

PROFILE OF A TURNER

Dan Killgallon

I was the fourth eldest in a family born just before the Second World War in the city of Westminster, London, England. I was educated mainly at Millbank Secondary School which was originally a Victorian Prison. It was here I first started to enjoy working with wood, with the smell of the wood and the feel of my bare hands making something that I could take home to Mum: a tea cloth holder with a marble as the mechanism. The next time I had contact with wood was when I asked my father for some pocket money. He took me down to our shed and handed me a rip saw, a small axe and a hessian bag, and told me to go on the bomb sites and chop wood and sell it. Other jobs as a schoolboy were as a barrow boy selling fruit and vegetables and as a paper boy but the latter job didn't last long! When I left school, I took up an apprenticeship to become an electrician. To supplement the small wage, I had a second job as a van and cellar boy in the wine industry. This was a good job with good French wine!



Then I was called up to do my National Service for 18 months in the Royal Air Force. The money was not that good however, so I signed up for three years as a cook. I had a very enjoyable time and I also travelled around the world, plus I saw Australia for the first time and realised I liked it. I eventually left the Royal Air Force.

I met my second wife at my best friend's wedding in Wales.

In the second year of our marriage, we had our first child, Claire. We then discussed buying a house and decided it would be the best to travel to Australia and settle there.

We came out on the Migrant Ten Pound Scheme in 1968 to the hostel at Pt. Walter in Fremantle. We moved to Maddington when our house was built and have remained there ever since. Later we added to our family with two sons. Up to the early nineties I worked in heavy industrial construction on the electrical installation side which took me all over W.A. as far as the Argyle Diamond Mine, the oil rigs, Kalgoorlie and Boulder, down south and travelled as far as Albany. I worked about 24 years on the Alcoa sites at Pinjarra, Worsley, Kwinana and Boddington Gold mines.

When I wasn't working the family enjoyed fishing from our boat and then four-wheel driving. In that time, we travelled the Canning Stock Route which was very interesting.

As I reached my middle fifties, I found that I was not getting the jobs and I put that down to my age. I then started to look for something to do in my retirement and my daughter Claire suggested I try woodturning at Liddelow Homestead. This is where I met woodturners such as Gerald Young, Reg Watson, John Curry and Gordon Ward who, I must say, inspired me to carry on. At this time, they told me the benefits of joining WAWA which was a brilliant idea as this opened up the opportunity to meet more fellow woodturners that helped me with my craft.

This is where I obtained the skills and information from the likes of the late John Shinnick, Jim Clarke, Jack DeVos and Dean Malcolm, not forgetting my mentor Viv Paust (though he is a grumpy old sod!) who lifted my game that much further with his critiques of my pieces. I should like to take this opportunity to thank all my fellow woodturners for all the help and advice over the years and look forward to many more years enjoying my craft.

However, if anyone wants to give me the ten pounds to go back, they can as I need it! Dan Killgallon.