

## **PROFILE OF A TURNER**

### **FRANK LEDER**

I was born in 1927 in a small village near the city of Augsburg in Bavaria, Germany. I am the third eldest of eight boys in the family. As schooling and further education was limited in a small village, my parents decided to move closer to the city, where they also built a bigger house to accommodate a bigger family. After finishing High School, my education continued in the Trade School for Mechanical Engineering in Augsburg where I gained my certificate as Fitter Machinist. Lots of unpleasant events happened during the war and after 1945 times changed slowly to a more normal way. I started working in my trade with an engineering firm, manufacturing Vacuum stripping Plants for Spinning Mills. Subsequently, I advanced to install these independently in spinning mills for the next ten years in all parts of Germany and Austria.

I met my future wife, Marianne and we married in 1955. I then decided to change my job, so I did not have to travel around the country any longer. My next job was as Quality Controller in M.A.N. (Machine Factory Augsburg Nuremberg) where I advanced to supervisor in the sheet metal and boiler maker workshop. I worked there until 1962 when we decided to migrate to Australia in September of 1962.

As assisted migrants we were contracted to stay for two years. From day one we tried to do our best to feel at home here. I found a suitable job in the metal industry and my wife in accounting. The life in Australia suited us very much and we decided just after a bit more than a year to settle here for good and build our own house in Dianella.

I started working as Fitter-Machinist with a Perth engineering firm, manufacturing and installing heavy sawmill equipment as well as overhead cranes and various other engineering items and I soon advanced to Foreman position. My job, installing the manufacturing machines etc. in sawmills brought me into contact, with the timber industry. Thinking back to those times, about 30 to 35 years ago, how the so called "waste timber", mainly jarrah was disposed of would make one cry today. A conveyor transported all the "offcuts" on a heap, to be burnt. Today, I think a lot of woodturners could have a feast to salvage plenty of beautiful, suitable jarrah. Well, times have changed.

In the meantime, we sold our house in Dianella and had a new one built in Willetton, to be closer to our friends who mainly live on the southside of the river.

After working for about 15 years with the same firm, it closed down and a change was inevitable for me. A few years of self-employment followed until bad health made it impossible to carry on working. As I improved health wise, I decided that sitting around is not my way of carrying on as there are better things I could do.

The TAFE column in the newspaper gave me a lot of options I could try, and I thought, why not woodturning? I enrolled in a course and obtained the basic idea, and it was to my liking. Further lessons at Timbecon followed where I brought my first lathe and some basic tools. One day, my wife Marianne came home from shopping in Southlands Shopping Centre and told me, "There is a group of men demonstrating an exhibiting wood turned items". So, I went over to the shopping centre where I met John Lillywhite who gave me advice on how to join a group and so on.

Health problems prevented me to join straight away, but I finally made it in 1991 and applied for membership with WAWA and I have been a member of Melville Group ever since. I have met many experienced woodturners there, who helped me along to gain some skill in my turning. Also regularly attending the WAWA weekend workshops is giving me a chance to watch demonstrations by so many skilful woodturners. I try to help out whenever possible, to say thank you for assisting me to obtain a great hobby called "Woodturning".