

## Geoffrey Hannah

John Brassell reviews *Geoffrey Hannah : never a less likely bloke: from relinquished child to Renaissance man* by Meg Heggen.

I have known Geoff for many years, the title of the book is very much as you find him, a hive of activity, kind and a great listener.

His woodworks are creations in wood, the marquetry work is unbelievable, not only the detail and design but also the execution, and his cabinet works are also works of wonder. He is one of Australia's most outstanding wood artists; in any other country he would be a living treasure, but no, sports people and those with the most money are top of the list. This book will give you an insight into his life and times, it has many unusual turns and surprises. The book is a good read and enjoyable.

The National Library entry: "Expressions of love come in many forms. For Geoffrey Hannah such expressions surely focus (for all the world might know) on the manipulation of wood and its transformation into masterpieces of grand proportions: to either honour lives; or perhaps elsewhere satisfy the desires (and often specific requirements) of lovers of

Continued page 7

"The Hannah Cabinet " is Geoff Hannah's latest masterpiece and was made over a six year period using 34 different Australian and international timbers, 4 species of shell and 17 varieties of precious stone with extensive marquetry inlays on 18 doors and on, and in, 140 drawers.



Next Association Meeting 4 December

7 for 7.30pm,

The Association's Workshop 50 Spring Street, Abbotsford

Our guest speaker is Paul Gregson. Details are on page 2.

## NSW WWA Committee

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**If you'd like to join or assist the committee or be more involved in the Association, call a committee member!**

**Life members:** Richard Crosland, Phil Lake, Kim Larymore, Leon Sadubin, Richard Vaughan.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Geoff Hannah is an Australian icon. He is a master craftsman of the highest order and a long-standing member of our Association. His story is worth knowing.

When you meet Geoff, as I hope you will, you'll find him is a very ordinary bloke, friendly, modest, happy and chatty. No airs and graces. He is interested in who you are and what you like doing. But in truth, there is very little that is ordinary about Geoff. He has had a remarkable life. Born and bred in the Lismore district, he left school early to start a woodworking apprenticeship. From there he has created masterpiece after masterpiece. His skills have taken him to Buckingham Palace and Europe where he has studied fine furniture making in the period 1635-1850. Throughout he has been an avid and dedicated teacher of the skills and knowledge that he has acquired.

His story has now been captured in a biography that is an inspiring story about a special Australian. It is a book that we should all have on our shelves. Signed copies will be available at our December general meeting for \$35. Otherwise it can be purchased through the Lismore Regional Gallery.

One of the joys of our Association is that we have many master craftsmen who are members – people who have spent many, many, many thousands of hours learning and acquiring skills. They do not tout their prowess - they are far too modest to engage in that behaviour. Many of them do not see their skills as being special – it is just something that they know and do. It is wonderful that these members are willing to help other members who have the desire to learn and acquire such skills. With the assistance of these people, the Association will continue to arrange workshops of interest to members where particular skills can be refined. We are just finalizing the dates for these workshops in 2018 and will announce the details shortly.

Just a reminder that you have plenty of time to start making a box to bring along to our meeting in April next year. Everyone is encouraged to participate so we have the full range of skill levels on display. I have no skill or expertise in box-making, but I am determined to create something for this occasion. Putting that in writing means I have no choice now. The good news is that my creation will make everyone else's look good.

I wish you all the very best for a safe and happy Christmas season and New Year.

Phil Greenwood

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**The AGM will be held on Monday 9th April**

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## Our next meeting

Monday 4 December

The Association is delighted that our guest speaker at the upcoming December meeting will be **Paul Gregson**, master conservator, restorer, furniture maker, carver, wood turner, upholsterer and guildler. He is also an Associated Editor of Australian Woodworker. Paul is a long-standing member of the Association who is widely regarded as one of Australia's foremost conservators. He has worked on pieces of significance dating back to 1620.

Paul will be providing a review of some major pieces he has made or restored, including the Prime Minister's dining table at Kirribilli House.

As well, Paul is bringing some items that he has been commissioned to restore and he will discuss the approach to be taken and the methods and techniques that will be used.

It promises to be a fascinating talk of interest to all members. Come along and meet a true expert with a wealth of knowledge.

## Many thanks to ...

**the following members who have recently contributed to our Association:**

**Peter Luscombe, Valeria Odewahn and Peter Munro** who helped **John Kirkwood** and **David Palmer** carry out some improvements at the Workshop.

**John Kirkwood** for his work installing the HNT Gordon end vice on the "Phil Lake" workbench.

**Peter Harris** for his ongoing tinkering with our workshop equipment to keep it all in good repair.

Our Workshop Supervisors for the past two months - **John Brassel, Gordon Joseph, David Palmer, Peter Dunn, Peter Harris, Phil Greenwood, John Kirkwood** and **Brian Dawson**.

**David Palmer** for organising agendas and minutes and sending emails to members.

**Oliver Addis** for looking after the finances of the Association.

**Peter Hunt** for keeping our membership database under control and liaising with members.

Our Newsletter team, **Warwick Wright** and **Peter Evans**.

## Welcome to our new members

Peter Munro, Steve Toscato and Chauntelle Mitchell

**Photos from the recent WWA group visit to St Patrick's Cathedral at Parramatta.** Details of the timbers used are can be found on the cathedral website—search "timber St Patrick's Parramatta".





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## MEMBER PROFILES

### Peter Dunn

I was born 1951 and raised along with my two brothers in Leichhardt. My Father was a tradesman in the metal working field but also managed to do a little woodworking from time to time, toys for us, things for around the house and repairs to furniture etc.

I remember, from a young age, always looking on with interest when he got out the tools and I remember him explaining the difference between the types of hammers and saws that he had. I remember him telling me about sawing on the correct side of the marked line and what type and size of nails and screws to use so that I wouldn't split the wood I was working on. I still have a good selection of his tools and use them from time to time. The ones I value the most are the ones that he made for himself and the ones he gave to me from time to time as gifts. The quality of his old tools is obvious when you consider that I still use his accurate self made engineers square which he made some time not long after the second world war and his old metal files still work well. A number of his wooden handled tools bear the dark stains you would expect to find when used by someone who dealt with metals for a living. His tools always evoke fond memories. When I started work and decided to buy tools for myself I remember him telling me to spend the little extra and buy quality.

I think it is fair to say that I have had a fetish for tools and the use of them from a very young age,

and surprisingly, my brothers don't have the same attraction.

I suppose the first real piece of furniture I ever made was a coffee table when I was aged about 16 and from there to speaker boxes cabinets etc. I bought my first house when I was 25 years old. It was a 1930's weather board house in Richmond and boy did that supply me with plenty of opportunities for woodworking and reasons to purchase more tools. I set about adding 2 bedrooms at the back, building a laundry, a new kitchen and bathroom and of course making the all the required cupboards, cabinets, doors and shelves. Then time to reclad the outside and re-plaster the majority of the old plaster of the inside.

I took some time off to meet and marry my wife and we lived there for a few years and then decided to buy 13 acres at Kurrajong which gave me the opportunity to build a whole house for us and of course I would need some extra tools. It was a 30 square house and garage (a bit over 40 squares if you counted the outside verandas). I worked on days off, after work and took long service leave. I did all of the carpentry, laboured for the bricklayers, plumbers, electricians, concreters and roofers. I built and installed the kitchen and bathrooms and laundry, seventy metres of covered verandas and installed about 160 metres of guttering. I refurbished, restored and installed the second hand windows and some of the doors.

Along the way I was helped by friends and family and met and became friends with the fellow next door, John Brassell who was



building his own house. For those who do not know him he is a long time member of the Association and was an accomplished woodworker. It was with his guidance that I chose and found where to purchase the appropriate timbers and learned the new skills to properly make the many cabinet doors and other woodworking that required more than carpentry skills. It was with his guidance that I purchased appropriate tools and my first monster power tool a Casadei combination machine which was some years later replaced with a Hammer (Felder) combination machine. It was John who introduced me to a now ex-member (and professional woodworker and Teacher) Paul Floyd who taught me many of the skills I now possess. It was John who took me along to my first WWA of NSW meeting.

I am not a prolific woodworker; however over the years I have done various fine woodworking projects for a number of people and sold various pieces. It is always the best feeling when someone sees something I have made and wants to own it for themselves, it is just the best compliment. Two projects that really stand out, I was commissioned to make a wine rack for an Italian restaurant that had to be in one piece and held around 250 bottles

Continued page 5

of wine, it was over 3 metres in length and was mounted behind the restaurant bar and each bottle was to have its own square hole, many recessed halving joints. Some years later I was telephoned by the restaurant owner who told me that he had retired and sold the restaurant and fixtures and fittings but had kept the wine rack and installed in his new retirement house.

The second project was to fit out a wine cellar with much the same wine racks and some cabinetry. The owner sold the house and sometime later when I was introduced to the new owner and he was told I fitted out the cellar he said, "How good is that, I don't drink wine but I show everyone the cellar".

I now live on the Central Coast and have a more than adequate workshop well equipped with my beloved tools and a bit more timber than I could possibly use. I am at present most of the way through replacing all the skirting boards and architraves and that will enhance the home improvements recently made. For the near future I plan to make myself a complete Blackwood bedroom setting and I am sure there will always be something that pops up.

I am a long time member of the Association and it has given me much pleasure and enhanced my knowledge of wood. It is satisfying to run the workshop and enjoyable when I get to pass on some knowledge. Wood is a wonderful and renewable resource and acquiring the knowledge and skills to manipulate it suit your purpose is well worth the time and effort.



### Valerie Odewahn - New member

Depending on whether or not you come to meetings, attend the workshop and use the facilities or perhaps just read the website and newsletter you are probably aware that you belong to an association of people who have a

common interest in things to do with wood. You may or may not know others in the association, however, you would be aware that our members cover the full gambit of what can be done when, messing around with, working with, planning about, talking about, dreaming about, or, just admiring wood. You may like or even love wood and sometimes even hate it when it won't behave itself. Then there is the feeling of victory when you finally persuade it to do what you want it to do. (Sounds a little like bringing up children doesn't it.) There's no need to ever wonder why, or, feel any discomfort about this fascination you have developed with wood when you realise that it has been around long before mankind existed and since the first of us it has been a constant companion, a raw material used to warm us, house us, protect us, feed us (a fruit tree is wood) and amuse and entertain us. Wood was an absolute requirement in the development of what human beings are today and whatever it is that we will become. I am willing to bet that, when whoever it was, invented the wheel it was made of wood, and, if some expert wishes to tell me I'm wrong, and it was made of stone, then I bet that the bloody axle was made of wood and without the axle a wheel is just a round thing.

So forget about the Stone Age, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age they have come and gone. It's the wood age that came first and it is still going strong. So enjoy your fascination, as I am sure you will agree, our first guest does. I would like to introduce you to Valerie Odewahn who has kindly consented to share a little of her woodworking life and plans with us. Valerie has been a member since 2014.

#### **Hello Valerie. At what age did you first become aware that you had a desire to make something with wood?**

When I was a child I whittled, making a stick smaller and smaller with my pocket knife. Then my brother bought me some Pfeil carving tools and my father showed me how to use his tools, probably so I wouldn't wreck them. At primary school I always tried to sneak in to the woodwork class but alas I was shown back to the sewing room. In the 1970s it was almost impossible for a woman to become a cabinetmaker's apprentice so I ended up working with silversmithing and jewellery most of my working life.

#### **What was it that prompted that wood working desire?**

Who knows! It was always there. I loved tools and making things.

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**What was the first project you actually started on?**

I can't remember a specific project, boxes for tools most likely. At high school I was asked to make a pulpit with carved apostles for a play! This may have been a way of encouraging me but what a project! I only made nine apostles because you couldn't see one side.

**Have you had any training in woodworking?**

A few short courses and lots of reading and experimenting prior to attending 10 weeks at Sturt with David Upfill-Brown and another 4 weeks with Roy Schack. Sturt is a wonderful training facility. Despite having done renovations and restorations etc all my life these courses lead me from bush carpenter to fine woodworking. In retirement I have been able to establish a better workshop with more machines and better hand tools.

**Do you woodwork now for the pleasure of it or do you make for others or is it a mixture of both?**

I do a bit of both now but less of the "building and renovating" type of projects. I enjoy the freedom of being able to choose using special timbers or dip in to the wood collection I have made over a lifetime of rescuing timber from all sorts of places.

**Is there a particular era or style of furniture that is your favourite and have you, or, do you intend to build any of that?**

Recently I saw some excellent Czech cubist furniture in Prague and found it quite exciting. I prefer simple forms and clean lines but can appreciate all types and styles. I like restoring furniture to see how it was made and to give new life to old pieces.

**What timbers do you most enjoy working with and what are you making at present?**

I love coachwood, its texture and aroma, but presently making hammer handles with American walnut, bellows in salvaged oak, shelves in very old Baltic Pine, a small NG walnut cabinet, a small myrtle and Tasmanian blackwood bedside table and outdoor furniture in merbau. In the past I have enjoyed recycled fence palings because you never know what beautiful hardwood lies beneath that grey surface. All timbers are special in some way and more people should be appreciating our Australian timbers and trees.

**Do you have a favourite finish?**

Oil finishes but Osmo is my current preference.

**Do you have any future projects?**

A jewellery cabinet for my jewellery and object collection, the last one was too small! Another chair, restoration of a dining table....plenty to do.

**What tools do you enjoy using most, power tools or hand tools?**

I just love tools of all sorts – I couldn't live without them even if unable to use them. My Veritas low angle block plane, a Woodpecker marking device and 150mm rule go everywhere with me. I use less hand power tools these days and more fixed machines and quality hand tools. Hand tools give so much control and I find the result more satisfying.

**Are you satisfied with the tools you have or is there a wish list?**

Always a wish list but over the last five years I have replaced most of my ordinary tools with better quality ones.

**Do you have your own workshop facilities?**

Fortunately my double garage is devoted to woodwork these days with the basic table saw, bandsaw, router table, thicknesser, planer, drill press, two metre bench and dust extraction. Prior to this I had access to great facilities at work. Oh and a very large timber rack outside!

**Do you have any parting words for our members?**

Joining the WWA has enabled me to have some conversations with other people who share the love of tools and working with wood and who have the most incredible range of knowledge. There is always more to learn.

**Thanks Valerie for sharing your thoughts and time with our members.**

I'm sure that after reading this that a great many of them will spring out of their comfy chairs and get into some wood, or maybe just think about, or fall asleep and dream about it.

Peter Dunn

**The Australian International  
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The festival will be centred in Bungendore near Canberra. There will be interesting and diverse events, workshops, talks and displays.

More details are available at [www.wooddustaustralia.com](http://www.wooddustaustralia.com)



Geoffrey Hannah continued from page 1.

finely constructed purpose-built, Australian-made furniture.

Nonetheless planted firmly in his thoughts is the wife of more than half a century, the love of his life (or certainly good proportion of it), Rhonda. Of course never to be forgotten in the love stakes are his children, and members of his family (past and present). Still mention must be made of the fact a baby was relinquished by a mother at Ventura Hospital (in Coraki) in the 50s, with knowledge of this remaining a well-kept secret until the child discovers tell-tale pieces of paper in a tin of private documents as a seventeen-year old knockabout larrikin well-versed in the vernacular. Mostly a bloke of action and jovial loquacity (and never an embarrassingly deficient recollector of names), Geoffrey Hannah now endeavours to put aside his tools of trade for a few hours each week so as to wholeheartedly detail his exuberance for all the loves of his life through his most unfavoured medium: the written word. A hopeless romantic at heart, Meg Heggen gives voice to a most 'unlikely' bloke, weaving Hannah's words, life and loves into a heart-warming and spirited yarn blessed by Renaissance ideals, values and proportions."



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## Hinges, for boxes

Presentation at the October GM

The chatter surrounding 'box-making' has been infectious of late, with members very eager to share their skills and knowledge with others.

Our next "Box Making Competition" deadline is four months

away; so it seemed timely to discuss box hardware (particularly hinges) at the general meeting.

With demonstration hardware and the support of Peter Harris & Alex Springall, I chaired an open presentation on the different types of hinges available. I won't cover them all in this article, but rather the "crowd favourites".

**The Strap/Smart Hinge** • Ideal for small boxes. • Concealed mortice required. • In-built 'stop': the lid will open only to 90°. • Straps with rounded ends enable morticing with a router bit (Member tip). • Brass plated: ~ \$A10-15; Solid Brass ~ \$A45

**Where to buy?** Simply *Google*: "SmartHinge"™ or "Hardware For Creative Finishes".

**The Quadrant Hinge.** • Ideal for small boxes. • Concealed mortice required. • In-built 'stay': the lid will open only to 90°. • Take your time with the mortice: It must be precise to house the 'stay' correctly when in the closed position (Member tip). • Brass plated: ~ \$A10-15; Solid Brass: ~ \$A55

**Where to buy?** Simply *Google*: "Hardware For Creative Finishes".

**The SOSS Hinge** • Named after the inventor Joseph Soss. • Designed originally as an invisible hinge for

doors, made smaller for box making. • A strong, solid hinge – ideal for heavier-lidded

boxes. • Concealed mortice required. • The position of your mortice need not be in the centre of the piece of timber. The offset from the rear of the box depends on the opening size of the hinge (Member tip). • Cost: ~ \$A10-15. **Where to buy?** Simply *Google*: "Soss Hinge"™ or search the Ebay store.

Happy box making to all members, and please, don't be shy: Email in a question or a photo seeking advice. I'll connect with our wealth of member knowledge, and get back to you.

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## The Sydney Woodcarving Group

The SWG meets regularly at four locations. Beginners are welcome.

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**Southside (Lilli Pilli):** First Saturday of the month and one weekday evening

**Epping:** Second and fourth Wednesday of the month

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**Shellharbour:** First Monday and third Saturday of the month.

For more information and location details, phone Rosemary Mackie on 0419 607 489 or visit [www.sydneywoodcarving.org.au](http://www.sydneywoodcarving.org.au)

## Australian cabinet timbers for sale

Bids or expressions of interest to be emailed to the following address by 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017: [cjrandcjc@bigpond.com](mailto:cjrandcjc@bigpond.com)

- Inspections are welcome by prior arrangement.
- The timber is located at Maloney's Beach, north of Batemans Bay. The purchaser is to pick up the timber from here.
- Since Jarrah is not normally considered a cabinet timber, bids/expressions of interest are invited for two separate lots:

- Lot 1: Jarrah

Lot 2: All other timbers as per the schedule

Bids may be made for Lot 1, Lot 2, or Lots 1 and 2 together.

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# Australian Wood Review

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## Online news

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## Stories

Tell them your story.  
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**Contact Linda Nathan, Editor**  
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## What is Hobby Society?

Hobby Society will be an online platform catering to hobby enthusiasts. It will be a place where those sharing the same hobby can **connect**, learn **skills** and rent **equipment** and **space**. And all the while building a hobby-based community or society will be the only online platform which caters to all the needs of a hobbyist; the need to improve their skills, to feel part of a bigger community and to access tools and equipment needed to carry out their hobby.

### How will Hobby Society help me?

If you are a hobby enthusiast who would like to get better or needs to hire space and equipment, Hobby Society will allow you to:

- build your skills through free access to **posts** and **forums** posted by other Hobby Society members
- build your skills by allowing you to see and book paid **classes** run by Hobby Society members near you
- rent the **tools, equipment** and **space** needed to do your hobby and reach your full potential.

Please contact the Hobby Society team on

[Stirling@hobbysociety.com](mailto:Stirling@hobbysociety.com)

[Rifat@hobbysociety.com](mailto:Rifat@hobbysociety.com)



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Studio/workshop space available  
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After 21 years Splinter Workshop Inc is relocating to new larger premises and is seeking additional members of the association and a sub-tenant.

Splinter is an incorporated association of woodworkers specialising in hand made furniture and objects. Each member works independently but shares the costs of the association. We cooperate with the upkeep of the workshop and, from time to time, on large projects and exhibitions. Our new premises will be in Barclay Street Marrickville, adjacent to Makerspace & Co.

**Tenancy:** We are seeking a person or group to sub-lease a space of up to 200 sqm. The ideal tenant would be engaged in art/craft/design/making that is in keeping with the creative nature of the precinct.

Rent is \$200 psqmpa including outgoings and GST.

**Membership:** We are also expanding our membership. Ideal members would be 1) other woodwork-ers/furniture makers seeking workshop space and facilities or 2) artists and/or crafts people of other disciplines seeking studio space in a creative and cooperative environment.

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Please contact Brendan Cody: [bcody75@yahoo.com.au](mailto:bcody75@yahoo.com.au)

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listed on page 2



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- Cutting height 310 mm
- Rip capacity 360 mm
- Tilttable table

**From 1,964.<sup>50</sup>**

\$ excl. GST



### FELDER-GROUP AUSTRALIA

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### A3 26 Planer Thicknesser

- Remarkably user friendly
- Allows for rapid retooling
- Solid cast iron planer tables
- 3 knife quick-change self-setting cutterblock system

**From 3,479.<sup>20</sup>** \$ excl. GST

\* Optional: all planer/thicknessers are also available with the new Silent-POWER spiral knife cutterblock. Valid till 30th April 2014 or while stocks last



### C3 31 Combination machine

- Surface planing width 310 mm
- 3 knife quick-change self-setting cutterblock system
- Saw blade tiltable 90°-45°
- Solid cast iron tables and units
- Quick change-over times

**From 10,024.<sup>60</sup>** \$ excl. GST



### K3 basic Panel Saw

- Solid cast iron tables and units
- Professional rip-fence with round bar guide
- Extremely durable

**From 5,113.<sup>30</sup>** \$ excl. GST



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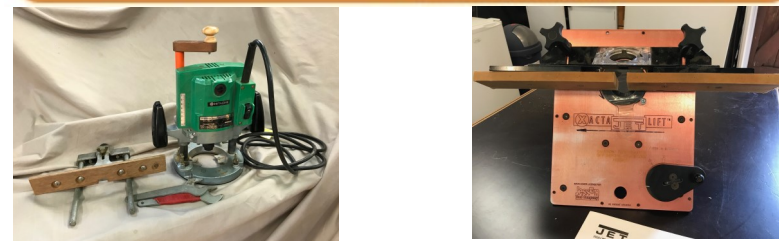
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# Boutique Timbers

High quality furniture timbers. Slabs up to 1 metre wide, boards, burls, burl slices, blocks, hardwoods, softwoods. Mackay cedar, Australian red cedar, Rosewood, snakewood, Queensland maple, Camphor Laurel, Huon pine, bluegum, redgum, greygum, flooded gum, tallowood, blackbutt, blackwood, pencil cedar, Hairy oak, N and S silky oaks, and more. Cheap Camphor boards and slabs for benches, bars, tables, cutting boards or food display boards.

Delivering to Newcastle, Central Coast and Sydney Metro. Small orders can be collected from Cremorne, Maccas Heatherbrea or Wyong.

**Boutique Timbers**  
**256 Spokes Road, Ballengarra**

16km west of Pacific Highway, turn onto Rollands Plains Road at Telegraph Point. Follow road for 16km, turn left at Spokes Road and travel 2.5km of gravel road. Visitors welcome from 7 to 7, 7 days a week.

**Phone Mal or Greg - 02 6585 8296 or 0416 096 827**  
**Sydney enquiries - 0407 613 002**  
**[boutiquetimbers.com.au](http://boutiquetimbers.com.au)**

**FOR SALE. The Association is selling a router and router lifter plate which are surplus to our needs.**

Details of the router are:

Make and model: Hitachi TR-12  
 Motor 1,600 watts  
 No-load speed 22,000 rpm  
 Main body stroke Approx 60mm  
 Collet chuck ½"  
 Price \$100

Details of the router lifter plate are:

Make and model Jet Xacta Lift router mounting plate (which accepts many makes of routers)  
 Plate dimensions Heavy-duty anodised aluminium plate approx. 300mm x 370mm x 6mm  
 Plate mounting The aluminium plate is mounted on two approx. 19mm solid steel shafts  
 Price \$200 or \$275 for both. More equipment will be for sale later.

Please contact our Secretary David Palmer by email at [secretary.woodworkersnsw@gmail.com](mailto:secretary.woodworkersnsw@gmail.com) or by phone 0415 188 605.

## The Bower Re-use & Repair Centre

is an environmental charity and cooperative committed to reducing waste going to landfill. Our shopfronts in Marrickville and Parramatta sell furniture, appliances, household goods, salvaged building materials, bikes, books and more. It's a treasure trove of delights with new items arriving daily. You never know what you'll find – all at incredibly low prices.

**You can learn a new skill with The Bower's 'Tricks of the Trade' workshops – in basic carpentry, furniture repair and restoration, furniture painting or introductory upholstery.** During school holidays we offer kids' recycled art and mosaic workshops.

Need something repaired? Visit The Bower's **Repair Cafe** for free assistance with dodgy electrical items, wobbly bikes and rickety timber furniture. The Repair Cafe operates on Wednesdays, 1pm – 4pm at Marrickville and on the last Saturday of the month, 10am – 12pm at Parramatta.

Further information at [www.bower.org.au](http://www.bower.org.au)