

PROFILE OF A TURNER

BOB MALACARI

Bob was born in Fremantle in 1931, as his family owned a market garden in Spearwood. He went to school in Spearwood, Mt Barker and Fremantle.

Bob served his apprenticeship as a Carpenter and Joiner from 1947 to 1952. He worked on housing and maintenance, also on office and hotel structures, where he often worked with his younger brothers who were carpenters as well.

In 1957 he decided that life as construction worker had limitations and he was lucky to be accepted as a trainee Civil Construction Supervisor with the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Authority. After training in Cooma, NSW, he was posted to Cabramurra, working on the Tumut 2 Hydro Power Station, dam and tunnels.

He married Patricia in 1956 and with (at that time) two children, she joined him in Cabramurra. There, living in extreme conditions with neighbours who came from all over the world was a unique experience.

At the end of 1961 the call of home (once a West Aussie, always a West Aussie) was too great and they returned to W.A.

Shortly after returning to WA, he joined G. Maunsell & Partners, a London based Civil Engineering Company, and for the next 7 years was employed in the supervision of the Standard Rail Project between Kalgoorlie and Kwinana including stations and finally as Clerk of Works Civil on the WAGR rail office in East Perth.

Patricia and Bob now had a family of 3 girls and 3 boys and lived in Attadale.

Bob worked for 30 years for G. Maunsell & Partners but had a break of four and a half years working with the Water Board on the construction of Wungong Dam, roofing of reservoirs and the construction of high-level water tanks.

After returning to Maunsell & Partners, he was involved in work on the reconstruction of Tasman Bridge, where a large ship had demolished a section. He also worked offshore at Karratha and on the overland Gas Pipeline from Karratha to Bunbury.

Bob joined WAWA at a meeting at the home of John Shinnick, as he had procured a lathe about 3 years previously to be used mainly to do spindle work for furniture hobby work.

At the next meeting at John Shinnick's a year later he was elected to the Management Committee where he served for two periods with members such as Keith McQueen, Milton



Rundle, John Lathwell, Cyril Jones and many others who have supported WAWA so well over the years.

Bob's involvement was interrupted by working on projects all over the state but has attended meetings as much as he was able and spent long periods on John Lathwell's sub-committee organising monthly weekend workshops.

Health problems caused Bob to retire in 1995 but he still attends as many meetings as he is able and is a member of the Wandi Group.

Bob and Pat now have 18 grandchildren and they reside all over the Australian Continent, which creates a good reason for caravan visits to places such as Darwin, Brisbane and Adelaide. As a result, he was met and become good friends with several active woodturners in other states.

With the pastimes of gardening, woodwork, fishing and family, adding to the fact that the body now moves much more slowly, there are not enough days in the week! With all of this activity he gets the most satisfaction in helping beginners and those whose skills are being improved and seeing the delight on their faces as they successfully master a new level of experience with their woodturning.

Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 162 dated September 2012

Observations Wandi WEWS September 2012

Bob Malacari was next with a reminder that it does everyone good to occasionally step back to basics, and he then proceeded to demonstrated what he meant.

Mounting a piece of wood between centres he roughed it down with a roughing gouge and finishing with a skew. After cutting beads with the skew, Bob changed to a 4-jaw chuck and cut several beads and cove using both skew and a spindle gouge.

However, Bob explained why he favoured the skew and the quality of cut that can be obtained.

Throughout the demonstration Bob explained the importance of your stance, tool angle and tool movement.

There was plenty of lively discussion following the demo.



Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 169 dated November/December 2013

Observation from Wandu WEWS September 2013

Bob Malacari, making bowls with inlaid lids.

Bob passed round several examples of his work inlaid with concentric rings. After tidying up a small blank he marked out three rings 4.5mm wide and cut them out using a modified screwdriver. The rings are then cut free with a parting tool made from a hacksaw blade.

Bob explained his shop-made offset plate device and passed it round for close examination. Using newsprint and bondcrete to create a glue joint to fasten a dome top blank to the plate, he then cut a groove and fitted a ring. After offsetting the work, Bob marked cut another groove, to which he fitted the ring. The rings are glued in with a minimal amount of bondcrete. Bob then mounted the work, still glued to the offset plate, into a chuck and finished off.

He then removed it from the plate, using a chisel to split the paper joint.

To finish the bottom, Bob cut a recess in to a chipboard plate mounted on the lathe, retained the lid with the tailstock, and did the necessary shaping.

Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 187 dated November/December 2016

Observations Wandu WEWS September 2016

The next demonstrator was **Bob Malacari**.

Bob's demonstration was on 'Old School Joints'.

Bob explained how he intended to work through his demonstration using old equipment. He advised that when he first took up wood turning chucks were large in design and had bits hanging from them. You had to watch your fingers to avoid them getting hit by these large chucks. He also advised how he had learned much of his early wood turning using a face plate and that the holes left in the work by the screws holding it to the face plate were simply covered up with a piece of felt. The felt was glued onto the base of the job. He said how in those early days you had to work out things for yourself, how to hold work on the lathe.

Today things have come a long way and methods have been introduced making things a whole lot easier than in the early days. Bob informed us that in the early days he read books. The origins of these books were from England as there were many professional wood turners, while Australia, at that time, had none. Then he explained how he had made his own chuck out of wood.

Next, he introduced the cup chuck. He explained how this was simple to use and how its introduction made things a whole lot easier. He went onto to explain how he still uses the cup chuck today despite having purchased more modern equipment.

Next, he explained how in the early days he used to make a lot of bobbins. He found in those early days how difficult it was to stop the bobbin from wobbling around when it was held on the lathe. He explained how he developed a technique using a drill chuck to stop the bobbin from wobbling. This involved making his own cup chuck with a morse taper.

Next, he explained how he made many face plates too suit the job he was doing. Sometimes the face plates he made had to be large in size.

Next, he explained how he taught himself to use paper glue joints to hold things together and how he still uses the same method today. The glue he continues to use is bondcrete.

Then Bob introduced a lathe steady that he had made, and he explained how he used this when turning long pieces of timber between centres. Lastly Bob spoke about tools. He explained how he developed his own set of tools from the basic designs. He found that as he became more competent that he could modify his tools to suit a particular job. In particular he mentioned the bowl and detail gouges as being two tools he had modified to suit over the years.

He finished off by saying how he had developed all of these techniques and tool shapes before the introduction of the scroll chuck.

A very interesting demonstration showing how tools, techniques and chucking methods had been developed over the years.

Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 205 dated November/December 2019

WAWA Recognises Members' Contributions, AGM, September 2019

Member No 83 Bob Malacari -- Life Member

Bob Malacari is nominated by Wandi Woodturners Monday group

Bob joined WAWA at its third meeting in March 1986. His first demonstration, a lace bobbin, was at that meeting in line with the then practice that everyone was expected to do some sort of turning on the lathe no matter what the skill level. His brother Arthur joined the next meeting. This was the start of the brothers loading up the lathe and travelling to various country locations including Collie, Mullewa, York, Beverley, Northam, Greenough and Stoneville to a mixture of meetings, shows, fairs and fetes, with wives usually in tow and conducting craft workshops at the towns they visited.

Bob was a foundation member of the Melville group where he was a regular demonstrator,



basing his demonstrations on “back to basics”, a practice he continues through to the present. During this period, Bob assisted at a Sunday morning class in wood turning at his children’s school where Gordon Ward was the manual arts teacher.

Although he had been involved in committee tasks before this, Bob joined the Association Management Committee formally in April 1988, coincidentally with Gordon Ward, as replacement for two committee members who had resigned. Their appointments were confirmed at the AGM in September of that year. That was also the year of the Exhibition of Excellence to which Bob contributed two standard lamps.

A series of family illnesses forced Bob to withdraw from most Association activities until, now living at Waikiki and encouraged by his cousin Graham Lewis, he transferred from Melville to Wandi where he continued to demonstrate, particularly those processes not dependent upon expensive equipment.

Four years ago, when Wandi’s Monday group became too large for one supervisor, Bob accepted the invitation from Graham Lewis to join him. Bob then became a regular at Monday hands-on sessions sharing the instruction, including weekend programs, with Graham and taking over during Graham’s absences until back troubles forced him to curtail his activities.

Presented September 2019