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## **TURNERS TALES**

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Between working for Telecom and coaching junior hockey, painting an occasional picture etc. etc. I enjoy woodwork in general and woodturning in particular.

Many people have enquired how long I have been a turner and from memory it would be since 1970. My first efforts were fun and made on a small lathe costing about \$10 for bearings and the rest from scrap. Likewise, the tools were homemade, so my original investment was small, but has grown to \$3,000.

Attendance at night school metalwork classes provided me with the means to manufacture a larger lathe. I found that one can do small jobs on a big lathe but cannot do large jobs on a small one. There is a corollary here in that, being lazy one must also be an inventor, it is pointless to take five minutes to do a job if it can be done in two, by using a contrivance.

Turning wood is a conservationist's dream. Timber discarded during clearing operations can be brought home and left in untidy heaps before being turned into: Compost from the shavings, Hot water fuel by burning failures, rejects and end pieces, First Aid practice for cuts and abrasions, an occasional work of art, to please oneself or satisfy a customer.

Speaking of customers, people interested in woodwork are usually fairly basic people regardless of social standing, and it is a pleasure to discuss timbers, grains, finishes etc with kindred souls. I'd like to mention here the generous nature of woodturners I have met, from Perth to Augusta and all stations in between.

The best thing one can do is toss a particular piece of wood in the car when going visiting and drop it off at a turner's place. I'm absolutely amazed at the people who have done the same for me, very often, total strangers.

One of life's pleasures is taking part in a Country show or "Hyde Park Festival" which is a three-day Arts and Craft held in January on Australia day weekend. One is allotted a site to work in and a power cord from a very overloaded outlet, the floor is sand, and the roof is big trees, one's bed at night is the nearest empty tent (most participants go home at night). I usually stay as moving a ton (sorry, tonne) of equipment each night would be a mammoth task.

So, there we are, operating around 12 hours each day, snatching a drink or sandwich now and again and answering about two thousand questions. My machine needs two motors to allow cool off periods. Making a noise and spraying shavings around is a 100% way to draw an audience and develop friendships. I'll never forget at one event; a lady came over after I'd finished a little pot and lid. She said she loved woodwork and in an obviously Dutch accent asked if she could feel the finished pot. The look on her face as she caressed the pot made my day.

A big problem in doing craft work is to be original and creative. This must be what keeps craftspeople going, seeking to create a pleasing, well finished article. I believe wood is beautiful and normally needs only the rough patches knocked off to produce a functional article. A few simple curves are usually enough to show lovely grains and textures. Living in Collie has a definite advantage in that a lot of good timber is available e.g. She-oak, Black boy, Banksia etc. Suitable Jarrah is difficult to obtain so visitors from other states are disappointed when I cannot show them Jarrah pieces.

Stories of this nature should not be too technical, so such details have been purposely omitted. However, if any budding turner has a problem, please contact me, maybe we can chew the fat and solve a few knotty ones.