

PROFILE OF A TURNER

Brian Fowlie came into this life in July 1933 at East Fremantle. His childhood was spent at the family home in Como with his parents and sister (all have now passed on).

Childhood leisure time was spent in or on the river, swimming, canoeing or sailing. The canoes were made from sheets of galvanised iron, the joins and nail holes being sealed with tar from the road verges. These canoes were sailed from Como to Mosman's Bay on the Easterly using a holland blind as a sail, then home again on the sea breeze (it was a long paddle when the sea breeze failed to eventuate.) He is sure his mother would have been worried had she known of these adventures. When South Perth Yacht Club formed (not the current club) he was involved in sailing VJ'S & V'S. Competitive swimming and Royal Lifesaving were major sports and Brian represented the State and won several State Titles.

His schooling was at the Como State School and then Wesley College. He then graduated from the University of WA with a Science degree majoring in chemistry. During this period National Service caught up with him and a very enjoyable and enlightening six months were spent in the Air Force.

Brian and Robin (whom he met at school dancing classes) were married in 1957; they have four children and five grandchildren.

Most of his working life was with CSBP & Farmers Ltd. making chemical fertilisers (no bull!!), being involved with production. He started at the Bassendean Works, then Rocky Bay Fremantle, Picton Junction, Geraldton (25 years) and finally the Cresco factory at Bayswater retiring in 1991.

During his time in Geraldton a definite taste for crayfish was acquired. He pulled his pots every day during the season and there was always crayfish available (alas not anymore). Beach and boat fishing were always successful, and this supplemented the crayfish diet. He also got involved with sailing catamarans (proper yachts not half yachts) and was Commodore of the St George's Catamaran Club.

Many weekends and holidays (when there were no work commitments) were spent four-wheel driving and camping, travelling North, mainly on the coast. This travel habit is still carried on today, but in the comfort of a caravan.

After retirement in 1991 and after the big obligatory 12-month trip around Australia he tried to get involved in Woodturning, firstly attending TAFE. Unfortunately, the instructor did not have the first clue on woodturning, so he assisted each class member to build a lathe (a T-gem look alike).

Brian then heard about WAWA, attended a Melville Group meeting and joined their classes and then got some idea on how to turn wood. He joined WAWA in 1993, was convenor at Melville 1995-97 and is still on the committee of management after being elected in 1997. He says woodturning is not a hobby but a disease.

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Brian Fowlie joined the Association in 1993, affiliating with the Melville Group, of which he continues to be a staunch member. Brian has served as the Group Convenor, a committee member and for a number of years held the very important role of organizing the Group weekly programme.

On numerous occasions Brian has been required to fill the role of demonstrator and his many skills have ensured the attention of the members present.

Brian is still a stalwart of the Group and because of his generous nature, he readily assists the families of former members in the disposition of lathes and other equipment.

Brian was elected to the Committee of Management in September 1997, and in 1998 took on the role of Weekend Workshop Coordinator until 2004. This role is pivotal in maintaining the Association's monthly Workshop, necessitating negotiating with the various groups to host a workshop and ensure a balanced and interesting programme. Brian filled the role with distinction and his advice is still sought and freely given, particularly to country groups. Brian is regular attendee at weekend workshops, including those in the country, and has been known to travel the eastern states for further enlightenment in the craft he loves.

In respect of his own craftwork, Brian materially assists in the management of the Shopping Centre Group, our shop window for attracting people to woodturning. Brian is also a member of kindred Organisations including the Fine Woodwork Association and the Goldfields Specialty Timbers Industry Group.

