

Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 74 dated February/March 1998

## PROFILE OF A TURNER

**Gordon Ward** born in China, educated in the UK, China and Hong Kong, worked in England and France and finally settled in Western Australia - Gordon Ward has had a very wide education in every sense of the word.

Gordon's father was with the British Red Cross and his mother was a Methodist missionary with the China Inland Mission, serving in Northern China near the Manchurian border when he appeared on the scene: on a raft on the river. He lived there with his parents until 1939 when all the women and children were sent to the UK because of the Japan-China war.

At first Gordon was at school in Edinburgh and then at the Leith Academy in Bournemouth. In 1947 they returned to China where he attended the Shanghai British School until Mao came to power when he was sent to Hong Kong and attended the George V School there. (Gerald Young co-incidentally also had attended that school). Gordon was awarded a scholarship to attend the Kingswood school in Bath, England where he completed his secondary schooling.

He then completed a 5-year apprenticeship with De Havilland Aircraft Company in production and mechanical engineering. The next 2 years were spent with De Havilland on structural testing before transferring to Hawker Siddeley in dynamic structural testing of guided missiles.

From there he joined Simca in France as a field instructor, finally rising to technical and warranty manager for Chrysler imports. After 9 years he left to come to Australia for Mitsubishi but on arrival his plans changed, and he joined a succession of motor dealers as service manager. It was suggested that he undertake teacher training in Manual Arts, so he did a 3-year course at Nedlands Secondary Teachers College where he studied under that other WAWA stalwart, Ron Goodson, who was in charge of the woodwork section. This re-introduced Gordon to wood turning and wood carving.

After graduation, Gordon taught at Kelmscott Senior High School where he developed a "free form" programme as well as teaching Applied Technology (mainly design) and all and every aspect of manual arts. After Kelmscott, Gordon went to Brookton SHS and while visiting the Royal Show from there, met Keith McQueen who was demonstrating on a Tough lathe at the show. Keith recruited him into WAWA, but he was not active until he returned to Perth from country teaching.

It was then that his interest in wood came to the fore. He always liked to combine carving with turning and most members have seen numerous examples of his ability to combine skills in design, turning and carving to produce what are essentially works of art.

He has demonstrated extensively at shopping centres and served as a committee member in two stints. After a minor heart attack in, 1994, Gordon has decided to become a full-time artist in wood, selling from a shop in Gosnells. He is now involved more in the aesthetic than the useful, designing and producing museum pieces, particularly exploiting the beauty of WA timbers.

Gordon greatly appreciates the camaraderie of WAWA and has freely contributed his considerable teaching skills for the benefit of members, particularly at Weekend Workshops. He considers WAWA to be outstanding in that everyone is keen to exchange ideas and pass on their experience and skills.

Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 145 dated December/January 2010

### **Observations Wandl WEWS September 2009**

**Gordon Ward** took centre stage stating he would make a goblet.

If you were expecting a single goblet, you were in for a surprise. After rounding a piece of lacy she oak, Gordon was joined by John Scarfe and the duo combined to give a very informative and entertaining demonstration. John explained the relationship between Vermac and Vicmarc and showed the Vermac system of chuck and accessories. As Gordon worked on the goblet the methodology was explained by John about the Vermac embellishing tools and their indexing system. Using a router and the 24 and 48 indexes a lattice pattern was cut into the goblet.

A continuous commentary, great turning skills and in-depth product knowledge by two extremely motivated people made this a truly memorable demonstration.

Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 148 dated June/July 2010

### **Observations Collie WEWS March 2010**

After lunch **Gordon Ward** came on to demonstrate a Bathtub Bowl and soon showed the audience why he is a top demonstrator both in presentation and technical skill as he created a delicate piece of turning. Gordon had prepared a handout sheet showing how to make the shoe shaped bowl in great detail.

Gordon captivated the audience with wit, jokes and most of all technical excellence.



# VALE

## GORDON WARD

12<sup>TH</sup> January 1937 – 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012

It is with considerable sadness that we note the passing of Gordon Ward, on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

Gordon was a long-standing member of our Association, who served on the Committee of Management for a number of terms, was always a very willing demonstrator at Groups and workshops, and a skilful instructor for many of our members through classes, and his involvement with the Dwellingup Forest Heritage Centre. He was awarded Life Membership of WAWA in 1998, as “an outstanding contributor, who had raised the technical, practical and artistic levels of the Association to new levels”.

Gordon was always a colourful and worldly character, probably due to being born in China, and then educated in that country as well as Hong Kong and the UK. His professions included being a mechanical and production engineer for De Havilland Aircraft Company, a field instructor for the Simca Motor Company, a service manager for Mitsubishi Motors, and a manual arts teacher at a number of colleges in Western Australia.

Gordon’s fascination in wood was not only limited to his involvement with WAWA, but also as a wood carver, membership of the Goldfields Speciality Timber Industry Group, and the Fine Woodwork Association of WA.

There isn’t a member of these groups who will not miss Gordon’s unusual sense of humour, his very quick wit, the numerous “accidents waiting to happen”, but most importantly, his absolutely outstanding ability to manipulate a piece of wood into a magnificent work of art, which was often touched off with some beautiful and imaginative colourings.

