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The Drift

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF
THE AUSTRALIAN BLACKSMITH 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



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PATRON
Keith Towe

PRESIDENT
Nick Hackett:
VICE PRESIDENT
Phil Pyros:
SECRETARY
Gavin Brown:
thesecc@abavic.org.au
TREASURER
Alice Garrett:
GENERAL COMMITTEE
Steve Nicoll:
Paul Cockayne
Dan Brady
Tony Sdroc

COVER IMAGE

Youngest member
Deagan Sanderson
proudly shows his
handy work at the Barn:
"Coat Rack on Yellow
Box" comprising 3
handforged nail in hooks
mounted on a yellow
box slab. Go to page
5 for the full story on
Deagan.



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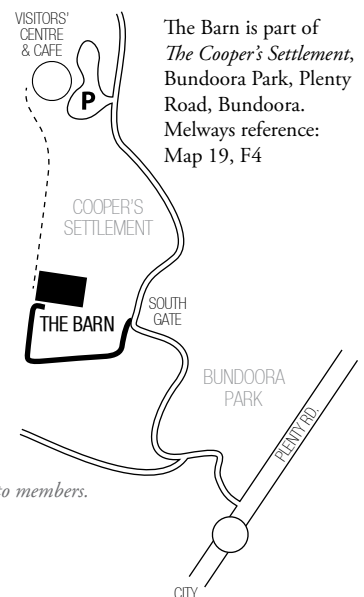
Our regular workdays are fortnightly on Sundays
from 10am until 4.30pm. Check the calendar on
the back cover for dates. Also listed at <http://www.abavic.org.au>

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 January 2016*



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

The AGM has come and gone. There was one sentence that has echoed around my head since. "We need to move with the times". Whereas this is true enough it reminded me of the hoary old chestnut.

Years ago many individuals and small groups around the world began to lament the perceived passing of the blacksmith as a recognised and useful trade. New technology and machinery meant there was less and less need for work at the anvil. In the face of this fading need many held such a burning desire to preserve the noble and ancient craft that they organised themselves into little associations and clubs. In our own effort to arrest the decline we established ourselves in August 1989 in a little hall in Rosanna. Through one way or another we organised forging days where the small but eager membership could learn skills that had been passed down for a hundred generations. We learnt how to move metal with deft blows of the hammer, various ways to join metal and generally how to make something useful or pleasing to the eye out of virtually nothing.

Boy oh boy though, was it hard work! Dirty too, and we often went home with a burn blister we didn't arrive with. It often crossed our minds; you know, if the smiths of yore had an arc welder they would simply weld on the reins of their tongs rather than draw them out or shut them on with a fire weld - much easier, much more can be achieved and much more profit can be made. If the join is hidden well enough who will know anyway. There's also the plasma cutter, heavy duty grinders and let's not forget the power hammer. Gee whizz soon we'll be

able to just print off our forgings on the printer. In this day and age so much can be achieved without forge and anvil to produce what looks like at first glance, wrought iron. If you can keep a straight face the unsuspecting punter can be easily convinced it is indeed wrought. I'm as guilty as the next bloke by the way!

The critical point comes when your designs become influenced not by what you can manage by moving and shaping and joining metal by smiting but by what can be achieved without resorting to such dirty, hot and tiring work. And why not? If you are making a living at this it is a matter of "needs must when the devil drives". Good luck to you and if the punter is an idiot that's his/her problem. Inescapably though, because the mighty dollar often rules. The only hammer in the picture is the auctioneer's.

On the blacksmith's wheel of fortune anvils are left lying around idle. They find their way onto the market at a greater rate and at a cheaper price. Gee, they even get sent to some other country to be "repurposed" into things not to be spoken of. Same for tongs and hammers and lots of other assorted paraphernalia related to hitting hot metal.

In the end die hard enthusiasts, often berated for not "moving with the times" begin to lament the passing of the blacksmith, i.e., that person who could shape/join metal with just fire, hammer and anvil. They gather in small groups and associations to make some effort to maintain and pass on skills which otherwise would slowly disappear. The cycle begins again. Where are you and I at and where is the ABA(V)

at? Personally I prefer to switch the electrickery off and see how I get on, much to the annoyance of my son who is part of the new King of Trades ... the A Grade Sparky.

A final note if I may. The editorial found in the pages of the Drift, written by the Editor, is just that, an editorial, or if you like, an opinion piece. It is the opinion of the editor. If you disagree with the opinion presented you are more than welcome, indeed encouraged, to respond with an opposing argument or indeed a whole new argument altogether. Just write to editor@abavic.org.au.

On the other hand, "glibly", you could always write the editorial yourself. Bear in mind of course you need to actually be the editor to do this. Your opportunity to be that person will come soon enough. The current editor has provided 9 issues and intends to hand over the duty perhaps this very minute or at least immediately after number 10 hits the streets.

Coincidentally that issue will be Edition 100 February 2016. If you wish to have a piece in the 100th edition of our newsletter the deadline is New Years Day 2016 (1/1/2016). It would be great to produce a bumper issue which will not be achieved without your input.



President's Report

Nick Hackett



The newly elected committee has begun working on business for the year ahead and we welcome Tony Sdroc into our ranks. Tony does some work within the park and brings a lot of valuable feedback from the park staff to our attention. As we occupy The Barn at the benevolence of Parks Victoria and Darebin Council, we do all we can to co-operate and maintain good relations with the Bundoora Park management. Recently, this has involved opening up our space to an ABC TV crew for the recording of some scenes for an episode of "The Dr Blake Mysteries". Park management and the ABC approached the committee for permission and we readily agreed. Thanks to Steve Nicoll for attending bump in and bump out of this operation to supervise the moving of anvils and vices etc. He informed the committee that ABC staff were extremely helpful and respectful of our space. The ABC has made

a small donation to ABAVIC and we will be opening a new account with those funds with the purpose of funding our proposed new shed. As council and the park has given in principal support to the new facility, we must now come up with the funds to build and equip the new ABA(VIC)HQ.

That subject and the other issues of coke supply and Drift publication will be on the agenda for discussion at an extraordinary general meeting to be held on the morning of the Christmas bbq. Our intention is to inform the membership of our work and concerns on these issues and to call for input and assistance. The committee has already begun to meet more regularly with special meetings devoted to just those issues and have begun a few initiatives. As we've said on previous occasions, the committee already has a heavy workload and it's hoped that volunteers for sub-committees will put their hands up at the EGM.

Congratulations must go to Blacksmith Doris for taking part in Radiant Pavilion. This was a kind of mini festival held in the first week of September focusing on metal object making and jewellery. They had plenty of publicity including The Age and ABC radio. Around 50 members of the public visited The Barn on the day and in small manageable groups were shown the facilities and some of the processes

involved in blacksmithing. In regards to publicity, it should be pointed out that while publicity raises the public profile of the organisation, we can't choose what journalists will write.

The event took place with the co-operation of Bundoora Park as did a school group I hosted on 8th September. Myself and Deb Harman/ Qadri from Blacksmith Doris are doing a small art project with Preston South Primary School. The kids wanted to see how the metalwork would be done so I invited the school to come have a look and gave small groups a talk and demonstration of general blacksmithing.

Steve Nicoll periodically demonstrates for school groups at The Barn and the committee encourages these activities in the promotion of community engagement and as a means to help the public understand our craft a bit more. If you have a similar project in mind, contact the committee for support.

We have been informed by park management that smoking is prohibited inside any building within the park complex. Smokers must observe this rule and when smoking outside, dispose of butts responsibly.



Secretary's Report

Gavin Brown



Sec Report.

G'day all. Well you're stuck with me for another year as secretary and I hope it's going to be a good one for our association. For those who were not at the AGM or have not looked at our financial statement the association did not make any money last financial year. Actually, the association lost money. This is mainly due to large coke purchases and the like (email thesec@abavic.org.au if you would like the full report).

One of the committee focuses for this year is fundraising. We are looking at creating a small sub-committee to organise fundraising so please consider what you can do for your association. What are we fundraising for? I'm glad you asked. We are fundraising to buy and build our New Barn at the Bundoora Settlement. The New Barn will be much larger with more forges and hopefully new anvils too. We have Park approval so now all we need is some finance. The sub-committee will also look at possible government grants that can be secured for the project.

Another focus will be on training

our members. This is also a way of fundraising for the new Barn. We are running a tool making course in November for those who are interested and have completed your self paced learning. We also ran an Introduction to Blacksmithing Course on the 4th of October. This course focuses on the very basics of blacksmithing including lighting a fire and a shop tour to learn all the different tools of a blacksmith.

The committee is also seeking members to help us in other ways. We would like to form a few sub-committees to help with things like the new Barn, fundraising and the Drift. There is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes and I think its time we share the load with our association members. These sub-committees would meet when they could and report back to the general committee on their progress. Please think how you can help the association and what skills you can offer so that our association can continue to improve.

Something I have been noticing lately is that newer members haven't been getting the opportunity to light a forge. We decided to offer the "Intro to Blacksmithing" course. It's the first time the course has been run and I think the day went well. Four people signed up for the course with two of them being new members; Dara, Alex, Julian and Austin.

The day was a warm one and started a bit late because Dara and Alex found every other way into Bundoora Park. After some phone directions we were all ready to go. We started with a bit about our Association and what we are about as well

as explaining the golden rule - everything's hot! We spoke about what we expected from them as members and asked what they wanted from us. Everyone was positive and excited.

We took a tour of the barn and I asked them to find me a flatter, a bottom swage, a hardy cut off tool, and a hot set. I gave them a general area to look and left it up to them. They even brought back the right tools! We talked about what they were used for and how they are used.

Anvils were the next topic. We discussed the parts of the anvil and their uses and then I asked them all to select the best size anvil they could in the Barn. After a quick demo of standing up straight beside the anvil and having your fist on the face they all found one that suited them best.

Now it was time to clean out the fire and get them going. As we started the fires I showed off a few more tools in the barn and their uses before we had a go at points. The guys were pretty excited as they did not think they were going to be forging today. We started off with basic points and I gave tips on hammer technique, stance and how to get the metal hot. I also demonstrated what burning steel looks like and how quick it took to burn.

After a few pointers on points it was lunch time. Steve, Nick and Dan took over from me and everyone pretty much got some one on one time. The plan was for them to forge and heat treat a centre punch. I'm not sure if they got them finished but I'm sure they all had a great day and learnt at least one new thing.



Blacksmithing in Papua New Guinea

Peter Drofenik

Papua New Guinea is a place where the people have gone from the Stone Age to the computer age, skipping the Iron and the Bronze Ages! I first travelled there in 2010 by boat, spending two months on the islands in Milne Bay Province and saw a need for introducing blacksmithing to the communities there. The people would use the skills, mostly for tool making. At the time, I set up a forge in the village on Dawson Island (pinned) using an air supply from an inflatable dinghy foot pump and an anvil from a heavy piece of scrap metal they had lying about. I had a spare hammer to leave them and pliers to hold hot things. Together we made some large shark hooks from Rio bar, forging the tip, splitting a barb on the point and punching a hole for the line to attach. They were just amazed at being able to do these relatively simple tasks quite easily with the metal hot and had never seen this demonstrated or even heard that it could be done this way. It was a real eye opener for them and they were so keen to learn more. They have previously been used to doing this task with their 'multi tool' - the machete, by hacking at the steel. The machete is really the only piece of equipment that they use - digging the garden, cutting down trees, building houses, opening coconuts...

In August this year I returned

to Papua New Guinea, meeting a shipping container-load of school resources, clothing and sports equipment for the island communities which were donated by groups and families in Australia. We had the shipping and some of the flights to the area donated so it has been a relatively smooth process to get the goods there. We previously found the postal



service to the islands impossible. We have sent boxes of items there, never to arrive or sent back to Australia with 'Return to Sender.' Now that a supply link has been established with the people on Normanby Island, I would love to take a blacksmith workshop there and to stay a few months to teach a group of people how to use the equipment. I'm putting the call out for some donated equipment to send there - a hand blower forge (as there is no power), small anvil, tongs, hammers, vice, blacksmithing books, aprons, boots, and gloves - perhaps enough equipment to set up two forges. This equipment will be shipped and delivered to the island by a

group of us and possibly filmed as part of a documentary series on blacksmithing.

This is taking blacksmith work to an area where they have never seen hot hammered work. The communities would seriously benefit from the skills developed. They are subsistence farmers on islands that are quite rocky and demand quality tools for digging. At present they have given

up with the Chinese substandard tools for their cultivation and have made digging tools with old car leaf springs, with the assistance of mainland engineering shops. They would benefit so much from making their own tools and to have the ability to reshape

tools to make growing their food easier. Local blacksmithing could provide better tools, as a starting point. This is not about decorative scroll blacksmithing or handing them good quality tools, it's about showing an intelligent and eager community a way to become more self-reliant and independent. It would assist their food production and could even become a source of income.

If you have any useful equipment to add to this worthwhile community project, please contact me at peter@peterd.com.au for more information.

Peter Drofenik



From the Patron

Keith Towe

We had a good roll-up at our AGM in late July and it was pleasing to see quite a few of the Doris Ladies, and that they contributed to the meeting discussions.

We missed a few of our regular Rural members due to Illness etc, but it was great to catch up with Hardy, Peter, Clem and Don again.

The Election of office bearers was a pretty simple affair with the previous committee voted in again, with the inclusion of Tony Srdoc to fill the outstanding vacancy. Two other nominees, Gerry Butler & Ben Sokol offered their support and were invited to assist the committee in sub-committee roles, and I am sure they can be of help.

At the conclusion of the formal meeting there were a number of Awards and Presentations.

The first of these was the awarding of Life Membership to Roland Dannenhauer for his selfless contribution to the Tree Project and to our Associations Aims over the past 6 or 8 years. Those of you who know Roland will. I am sure, applaud him for his work, and if you do not know him, I suggest you make an effort to do so as he is a

very creative fellow.

Mary Hackett was then presented with the Founders Trophy in recognition of her many years of guiding and encouraging the Doris Ladies Group, and Mary was roundly applauded by the members.

During the period of our existence, previous Association Committees have awarded Life Membership to a number of members, usually these were announced at an AGM and the recipients were thanked and given a pat on the back and that was it. The current committee have had framed certificates prepared for each Life Member, and these were presented to those members who attended this meeting. I feel this was a fine tribute by the committee and sets the standard for any future situations.

Life Members of the Association are as follows. Bill Bunting (dec), Don Marshall, Keith Towe, Norm Foun, Doug Tarrant, Kevin Rapley, Nick Hackett, Steve Nicoll and Roland Dannehuer.

After the AGM we enjoyed catching up with the members, and of course partaking of the superb BBQ that Serge and Tony are becoming widely

appreciated for. A super effort guys. This year they had another apprentice chef in the form of Peter Kandavnieks, who, incidentally, donated quite a few Drums and pails for water, and he and Hardy

donated coke to the group, thanks Peter and Hardy.

We also enjoyed viewing young Tony's "Horse" a composite of Rusty Metal, Old horseshoes & Pipe, very creative Tony.

Metals of Antiquity

Iron is one of seven elemental metals known as metals of antiquity. For edification reasons, the other six metals of antiquity are: gold, copper, lead, silver, tin and mercury. This means that this metal has been known to ancient civilizations including the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians and Hittites. So, it is impossible to know which civilization was the first to acknowledge the existence of iron.

The First use of the Metal

Iron can be definitively identified as first being used after 1500 BC in Asia. The Hittites were the first ancient people to use iron, and they did so in weaponry after realizing it was far superior to bronze that was used previously. The Hittites knew the iron weapons gave them an edge in battles, so they kept iron smelting and forging a secret. It stayed a Hittite secret for about four hundred years until their empire disbanded and the people moved throughout Asia, sharing their secret of manufacturing iron weapons wherever they went. It is assumed that iron was discovered in western Asia, since that is where the Hittites were from, but even though they were the first to use iron weaponry, it can't be assumed that they were the people who actually discovered the elemental metal.



Roland receives his life membership certificate

A New Member

Alice Garrett

What is your name and where do you live and because you're so young what is your age?

My name is Deagan Sanderson, I live in Broadford and I've only just turned 13. I am in year 7 and enjoying doing all the tech subjects at school. I can't wait to do metal work which will be the last subject for the year.

When did you join?

I think I joined in June 2015. Because of only being 12yo, I had to have an adult join with me, so my dad (Ray) became a member also.

How did you hear about us?

Every time I hear of a Blacksmithing demonstration anywhere, I ask my parents if we can go and watch. We've been to Sovereign Hill, Shepparton Fathers day event, Kryal Castle, Echuca Warf, Rare Trades Fair in Kyneton, Waterside at Footscray, and also to the Steam Festival in Echuca which is where we spoke to Doug and then Andy who told us about the Barn at the Pioneer Settlement in Bundoora. A fortnight later we turned up to have a look about, meet some of the committee, and join. I was so stoked that I was allowed to join knowing I'm probably the youngest person who's taken a fair dinkum interest.

Why did you join?

I'm so keen to learn, but don't have any friends or family that know how to blacksmith. I watch lots of clips on YouTube which has only got me keener, but it's not like having someone to help guide me, and teach me techniques. Mum and Dad are happy to encourage, but didn't know where I could go to do any schooling, or learning.

What have you made?

I started off with little bits of wire. I bought a paper weight anvil and as I watched TV I'd hammer the wire flat



and straight, then shape it around the horn of the anvil and make little horse shoes. After that, when we had the fire pit going I'd heat up old rusty bits of steel and try and shape it on a bit of rail line. With Dads help, I eventually worked up to making fire pokers, with twists, and a loop.

I love going to Clearing sales and swap meets, and I have a real collection coming together of tongs and hammers. Lots of blokes are really surprised when Dad tells them that I'm the one that's interested in the tools! We often get them for a better price because they see me going for my wallet not Dad! They love to see a young kid keen on such an unusual hobby, and not stuck inside on a computer or watching telly

Last year when I turned 12 I asked if I could get a real anvil for my birthday. I find it funny that all my mates at school have play stations and X-Boxes, but all I wanted was an anvil. (I got an old 50kg one off gumtree, which we had to go to Geelong to pick it up)

The kids these days don't do enough hands on stuff. When I mentioned to them I was making my own suit of armour, and chain mail, they all thought I ment in a game and wanted to know what game it was, I had to tell them it was called 'real life'

Have you got a shop at home?

My Dad is the best. He and I made a small forge on a stand. (He even snuck inside and pinched mums good

hairdryer for the blower). It works ok but doesn't get as hot as the ones at the Barn. At the last clearing sale we went to we found a hand blower. It made a horrid grinding noise, but we decided to buy it. I pulled it all apart, gave it a cleanup and a service and when I put it back together it worked great. At the Shepparton Swap Meet I finally found a post vice which I've been hunting for, for ages. I have all my stuff under the car port at the moment, however seeing Mum doesn't have any horses now, dad and I have decided that one of the horse boxes in the paddock is going to make a splendid Blacksmith shed.... although mum doesn't know that yet!

What do you want to learn to make?

I'd really like to be able to make leaves. And I'm really looking forward to one day being able to use the power hammer.

Since I've become a member, Doug showed me how to make a hook with a scroll and a twist. I've been making them at home, practicing what he taught me. To display them, we chopped down a small tree and cut a flat bit of timber from it. I hung the hooks from it so it came up as a rustic coat rack. I showed it to some of my family and now they all want one. I get the feeling I'm going to get lots more practice making them!

I search an internet site called Pinterest and they have lots of blacksmithing ideas. I like lots of the door knockers and even belt buckles.

I'd like to thank the committee for letting me join the association. I really thought I'd be too young and that I would have to wait for a few years. I'm enjoying the time that I've had at the barn, having fun learning what to do and how to do it.



A Hint


A Hint One way that we as adults learn is by trying something and then learning from our mistakes and trying again. However, there are some mistakes we don't need to make ourselves and can learn from other's experiences; here's two that I have learnt first-hand that I want to share with you.

I was fullering some steel pipe to make candle holders a little while ago following Lorelei Sims' idea. I thought that the length of pipe was long enough that I could have a hot end and a cool end but I didn't think of the tube as a chimney that hot air passes through. It didn't take too long to realise that I couldn't hold the pipe by hand long enough to do what I wanted to do.

My solution was to plug the handle end with wood (don't forget to look out for smoke). When I went back to read Lorelei's instructions I read something I should have read the first time around - her safety tip was to use wadded newspaper to plug the end. Second lesson: If you want to quench one end of a length of tube (think chimney but no plug) it's amazing how much steam shoots out the other end as water boils inside the tube. My experience didn't include steam up the sleeve or in the face but it could easily have happened.

I didn't need to cool the hot end down quickly so I should have left it to sit for a while before putting it in the water and I should also have made sure I knew where any steam or hot air would go. Thinking about using a plug; I don't know how tight it would have to be to constrain the very hot steam that is produced from a quick quench but the plug should be considered as a potential missile if it were to

let go suddenly. Don't let any of this deter you from having a play with tube; both round and square are useful starting points.

Ref: The Backyard Blacksmith, Traditional Techniques for the Modern Smith, Lorelei Sims, 2006, Quarry Books (in our library) 

Advice from a Greenhorn Austin Tseng

Having only been a member of ABA (Vic) since the first half of this year (with zero previous blacksmithing experience), I thought it might be an idea to offer a few quick tips from a beginner's perspective. If you have only just starting smithing with us, or haven't actually had the chance to pick up a hammer yet, I hope these hints benefit you.

Consider arriving first thing in the morning. This will give you the opportunity to practice lighting a fire on a free forge.

Don't wear anything that you would be unhappy to potentially burn a hole in. Sign in when you arrive before you do anything else, chances are you'll forget if you leave it for later.

Make sure you know where the first aid supplies are.

If your hammer is new, it needs to be 'dressed' before you use it. This means smoothing out the sharp edges of the hammer head. Ask a veteran to help you with this.

Make sure nobody else is using the forge you've got your eye on - even if it looks like the fire has been extinguished. Ask.

Be careful when poking around the scrap metal bin for stock. Tetanus is not fun. Consider using tongs.

Speaking of tongs, make sure they are the right size and fit for what you're actually working on. Dropping a red hot iron on your

foot is also not fun.

When you hammer, accuracy and power is more important than speed.

Drink lots of water.

Don't let your metal burn - watch it.


Don't yourself burn.

Make sure metal is cold before touching - it doesn't need to look hot to be hot. Sign off when you're done.

If staying until closing time, get yourself into the habit of turning off you forge's air blower.

And clean up your area please! If in doubt, ask. "She'll be right" is not a good attitude round fire/hot steel/heavy machinery. It's fine to fluff around at first, but sooner or later you'll be wanting to set yourself some measurable goals and objectives.

The Self-Paced Learning Exercises are a great way to do this. Ask a committee member for a copy. Enjoy yourself. If you find yourself hitting a dead end, take a break or do something different to break up the monotony. Don't be discouraged by your failures. Fail forward. Smithing is a lifelong learning experience and will reward those who treat it as such.

(Above all introduce yourself to someone you don't know. Ed) 

Radiant Pavilion

Dianne Beavers

Blacksmith Doris Open Day for RADIANT PAVILION, Melbourne's first Festival of Jewellery and Object Making.

During the week 1 - 6 September 2015, Melbourne's celebrated smithing community, turned it on, alongside international luminaries including David Clarke (UK), Peter Bauhuis (Germany) and Warwick Freeman (NZ). Exhibitions, master classes, lectures, open studios, performances and discussions, combined to create an intense and extraordinary program of 57 principal events in a MELBOURNE CONTEMPORARY JEWELLERY & OBJECT TRAIL across Melbourne, including Blacksmith Doris and our TO DORIS WE GO event, number 48, at the Blacksmith's Barn, Bundoora.

On first hearing of the projected RADIANT PAVILION Festival,

months in advance, there was a moment of instant recognition. The Barn, after all, conjures up, the vision of the ultimate radiant pavilion, with each lit forge a radiant pavilion in itself.

So many of the members of Blacksmith Doris are artists, and metalsmiths, jewellers and educators, who count blacksmithing as a significant aspect of their practice. Yet the wider sampling of blacksmiths in this active group, presents a very diverse range of backgrounds and experience, not to mention different interests and expressions, at the forge. We were eager to represent any Doris willing to participate. Our other intention, was to celebrate the business of making in our community, and in particular the atmosphere of making together, which

characterises the encouraging working environment of the Barn, and ABA (Vic).

Rather than a static exhibition of objects in the city, we envisaged revealing our radiant pavilion at Bundoora Park, and our radiant blacksmiths, working at their forges, in their usual capacity



and projects, in situ, on our regular Doris Day. The Open Day format, best represented a veritable theatre of possibilities for demonstrating the concerns of blacksmithing. On the day, it all materialised for the visitors, observing newbies and lighting the fire, to the expertise of Nick Hackett and Alice Garret collaborating on the dramatic power hammer for Nick's Unmaking project. Debbie Harman exhibited her extraordinary ceramic and iron sculptures, and Beka Hannah pursued her set exercises, and the forges were fully charged the whole day. Mary Hackett managed the logistics of a steady stream of visitors, in small groups, ensuring OH&S protocols, and protective wear for everyone's safety. As a consequence the event was well managed and incident free, visitors

receiving an induction to the site of a working forge. This was important given the young age of a few visitors, attending with their families, who were most determined to become a Blacksmith Doris in a few years, boding well for the future of blacksmithing.

So with minimal stress, we met our objectives and delivered a special experience for the many who made the journey to Bundoora, including Chloe Powell, a Curator of Radiant Pavilion, and visitors from New Zealand.

Blacksmith Doris was able to give an extraordinary profile to blacksmithing, putting it on the agenda for so many of the metal making community in Melbourne. In the frenzy of the week of multiple events at every turn, Blacksmith Doris was on everyone's lips, owing to the intensive marketing of Radiant Pavilion, on line, and especially the detailed, free, printed program of events, available everywhere. There, you located no.48 following no. 47, the

renowned Gray Street Workshop from Adelaide, exhibiting at Gallery Funaki, Melbourne's most significant gallery for contemporary jewellery. Following, at no.49, that listing indicated the solo exhibition at Anna Schwartz Gallery, by Susan Cohn, Melbourne's leading contemporary metal artist. Susan Cohn has also designed for Alessi, and furthermore, curated the first exhibition of contemporary jewellery for London's Design Museum, shown locally at the National Gallery of Victoria. So Blacksmith Doris was in very good company and we enjoyed participating in what we hope is just the first in a series of supported and ambitious events, celebrating what Melbourne does so well, MAKING! Well done, everyone!

Association Notices

BARN FORGEMASTERS

Barn Day Morning Afternoon

08.11.15	Steve, Gavin
22.11.15	Nick, Dan
06.12.15*	Keith, Doug
03.01.16	Alice, Paul
17.01.16*	Phil, Steve
31.01.16	Gavin, Nick
14.02.16	Dan Keith
28.02.16 *	Doug, Alice

* Committee meeting

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The association will hold an extraordinary general meeting of the membership in the Chapel at Bundoora Park at 11 am on the morning of the Christmas barbecue. The purpose of this meeting is to inform the membership of concerns around fundraising initiatives for our proposed new facility and ongoing coke supply. The future of The Drift will also be up for discussion. Members will be asked to volunteer to join sub-committees to address these important issues.

BARN RE-SHUFFLE

Last week the barn had a visit from the ABC Film Unit for the Doctor Blake Mysteries. The Barn would be in the movies so everything had to be moved out of the way and then put back for Sunday. As the fence had to be taken down we were able to talk Park Management into agreeing to a new floor plan. We now have more space and the fly press has been set up. With this configuration we should be able to set up two more forges.

Cheers

Steve Nicoll

CHRISTMAS BARBECUE

Our annual barbie will be on Sunday 13th December. Unfortunately Serge will be away in Italy this year but other capable people will step in to do the cooking. We have no planned car boot sale but as usual, if anyone has any blacksmith related things to offload, this is a great opportunity to offer members first dibs.

EVENTS

No events to report about this time round. A couple of close calls though.

After some concerns raised by members at the AGM, the committee have decided to change our fee structure to reflect the efforts of members and the costs involved for ABA(V) to demonstrate the skills associated with Blacksmithing. We realise that some organisations that would really benefit from having a demonstration may not be able to afford as much as others so we have decided to take it on a case by case basis and have a sliding scale of affordability.

We are also always looking for volunteers to help demonstrate when these events come about so put your hand up, you don't have to be an expert smith to show the public some of the basic principles of blacksmithing.

The usual end of year break up will have an extraordinary general meeting attached as will be described by another committee member elsewhere in this issue. Come along to have your say and catch up with other members, some of us only see each other once or twice a year.

If you have ideas for events ABA(V) could attend or demonstrate at let me know

0405763907 or

events@abavic.org.au

Cheers

Dan

Momentary Force

Mary Hackett

Momentary Force was an exhibition of objects and installations that Nick and I presented in a space called WOT Studios, an industrial building turned into workspaces for street artists and a jeweller. The exhibition was a part of a major event, *Radiant Pavilion*, a jewellery and object trail around Melbourne, in early September. The exhibition was another in our series opening up to question blacksmithing processes, creating new understandings and connections with the materials used. These new connections can bring an accessibility to a contemporary art audience, and to the wider community, far beyond blacksmith enthusiasts and appreciators of historical craft objects.

rust and coke dust while undergoing a slumping process, hung around the walls of the gallery. They were suspended on hooks and sat away from the walls so that they floated close to the viewer's face. This allowed the works to reveal both, or neither, of the two sides showing the imprint of the steel or the stain of coke dust - evidence of the work

archaeological dig.

My work consisted of drops of water that travelled from a glass jar down into a funnel, around spirals and eventually landing onto a wok that sat on a hot plate. When it reached the hot wok it fizzed producing a puff of steam, balled up and danced around the wok before disappearing. The



Nick Hackett; *Paperworks Installation View*; Paper, oxides, board, steel Dimensions variable ;
Photographer:- Matto Lucas

Through *Momentary*

Force both Nick and I explored different aspects of the characteristics of steel and the processes involved within blacksmithing. We exploited the things that we know, and have been taught, about steel and the processes used to make with that material. We then created artefacts that would not generally be seen as belonging to a regular blacksmithing practice.

Nick presented works on paper and steel objects. These pieces sat around the periphery of his chosen space. The works on paper, imprints of traditional ironwork stained from

undertaken. The ironwork used for the imprints sat underneath the drawings on the ground. They had undergone demolition from forging resulting in compression and were unrecognisable from the imprints. Nick's work highlighted the ephemeral quality of steel as a material used in industry and relied upon for durability. The material generally perceived as enduring has, in fact, an impermanent nature which was revealed through the iron oxide taken up by the paper. The way that Nick had worked on the prints was a process of burying and excavation which was not unlike an

water jar sat at the top of a stainless steel stand while the funnel, which was welded to the spiral, rested in a hook that extended from the stand. The wok and hot plate were placed at the base of the stand. The whole object was positioned on a large black rubber mat. It faced away from the entrance to the space which was covered with a translucent plastic. The work was not completely visible until the viewer entered and walked around to the side of the piece. The electrical cords from the hot plate and the bright red extension cord were left on the floor of the space, disappearing behind another plastic

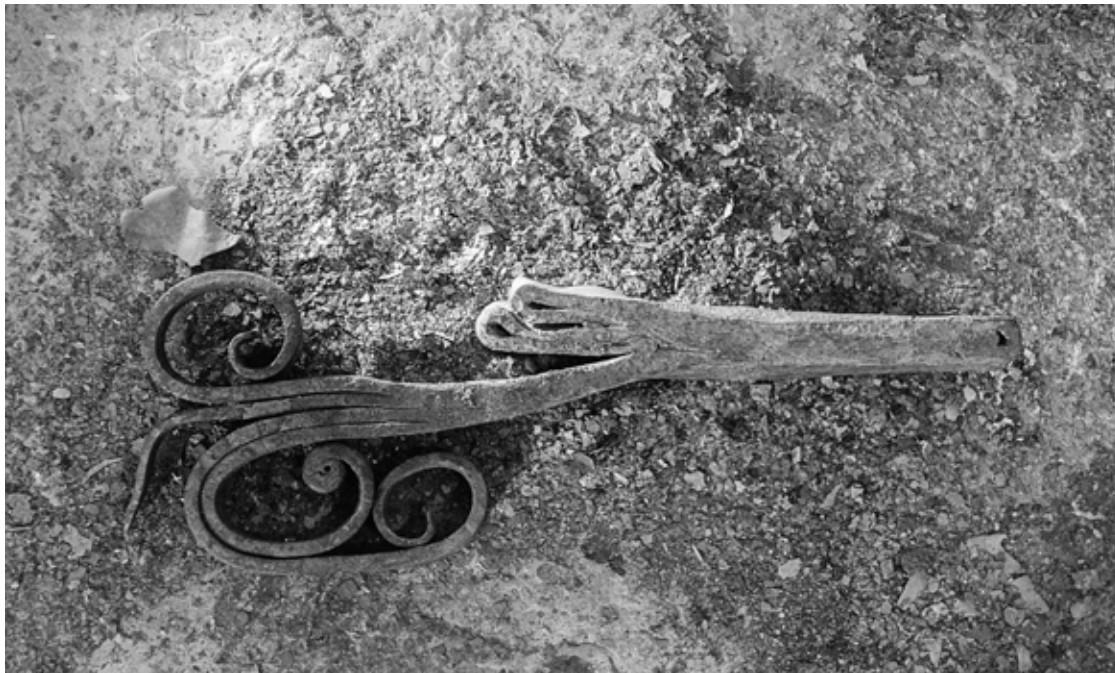
curtain. I had wanted the space to suggest an alchemists testing room. A video of a ball of evaporating water suspended on vapour in a hot pan was projected onto one of the walls. The computer which housed the video sat on top of a dirty ladder just under the projector. This work showed a moment within a quench where the hot steel hits cold water and for a time appears not to touch as the water heats, evaporates and encases the steel. My

we could contemplate how our work is perceived. We hoped that our exhibition would take on some of the characteristics of the space that it was occupying.

We placed our work in two separate spaces within the studio, making it feel like different exhibitions. Nick created a small room for his work within the main area of WOT Studios. He used wood panels for walls where he dangled his drawings

while my research examines the energies inherent in a blacksmithing practice. Nick's work deals with the baggage associated with the commercialism of blacksmithing by using his practice as a metaphor for the tension within the economic Realpolitik that exists between commerce and art. On the other hand, I pull apart my methods of making to reveal the natural forces that exist, and on which blacksmiths rely. This is a way of drawing

attention to responses made by materials, processes and the maker when operating together. Within *Momentary Force* Nick's paper and steel objects demonstrated the impermanence of ironwork and documented the demise of his already made pieces in a form of 'unmaking', reversing the production processes. My installation, however, displayed the reactions of water to gravity and heat just as they respond



Nick Hackett; *Squashed 1*, Forged steel, scale 25 x 9 x 2 cm Photographer:- Matto Lucas

installation slowed down the event of a quench and brought viewers to the exhibition closer to a process familiar to blacksmiths.

We chose WOT Studios, a space on the outskirts of inner Melbourne. Those who ran the gallery that we had first chosen had, oddly, objected to the show being a part of *Radiant Pavilion*. Luckily a friend of ours owned a large space, WOT Studios, and invited us to exhibit there. It was actually a better option for us. It was fortuitous as it gave us the opportunity to view our work outside of traditional gallery situations and gave us a place where

and installed a light above the area which was intimate. My space had been previously used as storage for the owner's family belongings - pushbikes, children's toys and barbecues - which we had to empty before I put my work in. A lick of white paint and plastic sheet to cover up one small area that I was not going to use, and it was a work space for 'experiments' to happen.

Both Nick and I cut back the processes of blacksmithing to expose its underlying dynamism. Nick opens his professional practice up to his own critical observation,

within a common making event. Nick's work within the exhibition amplified reactions while mine inverted processes.

What did the work of *Momentary Force* not do? We were not wanting to show blacksmithing as a 'dying art' as we don't see it as dying. It is morphing. We also did not want to exhibit 'objects of craft' - pieces for the home etc. - as this was not the platform for doing so. Our intention was to create work that would stimulate discussion on the topic of materiality, especially within the field of blacksmithing.

Momentary Force was not talking about our relationship to steel as material from a gendered perspective. Nick's pieces, did not reflect his technical prowess as a blacksmith, nor was my installation in any way reflective of my own gender in terms of blacksmithing. At times Nick's pieces showed the embellishments usually associated

so-called 'masculine and feminine' combined. While my work was, and always is, more influenced by the 'bush craft' of early European settlers, and their willingness to mend and build with what is at hand. This, too, shows the contradictions within the craft as, even though both men and women mended, embellishment was more

that Nick's work was feminine and mine masculine, and that this mattered, as we are not that, nor did it matter. For the exhibition, I think that it highlighted a point that our work cannot be read in the context of gender, which is a good thing for the craft of blacksmithing. It allows a platform where men and women can work unselfconsciously and without cultural expectations.

What did *Momentary Force* do? It highlighted a specific material - steel - and observations on what it is capable of doing. Nick used paper to expose oxidation, I used water which, in the end achieved the same goal. Nick's steel began to destroy his paper while the heat put to work on the steel vaporised my water. By shifting how steel, viewed as a tool that is used all over the world to build things, slowed down the viewer long enough to want to understand what was going on. People stayed and watch for a long time as the drips travelled along the curls of steel and dripped into the bowl; were charmed with the effects of rust on paper and were surprised by the weight of the worked steel.

Even though our work focused on different aspects of blacksmithing as practice I believe that it also complimented each other as we view problems differently. Nick explores how material (steel) can be impermanent through his starting question stemming from his work practice - that which feeds his family. He asks how material he uses within his practice can be seen as durable but, as witnessed through his portion of the exhibition, it wears to disintegration as time goes on. It is not a static material, it shifts. His pieces, which were buried under scale at a point where they would have been used within



Mary Hackett; *Vapour Installation*,
Steel, glass, plastic, hot plate, rubber mat, computer, ladder, electrical cord, projector,
Dimensions variable, 2015, Photographer: Matto Lucas

with decorative blacksmithing but also suggestive of the feminine through lace work. This, to my mind, reveals the contradictions within blacksmithing as a craft - the

associated with the traditional 'feminine' crafts. There were no trills nor tra las within my piece for *Momentary Force*. What can I say in regards to this? I am not saying

a piece of work such as a balustrade or table legs (decorative ironwork), showed signs of degeneration. Then, when forged further lost valuable mass from scale. If this forging was to continue no productive, to the maker, steel would be left.

The underlying question for my research, on the other hand, is how did the collective 'we' know about the making of useful steel way back

language of one of us may fail, the others may hit the right spot and give new meaning to our chosen material.

As a part of "Radiant Pavilion", *Momentary Force* was able to deconstruct and subvert common understandings of making processes found within a blacksmithing practice. "Radiant Pavilion," a six day event created by Claire McArdle

myself participating in four events across the week. These included "Feed Me", a five day Masterclass with David Clarke, a UK based silversmith; "Danger: Research in Progress", a Pecha Kucha (a fast paced presentation) for RMIT post graduates. There was also "To Doris We Go" - a day at Blacksmith Doris; and our exhibition. Nick participated in "To Doris We Go" and spent most of "Radiant Pavilion" wrestling my piece for "Momentary Force" while invigilating.

Momentary Force contributed to "Radiant Pavilion" / by highlighting the very nature of making within a blacksmithing context, while looking again for the primeval allure that was the foundation of the craft. We did this to open up a discussion about what we understand about the material of our

choice. It drew attention to, and commented on, our reliance and exploitation of materials within contemporary society by presenting ironwork in an unfamiliar format. Hopefully it persuaded the viewer that there is more to blacksmithing than a balustrade or decorative ironwork.

Radiant Pavilion: <http://www.radiantpavilion.com.au> *Momentary Force:* <http://momentaryforce.blogspot.com.au> Mary Hackett maryjhackett@gmail.com <<mailto:maryjhackett@gmail.com>>



Mary Hackett; *Vapour Installation*, detail

in history. I have always found the beginnings of history fascinating. I am not a chemist, nor a scientist of any kind for that matter, having the brain of Homer Simpson when it comes to these things ('mmm donuts'). However, I endeavour to dig deep into the workings of a quench to find some 'Science for Dummies' approach to what happens when steel gets hot and is then cooled. It is a lone quest as most people get the answer and I am always trying to catch up. Through Nick's methodical and practical methods, and my stupid scientist approach we had the potential to capture the imagination of a larger audience. Where the creative

and Chloe Powell, both jewellers and curators, celebrated and showcased contemporary jewellery and object making. It not only attracted artists from Melbourne's vast contemporary object making community, but from all over the world. Through "Radiant Pavilion" McArdle and Powell sought to connect artists/makers, collectors, the general public and theorists while building an audience and locality for jewellery/object making within the Southern Hemisphere.

There were so many things listed for this event that it was hard to see them all. In my enthusiasm I found

Thailand Blacksmiths

Dan Brady

This is some recollections from a trip I made four years ago to Thailand when I had only just joined ABA(V) I've forgotten a lot about that trip so I'm only going off a handful of photos.

I'd done a little research before we arrived in Bangkok on our way back from Mauritius to visit family. I'd discovered that in a small village called Aranyik situated near Ayutthaya the former capital of Thailand, was a group of Blacksmiths/Swordmakers that had passed the family tradition down for some eight hundred years. Originally Goldsmiths they had migrated to the area from Laos and when the gold supply ran out they moved to making tools and weapons for the King's armies.

Arriving unannounced by Tuk Tuk we were welcomed very warmly and with some surprise as they usually only took organised tours direct from Bangkok. With some translating from our driver a swordmaking demonstration was organised for a fee of 900 baht, which was about 30 dollars.

The forge was a small concrete hearth at ground level with an electric blower, although the master sword maker demonstrated the pre-electricity method with two concrete pipe bellows and some large feather dusters. The forge fuel was a large pile of charcoal, the Swordmaker sat crouched bare foot on a platform next to the fire assisted by two strikers. What struck me besides the lack of steel toed leather boots, was the striker's hammers which had no eyes punched to insert the handle,

but were instead strapped on top of a short piece of curved bamboo. It didn't seem to hinder their ability to hit the steel hard and wild bamboo was a cheap and plentiful resource.

After a demonstration of sword forging we were taken to a lean to at the side of a hut where one of the smiths was chasing designs into copper for the decorative handles, balancing them between his feet as he hammered patterns carefully.

The blacksmiths of Aranyik are quite famous all over Thailand for their knives and swords. The King,



I was told has visited the village twice to inspect the manufacture of the weapons that are supplied to his soldiers which was a great honour for this tiny village.

They also make cutlery but when we visited there was none in stock though I had seen some for sale in Bangkok in the market. Funnily enough, someone brought me a set on a trip to Japan recently knowing only my interest in hand forged items, not realising that we had visited the forge where it originated four years previously.

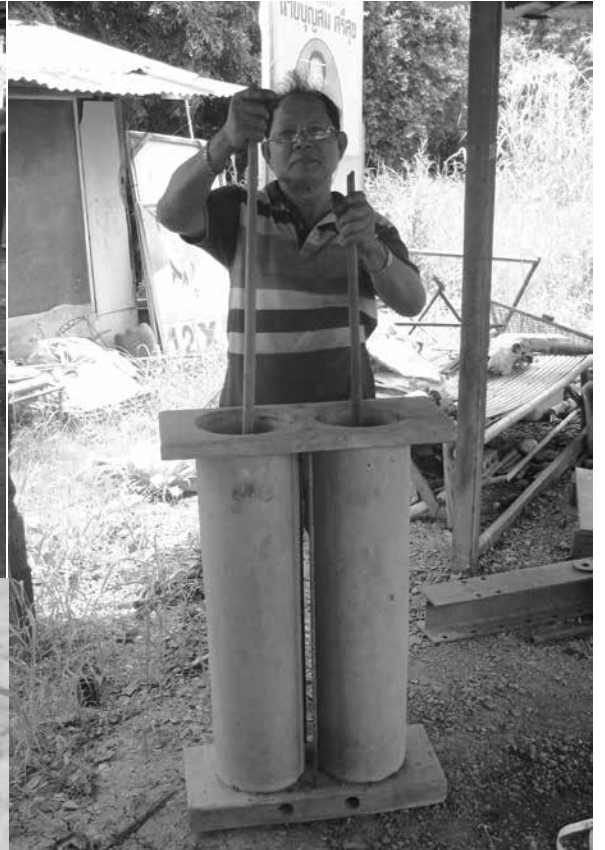
We brought souvenirs from the

shop down from the forge, picking up kitchen knives, a cleaver and a machete ranging in price from about 2 to 5 dollars. The carrying of which caused some concern when our plane home was diverted through Singapore, with very strict laws about the importation of weapons. Customs was waiting for us when we disembarked but we had declared everything with smiling innocence though they were very upset we had attempted to bring in a chopper and a parang, but when it was explained that the chopper/cleaver was for my partner's mother to use in the kitchen they visibly relaxed. We agreed to sign a piece of paper stating that the selection of pointed objects were for display or camping purposes only and that they would not to be brought into the city state of Singapore, were duly handed back our armload of knives and told not to take them out of our bags for the next 6 hours of our stopover in Singapore Airport.

No problem right? The whole process had made me a bit dubious as to our importation of potentially prohibited items into Australia but all were single edged utilitarian tools so I was pretty sure that we would be allowed to bring them back, that being said it really was a pretty big machete. Arriving exhausted in Melbourne we declared all items once again slightly stressed, only to find that all were legal. There was some confusion however, over the machete. The customs officer waving it above his head as he yelled to his supervisor "Oi are we allowed these?..."



More Images p17



Doodles

Ben Sokkol

I would like to say thank you to all the members that made the effort to attend the annual general meeting this year, and through the decision of the committee and presumably a show of hands, have allowed me to be included in some small way in the organisation of the association.

My role as a sub-committee member has been discussed, and I am currently tasked with seeking options for funding in order that we might build a new barn (workshop) on site at the cooper's settlement. Two plausible avenues could be grant funding (either private, council, state, or federal), or crowd funding (no irony or conflict in using modern technology to help preserve the knowledge gained from the past). If any member has experience with either of these (or other) avenues of viable fundraising, I would gladly shut the blast and lend an ear.

It has been good to see a number of new members joining up and coming along to the barn on regular work days, beginning the process of learning what is involved in, and how to work steel into both useful and aesthetic shapes and forms, the craft we are all here to preserve for future generations. As you might know, it sometimes gets crowded around the six forges we currently have in operation, so hopefully this means more members are showing up each time keen to persist with the self-paced learning exercises with a view to continuing on to some of the more advanced techniques that will be run as more intensive

training workshops in the near future. Speaking for myself, I have not signed off on exercises that by now I should be quite capable of completing to specification with only a few heats, and within a short frame of time. So my advice to new members would be to perhaps spend the morning (and get in early) working on the self-paced exercises, get something signed off, then spend the afternoon working on a personal project exploring how the steel moves and becoming more comfortable with hammer control.

Having been attending work days for just over two years now, and without any prior technical aptitude, I can reflect on where I began in this learning endeavour and believe I have grasped some of the fundamentals of the craft. Safely it could be said that though the learning curve is steep in the beginning there seems to be no ceiling. At fortnightly intervals it is difficult to get to know people by name and face in any great hurry. Something that I have found helpful is to check the names signed in the book for that day and try to put those names to faces present.

I'd like to extend a greeting to the Doris's (as bar a few members we may seldom cross paths). It was good to see the article in the paper (including its online variant), and I had friends who reported to me hearing the interview on the radio. Congratulations, and thank you for continuing to represent and promote the craft in the wider community.

Doris

Mary Hackett

Doris has been powering along as per usual. Our Facebook page is very popular with over 100 people following. This, thankfully, is not reflected by those wanting to join, but it is important to have extra support.

To Doris We Go

Doris, as I have been harping on for a few Drifts now, was host to a Radiant Pavilion event, To Doris We Go. Radiant Pavilion was a week long event that took place in Melbourne in the first week of September. We had a great turnout with around thirty visitors - men (some wanting to join), women (some wanting to join) and children (some wanting to join but too young**). All of the participants worked very hard on that day, forging, as guides, as entertainers and cake tea providers. I wish to thank all who worked on that day. For a more enlightening and entertaining report flick over to Dianne Beevers' article.

The Age

The Radiant Pavilion publicity crew arranged an interview for us with a reporter from The Age complete with photographer. Alice Garret, Beka Hannah and myself spent a morning working hard to help by posing for images, starting forgers which were not the 'right' forges and therefore having to light other less functional

forges to catch the right light for images. We stood way too close to overheated forges and carted around hot coals, all which burnt our faces and tested our patients. We were then interviewed by the reporter who was trying to

in the future will be the writing of a press release.

774 Richard Stubbs

The infamous article drew the attention of ABC radio station 774, and in particular Richard Stubbs staff. I went with Dianne Beevers to the station at South Bank where I was interviewed by Richard Stubbs A f t e r n o o n Program. I was a bit nervous as it was another opportunity for upsetting those associated with ABA (Vic). Richard's obsessions within the interview were sword and

knife making and a few times I had to steer him away from that and back to what we do best. Those who heard the interview believed that I held my own well despite his sharp, comic wit. It was over quicker than I had expected it to be, and the next group of interviewees were shunted in as I was trying to gather my things to leave.

**We actually have a structure in place to allow children to become members. "Too young" need not apply. Ed.

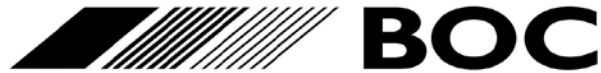


find the right angle that would satisfy both her readers and editor etc. The completed article may not have pleased but it worked to draw interested people to the main event. I am sorry to those who were offended. I the article read to me over the phone before it went to print but was distracted by the over abundance of work that I was meant to be doing at the time. I keep thinking of the well used Oscar Wilde quote from The Picture of Dorian Gray 'There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.' Something that I will remember

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUN
08
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>

SUN
13
NOV

Extraordinary Meeting 11am
The Chapel,
Coopers Settlement

SUN
13
NOV

End of Year BBQ
-after the EGM

SUN
22
NOV

Barn Work Day
10am– 4.30pm

SUN
06
DEC

Barn Work Day
(Last for the year))
10am– 4.30pm

SUN
03
JAN

Barn Work Day
10am– 4.30pm

SUN
17
JAN

Barn Work Day
10am– 4.30pm

SUN
31
JAN

Barn Work Day
10am– 4.30pm



TOYOTA AXLE MATERIAL FOR SALE @ THE BARN **\$5ea**
33mm diameter, 600mm long, flange removed

SUN
14
FEB

Barn Work Day
10am– 4.30pm

FOR SALE

HEAT TREATMENT QUENCH OIL

HIGH FLASH POINT OIL SUITABLE FOR HEAT TREATMENT
THE NEXT BEST THING TO THE REAL THING: AVAILABLE NOW AT THE BARN

50c
per litre
BYO container

NEXT DEADLINE FOR DRIFT ARTICLES:

1st January 2016 for Issue 100