makes it a lot easier for other users. It also makes it easier on your librarian, who is just another old bloke like you.

*Mel Forbes, Librarian*

## CLEVER IDEAS NEEDED

I have a request from a family member to make a wooden "container" and lid for an oil stone.

I have a rip saw and a hand held router, and I don't think this is going to produce a quality of outcome that I would be happy with.

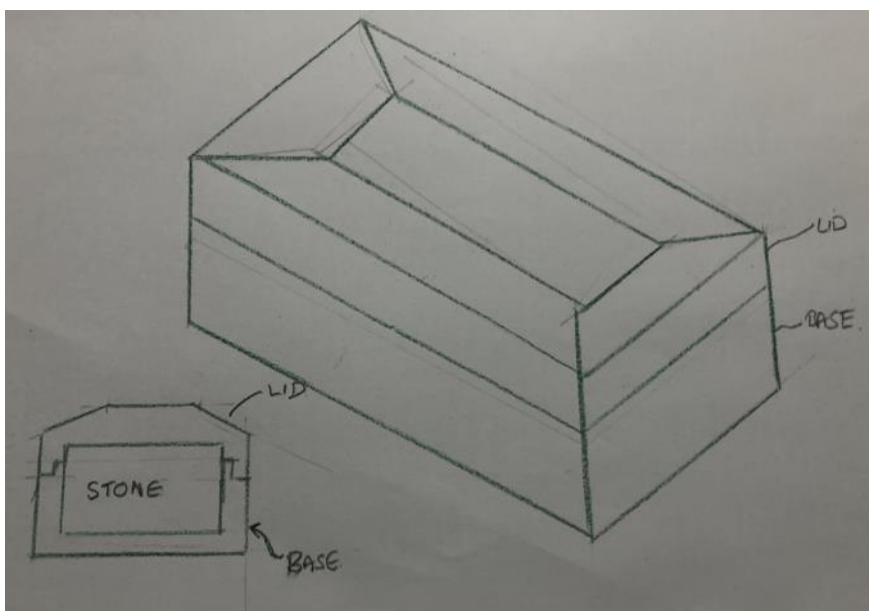
The purpose of this note is to request club members for ideas to machine this. One idea I have had is a CNC machine, but I do not have one. Is there a club member who would be prepared to assist me with the use of a machine that would cut these shapes?

Thanks.

*Phil Leach Thursday night turners*

*Philthenomad@gmail.com*

**0414446123**



## Birdbox Cutting Days at Woodcraft

### Manningham

Since the “olden days”, (when was that?) Woodcraft Manningham has been cutting the wood for assembly of bird boxes. Our history goes back to when there was an Australia Day parade down Swanston Street. How is my memory?

The process involved collecting donated plywood from JayDee Packaging at Mount Evelyn, our thanks to Dean and his team for their generosity. Usually, we procured the 12 mm material for any component, but we could use the 9 mm or 12 mm plywood for the birdbox roof.

In the more recent “olden days” after a club member did a plywood pick up and got a trailer load typically the Thursday night turners (Thank you Allan Way) organised a time, (typically a Saturday morning) to rip the final 6 pieces required and dock/drop saw them to length.



The trick now was to have the final cut pieces drilled with pilot holes. The roof needed about 8 holes, each side needed 6 holes and the base needed 4 holes. The front piece needed an arch window (like on Playschool) for the bird to enter and exit. These undrilled blanks were normally left in the foyer of the clubrooms and in the fullness of time the drilling and cutting would miraculously appear. We also needed cut wire coat hangers to suspend the completed bird box in the new owner’s location of choice.

We now had the components ready for assembly. On Australia Day the children (and sometimes younger adults) would queue to try their hand at assembling the birdbox. It worked very well that club members, armed with components were able to assist budding young “woodies” to assemble the birdbox. NO club members fingers were ever hit with a stray hammer blow as the 2mm nails were driven in. We were fortunate that Greening Australia sponsored us such that we were able to give away the completed birdbox at nil cost. The smiles on faces at the completed construction were something to see!

If my memory serves me correctly, my experience has been of assembling about 300 units at Australia Day functions. Well done to all parties that were involved.

On to “recent times” and we now supply about 150 units to the Warrandyte Festival. To this end John and Terry made the trip to Mount Evelyn and picked up some plywood. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of March club members were called to assist in ripping, docking and drilling birdbox pieces. About 8 or 9 members attended. Thank you to those members who attended and helped.

This time however, we were fortunate, with only 150 required, we were able to achieve all pieces being ready for assembly, I think the rip saw, drop saw and hand held drills will all need new blades after the work out.



The Warrandyte Festival is on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March and we would request that members consider volunteering to assist on the day. This can be “manning” the stall, wood turning, bird box assembly (no guarantee of hit fingers). Typically we set up by about 9:00 am, pack up around 4:30 pm. If you can volunteer, please put your name on the list in the foyer.

The day is worth about 150 children’s smiles.

***Phil Leach Thursday night turners.***

# Warrandyte Festival – Saturday 28 March 2026

(Sign up on the information board above sign in book)

This is a great chance to be part of the club in the community. Everyone who comes has a great day. Making boxes with the kids and talking to the public about the club.

## What we will do

- Make bird boxes with kids (same as last year) kids pay \$5.00
- Live demonstrations of Wood turning, Carving, Box making
- Selling items that members have made and donated to the club to sell eg. Kids toys, chopping boards, carved items.
- Sell members own woodwork items 10% to club.
- Tell the public about the club.

## How you can help

- Help kids with assembling the bird box kits.
- Wood turning.
- Bring your own project & demonstrate the steps in making
- Help with selling items.
- Speak to the public about the club/hand out brochures.

## Where

- This year the club will have the same position.
- Parking will be available at Bill Wood's house which is close by.
- 9 Stiggant Street, Warrandyte
- Times – 9 AM – 5 PM We clean up after 5pm.
- The Saturday morning is quiet until about 11.00 due to the parade.



Paul



Geoff Francis



Horst



Stuart Watson



Charles Hooi

## Safety First: A Note on Our Lathe-Chuck Wood Screws

Precision and safety are the hallmarks of a good turner, but a recent discovery during our Thursday night session serves as a vital reminder that our tools are only as good as the condition we keep them in.

### The Incident

A few weeks ago, a member arrived with a partially turned bowl that had a serious problem: the screw from the wood screw chuck had snapped off entirely inside the workpiece. This is what we call a "critical failure." Had that screw failed while the lathe was spinning, the bowl would have transitioned from a workpiece to a projectile instantly. In woodturning, "unexpected flight" is never a recognized or desired outcome.

### The Inspection

This incident prompted a full audit of the lathe chucks in our storage cupboard. The findings were concerning:

- **Bent Hardware:** Of the chucks equipped with wood screws, every single one was bent.
- **Mysterious Modifications:** Upon closer inspection, the faces of the screws that sit inside the chuck had roughly 1 mm ground off. There is no practical or structural reason for this modification, and it likely compromised the integrity of the seating.



### The Solution

To ensure everyone's safety, I have taken the liberty of ordering 12 new wood screws. Once they arrive, we will be conducting a "out with the old, in with the new" session—every existing wood screw currently in the cupboard will be discarded.

### New Workshop Protocols

To keep our equipment in top shape and our turners out of harm's way, please adhere to the following:

1. **No More Bending:** Screws should never be subjected to forces that cause them to bend. If you find a screw is resisting or the wood is too dense, stop and reassess your mounting method.
2. **Report & Retire:** If a screw does become bent, do not attempt to straighten it or put it back in the cupboard. Notify your group leader immediately so the part can be discarded.
3. **No Modifications:** Do not grind, file, or alter the screws in any way. They are engineered to fit the chucks exactly as they are manufactured.

Let's keep the wood on the lathes and the surprises to a minimum.

*John Paine, President*

## REPORTS FROM THE GROUPS

### THURSDAY MORNING



Hank the Master is still creating exquisite owls. Here are some of the latest. All in Osage Orange



Bob has started to explore lettering in stone



More traditionally, a carving of NZ flowers in Kauri



John is working on a carving of some Couata boats



Phillip is working on a female bandicoot. He knows a lot about bandicoot physiology.

## REPORTS FROM THE GROUPS

### THURSDAY MORNING

Mel is currently carving a design created in a painting by his wife. One way to win an admirer and get your carving hung inside the house



Marks work on a Comfort Bird with perch in Huon Pine with Birds Eye features and a wombat in Red Gum



Peter has been toiling away on a promised tiger which has created more challenges than expected but it has been promised that completion is imminent

### WEDNESDAY MORNING TURNERS



Charles and segmented bowl



Robert finishes a vase

## REPORTS FROM THE GROUPS

### WEDNESDAY MORNING TURNERS

Bert's lidded bowl



### FRIDAY MORNING



Since this picture was taken the group has welcomed a new member, Daryl Baker.

### Bird Box Making Sub story

Further to my article on Page 4: our day of making bird box pieces showed up a couple of areas where it may be easier to make the parts in the future.

A case in point is the arch doorway for the bird to enter and exit. On our cutting day we used a 50 mm Forstner drill bit and then two parallel cuts on the band saw. A trick in manufacturing is to use a jig or fixture to hold/move a piece material but only handle the piece twice,

once into the jig and once out of the jig.

Some days my mind starts to wander and I was thinking of a jig to assist in this cutting. A research and development project was needed.

The top photo, overleaf, shows a prototype of a jig where a circular disc supports the "arch window" blank in position. The jig is slid on the band saw table to about halfway along the blank. The handle is rotated through about 180 degrees, to cut the arch.

Lower photo: the sled then defines the remaining half of (other side) of the opening.

I mentioned this is a prototype, because it does not work! On chatting with Mel Forbes he asked for further details on the project. After showing him the prototype in person we got to chatting. Mel has a bandsaw with a 6 mm wide blade, after a couple of different attempts this did not work either! More research and development was needed. Thanks Mel for the use/experimenting on your band saw. I suspect that 6 mm blade did not have enough "off set" on the teeth and was not cutting a wide enough cut for the blade to turn or rotate.

But one of the objectives is to use the club band saw! Currently our club band saw has a 12 mm blade and this is too large to achieve the approx. 50 mm size of the top the arch. Thank you Charles for your support of my questions and band saw blade change outs.

I contacted Carbatec but they offer only 12 mm, 20 mm and 27 mm wide blades. These were never going to cut a 50 mm diameter hole/arch. The gentleman I spoke to was most helpful and put me in contact with Ace Saw Service (thank you Murray) the smallest blade they offer is 6 mm wide. I took one to test! Interesting that Ace Saw Service must purchase the required blade width and TPI (Teeth per inch) by the 60 metre length. I suspect that this bulk amount of blade is made in countries in the northern hemisphere. The man at Ace said "try the 6 mm blade, what length do you need? It can be despatched this afternoon". More blade changes of the club band saw ensued.

But it still did not work!

The manual for the club band saw indicates that it is designed to take a 3.2 mm wide blade. I am currently on the search to see if I can find a 3.2 mm wide blade about 3600 mm long. Watch this space.

***Phil Leach***

***Thursday night turners***

***Email: [Philthenomad@gmail.com](mailto:Philthenomad@gmail.com)***

