

Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 73 dated December/January 1998

PROFILE OF A TURNER

John Shinnick was born in Kalgoorlie, and he was educated at Christion Brothers College. His father owned and operated a dry-cleaning business in the town and after leaving school, John worked with his father for about 8 months.

Having always been keen on engines and mechanical things, on leaving home he joined the West Australian Government Railways as it was then called. At first, he was in Midland, but then moved to Brunswick as an engine cleaner and fireman. He was to be posted from Brunswick to Mullewa, but love prevailed over career, and he left the railways and married Kath, who has been such a support to him (and to WAWA) over all these years.

Having left the railways, John then joined Peters Dairies as a truck driver and worked with them for 29 years, gradually working his way up until he was finally payroll officer for the company.

In 1962, John wanted to build his own cupboards for the house and enrolled at night school to learn cabinet making. While there he met a wood turner. This gentleman was responsible for starting him on the wood turning path. With the assistance of his father-in-law, he bought a Tough lathe in 1962 and paid it off at 1pound (\$2) per week.

John has been teaching wood turning since 1985 and has been a full-time professional wood turner since 1990. The main stay of his work has been turned legs etc. for commercial projects and the necessity of earning a living means he does not always have the time to do some of the projects he would like.

Despite this, members of WAWA are often privileged to see some of the very fine bowls he has turned from our indigenous timbers, namely Sheoak and Jarrah. He has a fine eye for form and shape and does superb finishes.

John is WAWA member No. 6 as he was one of the original 13 who formed the Association. In fact, he did some two years of workshops with Keith McQueen before the formation of the Association. John was on the first committee for 4 years and served 2 years as Vice President. He had already formed the Bunbury group where he was the Convenor for its first 4 years.

He particularly likes the fellowship and the sharing of the skills which WAWA offers and to which he himself has contributed so enormously, particularly in the sharpening and care of tools. He is planning retirement in 4 1/2 years and looking forward to making some fine furniture and to doing some fancy turning. We shall all be looking forward to that.

Right: made by
John Shinnick
for the
competition at
the 1st AGM



VALE

John Shinnick member number 6.

It is with great sadness we report the passing of John on December 29th 2000.

President Les Small, Committee Members and all WAWA members join in extending our deepest sympathy to Kath, daughters Susan and Diana, and son Andrew and their families.

EULOGY prepared and read by Gerald Young on behalf of The Woodturners Association.

It was John's wish that someone speak of him as a woodturner and member of an organisation within which he enjoyed much good fellowship and to which he gave a great deal.

The Woodturners Association of Western Australia, which he held so dear to his heart, is an organization of some seven hundred members spread throughout the southern region of WA formed fifteen years ago. However, John's interest in woodturning started well before that, indeed it was over twenty years ago that he became an active woodturner at his home, making many items of decorative and practical use. It was not long before he acquired a lathe and taught himself to use it.

By diligent application, which was typical of John's approach to a task, he gradually built up his woodturning skills and began producing a wide range of articles.

It is not surprising therefore, that when John met Keith McQueen in 1985, a time when there was a worldwide awakening in the craft of woodturning, that they would have discussed the possibility of forming an Association to promote the craft in Western Australia.

John could not have foreseen at that time the spectacular growth of the Association, nor have been aware of the major role he would play in its development. The organization that was created grew and blossomed on the principles of good fellowship and sharing of skills. John's contribution to this development was truly outstanding.

He was a founding member of the Association.

He served on its first Management committee.

He served a term as Vice president.

He was a founding member of the Bunbury Group.

He was the Convenor of the Bunbury Regional Group and later also served as its secretary.

Last and most importantly, he was a teacher and demonstrator of the highest calibre and made valuable contributions to the Association Newsletter.

In addition to all these official appointments and activities, John's wide-ranging interest in the Association led him to visit members in Kalgoorlie, Esperance and Geraldton and in assisting the development of woodturning in those regions.

In March 1986 John, together with Kath, had the distinction of being the only member to have hosted an Association Week-end Workshop at their home. With an attendance of some eighty people, this was indeed a remarkable achievement!

John rarely missed attending the Association and Group meetings at many of which he would demonstrate woodturning skills. From time to time, he also participated in the "Show & Tell, feature of the meetings and in the competitions.

John's fine personal qualities of kindness and patience enabled him to share readily the wisdom he possessed. He had a natural ability to impart his knowledge to others with great clarity and to encourage them to develop their skills and strive for excellence.

In recognition of his great contribution to the Association, John was honoured with life membership in 1995. Recently in addition to his association activities, John found time to teach woodturning at the Bunbury TAFE. That gave him a great deal of satisfaction and made him many new friends. John's kindly and helpful nature has touched many people, who have appreciated his friendship and help over many years.

John will long be remembered with great affection.

BUNBURY THOUGHTS

Lift the handle up - move your body with the tool, a man's voice said. Then a hand would be placed firmly over you hand and the tool that you were learning to use would start cutting correctly and you would get a thrill at what you were doing. The voice and the hand was that of John Shinnick, our fellow group member and master turner.

Such was John's contribution to our group and WAWA. Our Bunbury group was indeed fortunate to have had a man with such talent and experience which he passed on to us. But it was a two-way thing - John also got a lot back in return.

The joy of seeing the improvement in a members turning and finishing was his reward and pleasure, none more so than to have his fellow member and TAFE student Toni Wilson progress so well as to be able to assist him and take on the teaching as his health deteriorated.

Big shoes to fill, but Toni is well on the way, with Show & Tell with the new turner and improving turner he was big on praise and gentle with his criticism. But the same man was not afraid to rebuke (have a go at) an accomplished turner who dared to lower their standards on their turning or finishing. such was the measure of the man, John Shinnick, Member No 6, a friend first and a turner second. His spirit and example will live on in our group and WAWA for a long time. Thanks John and Goodbye.

On behalf of the Bunbury Group. Tom Brixey. Convenor.