

Extract from Newsletter issue 118 dated June/July 2005

New Horizons - A Great Investment

Norm Gratte

For nearly forty years, I was an Industrial Arts Teacher working in wood, metal and graphics. Having been retired for a number of years, I decided it was time I knew something about wood turning.

In 2001, I attended turning classes organized by the Melville Recreation Centre. The instructors were two volunteers, Ron Eddy and George Franz, from the Melville woodturning Group. These two guys inspired me into becoming an avid woodturner. Bowls, platters, vases, pepper and salt mills, etc. were churned out.

After nearly four years of fairly similar type of work, I was looking for more challenges. The Forest Heritage Centre advertised one day workshops at Wandi. These appealed as "Just the thing" for a turner whose enthusiasm was waning.

I applied for two of the five days that were available. "Embellishment" with Vaughan Richmond and the "Perfect Platter" with Robert Jones. These two days at Wandi were, for me, stimulating and exhilaration. Both Vaughan and Robert were well organized, prepared to share their extensive skills and diligent in their instruction.

To summarize, they were highly professional, I intend enrolling in more of these workshops, for they have shown me new horizons and given me renewed enthusiasm.
Norm Gratte.

Extract from Newsletter issue 145 dated December/January 2010

Observations Avon WEWS October 2009

Norm Gratte came on to demonstrate an inside tear drop vase. Several examples were passed around and Norm explained they were all variations of the same method of manufacture of hollowing out from the base then sealing with a plug. After rounding down the wood Norm shaped the plug, he then shaped the center of the vase and parted off the plug. Using a morse taper drill bit he drilled out the center then hollowed out the vase. He then fitted the plug and glued it in place. Rather than having to wait till the glue set, Norm had prepared another vase to this stage which he placed in the lathe and shaped the neck and top, then drilled out the neck.

Using a drum sander in the chuck Norm cut the spout and finished shaping the top. The handle is made from wood cut on an angle so as the grain follows the shape, the handle is fastened to the vase using gold wire for pins. These vases would make a beautiful ornament in any home and present a challenge to the turner to make.

Extract from Newsletter issue 148 dated June/July 2010

Observations Melville WEWS 2010

Norm Gratte took the stage to show us how to make a flying saucer. First, he passed around two examples of flying saucers and then proceeded to make one. Norm had pre turned the doughnut shaped body with a spigot on both sides, and rounded both sides to their final shape, Norm then removed one spigot and bored into the center, he then proceeded to hollow out the saucer. By the use of a specially made plug mounted on a faceplate and fixed to the tailstock Norm was able to cut the saucer in halves without one flying away. Using a special guide to obtain the correct angle Norm drilled the holes for the legs; the saucer was then ready for finishing and colouring if desired. Norm then turned the legs, and the saucer was ready to fly. The demo held everyone's interest and kept them wide awake after lunch. Norm said he was going for a shoulder reconstruction the following week; we certainly wish him well and that everything goes alright.

Extract from Newsletter issue 154 dated May 2011

Observations Manjimup WEWS March 2011

Norm Gratte demonstrated the Escoulen Ball and Socket Chuck with indexed pivoting insert. Norm showed some items he had made including a golf club, and an egg in a cup and an egg cup with a duck in it. He made a spigot exactly 40mm which he mounted in the chuck and set the offset, Norm then turned a duck, the special chisels he used were passed around. Norm then demonstrated how to make a turned box with lid, the lid to have an offset knob. Norm explained that he just started to use the chuck and looked forward to determining the full potential that it is capable of. Norm and the chuck would be available at the shed Sunday morning.

Extract from Newsletter issue 154 dated May 2011

Observations Melville WEWS April 2011

Norm Gratte demonstrated the making of boxes with embellished lids and passed around several examples with designs inspired by starfish and tree nuts. The lid is made in two parts, the base which fits the bottom of the box and a domed top into which the embellishment pattern is carved giving a hollow effect of the lid. As the lid is the showpiece the bottom is turned last so that a perfect fit is achieved. Trust Norm to come up with something different every time he demonstrates.

Extract from Newsletter issue 158 dated January 2012

Observation Bunbury November 2011

First demonstration was Norm Gratte with a miniature desk clock, first showing us a handy board with places for sandpaper and other accessories. Norm explained the advantages of using a cup chuck and demonstrated how to use it on rounded wood cut to 28.4mm, to fit a 28mm chuck, sized with a special gauge. Norm passed round several examples of variations of miniature clocks, some based on golf balls. He mounted his pre prepared wood in the cup chuck and turned to round using a template made from aluminum offset printing plates. Norm first turned the base, then parted off, and fitted to a jam chuck to drill the recess for the clock. He then turned the ball shape ready for the fitting of the clock. Norm distributed an information sheet and answered questions from the members.

Extract from Newsletter issue 160 dated May 2012

Observations Melville WEWS April 2012

The next demonstrator was Norm Gratte making Salt and Pepper shakers in the form of nuts and bolts. He began by passing around two examples of his work. The first move was to make the six-sided head of the bolt, which Norm did by fitting a frame of rails above the bed of the lathe and fastening a router to the rails. He then used the indexing facility of the lathe cut the six sides of the blank. Norm then drilled out the center with a router bit to a depth of approximately 85 mm, using a specially made bit which had a rounded bottom. After cutting a 4mm deep flange, he mounted the bolt on pin jaws to cut the thread. After rounding over the end, Norm then drilled the holes for salt and pepper. Norm explained that the original idea came from Ken Rex (who would have been proud of Norm's presentation).

Extract from Newsletter issue 162 dated September 2012 **Observations Wandri WEWS September 2012**

Norm Gratte stepped in to demonstrate the making of fish using inside out turning. He passed round examples of four fish used as necklace ornaments. Norm utilized four pieces of wood 125 x 22mm square held in a 44mm square section, which was then held between a chuck fixed to a live centre, and normal drive chuck. With the aid of a small tool rest, Norm turned the block to round and shaped the fish with a skew and spindle gouge. He then rotated the four pieces 180 degrees and completed the shaping of the fish. At this stage Norm said that he would trim the waste on a bandsaw and complete the job with a sanding disc mounted on the lathe. Norm showed the setup he had made, and then sanded the fish to a final shape with 120 grit and finished with finer grits by hand.

Extract from Newsletter issue 166 dated May/June 2013

Observation from Manjimup WEWS March 2013

Norm Gratte took the stage to make fish by inside out turning. He first passed round examples of pods and mounted fish that he had made. Norm had prepared two pieces of wood fastened with screws on each end to form a square and mounted in the lathe spindle format. He then rounded the center between the screws and commenced to shape the fish. After scraping to a fine finish Norm then removed his work from the lathe, unscrewed, reversed and refitted the screws. The job was then fastened back on the lathe. Norm then turned the center to round and shaped the fish explaining how he selects the high and low features. Further scraping and sanding achieved the final shape which was passed round. He then told of his ideas for a crab and showed a fish on a necklace. Norm never seems to run out of new plans for his excellent demonstrations.

Extract from Newsletter issue 166 dated May/June 2013

Observation from Melville WEWS April 2013

Norm Gratte, demonstrated his seed pods.

Norm explained that seed pods make nice coffee table or dressing table decorations and passed round several examples of his work. The procedure involves a cup chuck as the preferred holding device, and the use of a small router mounted on a base and fastened to the lathe, so as to cut trenches in the pod spaced with the lathe indexing system. Pyrography can be used to further decorate the pods. Norm started with the blank screwed to the cup chuck mounted on the lathe and then rounded down and shaped. The center is then drilled out, a collar cut and squared off. Norm used a spindle gouge to shape and hollow, before using the router to cut the grooves in the pod following the curved shape. With a Dremel stylus and a ball shaped cutter, Norm cut a series of holes in the pod grooves, then colored with stain and decorated with pyrography. The base is cut and sanded on an angle to sit on a table. Throughout the demonstration Norm provided hints on techniques he had developed, special tools he had made, and tool handling methods for beginners through to advanced turners. Plenty for everyone.

Norm having just been award Life Membership at Wandu WEWS September 2016





Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 189 dated March/April 2017

Observations Melville WEWS February 2017

Unfortunately, nobody has put their hand up for this role as yet, so this is a brief recollection. First up after the welcome was **Norm Gratte**. Norm showed us a method of turning a bowl with an off-set hollow. Of interest was the jig he has devised for holding the turned “base” and positioning it for the offset turning. The finished product was an attractive difference to the average bowl. Norm, as usual, explained in simple terms the method and the difficult bits to watch to get a good result.

Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 217 dated July/August 2021

VALE

Norm Gratte, 1847 Melville

A member since May 2001, bringing with him invaluable skills as a long-standing Manual Arts teacher.

From the start, Norm developed to become Melville’s most valuable and appreciated member.

He always was willing to share his knowledge and became a regular and much appreciated mentor to new members. He was also very forthright with constructive advice to fellow members, both at meetings and at a personal level.

Norm will be very much missed by everyone who knew him.

Our thoughts are with his family.