

Mon Repos

NARRANDERA

Issue 3



Rowlings' Rant

2023 Wrap up

Well.....what a year!

What began as a couple of people asking if we'd ever offer any woodworking classes back in 2021 has become it's own enterprise.

We started by (very tentatively) offering one beginner woodworking class that was going to run on a Tuesday night. That quickly filled. Then we filled a Wednesday class. Then someone asked about a restoration class. We offered it for a Thursday night.

We were mildly gobsmacked. Maybe this would work!

Term 2 rolled around and 3 classes became 5, 2 on Tuesday and Wednesday, and the one on Thursday. That was a little more than we could handle, given our day jobs as well.

This issue

ROWLINGS' RANT

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I'd also been talking to a metalwork teacher I knew only from conversations on Facebook. He was doing some great stuff with his high school students with blacksmithing.

A very good friend and one of our biggest cheerleaders, Meredith, sent me an ABC article about the resurgence around the country of classes in Traditional trades and skills post Covid. She also sent one about Blacksmithing classes being run in Queensland.

Meredith planted a seed for us that is growing and blossoming into a behemoth that we didn't realise could exist. We introduced our Grandfather Trades classes.

In May we offered our first blacksmithing class with Brett and Lisa Inch travelling from Temora to run the classes for us.

In May I put out feelers through various social media groups for passionate people with skills that would be willing to teach traditional skills and trades.

We ran our first Soapmaking class in June, and leatherworking premiered in June as well. Jan Kates travels from near Queanbeyan to teach our soap making class each month. Geoff Poultney comes from Ardlethan to share his skills and knowledge in leatherworking.

We also began offering a woodworking class, with our 5 Board bench beginning in June (IT WAS A VERY BUSY MONTH!!)

We've also added another woodworking class with Planter Boxes premiering in November, along with Wool Felting taught by the marvellous Mary Casey from Griffith, and Beginner MIG Welding kicked off in November as well. Alex Dean nervously stepped up to the plate for that one, and knocked it out of the park.

Along the way, there's been newspaper articles, TV news stories, Mentions in NSW Parliament by our local Member (Thanks Steph Cooke), and a lot of laughs with some amazing people.

Because as much as these courses are about the skills, they're more about the people. We've met such a huge array of people over the last twelve months in this little community that is building.

We've had 170 people through the doors to do classes. If the weekly woodworking classes were counted as new people every week, that number would be closer to 700. Each person is a unique individual with a story of their own, a life that they've lived, and experience to share. Conservatively that number is closer to 150 with repeat customers.

That's mindblowing for what began as a couple of questions, random facebook interactions, and the sharing of some news articles.

There's been some sleepless nights, wondering if people were interested, or were going to turn up, or if the planning was correct for a new class. Usually for nothing, but it's a little worrying at times!

We can't forget to mention our suppliers, without whom none of this would be possible. Bruce and the team at Frasers H Hardware. Peter and the team at Gunns Mitre10. Dan and everyone at Grants Cypress. Jess for the amazing lunches and snacks (we REALLY love your work!). Fergus at Fergus's Vintage Tools. Small, family based businesses that support us, and who we love supporting in return.

So to the future.....what's next?

Well, all of our existing classes will continue to run. Dates and availability are listed below.

We're also looking at adding Candle Making, Leadlighting, Whittling and Carving. We'll begin some more DIY classes like DIY tools, Plastering, Glazing, and more. We'll be looking to add the next step of learning in several classes as well.

There's another couple of weekend woodworking classes that I'm looking to add, building an Adirondack Chair, and possibly a Workbench Building class.

I'll also be offering a Friday morning Beginner Woodworking class, running from 10-12.

If you know of anyone that is passionate about a traditional trade or skill, please get them to talk to us. We'd definitely love to talk to them.

As for us, well we're about to start our Christmas School holidays. Part of that will be doing further improvements to our workshop and outdoor learning spaces, adding storage and more lighting. We're also going to have a bit of a beach holiday, because if we don't get away, I'll just keep working!

Before I sign off for 2023, I really have to thank the brains behind the operation, my awesome wife Beck. She does all those little things in the background which make it easier for me to do the classes. And the big things.....possibly all the things. She continually amazes me with the way she goes about all the million things that she has going on, and just keeps doing it, day in, day out. Thank you, always and forever.

Have a marvellous Christmas, and an awesome New Year. Hope you get some relaxation in, as well as some time with family and friends.



One of the wonderful things about living and working in this amazing house is meeting people that have a connection to Mon Repos and The Murrumbidgee Club. If anyone has photos, stories and/or any memorabilia, we'd love to talk to you!



Furniture School Classes

Intermediate Woodwork: Tuesday 6-8pm Class Full

Beginner Woodwork: Wednesday 6-8pm 3 spaces available

Restoration Class: Thursday 6-8pm Class Full

****NEW CLASS** Beginner Woodworking FRIDAY 10-12 3 spaces available**

Grandfather Trade Classes

Blacksmithing

1 Day Beginner course \$300pp

March 9th 4 Positions

1 Day Metal Rose Course \$300pp

March 10th 4 Positions

Cold Process Soap Making

1 Day Course \$225

February 17th 4 Positions

March 9th 4 Positions

INTERMEDIATE CLASS

April 13th 4 Positions

Leatherworking

1 Day Course \$225

TBC 4 Positions

5 Board Bench

1 Day Course \$280

March 2nd 4 Positions

Cypress Planter Boxes

1 Day Course \$300

March 3rd 4 Positions

Wool Felting

1/2 Day Class \$150

TBC

Introduction to MIG Welding

1 Day Course \$280

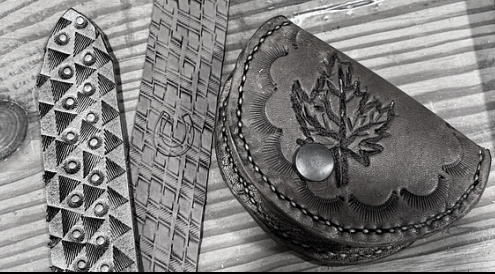
TBA Get in touch if you're interested
in this class

Candlemaking

1 Day Course \$TBC

TBC

**If you have a group of 4-6 and
would like to do this class
together, please get in touch with
us to discuss the possibility of
arranging a private date just for
your group**



New Classes

Introduction to DIY Tools: Got a shed full of tools, and don't know how to use them? Always had someone that told you not to worry about that tool, it was too dangerous, or the wrong tool, or you were the wrong gender to be using ANY tools?

This class is for you.

Our Instructors will run you through a variety of common DIY power tools available at any hardware store, and show you how to use them safely. We'll go into maintenance and accessories, storage and how to choose the right tool for the job.

Class will run on from 9-12 and 1-4 8 places per class

DATES TBA

Cost will be \$150 per person

Intermediate Welding: Students who have already completed the Introduction to MIG welding class can take it to the next level in this one day class, where students will build a Rocket Stove.

Class will run from 9-4

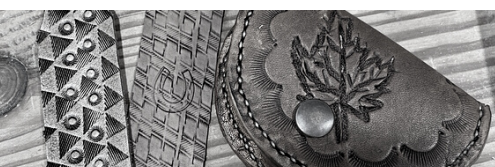
DATES TBA

Cost will be \$280 per person

*******IN DEVELOPMENT*******

Adirondack Chair: This class will have students building a classic Adirondack chair using locally milled Cypress Pine. The class will probably be a two day class, either over a weekend, or two Saturdays.

We're always on the lookout for new classes to teach, and for new teachers. If you have an idea for a class, or know someone that is passionate about a skill or trade, please let us know!





Meet the Teacher

Alex Dean - *Metal Fabricator, Vintage Car Restorer, Teacher and avid Vegetable Gardener*



10 Quick Questions

Favourite Footy Team?
Whoever I'm playing for

Favourite Food?
mum's lasagne

Favourite Song?
Zebra JBT
I'm on my way Rusted Root

Favourite Book?
Facebook Marketplace

Favourite Movie?
Italian Job & Sweet Home Alabama

Tea or Coffee?
COFFEE

Cats or Dogs?
Dogs

Why do you do what you do?

I teach because I love showing people how to do stuff for themselves. I also like to be a positive role model for young people that want to change their life and improve their journey.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

Not a teacher....

Favourite Season?
Sunny

One place you'd love to visit?
South America