

EDITION 98  
AUGUST 2015

# The Drift

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF  
THE AUSTRALIAN BLACKSMITHS ASSOCIATION (VICTORIA) INC.



Quarterly Newsletter of the  
Australian Blacksmiths  
Association (Victoria) Inc.  
Reg. # A0022819F

**EDITOR**

D.Tarrant  
editor@abavic.org.au

(After Victorian hours please  
i.e., after 5pm AEST or AESST)

All correspondence to:

**ABA (Vic) Inc.**  
PO Box 408  
Heidelberg VIC 3084

Association website:

[www.abavic.org.au](http://www.abavic.org.au)



**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**PATRON**

Keith Towe  
pkironwood@bigpond.com

**PRESIDENT**

Nick Hackett:

**VICE PRESIDENT**

Phil Pyros:

**SECRETARY**

Gavin Brown:  
thesec@abavic.org.au

**TREASURER**

Alice Garrett:

**GENERAL COMMITTEE**

Steve Nicoll:  
Paul Cockayne  
Dan Brady  
Tony Srdoc

**COVER  
IMAGE**

The Kelpies,  
Falkirk, Scotland  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
AMANDA GIBSON  
ARTICLE P 12



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## Workdays @ The Barn

Our regular workdays are fortnightly on Sundays  
from 10am until 4.30pm. Check the calendar on  
the back cover for dates. Also listed at <http://www.abavic.org.au>

The Committee will open The Barn at other mutually convenient times; please call the Secretary to arrange a time.

## Committee Meetings

The Committee usually meets every second month at  
The Barn on a Sunday workday at 10am. Members are  
most welcome to attend and, if invited, may participate.

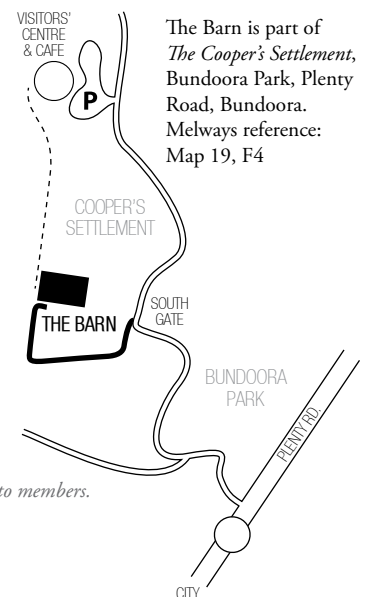
*The Drift publishes commercial advertising deemed by the committee to be of interest to members.*

*Advertising rates are: \$60 1/4 page, \$120 1/2 page, \$240 full page.*

*ABA(V) members are invited to insert classified advertisements free of charge.*

*Contact Alice Garrett, Treasurer, to book space and organise payment:*

*Deadline for next issue: 1 October 2015*



The Barn is part of  
*The Cooper's Settlement*,  
Bundoora Park, Plenty  
Road, Bundoora.  
Melways reference:  
Map 19, F4

## Purposes & Objectives of the ABA (Vic) Inc.

To promote, preserve and develop the craftsmanship,  
design aspects and techniques of all the various disciplines  
of blacksmithing to the highest standard possible.

To provide a means of communication between mature  
people with an interest in the craft of blacksmithing,  
for the exchange of ideas, experience, techniques and  
information for their mutual benefit, by the publication  
of a regular newsletter.

To encourage a greater awareness of and interest in the  
application of the skills of blacksmithing among architects,  
interior designers, art/craft groups, and the general public  
and to provide links between blacksmiths and potential  
customers by means of exhibitions, demonstrations and  
publications.

To promote, and actively provide opportunities for  
training in all the various aspects of blacksmithing by  
means of demonstrations, displays, lectures, and special  
tuition sessions.

To act as a representative body of the interests of Australian  
blacksmiths, locally, nationally and internationally.

To undertake community service, providing always that  
these services are within the comfortable limits of the  
time, talents and costs that the Association and individual  
members can afford.

To encourage communication and goodwill among  
blacksmiths everywhere.



# Editorial

Doug Tarrant

Some of our members were grossly offended by a throwaway line at the end of an article published in issue 97. For my part I am sorry on a number of fronts but particularly for not having recognised the possible offensive nature of the comment. The matter has been dealt with at committee level and I have apologised in writing to the member who first brought the matter to my attention. There is little more I can do other than to roll back the clock and start again. What's done is done. I can only strive to do better next time. To that end, in future I will be scrutinising copy beyond a scant gloss over for spelling mistakes which I correct as matter of course.

If your article does not pass the new scrutiny it will be sent back for alteration or will not get published. I have made this retrospective, meaning copy received for this issue has already been sent back for revision. It has not been returned and is therefore not included here. There will be no discussion on the matter. The problem remains though, that the responsibility in identifying offensive material will no doubt be left to me. This is a responsibility I do not relish and as sure as the sun will rise tomorrow I will stuff it up again. Mainly because what is offensive to me may not be offensive to the next person and vice versa. Enough of that. Once again, I apologise profusely for my part.

I hope you at least enjoyed the front cover of the last issue. It was a first and unless another image of the same ilk comes along it probably won't happen again. I'm pretty disappointed actually, and depressed at the response to what I thought was

a great issue.

This issue is once again supported by only a few members which is disappointing to say the least. I was also promised a couple of articles but they never came to fruition. I certainly feel I'm on the down hill run to my last Drift and that the effort is really just a waste of time. This is inevitable really as the experience of previous Drift producers will attest.

Clearly there is very little desire within the membership to share experiences, knowledge, news or even just a bit of gossip. It's like extracting teeth actually. The situation, which no doubt will remain unchanged, begs the question as to the need for a newsletter at all. If you have made no effort to contribute to the Drift in any way shape or form, but are

quite able, then these remarks are directed at you. When it becomes your turn to edit the Drift I hope things have changed.

## Belgium, Ypres 2016

*This arrived in the Ed's intray from our friend in NSW, Will Maguire.*

Hi Doug

I have been sent some info about a big forging event happening in Belgium next year. Thought your readership may be interested.

The more the merrier.

Kind regards Will

Will has expressly asked **not** to be contacted regarding Belgium. For further information visit <http://www.ypres2016.com/the-event/>



# President's Report

Nick Hackett



Edition number 97 of *The Drift* contained unnecessary remarks about the book "Striking Women" which were considered offensive by many of our members, this President included. Not unexpectedly the committee received several letters of complaint from the membership. The author of the article in question subsequently provided a written apology to the committee acknowledging the entirely inappropriate wording within the article.

That issue and some reported rumours of unfriendliness within ABA(Vic) provided the impetus for wider discussion within the committee on language used at The Barn and other association events and how we are viewed from the outside.

The decision was made that our association should make every effort to be and seen to be inclusive. We have a wide variety of members from divergent ethnic backgrounds, an ever growing number of women and several accompanied underage members. Every individual member has their own skill level and every

individual member has their own lifestyle. The committee agrees that all those divergent characteristics and interests of the members should be respected. Consequently any language or behaviour which could be considered too offensive to any of our members, or members of the public, is entirely unacceptable. I would point out that our tenure at The Barn is heavily subsidised through rental and electricity costs for example by Darebin Council and we are ultimately there at the approval of Parks Victoria. In terms of conduct, our association must as a minimum meet the standards of those organisations. There is also the corporate sponsorship from BOC gases to be considered.

The popular adage "not only do we need to be doing the right thing but be seen to be doing the right thing" also should work in reverse. To be seen doing the right thing should not be merely an act or veil.

An important positive result came from all of this. 1. A serious issue arose. 2. The committee was informed in writing. 3. The committee addressed the issue in depth.

We hear many rumours of ill feeling and bad blood developing among members in regards to the running of the association. The above illustrates quite well that if you have an issue, inform the committee in writing and the issue will be addressed. Gripping and moaning to anyone who cares to listen will only encourage more angst. And if you are unhappy with the way the committee works and the decisions it makes, get yourself on the committee to change things. Echuca was a quiet event this year with only 8 smiths

demonstrating over the weekend. Unfortunately our request for a cleared shed on arrival was ignored and the organisers were very reluctant and indeed grumpy to supply us with firewood. Considering everyone brings all their heavy and cumbersome forging equipment mostly from Melbourne, how are we supposed to also bring firewood? I for one regard the situation as unreasonable. A few members managed to sell enough items to mitigate fuel costs but not all. No matter, we were there to demonstrate our skills and engage with the public and that side of things took care of itself. It seems that where there is hot steel and noise, a crowd will gather. It must be that primeval allure referred to by Mary Hackett in her statement about our recent exhibition at RMIT. Sadly the weekend turned sour for myself as I had a recurrence of my previous back injury and was unable to participate on the Sunday. The organisation that approached us in regards to running classes in blacksmithing has not been back in touch so there is nothing to report there. It remains my view and the general view of the committee that we must pursue this type of activity with the public to raise funds for the association. Our skills and facilities are of significant value and I see no reason why we shouldn't realise some of that value as long as it is in keeping with our aims and objectives, we implement the correct model ensuring all insurance issues are dealt with and everything is transparent.

The committee welcomes all input on this subject. Via email or letter please.



# Secretary's Report

Gavin Brown



So this is the final Secretaries report for the financial year 2014-15. And we would have had our AGM by the time this gets out too so I may not even be the secretary any more. But I guess that would be ok – no more spelling mistakes.

I, unfortunately, was unable to make it to the previous 2 committee meetings but we have discussed some important things. The first thing that comes to mind was the previous Drift article regarding the book Striking Women. I would like to apologize on behalf of the committee regarding the comment that was made and that it was not picked up prior to being printed. Phil has written a formal apology which is published in this Drift.

Another issue we have discussed as a committee is the current 'Stigma' ABA (Vic) has regarding friendliness and approachability – especially with new members. This was new to me, and being a relatively new member (6 yrs isn't that long) I found this a little confronting. Although this news came to me re-

cently I am hoping with our new Self-Paced Learning tasks and guidance is making new members feel more welcome and giving you some direction. If not I would really love to hear what new members have to say about how they felt when they joined because if we don't have any new members how can we preserve our craft?

We had a few issues with the mail out for the last drift. Unfortunately we don't know what went wrong but we're pretty sure we fixed it. However, if you didn't get the Drift let us know.

By this stage you should have paid your fees for the 2015-16 year. And with that you should have filled out and signed a 2015-16 form. I will be using those forms to update our member database and if your name isn't on the database you will not receive a Drift. The committee is also looking in to a way to manage the members list better, so if some tech savvy members out there have some ideas feel free to contribute.

Speaking of the Drift it has always been a bit of a struggle to get members to submit articles. We do have members who regularly submit articles and to those members I say a big THANK YOU. You know who you are. I'm not sure why other members don't submit articles. Is it because you don't know what to write? Is it that you don't think others will read what you say? Is it because you think you're too new to blacksmithing to write anything worthy? I hope not. Just remember that if you find it interesting then

others probably will too.

Thanks for the year all and I hope I will stay your Sec next year too.

Gav

.....and this is nice.

Dear Sir

*I recently had the good fortune to undertake an introduction to blacksmithing course with one of your members, Ray Gard, at his Raven Forge at Thalloo. I had been wanting to try my hand at blacksmithing for many years and made an internet search of blacksmiths who provided training courses. What attracted me to Mr Gard's course was the fact that he offered one-on-one training and, when I contacted him, he told me to "bring a sense of humour". I could not have made a better choice.*

*Mr Gard's skill and experience at his craft, combined with his excellent teaching manner, made my experience both interesting and productive. In past lives I have had a lot of experience in adult education; and I could not fault Mr Gard's approach to his course. Whilst relaxed, he paid close attention to safety and multi-tasking; and I really benefitted from his approach. One of the things which really impressed me was his dedication and faith to his ancient craft of blacksmithing -there were no shortcuts; all holes were punched and not drilled; and all work was done with a traditional coke forge at the anvil.*

*I found Mr Gard to be a friendly, knowledgeable and affable man and I commend him to you and your members as a person who displays, in my opinion and experience, the highest standards of integrity in your craft. I should have no hesitation, whatsoever, in recommending his course. Best wishes to you and your members for keeping this ancient and most worthwhile craft alive.*

Yours sincerely

Dick Adams

Springwood, NSW

# 2015 ABA(Vic) AGM

Gavin Brown

On the 26th of July 2015 we had our Annual General Meeting in the Chapel at Bundoora Settlement. It was a cold morning that didn't seem to warm up. 26 members sat in the freezing church for the meeting which went for an hour and a half. We heard reports from the committee members about the year and heard from Beka from Blacksmith Dorris about how they're going.

We also discussed the current or past perception of the association with regard to new members. This was mentioned by Andy Jagger who first brought it to our attention. He had heard that new members would attend and be ignored so would leave. A general discussion continued and the committee believes that the perception has changed and that is due to induction members being at regular Barn days.

In the 2014-15 year we had 156 members. A special thanks to Paul Cockayne, who is apparently a number cruncher in his spare

time, for working that out. He also looked in to the past years which show we are slowly growing every year. We must be doing something right I guess. Unfortunately he also worked out that from the 156 members only 44 have paid up for this coming year. So if you want to keep receiving the Drift please pay for membership AND fill out a membership form (can be downloaded from the web page or filled out at the Barn).

Another important discussion was had about our General Policy for members. Dan Brady spoke about our need to be accepting and approachable by everyone. We are only here because the Darebin Council and the Settlement let us and we are seen by the public. We also need to be inclusive of everyone – members and the public included. Paul Cockayne finished by saying that unless issues are formally presented in writing to the committee they cannot be addressed.

All past and present Life members were invited to attend the meeting and receive a framed award noting their life membership. It was good to see Don Marshall, Keith Towe, Doug Tarrant and Nick Hackett and a shame that the others could not attend. Roland Dannenhauer was awarded with life membership for his ongoing assistance with the Tree Project and commitment to the Association. And lastly, Mary Hackett was awarded with the Founders Trophy by Keith Towe for her dedication to Blacksmith Doris. Well done Roland and Mary and thanks for your commitment to the Association.

Lastly, the new committee was elected. Nick Hackett was elected president, I was elected Secretary, Alice Garrett was elected treasurer, Phil Pyros was elected Vice-President and Dan Brady, Steve Nicoll and Paul Cockayne were elected as general committee members. With one committee position left 3 members from the floor put up their hands for the job; Tony Srdoc, Ben Sokol and Gerald Butler. Tony was elected after a vote and Ben and Gerald are going to be Sub-committee members.

At the end of the meeting it was time for another great BBQ by Serge. We all moved over to the Barn and thawed out slightly while waiting for the snags, steaks, hamburgers and vegies to be cooked. We caught up with people who we don't see at the barn often and had a few Beveridge's. All in all it was a great day. Hopefully next year more members can attend.



2015-16 Committee; Standing L-R Paul Cockayne, Nick Hackett, Gavin Brown, Alice Garrett, Dan Brady, Phil Pyros. Kneeling Tony Srdoc, Steve Nicoll



# From the Patron

Keith Towe

Why is Artistic Hand Crafted Work Ignored in Australia?

Calligraphy, Ceramics, Fabrics, Glass -- Blown, Slumped. Stained, Paper Crafts, Metal Crafts -- Artist Blacksmithing, Gold Smithing, Silver Smithing, Non Ferrous Casting, Jewellery, other than Metal Crafts, Quilting, Sculpture, Timber -- Turning, Carving, Boxmaking, Furniture .

All these three dimensional Craft/Arts can be viewed from all sides or any angle, and there are certainly many, many fine examples of the work of each of the above Crafts throughout Australia, yet they are so often looked down upon by practitioners of two dimensional Paintings, as not being real "Art", yet I have seen many, many examples of "So called" Art, hanging on the walls of public and private Galleries, and commercial establishments with no design aspects, and that fail to impress in the least.

How is it that wall hung paintings and sketches, can dominate Art Exhibitions throughout this country to the exclusion of any of the creative disciplines above?

Keith Towe June. 2015

Are we still a viable Trade/Craft? The beginning of our Association came about as a result of the closure of the Apprenticeship Commission of Victoria and the death of a system that trained 10's of thousands of young men and women in a multitude of Trades and Crafts, and with the resulting loss of training, not just for Blacksmithing but for most other Trades.

The great training Factories such as

the Ordnance Factory Maribyrnong, The Ammunition Factory Footscray, Navy, Railway and Port Authorities, the Agricultural Factories and 100's of small businesses that trained apprentices and sent them to the RMIT for formal studies to comply with the State Training Board's requirements were left to ponder their future and the future of their partly trained apprentices. The RMIT wished to become a University and Trades were not on their future curricular. For a year or so many partly trained apprentices were sent to South Australia for block training before South Australia too ended their Apprentice system.

Was this action great foresight, or an economic decision? Maybe the following details will provide some answers, and maybe it has all happened before and will happen again.

I can recall in the 1960's 70's when most metal machining was done on Engine Lathes and Capstan Lathes by skilled turner, then in the 1980's CNC Machines were imported to greatly increase the work required, and hopefully reduce the costs. This resulted in workshops having just one or two CNC experts who programed the machines, and semi-skilled operators employed to load and unload the machines, so many trained Machinists were made redundant.

In later years we saw Sintering of small gears and precision components that had previously been made in Gear Cutting workshops, then came Fine Blanking of precision parts at a fraction of the cost of the then stamping methods and machined products. Now we

see 3D components that can be made in the kitchens of private homes that will again impinge on currently accepted manufacturing methods, and will again result in redundancies.

We may well think that this a modern day phenomenon, but about the time Captain Cook was discovering the East Coast of Australia, the Watts Steam Engine invention was the catalyst for the beginning of a period where many skilled trades suffered both the loss of individual skills and the loss of work.

In England, Henry Maudslay developed the first large and important Line Production Processes with equipment commissioned for the Royal Navy at the time of the Napoleonic Wars. The new process reduced both the required skills and the time required to make Running Blocks for Sailing Ships, and this resulted in 100's of skilled workers being made redundant by the use of Line Shafting run by one steam engine. Remember this was in the 1770's, so the situation is not new.

James Nasmyth's invention of the Steam Hammer led to very much quicker, more cost effective heavy Forging methods and again led to redundancies and the loss of individual skills, incidentally, Nasmyth's Hammer was an afterthought while developing a Steam Pile driver for the Royal Navy.

.../p8

## From the Patron

(continued)

Did the advantages of very much lower production costs outweigh the loss of individual skills in the 1770's and up until today, and will it continue until

there is just a handful of specialists who control Manufacture and Design applications?.

After visiting the Rare Trades Fair at Kyneton, I am confident that many so called Lost Skills are being maintained, albeit in a very small way by older blokes, not enough young blokes are interested in such skills, they would rather exercise their thumbs on their Mobile phones, and hand skills of any nature are "Old Hat" to many.

At the Rare Trades Day, there were at least 5 Blacksmiths working and a couple of others who sometimes hit Hot metal, so that was a good sign for our Craft, but each year I see dozens of newcomers join our Association only to disappear after a year or so, and as a fairly regular attendee to the Barn, I do not know 60% of the members these days.

What does the future hold for our Association say in the year 2050? will Blacksmithing still be practiced as we know it now? Will those intricate hand skills still be widely practiced?

It was pleasing that our Committee has introduced some training for punch, drift and threading of bars for lattice type projects, a skill that we do not see very often here in Australia.

Keith Towe. June. 2015



# Chamberlain Anvils

Mark Coleran



Chamberlain Anvil manufactured in Australia could be Australia's rarest Anvil. It was cast at Chamberlain Industries Foundry at Welshpool Western Australia around 1984-1985. About 30 were made 2 were of Carbon Steel and the remainder were of Mild Steel.

Alan Hawker "Bob" Chamberlain an inventive and innovative Engineer was born in Melbourne. During the Second World War period he was sent to the United States to work with a design team on a new tank, where he was exposed to the latest in engineering design and manufacturing techniques.

He was persuaded by the Western Australia's State Government to build a tractor in an ex munitions factory in Welshpool. The first prototype was assembled and produced in 1949 and in the same year 10 more tractors were manufactured. The popularity and increased productivity produced at Chamberlain Industries and

with a tractor made for Australian conditions, resulted in many agencies being established in Australia.

In 1970 John Deere purchased a 49% holding in Chamberlain and as a consequence Chamberlain was renamed Chamberlain John Deere.

In 1986 due to a significant decline in the demand for tractors the manufacture of the Chamberlain Tractor ceased and Chamberlain became a fully owned subsidiary of John Deere.

It is a coincidence that prior to the demise of Chamberlain, who were primarily a tractor manufacturer that they produced an Anvil and the company that took over Chamberlain originated from John Deere a Blacksmith made famous for developing a new plow from using an Anvil.

Image:<http://www.ozwrenches.com/Images/chamberlain/Anvil.jpg>





# Backyard Blacksmithing

Alice Garrett

*This issue's article on backyard blacksmithing is on Nick Hackett. Our President. Which of course is also Mary Hackett's forging space as well and I will be interviewing her at a later date.*

*How long have you been blacksmithing?*

It has been 30 years since I began forging. I started working copper, brass and silver at Art School in 1985 and almost immediately began to forge and heat treat steel to make tools. My first power hammer forging was in 1990 under a 5 cwt Massey at a workshop in Footscray.

I have worked predominantly in steel since about 1988, making furniture, architectural fittings and sculpture. Forging has always played a role in my work, beginning with tools, creeping into my finished works as feature details and textural elements and gradually coming to dominate my practice. I have worked mainly as a blacksmith since the early 2000's, becoming a member of ABA(Vic) about 10 years ago.

*Did you buy or make your forge? If made how?*

I have several forges, coke and gas and have always built my own. They forges are always built with fabricated steel, more often than not, recycled. My main forge in the back yard is an open hearth configuration similar to those at The Barn. This is supplied with air via an industrial blower salvaged from the scrap yard. I have recently built a gas forge from a stainless steel beer keg lined with firebricks. I have made the burner from fabricated steel with a 0.9 mm MIG tip as gas outlet. I have to admit plagiarising that particular technique from our good friend, ABA(Vic) member and Echuca regular Simon Baxter. The regulator for the gas flow is a specific for LPG and can be purchased at Niche Gas Products in Preston. Additionally I have use of a diesel forge at Blueprint Sculpture where my spring hammer is situated.



This one was acquired and adapted for both forge and foundry applications by ABA(Vic) member Brendan Hackett. Over the years both Brendan and I have

made a number of forges as required for specific jobs. There are as many opinions out there on forge making as there are for sore back remedies. It isn't rocket science. The basics have been known for several thousand years. Fire, air and some way of containing the combination.

*Are there any issues with forging in your area?*

I live next door to a park and the forge is adjacent to that so I have no issues. I never make noise after hours. I haven't had a single complaint in 14 years at my current address and locals are often surprised to know there is a blacksmith in their midst.

*What's the best thing about forging from home?*

As with any working from home situation, there are plenty of advantages of having a forge in the back yard. Being around for my kids when they were still kids was major upside. Not having to deal with daily peak hour traffic is another. I suppose the overarching factor is being able to work on my own terms and within reason, whenever I feel like it.

*How long did it take to set up your forge? And are there any tools you'd still like to add to your workshop?*

The workshop is continually being developed, changed around and grown so it could be said that this particular forge has taken 14 years to set up. Given that I still use tools I acquired in the mid 1980's there is an argument that it has taken 30 years. Tools come and go and there are always semi made sets of tongs, chisels and punches on various shelves. Everyone has a wish list of tools and equipment and the more we acquire, the longer the list gets.

Anyone got a forging press they don't need anymore?



# Raw Coercion

Mary Hackett

When blacksmiths build a forge fire they heap the fuel high. This is done to raise the heart of the fire. The steel is driven into that heart.

As an historically primary craft practice, blacksmithing demonstrates our early exploration of substance from a time when it was imbued with life and magic. Raw Coercion focuses attention on the making aspect of a blacksmithing practice and the primeval allure that was the foundation of the craft. Raw Coercion deconstructs and subverts our understanding of processes while drawing attention to our reliance and exploitation of materials within contemporary society by presenting the act of blacksmithing in unfamiliar formats.

Nick Hackett's works highlight the ephemeral quality of steel as material which is generally perceived as enduring but has, in fact, an impermanent nature. By 'unmaking' blacksmithed pieces and echoing archaeological digs Nick questions the perceived permanence of iron as material.

Mary Hackett concentrates obsessively on the process of quenching, the cooling of steel to harden. Her work draws us close to the sublime magic of a quench by isolating and scrutinising that moment. However, true comprehension seems just out of reach.

This is an exhibition that was on until 20 July and open to the public day and night. It was designed as a prequel to an exhibition that Nick and I have organised for Radiant Pavilion, a jewellers and object makers event happening in Melbourne in September. We were invited to exhibit by the head of the Art In Public Space department as part of the Master of Arts (Art in Public Space), post graduate conference. The exhibition consists of our work in window boxes that show out onto the street. The premise of the show was to present our independent research on

processes within blacksmithing - Nick's unmaking and my focus on quenching.

Nick's work for this exhibition had an archaeological feel to it. He used wrought iron as steel 'reo' within cement. The cement was dug into, and this excavation revealed the ironwork which was left to rust. This was placed into the window after the length had been cut to fit the space.

His next piece was a section of rusted wrought iron placed onto paper and coke dust piled on top. Nick then exposed some of the ironwork. The whole thing was sprayed with water and left to rust further over the period of time that the exhibition was held. The rust from the ironwork will transfer itself onto the paper leaving the form of the wrought iron.

The third piece in his series was a photograph of a drawing executed in the above manner. It shows the stain of the rust, the coke dust and the effects on the paper that occurred from the wrought iron.

His last window showed an unmade, or compressed, wrought iron screen. He used his wrought iron squashing technique which was paused at a point where the individual units could still be recognised. Alice Garrett worked on the squashing as Nick's back was giving him trouble. I believe that Alice found the experience thought provoking.

My work, and I can talk more extensively on it as I know it, was a narrative of a quench. The centre window box was occupied with a video of a yellow-hot steel ball being dropped into a glass tank full of water. The ball was hollow. I had raised it from two pieces of mild steel. Raising is a technique used in silversmithing that forges metal, usually copper or silver, up from flat sheet to make dish forms. I raised steel discs to match and fused them together. I then, with help from Nick and Angus Hackett, repeatedly

heated it up to yellow-hot and dropped it into cold water while it was being videoed. The one in the window box shows a ball that had been tortured by the heat and full of minute holes so that water seeped into the ball, which sunk. On the opening night of the exhibition the video was projected up onto the wall of the building opposite the Art In Public Space Building.

My second window showed the fire in the forge and a yellow-hot ball surrounded by coke, and the third was an image of the ball dropping through the water creating a vessel in the water as it parted to accommodate the ball. These images describe a couple of the steps of a quench - the heating of the metal and the cooling down.

The third photograph, in my fourth window, was a photograph of the whole drop of the ball. It had been taken by Angus as a long exposure. It is a gorgeous image, full of grey shadows. It documents the decent of the ball from its release until it touches the bottom of the tank.

The last window holds the hollow, tortured ball. Scale sat on the centre of box on the floor as if the ball had dropped there. The ball rested to the side of the window box. Presumably it rolled there, or bounced on the surface of the imagined water.

With this sequence I presented descriptions of a quench. Each description is a legitimate account of what occurs in a quench, though it isn't the quench, obviously. The actual event is something that can only really be experienced in the blacksmith's workshop, and only truly by the blacksmith, as other sensorial responses - sound, smell, heat, and the kickback of the object from the shock of hot meeting cold - cannot be conveyed. The quenching narrative, then, is only a shallow encounter and we, as smiths, have a unique perspective on process.



# Smiths in Scotland

Amanda Gibson

I ran through the process of creating the Blacksmiths Tree and the huge benefit the project has had on the fire affected communities.

I had the good fortune last year to travel to Glasgow for a conference run by the International Association for Community Development. I was there to speak to an audience of community development workers from around the world about the making of the Blacksmiths Tree. My thanks go to Nillumbik Shire Council who donated the air fare and made it possible for me to attend the conference. While I was on that side of the world, I sought out a few of the blacksmiths who had been instrumental in helping spread the word about the Tree Project and bringing the blacksmith-made leaves to Australia.

I happened to be staying near the majestic Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum. It's full of incredible art, including a magnificent Salvador Dali painting of the crucifixion, works by a blindingly talented group called the Glasgow Boys and some striking contemporary sculpture. The first day I visited I was delighted by an organ recital in the great hall. It was at Kelvingrove I ran into my first ex-pat, in the form of a rather shabby looking stuffed platypus in the "Most Poisonous Things" exhibit. He was a specimen of a fair age, and looked as though he had been in the hands of an upholsterer rather than an experienced taxidermist, as the poor fellow resembled more of a surprised pillowcase than any platypus I had

ever seen. Nice to see a familiar face though. Having said that, the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum is the most visited gallery in the UK outside London and it's not hard to see why, the armour and weaponry dating back to the Dark Ages is alone worth the visit.

Glasgow is a fantastic city to explore, from the edgy street art and vintage shops to the magnificent necropolis where I discovered the gravestone of William Miller, the writer of "Wee Willie Winkie." I also happened across a nice piece of forging in the

art nouveau in the world. The street was barricaded and huge blackened windows faced out revealing the terrible damage inside.

The University of Glasgow, where the conference was held, was of suitable Gothic splendour. It was founded in 1451 and parts of some buildings date back to that time. I took special note of the University gates, made in the 1950s of forged steel to commemorate outstanding graduates of the first 500 years of the University. The conference, Community is the Answer, was



form of a short balustrade and gate. The plant like forms were reminiscent of the seating for the Tree site I was working on with blacksmiths back home. A heartbreaking thing to see was the Glasgow School of Art. The early buildings were designed by Glaswegian architect and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh in the late 19th Century. A few weeks before my arrival, a fire had broken out in the older buildings and destroyed the iconic library, known as being one of the finest examples of

attended by hundreds and the place was a constant buzz of activity throughout the three days. To give context to my presentation I had to outline the destruction and severity of the Black Saturday fires- the largest wildfires in human history. I also gave a brief overview of the work of blacksmiths, my favourite images being of a large gate Bill Bunting had worked on and a delicate set of cutlery made by Steve Nicoll to show the scope of work blacksmiths are capable of.



Close-ups of Doug Tarrant's and Henk Welton's beautiful leaves were met with awe. I ran through the process of creating the Blacksmiths Tree and the huge benefit the project has had on the fire affected communities. The Blacksmiths Tree is an unusual project, particularly in the community development area. The presentation was received very well, to the extent that I still receive emails from people who heard about it.

As part of the conference, I went on a field trip to Galgael—a community boat building collective. The workshop has been running for 15 years, using timber that would usually go to landfill to

of the workshop I discovered the “Smiddy” where a very nice forge, anvil and set of tools lived. I spent the afternoon firing up the forge and teaching the boat builders basic tapers and scrolls. hilariously, although there were plenty of forging tools, there were no actual hammers and it took a while to find a couple of hammers and attach them to handles.

To my joy, the blokes at Galgael knew Andy Scott, a local sculptor who had designed the Kelpies. The Kelpies are a massive sculpture of a pair of horse heads by a canal near Falkirk. I had been watching the building of this enormous sculpture online. It had just been finished and

and the park surrounding them was full of visitors and kids playing on the day I was there. The legend of the kelpies is surprisingly rather grim, considering the beauty of the sculptures. Kelpies are water spirits that live in canals and occasionally they take the form of horses. If someone was to mount a kelpie-horse, it would rear up and plunge into the depths of the canal, taking the person with them. The person was presumably eaten. Moral: do not sit on strange horses you find by a canal.

The designer of the Kelpies is Andy Scott. Educated at the Glasgow School of Art, his workshop is also in Glasgow. The day I dropped in, it was full of galloping horses. Andy was making a set of five to go in a private garden and they were in various stages of completion from rudimentary wire skeletons to fully formed animals, all constructed of tiny pieces of metal MIG welded together. They are curiously ethereal although made of steel. Andy was trained as a sculptor in bronze, but his welded steel work is cheaper and faster than bronze casting. He regularly works with teams of structural engineers, lighting designers and fabricators on large public artwork, but it's the smaller pieces he's made in his workshop that I like. His work is distinctive and his forms often have a flowing moving feel to them. He is currently working on a memorial sculpture to commemorate the men who lost their lives in the Scottish steel industry.

The travels continue next issue with a visit to Terrence Clark's workshop and the Quinnell School of Blacksmithing.



make wooden boats. The Galgael Trust runs 12 week courses in woodworking and those interested in developing their skills further join the boat building team. They sell wood carvings, chopping blocks, drawers and anything made of wood in a small gallery/shop to raise money for the group. There's a great feeling of camaraderie in the workshop, which is great as many of the men there have come from difficult environments or have been long term unemployed. At the back

I was keen to visit. A quick phone call to Andy meant I was going to visit his workshop as well.

The Kelpies have to be visited to appreciate their scale. Built of structural steel with a stainless steel cladding, they are 30 metres high and weigh 300 tonnes each. The process of fabricating the steel took several years. They are positioned either side of a specially constructed lock and basin, part of a canal extension. They're beautiful to see,



# Echuca-A Personal View

Andy Jagger

What do I say about an ABA(V) institution that's been reported on for twenty years? I've been a member for 8 - 10 years but have attended the Steam Rally for only the last two so my viewpoint is as a newbie in a way.

Exhibits range from the massive steam traction engines through small two seater steam cars to tiny model steam engines and on the way diverge to historical pushbikes and controversial monster trucks.

Why did I go? Well last year was to see what it was all about and this year was because I enjoyed the first visit and I'm sure that's why some stalwarts have been going solidly since the beginning. As I do several shows a year and have done so for several years, for me, its not the thrill (and it is a thrill) of performing before the public, its the camaraderie, the craic, the characters and of course the Saturday night around the campfire.

Here's the thing - there's nothing special about the campfire - a few logs on the shed floor, simple, tasty food, basic seating, beverage of your own choice but it all conspires to an atmosphere of sharing, yarns, laughs, deep relaxation and the slow realisation that it was worth coming for this alone. Meanwhile, since the public left between 4 & 5pm, the steam imps have started to appear on the oval and the smith's shed is a ringside seat! Now is when some of the steamers really show their paces. It might start with a steam car being fired up and run around the deserted oval at top speed then maybe an ancient truck and part of the fun is being able to catch a ride on these living fossils - even drive one - just ask Alice!

Smithing will always draw me in and being able to share that passion doubles the enjoyment. As with any group there is a range of characters and skill sets. At the same time as

being the visual spectacle that the public expects these individuals were working and interacting with one another. Skills were being passed on and absorbed in a quiet and pleasant way and info and experiences shared almost unnoticed amongst inconsequential chat and laughter.

Simon, our longstanding and popular chef, lives 25 mins or so from Echuca and was mentoring newchum Peter from near Shepparton, a useful hookup as both live so far from the Barn, and from this came conversation that led to further thoughts on the subject of country members, travel, overcrowded facilities at the Barn and the value of getting together. So there's a subject for a whole other article.

Cheers

Andy J



# A Smudge

Keith Towe



*A smudge of Blacksmiths*

Collective Nouns given to various groups, such as "A Murder of Crows" A Gaggles of Geese, A Herd of Cows, etc.

In the past I have often discussed with friends what we should call a group of Blacksmiths.

In the daily Newspaper recently I read that Blacksmiths working on early

Naval shipping were nicknamed "Smudge" as they usually had Coal Smudged faces, because Coal was the fuel for both the ships boilers and the smiths forge, so may I suggest that we call a group of Blacksmiths "A Smudge of Blacksmiths"

Keith Towe. June. 2015



# Association Notices

## BARN FORGEMASTERS

Barn Day    Morning    Afternoon

2.8.15*	Keith,	Alice
16.8.15	Doug,	Paul
30.8.15	Phil,	Steve
13.9.15*	Gavin,	Nick
27.9.15	Dan,	Keith
11.10.15	Alice,	Doug
25.10.15*	Paul,	Phil
8.11.15	Steve,	Gavin
22.11.15	Nick,	Dan

\* Committee meeting

## TRAINING

Gavin has reworked the self paced learning program and we are now ready to implement the revised document.

Advanced Wrought Iron is in progress although over an extended period due to availability of participants and instructors. The participants are working at their own pace practicing splitting and drifting square and round holes to size and the course will resume apace when all are competent and confident in these techniques.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

As most of you would have realized we have passed into the new financial year. Which means you need to renew your membership if you haven't done so already.

Please be mindful of your penmanship and write as clearly as possible especially regarding email addresses when you're filling out membership forms. Also update any information that may have changed e.g. address, email.

Every quarter the Drift is sent out, I generally get 1 or 2 copies that are "return to sender". It is a shame that those people didn't get the Drift but also a waste of our resources.

Regards Treasurer.

## LIBRARY

Response to correspondence regarding Library Portfolio Notice in Drift 97 Edition

"I unreservedly apologise if I offended any members of the Association with my comments about the book "Striking Women". It was never my intention to insult or belittle anyone as those who know me in the Association will confirm." An order for the book Striking Women has been placed and it's availability from the Barn Library will appear in these notices when it arrives.

Regards

Phil Pyros

## BLACKSMITH DORIS

Blacksmith Doris is enjoying its fifth year at the Association. It has quietly - not that quietly - okay, loudly - worked on the first Saturday of every month for a few years now. Women have become a part of the composition of the Australian Blacksmiths Association (Vic). It is common to see women working on regular barn days, and women who actually smith are on the committee. This is a great achievement for the association as, when I first attended social blacksmithing events, there were no women blacksmiths who practiced the craft attached to the association. It is truly wonderful to see women being accepted as capable blacksmiths.

Thanks to Radiant Pavilion, Doris women will become an exhibit for, hopefully, a small group of curious jewellery based spectators on the first Saturday of September between 10.30 am and 2.30 pm. We have the bones of a blog created especially for the event: <http://todoriswego.blogspot.com.au> that will be worked on over the next couple of months.

Mary Hackett

## INTRODUCTION TO BLACKSMITHING DAYS

Have you been at The Barn a few times now but never learnt to light a forge? Have you looked around The Barn and thought, "what is that tool used for"? Can you name all the parts of the anvil? Have you just joined up and have never been to The Barn and don't know where to start? Are you going through the self-paced learning tasks? Then this is the course for you.

On the Introduction to Blacksmithing Day the Forge Master will teach you how to light your forge, explain what the tools at the Barn are and what they're used for and, of course, get some metal nice and hot. The day will introduce members to the Self Paced Learning Course and have the opportunity to have tasks signed off. You will also be able to ask those questions you have wanted to ask about blacksmithing.

The course will begin at 10:30am where you will learn to light the forge. You will be guaranteed your own forge for the morning and instruction from the Forge Master. After lunch (BYO) you can use the forges at your own pace for the rest of the afternoon.

The day will cost you \$20 plus the usual coke fee (\$5 for half a day, \$10 for a full day). You don't need your own steel or tools, but your own hammer is always good.

If you would like to attend then please book in with the Secretary by email at [thesecc@abavic.org.au](mailto:thesecc@abavic.org.au). Spots are obviously limited so book in early.

Intro to Blacksmithing days - Sept 6, Oct 4, Nov 1.

# Learning at Ultimo

Dan Brady

Somewhere between blacksmith fantasyland down in Tasmania and the realities of home life, I managed to make a three trips to Sydney to get my Cert III in Metal Fabrication Blacksmithing under way this year. It's been a big ask of the family having been away a lot already to then have to commit to travel to Sydney for a week at a time every couple of months.

I'm pretty sure that some of you reading this will already have attended or at least be aware of the Ultimo TAFE Blacksmithing course. For those that haven't or aren't this industrial smithing course is run by Lindsay Cole and Bill Searle and is run on a weekly basis or in blocks several times a year. If you are interested, the earlier you contact them the better because although I started last December I had been on the waiting list for block release for almost two years.

On arrival our class is split into two groups with returning students and the new intakes, each taking a turn in the classroom for a day of theory while the other gets started in the workshop. Being the block release program it draws on students that have complications to attending the weekly classes such as work, family or distance. Our group was myself representing Victoria, two Tasmanians and one from New South Wales. Someone else had already dropped out and not been able to be replaced so it was a small class which maximised instruction time for us. The first part in the workshop was basic forging with a variety of exercises not too dissimilar to the self-paced learning

sheets that are handed out to keen beginners at the barn. Our projects for the week were a small lifting hook made to spec, some S hooks and a set of link bit tongs made by hand at the anvil. At the end of the week I was reasonably happy with my tongs and the hook seemed to be made to the right proportions so I felt it had been a pretty worthwhile experience. It did take a while to get used to using a gas furnace for the bulk of the heating and using the oxy torch for any localised heats or heats taken on very small stock. Not a lump of coke anywhere to be seen.

The second session a few months later was an introduction to the power hammer and some of the previous attendees had pulled out due to work so it was two even smaller groups. This was our opportunity to forge under the 300 Cwt Massey, after proper safety instruction of course. Once we were under way we forged out a set of tongs under the hammer using pads and swaging the reins out with an offsider. With enough time at the end of the course to forge a decent sized straight pein hammer, hardened and tempered.

The most recent session was last week, the end of June and once again it seemed like work had dried up just before I needed to travel so I hitched hiked up with only a swag, a hammer, a change of clothes and enough money in my pocket to cover a portion of my course fees with a tiny amount to last me the rest of the week. Needless to say hitching the Hume was difficult and I spent a very frosty night asleep under a tree near the highway at

Yass. My swag was worth the extra weight in blankets to be sure, it really was warm! If only I had found my ear plugs in my pocket the night before and not as I was packing to hit the road the next day I might have actually got some real sleep and respite from trucks engine braking on the downhill all night. Roughly 24 hours after I left Melbourne I had made it to Sydney with a few photos taken and words to the effect of "... oh my god we picked up a hitch hiker and you wouldn't believe it but he didn't try to rob us or bury us in the bush somewhere..."

Some of us just like to talk to people we haven't met before and genuinely want to get to where we say we are going I guess.

Anyway back to School and it's all about spring steel, spring making and spring repair. A day of theory and words like silicon manganese, martensite and phosphorous bronze. A mock run on the first workshop day, forging a leaf spring out of low carbon steel but then moved on to forging and heat treating a spring for a leg vice. Just as well because I had a couple that needed repairing though the 300Cwt got the best of me at one point and squashed my spring flat when it was on edge and it took a bit of work to get it back to dimensions but once finished hardened and tempered it turned out really well. I even managed to smash out a flatter in my spare time at the end of the week out of a piece of fork tine. If you see me carrying it around at some point just don't look too closely at the eye alright? The rest of it is nice though.

*Continued p17*



I'm really enjoying my time up there and appreciate that I have a good group of friends to stay with which makes the whole process a lot easier. I'd recommend this to any of the members that wants a highly productive and informative environment of blacksmithing to immerse themselves in with a great

group of people from all round the country doing the same.

Thanks heaps to Lindsay and Bill for putting up with my pestering phone calls and impromptu visits in order to work out just if the place actually existed at first and if I could somehow get myself in there with the follow ups.

Blacksmithing and welding, Ultimo College

TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute, Ultimo College, Building P, Wattle St, Ultimo NSW 2007

P: (02) 9217 3068 | F: (02) 9217 4003 | E: [lindsay.cole@tafensw.edu.au](mailto:lindsay.cole@tafensw.edu.au) | [www.sit.nsw.edu.au](http://www.sit.nsw.edu.au)



*From left to right Pat Hughes, Craig Steel, Bill Searle, Andrew Malinowski, Taig Simms, Lindsay Cole, Piers Johnson, Richard Brown, Dan Brady, down the front Tony Cook*



## Events

Dan Brady

Nothing on the horizon for events apart from the AGM which will be most likely over by the time you read this.

Thanks to those that made the trip out to Echuca and Swan Hill while I was away. I really wished I could have made both of those. Thanks again also to Paul and Marrianne for putting on Swan Hill and Simon

Baxter for sorting us out up at the Echuca Steam Rally year after year.

Got any ideas for events we should take part in in? Drop me a line [events@abavic.org.au](mailto:events@abavic.org.au) or 0405763907

Dan.



# Metal and Clay

Debbie Harman (Qadri)

I am sitting at my desk going through the photographs that Suzanne Balding has made of my metal and clay artworks. And whilst I can only place a few here, she has given me over a hundred of them. I have to sift through them and as I do, I see that each one offers a glimpse of something different, often a small part of the making process is in focus, but serves to remind me of the reason that I made them.

Whilst at Doris I have been experimenting with combining forged metal and clay. It's something that I first experimented with about three years ago and it has evolved out of feeling too tired to hit metal (sounding very lame for a blacksmith). Sometimes by the time Saturday came around I would drag myself to black-smithing but be too tired to face the hammer and tongs. And since my primary motivation for coming to blacksmithing was a social one, it was never a problem, I would just prepare for something more sedentary to do in the lunchroom. One day I brought some clay to play with and sat in the lunch room and then instead of forging pieces to go with the clay, I began to use things found in the metal scrap bin. I often use recycled materials in my artwork including plastic, rubbish and recycled clay so it was a natural progression to find a way at blacksmithing to also indulge in recycling. The scrap bin has so many interesting things in it, and it's akin to patchwork rug making where you find some scraps that interest you and make them into something new. You could look at it as making use of the energy that went into making the pieces that I find in the bin. Often the pieces are made as part of the black

smith training; loops, scrolls, hooks, scraps thrown aside or chopped off. Unwanted things.

It is really interesting to scavenge for interesting shapes and then figure out how they will work with the clay. The clay is a very soft, fragile, earthy material and generally the black-smithed metal pieces are hard, symmetrical, smooth and dark. The work is an opportunity to explore on a very intuitive level the two very basic materials. I try to do this in a very primary way, using only white or terracotta clay, black or brown colours and iron oxides and usually very organic shapes. There is an interesting relationship between the clay and mild steel, as both materials need fire/heat as part of their making process. And I find it interesting, as you can also see from some of the photographs that when I fire the clay to preserve its shape, the metal begins to deteriorate. The metal emerges from the kiln black, often with flakes of scale peeling off. Over time it begins to rust and as the porous clay receives moisture from the air the rust is drawn into the clay where they connect. So the artworks are constantly changing and reflecting the characteristics of the materials and their interaction.

When people see this work, I am very cautious to say, don't do this at home. Putting metal in a kiln could be disastrous for the life of the kiln and the shelves. In fact the first time I took them to where I fire them, someone else saw them and then put some aluminium in the kiln the following firing and we were very lucky that it did not cause any grief. So it has become a covert practice. The artworks are very fragile whilst drying so they need to be moved to the studio in Sunbury where the kiln is, within the first few days and they

are carefully hidden. They are dried very slowly in order to minimise shrinking, for three months, then they are quietly fired to earthenware temperature (about 1080) whilst no-one is looking. When they come out of the kiln they are likewise whisked away into bubble-wrap and boxes. I glazed my first pieces, but since then have tended to leave the work unglazed because I want the conversation to be about the two raw materials.

In this series of artworks I am truly relaxed and let the artworks find their own way. When I first studied clay I really enjoyed making abstract sculpture, but because there was not much use for sculpture, I veered off into other more functional areas. I feel in this work that I am returning to the initial pleasure of making and using the materials, without thinking too much about the end purpose. A bit like reading trashy novels, purely for pleasure and relaxation. I am not making them for any special purpose or reason. When I sit in the lunchroom at the Barn and make the work my main purpose is to sit and converse with others, so I think the artwork has this very relaxed feel about it. It is a conversation about clay and metal and how they might fit together.

After firing, the artworks and the photographs that document them have become something else. They are a reminder of the process and celebrate the two materials but they also head off into the outside world talking about artwork, objects, audiences and shows. Meanwhile, I think I might just head back to the lunchroom with my teapot. . . . .





*'Pair';*

*Earthenware clay, scale, and iron oxide, by  
Debbie Harman. Photograph by Suzanne  
Balding*



*'Cluster'; Earthenware clay, mild steel, white slip and iron oxide, by Debbie Harman. Photograph by Suzanne Balding*



*'Terracotta',*

*White clay and mild steel, by Debbie Harman.  
Photograph by Suzanne Balding*



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**SUN**  
**02**  
**AUG**

Barn Work Day  
10am– 4.30pm

**SAT**  
**16**  
**AUG**

Barn Work Day  
10am– 4.30pm

**SAT**  
**30**  
**AUG**

Barn Work Day  
10am– 4.30pm

**SUN**  
**13**  
**SEP**

Barn Work Day  
10am– 4.30pm

**SUN**  
**27**  
**SEP**

Barn Work Day  
10am– 4.30pm

**SUN**  
**11**  
**OCT**

Barn Work Day  
10am– 4.30pm

**SUN**  
**25**  
**OCT**

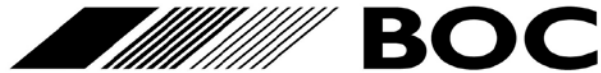
Barn Work Day  
10am– 4.30pm

**SUN**  
**8**  
**NOV**

Barn Work Day  
10am– 4.30pm

**SUN**  
**22**  
**NOV**

Barn Work Day  
10am– 4.30pm



The AUSTRALIAN BLACKSMITHS ASSOCIATION (VIC) INC., would like to acknowledge the continued support of BOC GASES in supplying our workshop gases. Visit <https://www.boc.com.au>



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1st October 2015 for Issue 99