

The Cutting Edge

A periodic magazine that celebrates the activities of the Shed and its members

Volume 1 No. 18

Hornsby Woodworking Men's Shed

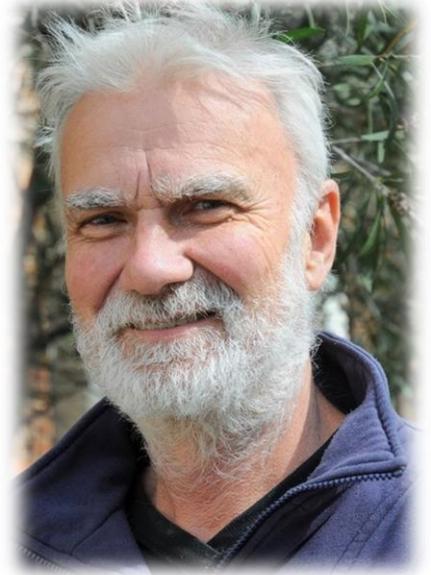
Summer/Autumn 2019

Member Profile – Andrew Dryburgh

Born in 1954, eldest of 5, 4 boys 1 girl, I had a very happy and conventional upbringing in Epping. Father worked for the PMG as a draftsman, Mother stayed at home until the youngest went to High School. At that time Epping was an extremely homogenous neighbourhood, solid middle class, all my friends lived in the same family situation. Most of us even went to Avoca for the Christmas holidays.

I wanted to go to Epping Boys High but a fluke of geography (our house was on the wrong side of the boundary) meant I was going to be sent to the brand-new Pennant Hills High. My parents were not happy with that choice so I sat the test for James Ruse Agricultural High in Carlingford and was successful.

My high school years were notable for academic success without much effort (not good training for University).



With practically no careers advice to guide me, in 1972 I did Agriculture at Sydney University, as I had no idea what to do. I had been offered a Teacher Scholarship which I refused (to the lasting benefit of countless students). My parents offered to support me in the first year but after that I had to get myself through. I looked at the career prospects in Agriculture but was not impressed so, at the end of that year, I applied for and won a Forestry Commission Traineeship as it was the closest analogy to Agriculture that I could see. I was pretty lucky as there were 1200 plus applicants and they only selected three.

The traineeship was one of the best things that happened to me. I deferred second year (at ANU) and did a year in the field which involved travelling all over the State and spending about six weeks at each location, ranging from Batlow in the south, Murwillumbah in the north-east and Eden in the south-east. We were paid full adult wages plus a car allowance and camping allowance. I'd never had so much money, plus it was good to have a year off study to recharge the batteries. We travelled with a fellow trainee for company.

In 1974 I started second year at ANU, living in college with full room and all meals for \$26 a week, even included full maid service with beds were made each day! My college was only two minutes from the Forestry Department so I could get up at 8:45 am and still make breakfast and lectures. NSW trainees received very generous allowances, including for text books and travel so we were probably the most well-off group on campus. We all had cars and expensive hobbies such as photography, skiing and girlfriends. I was going out with an Epping girl who was studying to be a teacher at Sydney University. We met when I tutored her in First Level Science for the HSC (not with total success).

I graduated at the end of 1976 and realised that I would have to do my own cooking, housework etc. I proposed to Margaret and, to my amazement, she accepted (probably out of pity). I was lucky and my first choice of posting was as second Forester at Moss Vale. Unfortunately, Margaret was posted to Busby High in Green Valley (west of Liverpool) which meant difficult travel and it was a tough school for a new

teacher. We started a campaign to transfer her to Moss Vale High through Tom Lewis (the local member and ex-Premier) which succeeded after a year and a half. Moss Vale was a great posting, there were only two Foresters so there was a lot of work variety; Pine plantations, Hardwood areas, lots of aerial Hazard Reduction over the Board Catchments etc. Our district extended from the coast at Wollongong through the Lachlan River, past Grenfell. The town was very friendly and there was a huge variety of sporting and social opportunities. The only downside was it was a very bad area for wild fires. Most of the Pine plantations had been burnt out in 1965. We were pretty isolated from support from other Forestry Districts so most weekends in Summer were spent on Fire Duty in the office, monitoring reports from our lookout towers and liaising with the local Bush Fire Brigades and Councils. I spent a lot of time on combatting wild fires and had some pretty hairy experiences. I remember standing on a road near Tallong at the top of a ridge waiting for a fire to come up the western face, pushed by strong, hot North-Wester. We couldn't see it but the noise was like an express train. It came up in a sheet of flame about 25 metres high and went right over the top of us. Luckily, there were paddocks behind us so we managed to stop it in the grass without tankers. That fire was so bad that they sent up groups of prisoners from Goulburn jail. I put our foremen in charge of them and they were good value. Mostly country blokes in for minor things and they were happy to have a day out.

However, all good things come to an end and, after three years, the Commission expected Junior Foresters to transfer to another area to gain wider experience. I had look at what was on offer and was not very impressed, particularly as Margaret was very happy at Moss Vale and it didn't seem fair to expect her to move so soon. I was doing a computer course (out of personal interest) through New England University at Armidale and I had met a forester from Head Office there. At the time they were expanding the Computer Section and were looking for an additional forester. They circulated an advertisement which I ignored until I got a call from the Deputy Commissioner asking where my application was. At that point the penny dropped so I applied and got the job. Then, for three years, I commuted daily from Moss Vale to the City. Eventually, it got too much but, luckily, Margaret got a job at St George Girls' High at Kogarah, a selective high school. She really liked the school and stayed until our son was born.

After a couple of years renting in Epping, we bought our current house in the east side of Pennant Hills. It was fairly small (only 2 bedrooms) so, in 1993, we completed a large extension. From a career perspective, I worked my way up to Senior Project Officer and was designing and running most of the computer systems, while working 60-70 hours per week. I could not see much chance of further advancement without going into administration (which would have bored me to tears). At the time I was doing a part-time Master of Business Administration degree through Sydney University and part of my research was applied to designing a system to predict dividend yields and share values. The predicted values were a positive correlation to the real world so it looked as if an alternative career was feasible. A close friend in Personnel told me they would be offering redundancies in some months' time, so I took long service leave and successfully applied for a redundancy when they were eventually offered.

So, in November 1991 I 'retired' and started investing in the share market. It has worked out pretty well and I got to spend a lot time with our children while they were growing up. I've had time to coach their multitudinous sport teams, run afternoon tennis competitions at Pennant Hills Park and have been involved in a lot of community pursuits.

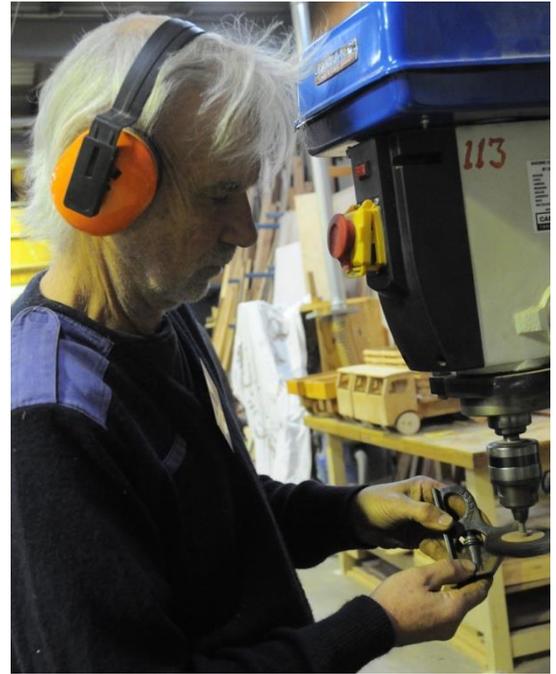
I was always interested in working with wood (thanks to my father) and, about 4 years ago, Margaret saw a notice about the Shed. I went along and Les Sanford took me round and introduced me to the other members and the machinery which was much more comprehensive than my Triton system. I signed up on the spot. Since then, I have been kept busy making furniture and items for my children and a large collection of siblings, nieces and nephews (our children have 21 first cousins) plus friends.

I have an ENORMOUS collection of timber (can't go past a skip without checking it out) including Californian Redwood, Silky Oak, Western Red Cedar, Australian Red Cedar, Oregon, Eucalypt, Golden Sassafras and, my favourite, Australian Kauri.

My other hobbies are sailing, pre-war cameras, pre-1965 Hornby Dublo model rail and restoring old *Made In Australia* Sidchrome tool sets. We have a beach house at MacMasters beach on the Central Coast where we go each weekend Summer and Winter and I have made a lot of the furniture for that. I would like to buy an old British sports car (preferably a T series MG) but simply do not have the time. My son has bought a house at North Avoca and I spend a lot of them helping him improve that.

Andrew is well known at the Shed for his prodigious consumption of timber, some of it only fit for firewood. He has many relatives that take advantage of his skills as a Woodworker so he is always working on a project for them, tuning "rubbish" timber into a rustic piece of furniture.

Andrew is always quick to offer help and advice to his fellow members



Presentation By Lisa Maunsell

Continece Foundation Of Australia

Lisa was invited to speak at the April Members' Meeting to inform us of the high incidence of incontinence (it affects one in four Australians over the age of 15) and the importance of good bladder and bowel health.

Lisa informed us that a healthy stool was something like a thin sausage, if its small and round or hard and knobbly, it may be a sign of dehydration. Water was the best way to stay hydrated as opposed to tea, coffee and alcohol which are bladder irritants. She added that urine should be passed when the bladder was at least half full, that is, not too frequently and it should be a light straw colour.

She left a number of informative brochures which are available at the Shed, including one that referred to an application that helped find the locations of the closest public toilets. Refer to the Web site – continence.org.au for more information. There is also a National Continence Helpline – 1800 33 00 66.



Another Bunnings' BBQ, 2 February 2019

It was another early start, with many of the familiar faces at Dural Bunnings around 7.00 am setting up the barbeque and marquee to be ready for an 8.00 am start. As usual, we were well organised with the cooks soon producing that enticing smell of beef and onions. The bread was set out on our special platters, the drinks cooling in their tubs, the condiments set out and the Treasurer ready with the cash box. It was a slow start (we think may be due to the new extensions that have carparking and another entrance into the Nursery area), with some rain but around 11.00 am things got going, prior to the lunch time rush.



As usual, Treasurer Mark Wilson reported the results, the following day:

“Good morning and well done to all.

Brian has reported to me that there is \$1,132.15 in the cashbox, which equates to the gross takings for the day. After expenses from Fred, Bruce, Ian and David T, the net figure is \$754.22.

This compares well to the last two Dural BBQs in April and June last year, when gross takings were \$1,019 and \$946, with net figures of \$668 and \$635, respectively.”

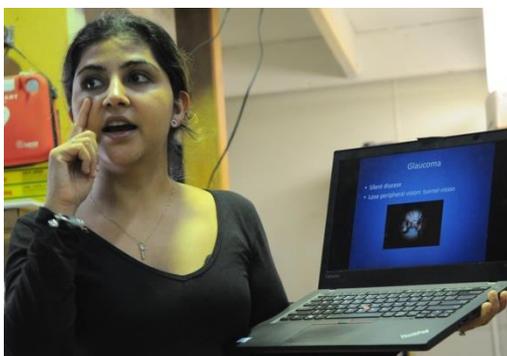


Presentation On Eye Care at the January 2019 Members' Meeting

Meesha Perera is the wife of member Dimithri and a key organiser of the Shed's Christmas party. She is a professional optometrist at Granata Eyecare in Hornsby and welcomed the opportunity to talk to members about the increased potential for loss of vision as we age. The conditions that she identified are cataracts, glaucoma and macular degeneration.



- ☞ Cataracts cloud the eye's lens, it's like driving with a dirty windscreen. They are usually monitored for some time before they are at the stage for surgical removal.
- ☞ Glaucoma causes degeneration



of the optic nerve. There is a loss of peripheral vision. It is detected by pressure testing and visual field testing.



- ☞ Macular degeneration causes loss to the central vision. There are two types; wet and dry.

Regular visits to an optician will ensure that your vision is not lost prematurely through early diagnoses of the above and other conditions such as - diabetes, high cholesterol, high blood pressure and risk of a stroke.

Meesha also demonstrated a range of prescription eye wear that complies with the Australian Standard. They help protect against the risks of impact and foreign bodies whilst working in the Shed.



In and Around the Shed

From LHS top, left to right:

- 🔪 Ron Koutchavlis framed a Hitler Youth knife for displayed in the local RSL sub-branch
- 🔪 Getting ready for Christmas, already
- 🔪 Louise Pollock with a rotating tree that she is mailing to a distant relative
- 🔪 Laying water pipes for the National Can re-development
- 🔪 Jane Ruehmkorff demonstrating her expertise on the lathe
- 🔪 Yuval Cohen made a stand for a microscope that he rescued and then restored
- 🔪 A presentation watch stand made by Philip to order.





Brian Hart talked to me about an unusual use for the toy deck chairs that we make for charity at Christmas time. They are supplied with dolls.

“Our great granddaughters, 10 months and five months. They are cousins.

We love these photos”...

Helen and Brian

Bruce looking after the garden.



One of our charities.



Grandkids Day at the Shed, 23 April.

What would a boy rather do during school holidays than join granddad at the Shed?



Tony Blair – A New Life

As reported in the last issue, Tony was farewelled at the Shed Christmas party. Many members were interested in how he has settled in to his “sea change” so I asked for a report.

Hi Philip,

In response to your last request I will try to highlight the features of my move to Woolgoolga.



It turned out to end satisfactorily although I had to endure very many stressful situations along the way during the implementation of the adventure. I can honestly say it was not a ‘fun’ time and my blood pressure suffered.

Beginning at the beginning, refurbishing and then the de-cluttering of my Castle Hill property to the Agent’s standards, organizing the sale and recruiting a Conveyancer, finalizing the sale of the property and managing the many & various stuff-ups of the Bank along the way left me with a lot more grey hair than I had previously. I can honestly say that I would never recommend the NAB Bank to anyone because of their poor management. One would have thought this would have been a lot easier than it was but considering the state of the declining property market, it proved to be an enormous load. I was fortunate to have the assistance of my family to help me over the ‘hard spots’ both at home and with the Builder at Woolgoolga who has done a marvellous job with the building of my new home at the front of our property. He is also building a bigger house for my son at the rear.

Then, after the sale of my Castle Hill home (at a slightly reduced price), came the hiring of a removalist to pack and transport my goods and chattels to Woolgoolga. Quotes for this service ranged from \$4,500 to \$11,250. I eventually settled for a known firm at a mid-level price and was not disappointed with the service they provided.

Moving my ‘stuff’ into my new home, placing it in appropriate places and unpacking the 65 boxes proved to be more stressful than any of the previous activities, as my helpers were only available for a limited time. The continuous call of “where do you want this?” at machine gun rate meant half-baked decisions, *decisions* and *more bloody decisions* leading to shortened tempers and high family stress that I found to be almost unbearable. Hence the elevated blood pressure. My daughter left to be with her partner for Xmas after 3 days and then my son, daughter-in-law & granddaughter arrived for 8 days to further help me ‘settle in’. They were of great help in moving ‘stuff’ around; particularly the heavier items and selling off through local Facebook items that I should not have brought along with me anyway!

During the move-in I soon discovered that the application of Female Logic relative to the placement of things, particularly in the kitchen area, by far exceeded my poor Male Logic. So I am now discovering where things are in the house. What a relief!!! I hope my blood pressure has now reduced to more appropriate levels. Mr. John Walker and Gordons have helped to relieve the stress somewhat.

My builder has constructed for me an elevated 2 bedroom home with ensuite bathrooms, study, an open kitchen with walk-in pantry, a combined lounge/dining room and a European style laundry. The kitchen has a complete range of new Electrolux appliances and stone bench tops. Front and rear patios complete the upper level whilst downstairs I have a double garage, a small workshop, a ‘mud’ room at the foot of the

stairs and another small toilet room, just for emergency sake. The building faces due north with views over the bay and beaches, the off-shore Solitary Islands and the local playing field which has a resident group of kangaroos. Facing north means that I have the cooling north-east winds to ventilate the house that reduces the need to use the built-in air conditioning. All in all, a very comfortable low maintenance house for me with a great view to wake up to when I have my breakfast every morning.

The town has a big Medical Centre, a big Woolworths store, a great café society and bakery, a Probus Group and a Men's Shed Group both of which I have joined. The Shed Group is nowhere near as good as yours by a long shot so I may be doing my carpentry at home using my own Triton machinery. I have also joined the local RSL and Bowling Clubs so have lots of opportunities to dine out should I not feel like cooking.

Woolgoolga is about 15 minutes north of Coffs Harbour. Coffs has a major hospital and a vibrant city atmosphere with all the services that one could wish for, so I am not missing Sydney at all. There are also two beautiful beaches within walking distance, from one of which I have already caught fish. Just hope the quantity improves because I hate buying fish from the fish shop!

Yes Philip, it has ended well enough for me at this stage of my life. I have maintained my independence, am still involved in a community and wake up with a smile each day. Having a new house means building maintenance is nil, so I don't have to find a 'Tradie' to fix something. Also having sold my old house at a profit I have very few money problems to worry about. Peace of Mind has a cost but the benefits of doing what I did outweighs by far the consequences of not doing it. I am sure my life span will be extended as a result.

However, I would recommend that everyone who may be considering either a "tree change" or "sea change" in the near future to commence their planning initiatives and decluttering" operations NOW. If you have not worn, used or looked at an item in the last 6 months then dispose of it instantly."



It is truly amazing how much you can do without, without it hurting too much, if at all. My house (at the front) is entirely complete and very comfy for me apart from the fact that I do not as yet have a concrete driveway so I can't park my car under cover in the garage. The driveway plus kerb & guttering will not be completed until my son's house (seen at the back of the block) is finished at the end of

March. Once the drive goes in, we will then have to embark on major landscaping works to make the place look respectable.



This scene is what I see from my front balcony. It is also entirely visible from my kitchen, lounge/dining room and my bedroom. It is the view over the school playing field, where the kids get to dodge the kangaroos, the whole bay and beaches with inshore reefs and the offshore Solitary Islands. My son can enjoy the identical view plus a bit more from his first floor balcony over my roof so we both get the

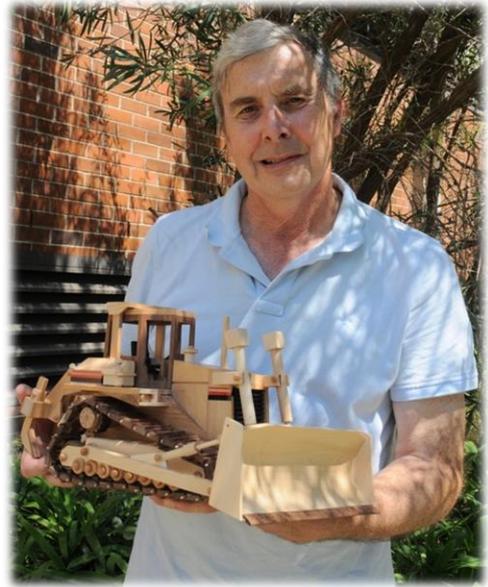
best view in the district.

Tony Blair

Peter Fowler's Model 'Dozer'

Hi Philip.

Thank you for your interest in a project that took me almost ten weeks to complete; but one that became frustratingly satisfying. I saw the original project in a catalogue <https://toysandjoys.com/81-the-hi-track-dozer.html> after I had visited a friend who actually owned a real Caterpillar D8 tractor. I loved the design and shape. I wanted one for myself and thought (stupidly) that I could make three of them; one for our new son-in-law in Canada, our son here in Thornleigh and myself, almost as quickly as I could make a single one. Definitely wrong!



The company, "Toys and Joys" that designs and provides the blueprints for the projects, is located in Washington State in the USA. It is located just across the border, in British Columbia, Canada.

Many of the Shed members are quite capable of making one or all of the patterns available from "Toys and Joys" and the parts in the kits are probably available from craft suppliers here in Australia. The "kit" for this tractor consists of three sizes of

dowels, the small runner wheels and the small plugs.

The plans are full size so can be used as templates but I used thin acetate sheets to trace the patterns, transferring them to the work piece. I have enclosed a photo of the final result but, if you wish, I can provide you with more detail and photos. The treads, cab body, drive sprockets, blade and ripper bar teeth are Black Walnut. The engine grill, instrument panel, seat and control knobs are Ebony and the remainder is made from Sugar Maple. The plans show you what you need to build and the steps that they used in the prototype but how you accomplish that repeatably, efficiently and safely is left to the individual builder.



For instance; each tread piece requires seven steps to complete and eight including finishing. For each tractor, there are 30 tread pieces per side. I cut and started out with 250 pieces of Walnut for three tractors. With minor variations in dimensions and, in spite of using jigs for cutting and drilling, I had 25% wastage in unusable pieces. The biggest challenge of the build was figuring out how to make each piece, repeatably and safely. The latter was my greatest concern.

I would be happy to provide a more detailed review of the build, if you wish, but with the quality of talent that I have seen at the Shed, I would definitely be "bringing coal to Newcastle".

Cheers,

Peter

Visit by Steve Fedorow, Group Manager Environment & Human Services, Hornby Shire Council

The Committee thought that a meeting with representatives of this Department would be beneficial to both parties; for us to demonstrate the benefits that we have to offer the local community and for them to recognise that and appreciate our needs to accommodate a growing membership, well into the future.

The date – 26 March was agreed, at 10.00 am and we were ready to greet the visitors with our lunch table set with an appealing morning tea. Steve was accompanied by Chris Budhan, Community and Cultural Development Manager and Cheryl Etheridge, Manager Library and Information Services.



We had developed a PowerPoint presentation for this meeting. It was set to play continuously throughout the meeting, enabling our visitors to view information about the Shed and prompting our questions to them. Steve was receptive to our needs, even considering a disabled parking spot.

We moved to a tour of the Shed, the machinery and its uses and members working on toys. Then the external woodstore. At 11.00 am, they left,

Cheryl with a supply of flyers to go to the local libraries and a hard copy of the PowerPoint.



Visit By The Mayor Of Yeongdong County, South Korea

I received a message a few weeks ago that the Mayor, Sae Bok Park and other members of the Yeongdong city council wanted to visit an Australian Men’s shed to see how it works. To suit them, the visit was set for 3.00pm on 6 April.

Eight people arrived, right on time, including a photographer. Communication was a little difficult with only one person able to speak good English but, with him translating, we managed to get across the Men’s Shed concept of working with the community and making toys for charity. They were interested in a tour of the Shed, what the various machines did and items we had made, including a rocking motor bike.

The banner in the picture below, is about their 2019 participation in the Korean folk festivals in Australia, international exchange, Yeongdong Delegation. The Mayor is wearing a yellow tie.



They left some tiny drum shaped ornaments (picture above right) and bottles of their local wine.

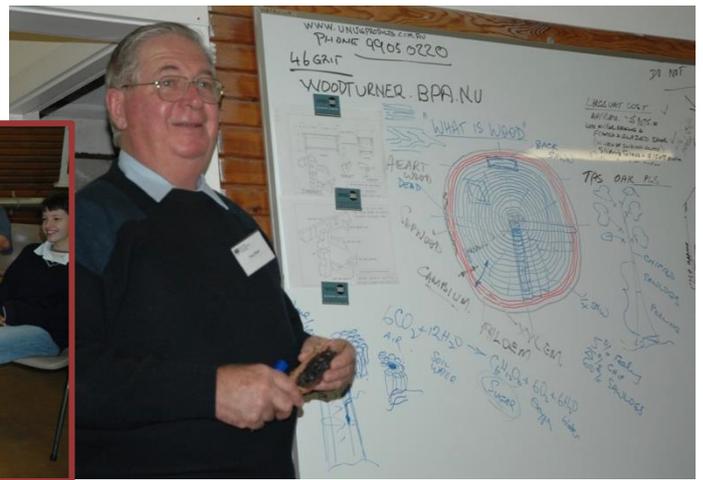


In the Shed, 14 Years Ago

With the Shed in its 18th year, I thought that it would be interesting to illustrate scenes from our past that were part of the development process leading to the successful Shed that we are today.

The photos below are from the members' meetings held in 2005. We moved to our current location late in 2010, before then, we occupied an ex scout hall in Headen Park Thornleigh. In those days, we held the monthly meetings in the evening when more time was allocated to presentations.

How many members do you recognise?



What is possibly the world's largest wooden tower clock is ticking away in Nannup, W.A.

Contentedly ticking away in a specially built shed in Nannup, Western Australia is possibly the largest working wooden tower clocks in the world. Four years into a 15-year journey that saw Kevin Bird build what is believed to be the world's largest wooden pendulum clock. Then he hit a major roadblock; a proposed civic centre that was supposed to house his six metre wooden clock was knocked back by the local council.

[Photo: The gear train is entirely wooden. The largest escapement rotates once a minute and the smallest, once every 12 months. \(ABC South West: Sharon Kennedy\)](#)

"Well, other people say you've got to keep going until it's finished so I just kept on digging.

"Ultimately I was left with all these pieces that were years of my life and unless they were all together and running it was just nothing more than expensive firewood."

A man's shed is his castle

So, Kevin Bird built a giant shed on his property in Nannup, in southwest WA, to house this giant clock. From there, he continued to tinker away in his shed slowly putting each piece together.

His goal was never to build the world's biggest wooden clock, but rather create something magnificent out of timber.

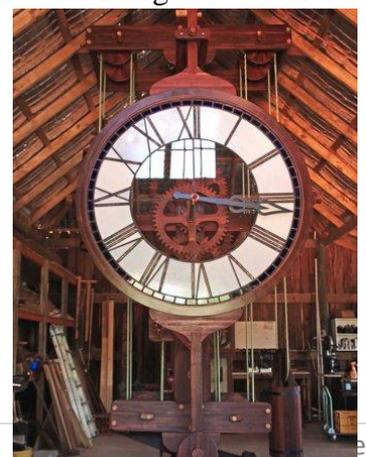
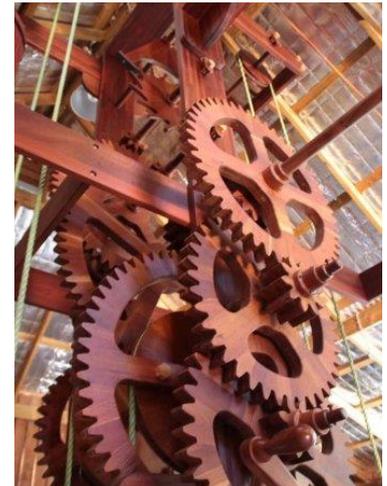
"There was a bit of a thing that timber was nothing other than woodchips and railway sleepers and I thought that's not quite right," Mr Bird said. "I was making smaller clocks and I thought I should really make a big one and that's how it started." Despite its size, the construction of the timepiece was not Mr Bird's biggest challenge. It was finding somewhere to eventually house it.

[Photo below: Margie Bird has supported her husband Kevin through this 15 year project. \(ABC South West: Kate Stephens\)](#)



The efforts took its toll on Mr Bird and his wife Margaret. When he couldn't put it up, he said "Margaret, I can't". I said "You have to have completion of this clock. It's been a long, long journey".

[Photo at right: The clock is 6m tall. The jarrah wood is one of the hardest in the world as well as being a timber that will age beautifully. \(ABC South West: Sharon Kennedy\)](#)



Built predominantly of jarrah by local Kevin Bird, the clock is nearly 6m tall and just over 3m wide and 3m long. The jarrah clock was originally destined for a new civic centre in the main street of Nannup. When the project did not eventuate, Mr Bird decided to assemble the clock in a specially built shed on his property. The clock face is 2m in diameter and made of leaded glass with a steel armature inside a timber frame. Building the clock has taken the best part of a decade of Mr Bird's life. But clocks have not always been his everyday focus.

A retired aircraft engineer, Mr Bird once had to service the navigational chronometers, which were mounted in the aircraft's instrument panel. "I hated it. They were terrible things to work on," he said. However, he did gain an indelibly stamped knowledge of clocks and their workings. Upon retirement, Mr Bird settled in Nannup, a historic timber town about four hours south of Perth. He combined his clockwork knowledge with a love of wood and began making pendulum driven timepieces.



[Photo: These wooden clock parts are made from local jarrah and she-oak timber. \(ABC South West: Kate Stephens\)](#)

For Mrs Walford, part of the clock's appeal is its recognition of Nannup's timber history. "Now that Nannup's timber industry is decreasing, and we're looking at alternatives for that, this is a really important way for us to conserve our history and honour our heritage," she said.

With his 15-year project now at an end, Mr Bird is not sure what is next on the cards. But in the meantime, he will have to come to terms with a silent and empty shed. "I went into the shed this morning to pick up some bits and it was so empty. I thought, oh well, that bit of my soul that was in my shed is now in the main street."

[Photo: The pendulum is 4m long and beats every 2 seconds \(ABC South West: Sharon Kennedy\)](#)

A falling weight is very accurate

Non-digital clocks can either be pendulum driven, using a falling weight, or can be spring wound. "A falling weight is a uniform driving force so it becomes very accurate," Mr Bird said. "Whereas a spring wound clock has more tension when (first) wound than it does as it nears rewinding." Spring wound clocks or watches need complex mechanisms to overcome that propensity.



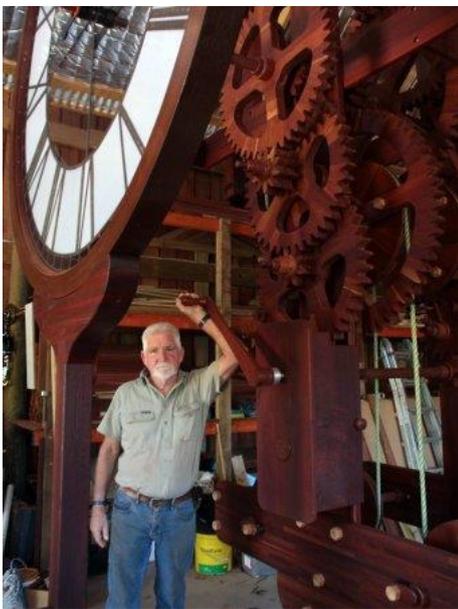
Mr Bird said the Westminster Clock in London is a tower pendulum clock which, after 170 years, is still one of the most accurate clock movements in the world. After running for some seven months, Mr Bird's creation varies by a minute within a week. "I'm hoping within six months to halve it to one minute in a fortnight," he said.

Forces of nature work against tower clocks

Mr Bird said most tower clocks used a four-metre pendulum, which is the most accurate. The square root of the pendulum determines its oscillation, so a 4m length will equate to a two-second period. However, nothing determined by physics is simple. "Pendulum oscillation period depends on length, height above sea level and distance from the equator," Mr Bird said "It's the rotation of the planet that determines its resonant frequency. If we took it to Perth, we'd have to reset it." Other forces of nature work against a tower clocks, such as weather and birds.

The Westminster Clock and its four 16ft (4.8m) hands has a robust movement to cope with perching pigeons putting it out of balance. "Imagine in the winter if they (the hands) are covered in snow. They've still got to work with terrible loads.

Mr Bird said there was another reason apart from visibility why tower clocks were so high. The long drop of the falling weights means that the mechanism only needs to be wound once every seven or eight days.



[Photo: The clock is hand made. Kevin Bird also made the lead glass clock face. \(ABC South West: Sharon Kennedy\)](#)

Mr Bird's creation requires winding twice a day. To save many a late night trip cranking the handle, Mr Bird devised a simple yet ingenious self-winding mechanism. As the weight descends, it trips a seesaw effect, which sets off an electric motor to drive the winding mechanism. The weight reversal is accompanied by "a lot of Harry Potter type clanking and clacking of wheels and pulleys".

Kevin Bird does not expect his clock to wear out in his lifetime or in his grandchildren's lifetime. "Everything so slow; the fastest (piece) is the escapement at the top which rotates one revolution per minute. That compares with the hour wheel which goes around once every 12 hours. Timber is a unique material. In Holland timber gear trains have been running for over 400 years." According to Mr Bird, the escapement was the most difficult piece to engineer correctly. "It is very similar to a watch escapement which is tiny and doesn't have inertia." Months of trial and error went into shaping a piece that was accurate and had very little recoil. "That's number nine: the other eight went up the chimney."

So, what has compelled him to sacrifice so many hours to its making? Visually, it's an art piece, it tells the time accurately and makes you feel good to look at it," he replied. "What more to you want?"

"Ultimately I was left with all these pieces that were years of my life and unless they were all together and running it was just nothing more than expensive firewood."

Recognition of Nannup's history

Nannup is an old timber town and is still home to an operating timber processing plant. Mr Bird used local timber varieties jarrah and she-oak to build the clock as a way of showcasing wood. "We've now got to go back to something that is sustainable that we can grow in our backyards and it will last and it's beautiful," Mr Bird said.

In late 2016 there was finally light at the end of the tunnel. Local business owner Heather Walford and her husband proposed to build a tower in the main street of Nannup to enclose and house the clock and turn it into a tourism draw-card. Ms Walford said she fell in love with the clock as soon as she saw it. "It's an absolute piece of art. It's a gorgeous thing to look at as well as being very, very big. It's a dream, it's a passion, it's got so many things going for it," she said.

The Nannup Shire sits on the banks of the Blackwood River and is often trying to draw tourists to the town as they take a trip to the neighbouring Margaret River wine region. Nannup Shire President Tony Dean said the clock was one of the greatest innovations in Nannup tourism. "We don't have any attractions — except for our natural beauty of course — but we don't have many built attractions and modern tourism needs built attractions and for that alone it will bring tourists," Mr Dean said. Hopefully this will iron out the seasonal tourism, so we have a constant flow of visitors to the CBD."

Source – ABC South West

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