

PROFILE OF A TURNER

John Mason was born in Griffith, NSW in 1937, the fourth of five children. His Father came from England at 16 years and his mother came from the U.S.A. when she was 14.

When his father returned home after the war, the family left the farm that his mother held together during that time and bought a big Guest House at Kurrajong which was not a great success. Two years later, they moved to Sydney and a regular job for his father which in 1950, took the family to Wagga for two years where John finished his Intermediate High School. Then back to Griffith to run John's Grandmother's farm. It was the biggest mixed farm in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, 100 acres, with 40 acres of wine grapes, 40 acres of apples and the rest in plums, oranges etc. John worked on the farm for 6 years with periods working other jobs during the quiet times. He worked on the railway, harvested and carted wheat (in bags) and did a stint as an electrical apprentice. Farm work was very hard, mostly hand work in those days. Three (winter) months pruning grapes, then from January picking them, backbreaking work. Then the apples, pick through the day and pack until 1 am. Then there was the cow to be milked, chooks, pigs and dogs to feed. Most of these were John's jobs and learning from his grandmother, John made great butter.



During these years, John developed a love of motorbikes and rode and raced them as a member of the local club. He was also a very keen shooter and won a number of trophies in the Rifle Club.

John was 22 when he went to Sydney for a holiday. He ran out of money after some misfortune, ran into an old friend who got him a job at Nestle's head office in the laboratory store. He was soon promoted to the lab itself and it was there that he met Lorraine.

In January 1963 they married and in December 1963 had the first of their three children. Insisting that Lorraine be at home for the children, John took on three jobs, managing a shop, pulling beer at night and doing security on weekends. A few years working at a Golf Club, then came a move to the country, managing a shop and then later, another shop. Unfortunately, the owners sold out so a move to Canberra was next. By this time Stephen, John's eldest, had left home and Canberra was a good place for the other two, Michelle and Darren, to find work. John worked in a department store, selling TVs, videos and sound systems.

For some years, John's marriage had been rocky and with the children reasonably self-sufficient, the marriage finally broke up in 1984, and John moved back to Sydney doing similar work. Being a bachelor was a whole new lifestyle and he was not sure that he liked it.

Then he met Pat. Neither John or Pat was ready for a serious relationship, but love does strange things, and a home was soon set up. Pat, the mother of two sons and a daughter, was originally from Western Australia and had a desire to return. John needed no urging and

after helping her mother sell her house in Darlinghurst, the three set off and settled in South Yunderup in 1987.

John and Pat were married in 1994.

John got a job at Parry's in Mandurah, TV's and sound systems again, until the company was taken over and John was out of work. Taxi driving, School bus driving, and a few other jobs followed until John joined a friend and started a Security Company in Mandurah. It was a slow start but eventually the company had two patrol vehicles, fully equipped with two-way radios etc. After 6 years and a very nasty encounter with an offender, John, now 58, decided it was time to leave.

During this time, Pat's Mother passed away, so they sold the (large) house and settled on the 4 acres where they still are. In being repaid a debt, John suddenly found himself with a Wood fast lathe, a drill press, belt sander and a band saw. John taught himself to turn, using only scrapers as he did not know that anything else existed!

Then he saw a woodturning demonstration in Mandurah being done by the local Group. John joined and soon learned that there is a whole lot more to woodturning! In his usual style, John told Pat that if he is in an organisation, he is in it boots and all. In his second year with the Mandurah Group, he was elected Assistant Convenor and in the following two years he was the Convenor. In 2000 John was elected to the Management Committee and it was during this time that President Les Small made him "an offer he could not refuse" and he then took on the duties of Editor of the WAWA Newsletter. The Mandurah Group's elections of 2002 saw John returned as Convenor for another term.

John is very strong on promoting the Association and is always ready to help anyone, especially new members. John is a regular attendee at the Weekend Workshops, and he finds that the information gained from the demonstrations and just talking, the fellowship and ready assistance is invaluable. "I have been in many organisations in my life, but this one is the best I have ever been associated with".

Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 101 dated August/September 2002

A VERY SPECIAL OFFER

There are a lot of discussions in the Mason household and there was a particular one just prior to the monthly Management Committee meeting. I was talking about various ways of increasing the Association's income when my wife, Pat, put forward her suggestion. Pat has suggested that ALL members "donate" an item or items of woodturning (only) to the Association, and they will be sold in her shop in the Fremantle Markets. Pat went on to say that 100% of the takings would be returned to WAWA. However, Pat laid down a few conditions, the principal one being that ALL members contribute, not just the same few. Pat will be in charge of the pricing. Rest assured; she will set the best price keeping in mind that

a quick turnover is essential. Overpriced items will just stay on the shelf. Pat has had nearly 10 years' experience in this environment which indicates that she knows the business.

Working out a quick calculation, if each of our 650(?) members donated an item(s) to the value of \$30 that works out to be around \$19,500. This is expected to be a long-term project, and if the goods are supplied as expected, a weekly return of \$100 would not greatly impact on our business yet it would return \$5,200 per annum. It boils down to a simple fact, you are woodturners, therefore you should be able to produce a saleable item. The wood (usually) costs very little and your time is (usually) your own. This is an ideal opportunity to bolster our funds at a time when it is needed, not only for the insurances, but there is always a wish list from the groups for additional equipment. A question has arisen.... what to make? Bowls, Vases, Clocks, Fruit, Eggs and Eggcups, Business Card Holders, Salt & Pepper Shakers and Mills, Breadboards, Letter openers etc. Make as much as possible with dark wood. The lighter coloured timbers just do not sell as well. The items should be of good quality, not necessarily in the "master " class but certainly in the "market", class, so that brings in all of you Novice turners as well. Identify the wood and supply your name, either on the item itself or on an attached card. If you are still unsure about any aspect, feel free to call Pat on 9537 6626, Monday to Thursday or any evening or 0408 903 800 on Friday, Saturday and Sunday when she is in the Market. Items can be delivered direct to the shop in the Fremantle Markets (Creations Wood Gallery, Shop 34, adjacent to the Tavern) or they can be left at any weekend workshop where I will collect them. If this is not suitable, call either Pat or myself and we will work out some other suitable arrangement.

So, there it is Now is the time to get busy and make your contribution. John Mason

Extract from Newsletter issue 141 dated April/May 2009

Observations Manjimup WEWS 2009

John Mason was next up with a talk on wine, some jokes and stories of his adventures in wine purchasing. After this entertaining preliminary talk John got down to the business of making a deep hollowed bottle. He hollowed out the neck then the base explaining the types of drills and hollowing tools. The secret of success is to make the base plug that fits tight and matches the grain so as to be unnoticeable and John achieved perfection, sealed the inside with plastic coating and finished the outside. I expect that a hollow bottle will be a competition item for 2010.

Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 158 dated January 2012

Our long standing and highly respected WAWA member **John Mason** passed away last November. The following tribute was presented in front of John's wife Pat, at a recent Mandurah Group meeting. John had been a member of the Mandurah Group since the mid 90's, and became a very accomplished wood turner, as he and Pat had a market stall at the Fremantle Markets. John loved his woodturning and was always willing to pass on his

knowledge; this was noted by the number of demonstrations, he has done at Group or WAWA meetings.

He served the members at Mandurah Group level, as a committee member, secretary and convenor. To my knowledge he was Convenor on 3 occasions. He was the also the Competition coordinator at WAWA level for many years.

John and Pat made their Yunderup residence open to all and anyone who was interested in woodturning, and he had a hands-on meeting there for several years on a Monday.

He allowed the Mandurah group to store some of their equipment and wood on his property, and he was always involved in working bees and wood collecting from Manjimup to Wanneroo. He tried his hardest to make the WAWA Mandurah May workshop the best in the west and would organise the Saturday night quiz nights or other entertainment when we used to have two-day workshops. John and Pat will always be remembered for their great gesture to WAWA for allowing members to sell donated items at the Fremantle Markets with all the profits going to WAWA. If my memory is right WAWA benefited by around \$5000. It was this great gesture that resulted in both being made Award of Merit members.

Thank you, Pat and John from the Mandurah Group.

Another good thing about John was the fact he did not always agree with what you had to say, but he would always listen to your point of view and sometimes change his opinion (not always). But I suppose that's what makes the individual. Not all is said here that could be said about John, and many of the members here will have their own story and he will not be forgotten. A bloke like John is a value to any Group or Organisation and will be missed.

Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 157 dated November 2011

VALE

WAWA has just learnt of the passing of John Mason on the 19th of November 2011.

On behalf of all John's woodturning friends, we wish to extend our sincere condolences to Pat and the Mason family.