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PROFILE OF A TURNER

Val Pereira was born in Merredin in 1936 and attended the Merredin Junior High School for all of his formal education with the exception of music, for this was taught at the local convent and at an early age he was introduced to singing.

His first employment was with the PMG employed as a telegraph boy and he also delivered the mail to the houses in the town. After about eighteen months of this he left to take up an apprenticeship in the trade of carpentry and joinery with the Public Works department in Perth and for this he had to leave the family home and live in rented accommodation in Perth. During this period Val became very interested in working with wood and was very keen to do well at his chosen trade, so he attended night school to study to become a master builder. He completed all of the study requirements to become a registered builder before he qualified as a carpenter and joiner.

Towards the end of his term as an apprentice Val had a fall from the roof of the Mount Henry Home on which he was working. This left him with an injured back which later developed Ankylosing Spondylitis which has hampered Val all his life. With the fall from the roof and a brief hospital spell, it became obvious that working as a carpenter would soon show up as a weakness that would upset his working life. Consequently, Val increased his hours at night school to study to become an Architectural draftsman which he managed to complete in three years. He was then transferred from a carpenter to a blue-collar worker, an Architectural draftsman, still with the PWD. Val once again got stuck into the books and upgraded his drafting qualification, which led to him being awarded a Diploma in Architectural Drafting.

During the latter half of his teenage years, he participated in Old Time Ball Room Dancing and eventually with his partner took out the State Title. About this time, he met and married Eileen and it wasn't too long before they were building their home in Yokine. Val took long service leave from work and they built their entire home themselves with the exception of the brickwork, completing it in twelve months. They moved there in February 1965, where they lived and raised two children. Val and Eileen moved to Mandurah in 1991. During the early years of their marriage Val really felt the effect of the fall from the roof that occurred during his apprenticeship. He spent a fair amount of time off work, at hospital or visiting Doctors, trying to sort out his back problems, eventually being told that he was too young to have any surgery to rectify the problem. Val was forty-five years of age before he was given a hip operation so that he would be able to continue to walk.

All through this Val kept himself busy, becoming the Secretary of the Coolbinia Junior Football Club and the inaugural Secretary of the Ankylosing Spondylitis Group. Before leaving work, Val purchased a property in Mandurah which included an orange orchard and four years later he retired from the government to run the orchard. It was at this time that he started wood turning. Val went to night school and was instructed by Ray Quadrio for a term, and he thoroughly enjoyed working with wood again.

After buying a lathe and joining WAWA he soon became very much involved in competitions, with great success. Val became a regular attendee at both the Mandurah meetings and the Association weekend workshops. At about this time Val became involved in singing again and joined the Mandurah Choir and also a group called The Shades of Harmony. Val was elected WAWA's Mandurah Group Convenor and held this position for just a year when ill health once again stopped all work and fun. His health is just about right again, and he is eager to get back into some serious turning. We look forward to seeing some more of his fine woodwork soon. Val is to be congratulated on his courage in meeting and overcoming adversity over such a long time. Val had a nasty fall recently which resulted in a broken arm and shoulder, but it was good to see him at the Kalgoorlie Weekend.