

# Wonthaggi Woodcrafters 25 Years On

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2014, The Wonthaggi Woodcrafters Inc. celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a luncheon at the clubrooms.

Invited guests included inaugural members, life members and local State Member of Parliament, Ken Smith. Seventy members, guests and friends joined in celebrating what began as a small gathering of like-minded people at the Wonthaggi South Recreation Club rooms, to what is now a very active Club with over 60 male and female members, who are proud to meet, socialise and work in some of the best woodcrafting club facilities in Victoria.

The Club welcomed back inaugural members George Hill, John Lindsay, Charlie Griffiths & Len Jackson. Okke Huitema, who initiated the formation of the Club, was the first President and is still on the Club Committee, was also present. Okke's views and experience are still highly valued and respected by everyone at the Club.



Introduced by President John Hatton, speakers at the luncheon included life members Hartley Tobin and Roy Fischmann. They recounted the early days of the 'Woodies' and some of the milestones through to the present day. In the early days, the meetings were at various venues, even the Pigeon Club rooms and the garage/workshops of Harry Oates, Okke Huitema or George Hill. Today, the Club has two well-equipped workshops, a meeting room (in which the luncheon was held) which incorporates a kitchen and comprehensive library, an expansive veranda to host school groups and for expanded workshop use during inclement weather and an enclosed storage area.

It was great to have George Hill, seen as a guiding light in the early days of the Club, join us after lunch. George was secretary for the first 5 years and then President for 8 of the next 10 years. He was made the Club's first life member in 2000. George is highly regarded by members and so much an integral part of the history of our Club. Great food, great stories and reminiscences, meeting old friends and making new acquaintances; the continuous buzz of chatter and laughter, highlighted the importance of the celebration.

Wonthaggi Woodcrafters came into existence on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1989 as a group of enthusiasts and was officially named as such on October 4<sup>th</sup> of that year. However, it wasn't until 1998 that it had its own Club rooms at the Bass Coast Adult Education Centre and purchased its first woodlathe. During 2002, a new woodturning workshop was constructed and opened in December by Vic Wood.



Twenty-five years down the track, the Club is a strong, viable organisation, well-known and highly respected in the Bass Coast area. It caters for a diverse range of woodcrafting interests for both men and women. We're confident the Club will continue to provide opportunities for woodworking hobbyists for a long time to come.

New members are always very welcome and for information can contact us by email [wonthaggiwoodcrafters@gmail.com](mailto:wonthaggiwoodcrafters@gmail.com) or visit our website [www.wonthaggiwoodcrafters.com.au](http://www.wonthaggiwoodcrafters.com.au)

