

September 2013

42 Courtney St Nth. Melbourne Vic

## UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

Wednesday, September 25<sup>th</sup> 7:30pm.

**Susan Wraight- Internationally renowned Netsuke Carver.**

**Venue: Arts House Meat Market Meeting small meeting room,  
5 Blackwood Street North Melbourne. 3051.**

*Susan trained initially as a jeweller at the Royal College of Art in London, but has now been making netsuke for more than 30 years. She is part of the contemporary netsuke movement, which has seen netsuke move from being exclusively Japanese to becoming an international art form with practitioners and collectors around the world.*

"Brendan's Island": Boxwood, with inlays of paua shell, and eyes of amber over gold leaf.



*Netsuke originated as part of traditional Japanese dress, and gradually developed into objects that were not only functional, but were also exquisite works of miniature sculpture. The kimono had no pockets, and items of daily use were threaded onto a silk cord that slipped behind the sash and knotted into a small carving - the netsuke - which held everything securely in position.*

"Coconut Octopus": Boxwood, with eye inlays of amber over gold leaf.

*Susan's talk is essentially the paper she gave to the International Netsuke Society's convention that took place in London earlier in the year. She will look at where a netsuke carver gets ideas for their carvings, how a netsuke is made, and the qualities that make a good netsuke.*

**THIS IS A MEETING NOT TO BE MISSED!**

**October 18-20**

**Timber and Working with Wood Show.**

**Venue:** Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, Southbank, Melbourne.  
*The VWA will have a stand promoting the coming Create from a Crate exhibition. We are calling for volunteers to supervise the stand. Please contact Will Matthysen at [editor@vwa.org.au](mailto:editor@vwa.org.au), or mobile 0438 984 415.*

**Wednesday, 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.

**Wednesday, November 27 7.30pm**

**Visit to Australian Recycled Timber**

**Venue:** 45 Fabio Ct Campbellfield VIC 3061 - [www.australianrecycledtimber.com.au](http://www.australianrecycledtimber.com.au)  
*John Monument will don the chef's hat and provide a gourmet BBQ.*

**Wednesday, December 11 7.30pm**

**Christmas Drinks.**

**Venue:** At the Metropolitan Hotel, corner Courtney and Blackwood Street, North Melbourne.

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### Note from the editor.

Please direct any comments or feedback on the newsletter, articles for publication, or other VWA activity to the editor at: VWA Editor [editor@vwa.org.au].

## OBITUARY

### Graeme Saleeba



It is with sadness that we announce the passing of Graeme Saleeba on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August. Graeme was a member of the VWA from its inception, and participated in many exhibitions. Always ready to help, Graeme could be seen manning the exhibitions, assisting in setting up and taking down, and served on the Festival committee.

I have been in touch with Graeme's wife Lois, who kindly wrote a few words of how he started out in woodwork.

"Graeme actually started doing woodwork at school. There were very few boys in his class at Melbourne Grammar who chose woodwork as an alternative class once a week. However Graeme did it to avoid another subject (I can't remember what that was!)

and took to it like a duck to water. His efforts were noticed by the teacher who was very good and encouraged him, and so the interest remained and many years later he was able to turn to it again in his retirement. I still have a table done by him at school, which he french polished a few years ago. I believe he also made a shoebox and a magazine stand for his parents.

He made tables for all family members including a hall stand. He made furniture for our house and made western red cedar wall panelling for the house. Recently he turned to making small boxes. Firstly he made sets of Shaker oval boxes for us and for our 3 children and a friend and then started making small rectangular boxes from different woods. In the last 2 years he started making a "special" box for each of his grandchildren. The two oldest got their jewellery boxes but unfortunately he was still doing the boxes for the last two grandchildren when he died. Those children have taken their half completed boxes hoping to finish them themselves one day and each child also got a small completed box done by Graeme.

"Reminders of his talent are with us every day."



Over the past five years Graeme also attended the furniture restoration classes given by Carl Lutz at the Ringwood North Community Centre. Graeme would bring in increasingly complex antiques for restoration, which were carefully taken apart, replacement parts made where necessary, and then lovingly brought back to life. Graeme was a perfectionist, especially when it came to finishes. French polishing was his finish of choice, a finish which requires a lot of skill and technique to do well, a skill which Graeme had clearly mastered.

The essential nature of craftsmanship is this; that objects that are well designed and made will continue to bring joy to those who use them, well into the future. They will ultimately outlive us, and be passed on to enrich the lives of future generations.

Graeme was a longstanding and valued member of the VWA, and we wish his family strength during this sad time.

Will Matthysen.  
VWA Editor



## Treasures await when you look around the corner.

### Andrew Potocnik

Any woodworker travelling to a new destination will find sources of inspiration, but you never know what you'll find –or where.

Whenever I venture outside my local environment I take a camera, keen to record anything wooden; work relevant to personal explorations, or anything that may inspire my students. Really it's all about challenging myself with things outside my own small world, learning from that exposure, and then sharing it with students (or anyone who reads my articles).



On a trip to Vietnam I was astonished by creations and working conditions in the least expected locations. This is a country experiencing industrialisation at a rate beyond imagination. Many of the world's major manufacturers are setting up factories dragging common workers through decades of development, from farming to working in factories producing those state-of-the-art appliances that you and I take for granted in our current existence. But there are strong links to traditional crafts, mostly related to the use of wood. Not surprising; but where you find them and in what conditions they are produced certainly is.

Here's a suggestion to anyone travelling anywhere; don't stick to the tourist strip. Wander down side streets, peek around corners and don't be scared to ask about anything new to you. Use gestures, and you'll be surprised how far a smile will get you. A shrug of the shoulders, a point of the finger with a quizzical look can open many doors. Locals are often as inquisitive about 'visitors' as we are about them, but be sensitive of local traditions, religion and

taboos, so research before you go. Beware: sometimes the simple act of taking a photo may challenge belief that a photograph takes the soul away from the person being photographed. Your values may not be similar to those into whose culture you are entering, and a seemingly small act on your behalf may have major significance in the world you are a guest in.

If you're on a tourist tour, you'll probably be taken to a co-operative that employs handicapped workers producing a range of items including lacquer ware and furniture. Buses roll in, tourists follow the production line through the 'workshop' filled with disabled workers working on items, through to the shop where all manner of wooden ware is on display ready for you to buy.



I found a variety of furnishings that show very strong links to classic Chinese styles; not surprising, seeing China has had a strong influence over this country over a long period of time. By the time you've made it through to the 'shop' several other buses have arrived, filled with more 'punters', but get away from these 'workshops' and you can find some workshops that are real eye-openers on how production really happens.



Spending a couple of days in the historic town of Hoi An, known to tourists as the place where any form of clothing can be custom made for a pittance overnight, I found a furniture-making business close by on the island of Kim Bong, less than ten minutes away on the local river taxi.



Huynh Suong, a descendant of many generations of wood carvers runs a business that produces a myriad of carved furniture pieces. While a sign hanging over the workshop's door proudly proclaims "woodcarvers training workshop funded by UNESCO", his personal style has evolved into contemporary forms that have won recognition within the Vietnamese Artisan Craft Competition. However the bulk of his output is mere traditional work produced by anywhere up to 50 cabinet makers, carvers and the like working at any time.







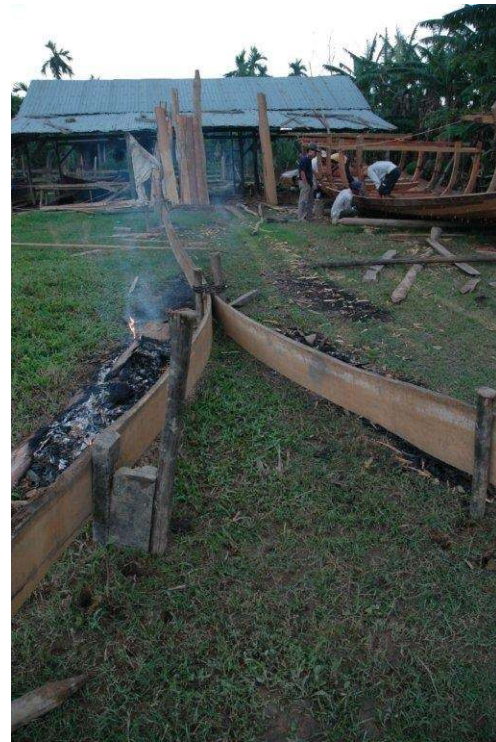
Staggered by the range of work on display in his show room, along with works in progress, I was impressed with the (by our standards) small, thin, sinewy workers who machine wood ready for carvers to work their wonders. Intricate carvings are teased from segments of wood in the simplest of workshops by teams of carvers sitting cross-legged in an open-sided shelter. Based on traditional inspiration, bamboo, lotus and dragon forms abound, they're all heavily intertwined with religion and local style. For manufacturers in Australia alarm bells would start to ring; safety, working conditions,

fair pay, etc. This isn't an example of exploitation; this is the reality of where our cut-priced suburban purchases are being made.

But treasures such as these aren't the exclusive domain of dedicated businesses. Strolling laneways of a nearby island I stumbled on another artisan carving on turned legs at the back of his open air café. He carves between orders, or does he serve between carvings? His tools were basic but the quality of product was second to none. Intricate carvings on turned legs, you couldn't ask for better work. And I suppose the food is probably just as good.



Down another street was a turner with his simple selection of tools working in a street front shed at seven o'clock in the morning. Spindle turned legs using tools many of our 'hobby' turners would consider 'basic', this turner probably supports a family, and may even supply the carver I saw at the back of the restaurant!



Heading down a laneway, keen to take a great snapshot for the album, I found boat builders bending green wood in the open using pickets driven into the ground and a small fire to dry it to shape. Right next door, a group slabbing logs into boards, using techniques just like we use at home! But did they think I was weird standing there watching and then wanting to photograph them? This is just basic life to them, so why should a foreigner be interested in them? To be honest, I feel the same way when our school hosts overseas visitors who photograph the wood room during their school 'tour'.



Out of a bus I caught a glimpse of a coffin mounted on the back of a motor cycle! Who knows how many other situations I missed, all cases of people working away in conditions many of us wouldn't endure, using tools we consider inferior, and using their woodworking skills to support another form of income, or maybe the other way around.

There are two ways you can view items purchased when travelling, or even when purchasing locally.

On one hand, there are the real 'masters' creating genuine artefacts full of integrity, rather than the mass-produced items pumped out for

the tourist market. Maybe you are witnessing highly skilled artisans who work for a pittance, creating works that are then on-sold by other players in the market who make more than the original artisans.



Alternatively, when you're shopping at home and purchase wood-based items and are able to squeeze a bargain out of local retailing moguls, without realising it, you are simply chipping into their profit margin. They have already screwed the next person down in the supply chain, who screws the next person down... The lowest in the chain is the one who cannot screw anyone else, but who needs to exploit natural resources to meet his needs.

Another conclusion:

Alternately, when you're shopping at home, for every wood-based item you purchase and squeeze a bargain out of local retailing moguls, without realising it, you are screwing a tiny manufacturer who needs to exploit the local environment and workers who need the next person below them to give less for the person below them. Who really benefits? Who gets a real bargain? And how can we get a true appreciation of the people at the coal face, working in conditions we couldn't imagine? A walk down a side street next time you're overseas could make you think about who is really making money out of items we buy here in Australia.

Call me cynical, but here is the basis of poverty. The person at the bottom of the chain has nobody else to extort from and therefore is destitute. All they can exploit is their natural environment... and where does that lead?

## CREATE FROM A CRATE 2014



Arrangements for our coming Create from a Crate exhibition are well under way. The exhibition will be held from 8<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, 2014 at the

**Hatch Contemporary Arts Space**  
14 Ivanhoe Pde, Ivanhoe, VIC 3079  
Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 5pm  
Free Entry

<http://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/hatch/>

Please note the following:

- Closing date for entering the competition is 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2013.
- Pieces are to be finished by 20<sup>th</sup>, January, 2014.
- Information for the catalogue must be received by 20<sup>th</sup>, January, 2014.

- The exhibition will fall under the umbrella of activities/exhibitions that make up the Sustainable Living Festival. The SLF is Australia's largest and oldest sustainability festival, with many celebrities and important environmentalists gracing the festival with their presence to raise awareness of environmental issues and promote sustainable living. The festival attracts over 122,000 visitors every year and engages with hundreds of organizations and individuals on social issues. Through the promotion CFC will receive through the festival it is hoped that a whole new audience will be introduced to the sustainable and noble art of woodworking.....and hopefully you all get to sell your pieces!!!!
- Arrangements have been made with two regional galleries for Create from a Crate 2014 to be hosted at Ballarat from the 27<sup>th</sup> February to 16<sup>th</sup> March, and the at the Benalla Regional Art Gallery from 20<sup>th</sup> March from 3 weeks.

Further information can be found on the following websites:

<http://www.vwa.org.au/exhibitions/create-crate>

<http://www.facebook.com/createfromacrate>

<http://www.wasteconverters.com.au/RecyclingCompetition>

## FOR SALE

**The following tools and machines belonging to Graeme Saleeba are for sale.**

1. 18" Woodman wood cutting Band Saw
2. 10"x5" stone Viking Grinder
3. Jet Drill Press
4. Carbatech Industrial Vacuum
5. Ironbark Multi - Function Mitre Bench
6. Triton Router and Jigsaw Stand
7. A wide selection of hand tools.
8. A variety of well seasoned furniture timbers.

**Please contact Lois Saleeba on 9870 8946.**

## FOR SALE \$1000

Used Powermatic DDS-225 Dual Drum Sander, from the VWA workshop, North Melbourne. The four drive lead screws and threaded bushings to adjust the table height need to be replaced. Please contact the secretary at: [secretary@vwa.org.au](mailto:secretary@vwa.org.au).



Commercial grade twin drum sander.

### Features

- Twin 100mm dust extraction outlets
- Forward & reverse switch
- Safety cutout bar on infeed
- Magnetic starter switch
- 6 position rear drum roller adjuster
- Full cabinet stand with storage
- Rubber conveyor table
- Convenient table height adjustment

### Specifications

Sanding Drum Width (mm):	635
Maximum Sanding Height (mm):	133
Drum Diameter (mm):	152
Feed Speed (m/min):	2.5 and 3.6
Minimum Sanding Length (mm):	235
Dust Extraction Outlets, Twin (mm):	100
Motor:	
Main:	5 HP, 3 Ph, 415 V
Feed:	1/4 Hp, 1 Ph



## Chairmaking Courses with *Rare Chairs*

*Rare.chairs* came into existence in 1990 to rekindle interest in the traditional ways of making Windsor Chairs.



The craftsmanship of the English Windsor chair has a significant place in the history of world furniture. It is widely regarded as one of the most challenging forms of woodworking. To achieve the authenticity of the craft, chairs are constructed at *rare.chairs* using hand tools only, many of these tools being rare and almost forgotten. Some we have had specially made.

If you are interested in learning more about *rare.chairs* , the courses, and the workshop, please visit the website at: [www.rarechairs.com.au](http://www.rarechairs.com.au)

## Current VWA Committee and Contacts:

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Committee Member	Mark Wakeham	0428 242 585
Committee Member	Sam Johnston	0404 520 680

# TCF2013 *Prepare to meet the maker*

World of Marbles, Sheffield



## TASMANIAN CRAFT FAIR

1-4 November, Deloraine

[www.tascraftfair.com.au](http://www.tascraftfair.com.au)



*All funds raised go to local, national and international Rotary projects*