

PROFILE OF A TURNER

Elaine Boyd

Like many of our wood turners, Elaine was born in the country. She grew up in the central wheatbelt where her parents were farming at Koorda. She was quite capable of driving a tractor and doing many other farm jobs while still a schoolgirl. Elaine's secondary education was undertaken in Perth - boarding school at first and later her mother came to Perth to look after Elaine and her sister.

On first leaving school she worked as a milliner, but the long hours and poor pay influenced her to look for better employment. This led her to become a telephonist working shift work at the Perth GPO. She was one of six selected for work on the overseas lines. This needed some knowledge of other languages. Elaine had learnt some German and French at school and had also picked up some Italian from prisoners of war working on their farm. (During the war many farms had to rely on labour from Italian prisoners of war and most of them were very good workers.)

Elaine had known and been friendly with Ted for around six years when they decided to marry. At that time, married women could not remain employed with the Government services, so she left the PMG and worked as a receptionist at Skipper Bailey until their first child was born.

Prior to taking up woodturning, Elaine had a plant nursery specialising in ferns. After Ted retired, they decided they would like a hobby that they could both share.

About 25 years ago, her mother had taken up wood turning. The reason for this was that she wanted a standard lamp and decided they were too dear to buy. Her mother went to Technical School to learn wood turning and then bought a lathe. The money she earned from her turning was used to support an overseas missionary.

Elaine started turning using her mother's old lathe. She took lessons at Kent Street school for three months using a blunt scraper on pine. At first, she was terrified of the lathe but, with proficiency, overcame her fears.

Elaine and Ted met up with Ron Smith and Gordon Ratcliffe at a WAWA demo in Belmont and they encouraged them to join the Association.



Elaine is well known for her artistic pieces, especially her many different mushrooms, usually set in a garden scene using pieces of burl or other settings. She enjoys the different shapes and colours that can be used in these creations. Repetitive turning of many identical articles does not have the same appeal. Her creations have won many of our local competitions and "Best Thing Turned for the Year".

Elaine finds WAWA to be a great social group and hates to miss any of their meetings. She enjoys the interaction and fellowship and the technical hints so freely shared. Over the years she has built up her equipment, but it remains basically a hobby. She strongly believes it is an excellent hobby for women and anyone taking it up has a great opportunity to learn and create. Also, from a woman's viewpoint, there are many useful things for the house that can be made.

It is good to see that an increasing number of women are now following Elaine's example.

Extract from WAWA newsletter issue 42 dated October/November 1992

A LADY TURNER'S POINT OF VIEW.

When I (**Elaine Boyd**) asked lady turners to tell me how and why they came to take up turning there seemed to be certain areas where many had similar experiences.

Some of the reasons for taking up turning were:

- (a) from necessity (an example was the Rockingham woodcarvers who couldn't procure suitable turned articles)
- (b) opportunity and
- (c) the love of wood and the desire to work with wood

The difficulties they had to face when they first started (and there seemed to be plenty) made many feel that they were on their own in a man's world.

One of the problems in particular was the lack of knowledge of woodworking tools and their USES.

I found very few lady turners came to WAWA weekends.

Maybe this was because women keep their weekends for their families and their hobbies are for weekdays.

Also, they didn't try to compete with other turners, but preferred to make things for their homes, for a friend or for sale.

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For our August meeting the association travelled to Moora.

Elaine Boyd started the ball rolling with a most interesting talk on 'Turning from a Woman's point of view', discussing how some women came to take up turning and the problems they encountered.

She concluded with a women's display of turnery which could be the envy of many male turners and clear proof that most problems had been solved.