



## WANDI WOODTURNING CLUB HISTORY

### HOW THE WANDI WOODTURNING GROUP CAME ABOUT

The Wandi Progress Association (WPA) had a desire to supply community facilities that locals and other community members could use. Their first major project after the construction of the Magenup Equestrian Centre was to lobby Town of Kwinana for a community hall. They were successful and once the building was completed a variety of clubs sprung up to become permanent users.

The Wandi Woodturning group's first meeting was held in 1995, founding members mainly consisted of WPA committee members and then after a local newspaper article their membership grew from about 4 twice a month on a Thursday evening to between 8 & 12.

Photo right Sound Telegraph 26 July 1995

From left:

Jack Pallas, Steven, Bradley and Rodney Cocks part of the initial membership of the inaugural woodturning group. This article gave our numbers a boost.



In these early days of the club, they had little in the way of machinery and tools; all was supplied by the members and carted in to hold a demonstration workshop. A car would roll up with a mini lathe with stand and it would be set up in the hall for the demonstration, tools would be sharpened at home and then honed while on the job because the club had no grinder. Over the coming years the membership grew to about 30 but there was a need for week day workshops for the retirees; many of the WPA committee were still members and it was decided to lobby council again for a larger and more purpose build area. The Wandi group along with the Woodturners Assoc. made use of the hall for weekend workshops, it became a popular venue. Other groups that were established at the same time were Wandi Playgroup, Wandi Craft Group and they were also in need of a better space.

It took a few years but finally the Clubrooms were built, and a multipurpose area was constructed for the turners to use. It consisted of a long lockable space with a secure storeroom, lathes were meant to be stored behind two large roller doors that could be moved out when needed. This space worked well for many years with the club having two Thursday night meetings a month and a Wednesday hands on meeting. Special days were offered to members one being a women's only group and others were skills workshops for the Wandi members. Still the group grew and so did the lathe numbers along with a grinding sharpening station and bandsaw. It was evident again that the club had out grown its space.



Photo above left - Jack de Vos (left) shares his turning expertise with a workshop for interested woman turners. Venue the Clubrooms.

Photo above right - Gordon Ward (left) making a special point about marking out for spindle turning.

Photo right - Jack with some of the women turners taking a well-deserved lunch break.



About this time the suburb of Hope Valley was resumed as a light industrial area, all the residential housing and community facilities including a school were to be bulldozed. The distressed community couldn't do anything about the decision, they had to go but they thought one building could be saved and that was Hope Valley Primary School a community centre piece that everyone had something to do within the last 50 years. The Town of Kwinana were lobbied by the community to save the school however Landcorp said it had to go but it was realised that the school buildings could be moved to another site. This is where the WPA became involved and said that it would organise the move. Landcorp came up with some funds; a grant was secured through the Department of Local Government and Lottery West. The main building consisted of three classrooms the office for the secretary and principal along with staffroom and canteen. The outside play area was covered with a roof so the children could play out of the sun, and this would go as well.

The WPA gained a building license applied for the appropriate building approvals and then engaged a builder and building transport company. The school was stripped of useful materials, and then the builder came in and removed the verandas, canteen and staffroom. The woodturners came to the aid of the WPA and helped with the striping and dismantling, the WPA didn't have the man power for this. It was around this time the WPA realised that the large cover over the play area could be useful so negotiated to have it removed and delivered to site. The remaining building was cut in half loaded onto two low-loaders and delivered to the site on the 17 November 2004 where it sits today at the Wandi Community Centre.

Well the covered play structure became the Wandi Woodturners new clubrooms, the building was installed as a standalone structure, roof only with a concrete slab. The additional changes to make it an enclosed building were completed in June 2005 by the WPA and many woodturners from around the metropolitan area. Not too many tek screws are in a straight line holding up the exterior sheeting but it was all completed by volunteer help.





Woodturners from other groups and WPA members pitched in to sheet the shed, what a great colour for a woodworking shed Eucalyptus green. Like any good busy bee there has to be a good feed to thank the volunteers, sausage in buns were the order of the day.



The completed wall, just another three to go, congratulations all round we did a great job.

A handyman was paid to build the stud wall framing inside and a local gyprock installer donated a day and team of men to line the inside. Flushing off the joints and painting was completed by the handyman. The inside of the building has six different sized storerooms and by the time the building was finished all the spaces were occupied by different groups with the official opening on the 18 November 2006. The two new buildings were named one being the shed became the "Shed" and was used by the Woodturners, Carvers, Marquetry, Triton, Fine Wood Association, WAWA and WPA/Wandi Landcare.

Photo right - Volunteers helped out with the interior shed walls and hung a suspended ceiling in the workshop to keep the space as open as possible.



The Hope Valley School was named the Resource Centre. Now the woodturners were able to leave half their lathes in place only having to move a couple when having their hands on workshops, a bonus was a secured wood store that came later as demand arose for this area.

With this improved space the club started another hands on night for members who were still working and a women's only group shared half a Wednesday in the afternoon.

Photo right - The women's Wednesday afternoon group overlapped with the men's group in the morning, there was good discussion about the turning progress on the lathes.

Later the women's group was meshed with the men and now we have mixed attendance in all sessions.





Photo right - Newspaper article notifying the community of the clubs latest acquisition. It was clear that a club that was accessible to older people would attract members with disabilities. Our turning club has embraced this and purchased a purpose built lathe to make the turning easier along with a special wheelie chair that can assist the user to get into position on the lathe.



In the meantime, Smithy's Boxing Gym became a permanent user group and operated out of the Resource Centre along with the World Wildlife Fund.

Still the club expanded and with the ever-increasing age of members it was clear that a new home was needed where lathes could be left in place and not be moved. Again in 2009 the WPA made a decision to assist and lobbied the Town of Kwinana to build another building this time one that could house all the wood groups that now use the Wandu Community Centre site and Smithy's Boxing Gym. It became clear that funding such a building was not possible so the WPA mapped the use of the community buildings and came up with a plan to move the permanent groups around. It was decided to use the new workshop for Woodturning, Triton, Scroll Sawing and leave space for a future group (later taken up by the Women Working In Wood).

Carvers would go in the Resource Centre and shared with the Marquetry Club and Smithy would go into the Shed.



The Pavilion finished, the workshop is the closest to the carpark with the amenity in the middle and a large Recreation room on the other end.

There are still times when the workshop is a bit small and it gets a bit hot. The City of Kwinana can't make the building larger at the moment but they did help out with an evaporative air conditioner.

It has been two years now since the Pavilion was finished with the official opening on 3 April 2016 the Wandie turners are creating their usual mess of chips and dust, cleaning it up and then making more mess again and cleaning it up. The building and workshop has hosted many Wandie and WA Woodturners workshops including national and international guest turners. The area is a credit to the long serving members of the club and the tenacity of the WPA who had the insight to bring these facilities together supporting the various users.

Photo right - 17 November 2016 Nick Agar well known international turner became one of the first to demonstrate to a keen WAWA audience in the Recreation Room of the Pavilion.

Photo below - Turners concentrating on the demonstration and why wouldn't you when Nick was demonstrating how to make the bowls and platter in photo below right. The following day Nick instructed a hands on class in the workshop with many of the participants making one of his Viking bowls.



Projects in hand are a commercial dust extraction system, giving a vacuum point at each machine making the workshop an even better place to be in. In 2017 the Woodturners Association of Western Australia made Wandie its home and there are expectations to expand the association on the site.

I think it appropriate that we also mention some of the great local Western Australian turners who have graced the woodturning workshops keen to spread the word of their craft both of which have now passed on. Master Craftsman Gordon Ward was the first to have national and international success followed by Master Craftsman Jack de Vos, their work was exquisite and gave all of us something to strive for.

*Written by Rod Cocks*