



# The Cutting Edge

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September 2012

42 Courtney St Nth. Melbourne Vic 3051

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## EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

### October 19-21

Timber and Working with Wood Show to be held at the Melbourne Show Grounds, Epsom Road, Ascot Vale. The VWA will be hosting two exhibitions open to all members.

**ACROSS THE BOARD** 2012 will be open to all timber types.

**STORMWOOD** will be open only to pieces featuring the timbers that were rescued and salvaged from the Melbourne Botanical Gardens after the severe storms in 2005 - These timbers have already been distributed to members so we look forward to seeing the STORMWOOD creations.

Applicants may submit up to three works for each exhibition, and entry is made via the [online Exhibition Entry Form](#).

#### Prizes and Judging:

There will be two major cash prizes of \$1000 and \$500 in each exhibition. See more details on Pages 7 and 8.

### October 23 7.30pm

**Annual General Meeting.** Venue: Arts House Meat Market Meeting small meeting room, 5 Blackwood Street North Melbourne. 3051. Venue to be confirmed. We strongly urge our members to attend, catering will be provided.

### October 30 7.30pm

**Visit to Blueprint Furniture.** 183 Laurens Street, North Melbourne.

### November 27 7.30pm

**Visit to the workshop of Christian Cole Furniture.** 5 Dairy Drive, Coburg Vic. 3058.  
<http://www.christiancolefurniture.com.au>

### December 11 7.30pm

**Christmas Drinks.** At the Metropolitan Hotel, corner Courtney and Blackwood Street, North Melbourne.

**From The President      Damien Wright**  
**September President's Report.**

The sun is out and our Apricot tree is in full bloom. Thank goodness, winter felt endless. As always the VWA has been very busy, organizing, managing, dreaming.

The meeting programme continues to inform and excite. On Tuesday the 4<sup>th</sup> of September we met the wonderful Lachlan Fisher of Fisher Cricket Bats who delighted us with his knowledge and enthusiasm for the cricket bat. Lachlan has been making handmade cricket bats of the highest quality for 25 years. He took us through the process and discussed more generally the delicate balancing act that is Cricket.

Our Annual General meeting will be held on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. This is an opportunity to both scrutinize your VWA and offer your talents and energy.

On October the 30<sup>th</sup> we will visit Blue Print Furniture in Nth Melbourne where Charles Scott will show us through his amazing establishment. Don't miss this opportunity.

Our exhibition programme continues to develop. We are exhibiting again at the TWWS, which includes the Stormwood Exhibition. I trust you are all busy making exhibition pieces. On this matter a conversation with Jerome regarding his exhibition piece was a reminder for me of the deep affection that we VWA members share for woodwork. As a lively hood it can be, demanding and stressful the joy gets sucked out of it and is replaced by responsibilities. Jerome's enthusiasm reminded me that woodwork is a beautiful thing to do. Not to be worn down by it. Be a shaving not dust.

In news of the school Adam Stewart has finished up as a tutor. Adam has made a fantastic contribution to the VWA over a long period of time, as a tenant and a tutor. Adam is a fine craftsman and designer, a gifted teacher an extremely dedicated hard worker and a gentleman. On behalf of the committee I thank him for his gifts and wish him well.

Looks like membership is steady and demand for places in the school continues to grow. I wish to thank our Membership Secretary, Meg Allan, for her great work particularly at this time of year. And thank you Jerome for your dedication to the school.

Thanks Rob for the financial report.

In response to the news report that the Lone Pine Tree was to be felled At the War Memorial; Stephen Farquhar delivered a very professional and convincing expression of joint interest to the War memorial, well-done Stephen. I look forward to seeing what comes of the 'Lone Pine Project.'

I wish to thank George Wright for his great work producing the VWA News letter. Will Matthyssen will take over the newsletter role. Thanks Will.

## FISHER CRICKET BATS

### VWA General Meeting – 4 September 2012

The September meeting was held at the workshop of Lachlan Fisher, cricket bat maker, in Kingsville, Melbourne. Lachlan started out as a graphic designer, before becoming full time bat maker for the last 20 years. During this time he has produced bats for both amateur and professional players.

He started the evening by talking about the origins of the game, which emerged from the mists of time and took on its current form in about the 1830's. Cricket is an evolving game, and is a symbiosis between the bat and ball, both of which have developed very involved and complex craft traditions in their design and manufacture. What is unique to the game is that the strategies of the game are centred around how the cricket pitch, willow and leather change over the course of the match. It is the task of the opening batsmen to take the shine off the new ball and 'soften' it up, making it harder for the bowler to spin and curve the ball. The openers play a largely defensive game, and once they have done their task, the subsequent batsmen play a more aggressive game and concentrate on scoring runs.



*Lachlan Fisher (centre) and bat blanks at different stages of completion.*

Lachlan sources the willow either imported from England, or from his own plantation timber grown in Gippsland. Willow trees must be between 12 and 16 years old before being harvested. The spacing of the growth rings is also important, ideally they should be about half an inch apart, or about 8 year rings across the width of the bat. The willow is then left to air dry, in Melbourne it will stabilize to around 12 % M.C., which is ideal, in Sydney it will be 14%, and in Perth around 10%. The willow log is cut into 28 inch lengths, and then split into flitches with the year rings ninety

degrees to the face of the bat. The blanks are then machined to the correct cross section, and the 'v' cut into the top to receive the handle.

The handles are made from Indonesian cane, cut into layers, with flat strips of rubber laminations inserted and then turned into handle blanks. A matching 'v' is cut on the end of the handle, and glued into willow blank. The handle is not aligned with the axis of the willow, but is angled forward slightly.



*Partially machined willow blanks (right), and with the handles glued in (left).*



*Lachlan's custom made rolling machine. The bat is placed face up on the carriage on the left, and fed under the rollers on the right.*

The face of the bat is cambered, and then put through a rolling machine which compresses the cells on the face to a depth of about and eighth of an inch. This is a critical process, as it prevents the face from being dented by the impact of the ball, and provides just the right amount of recoil to propel the ball.



*Shaping the back of the bat using the large spoke shave.*

The back of the bat is now carved with a spoke shave, a large shave initially to remove the bulk of the material, and then a number of smaller shaves to refine the shape and finish. What is important here is to remove the right amount of

material in the right place. The overall weight must be between 2lb. 4oz. and 2lb.7oz., and the weight must be distributed around the middle to give the correct balance and feel.



*Final finishing using the small spoke.*

This is where Lachlan tailors the weighting of the bat to suit the individual client. The bat is now 'boned' to compress the fibres on the edges that were not reached by the rolling machine. Traditionally this was done using an animal bone, but Lachlan uses a round steel bar.

Likewise the handle is shaped to suit the client. The handle is then wrapped with string, and sheathed in rubber.

After some light sanding, the bat is now ready for oiling with linseed oil. Finally the bat needs to be 'knocked in', with a ball shaped mallet.



*Boning the bat edges using the steel bar.*



*Testing the balance and weighting of the bat.*

Other sports have been more open to introducing high-tech materials, for example the wooden racquets of the 50's and 60's were superseded by the metal alloy racquets of the 80's, only to be replaced by the composite carbon fibre tennis racquets of today.

By contrast, the essence the cricket bat and ball has not changed much in over a hundred years, and although the manufacturing techniques have become more mechanized, they are still essentially crafted objects. As for the cricket bat, willow has turned out to be the ideal species, it is light and resilient, and provides the just right amount of springiness. Could other timbers or materials be used? They probably could, but the whole game has evolved around the interaction of the willow bat and leather ball, and any changes in material would fundamentally alter the nature of the game.

And that would, well, just not be cricket!

# CALL FOR ENTRIES

## VWA woodworking exhibitions and competitions

# ACROSS THE BOARD 2012



and



# STORMWOOD



This year the VWA will be showcasing members' work via two exhibitions

**ACROSS THE BOARD 2012** and **STORMWOOD**

at the VWA stand as part of the Timber & Working with Wood Show  
Melbourne Showgrounds, from October 19 – 21, 2012.

Both exhibitions are open to all VWA members. All forms of fine woodwork including furniture, box making, wood turning, wood sculpture and carving will be considered. **ACROSS THE BOARD 2012** will be open to all timber types.

The **STORMWOOD** exhibition will feature the timbers that were rescued and salvaged after severe storms hit the Melbourne Botanical Gardens in 2005. These timbers have already been distributed to members so we look forward to seeing the **STORMWOOD** creations!

Applicants may submit up to three works for each exhibition. Please provide photographs or drawings and brief written description of your work, including dimensions, timbers and materials. As part of the exhibitions we will be having a digital display of the works and the making of them. We encourage participants to photograph their work as it is being made. The process is as interesting as the product. Demonstrations of woodwork and skill sharing by members will also be at the VWA stand.

There will be two major cash prizes of \$1000 and \$500 in each exhibition. **ACROSS THE BOARD 2012** winners will be based on a people's choice vote. **Stormwood** winners will be judged by three woodworking professionals.

Entry forms are available on the VWA website. For further information on **ACROSS THE BOARD 2012** and **STORMWOOD** please contact the exhibition committee at [exhibitions@vwa.org.au](mailto:exhibitions@vwa.org.au)



## The Timber and Working with Wood Show 2012

As detailed on the Exhibition flyer on the previous page, the show is coming up fast.

This year we would like all entry forms submitted via the entry form on the website. This makes it a lot easier to co-ordinate and ensures information does not get lost in the mail.

However, if you have difficulties using the site, please contact our Exhibition Co-ordinator, John Monument, on 0417 119946 or by email to: [jmonument@hotmail.com](mailto:jmonument@hotmail.com) and John can arrange to send you a copy of form you can fill in and mail back.

### Request for assistance – Manning the Stand

As in past years, we need your assistance to man the VWA stand at the show.

If you can help, can you please send an email to John, or call him, letting him know which time slot you can assist with:

<b>Fri. 19 October</b>	<b>10:00am-1:30pm</b>	<b>1:30pm-5:00pm</b>
<b>Sat. 20October</b>	<b>10:00am-1:30pm</b>	<b>1:30pm-5:00pm</b>
<b>Sun. 21 October</b>	<b>10:00am-1:30pm</b>	<b>1:30pm-5:00pm</b>

Exhibition Co-ordinator: John Monument  
46 Darling Street, Fairfield 3078  
Mob: 0417 119946  
email: [jmonument@hotmail.com](mailto:jmonument@hotmail.com)



## Update on the VWA School of Woodcraft.

Jerome Wielens Chair School Committee, Victorian Woodworkers Association



As Term 3 draws to a close this week, the School of Woodcraft is full of almost complete pieces ready for finish to be applied and taken home. It has been a busy year for the school with most classes running at capacity and just under 70 students per week attending classes. Positions for Term 4 are filling fast. The small profit that the school is now generating is being used to purchase new equipment and machinery. For example, we recently bought a venturi style vacuum press and 2100 x 2400 bag for laminated and curved projects.

*Student work in progress at the Wood Design Centre, Tyrone Street, North Melbourne*



This term marks the end of an era for one of our teachers, Adam Stewart. Adam will be leaving us to focus on his business. It has been a great privilege having Adam as a teacher at the school for the past five years and his creativity, skill and enthusiasm will be missed. We sincerely thank Adam for his contribution to the School of Woodcraft and wish him all of the best for the future. Phil Carson-Crickmore will be replacing Adam on Wednesday nights. Phil is a master luthier and furniture maker with a natural talent for teaching.

*Even more student work in progress at the Wood Design Centre, Tyrone Street, North Melbourne*

### Current Committee and Contacts:

President	Damien Wright	03 9486 4434
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