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PROFILE OF A TURNER

Ken Thurston

This time we look at another of our senior member, Ken Thurston (WAWA member 134).

Like most of us, Ken was born at a very early age in Perth on 10th Jan 1935 and being a product of that era, had to make his toys and playthings like most of his compatriots of the time. This was to stand him in good stead for future life. Since times were rough during those days and obviously, money was very tight, Ken's schooling was cut short when he left Bayswater Primary. Young Ken was put to work and showed a lot of aptitude for using his hands and machinery.

He was called up for National Service between 1954 and 1959, serving in the Leighton Battery Battalion where he still does voluntary work guiding tourists through the caverns and hallways and passing on his wealth of knowledge on the subject.

Shortly afterwards in 1960, Ken married Valma and was blessed with 2 children.

All was well until cancer came calling, and after 55 years of wedlock, Valma succumbed.

As mentioned, Ken's aptitude with his hands came to the fore when he spent 25 years building Chamberlain tractors and farm machinery until the company was bought out by John Deere.

Ken then took a position on the maintenance team at UWA where his machining skills again came to the fore as he turned pieces of steel, brass and plastic into spare parts for the pumps he was tasked with maintaining and did so until he retired in 2001.

While his first love was always turning metal, he had a desire to learn how to turn wood and joined WAWA in 1985 in the early days of the Melville club and became acquainted with Neil Piper among others, who passed on their skill, making Ken a very happy person.

While turning both metal and wood are in Ken's blood, he is also an active participant in the toy making activities of the club and has taken to the use of a scroll saw to make his favourite items being tractors, farm machinery and other vehicles or jewellery which are quite distinctive and well received when we have our annual toy handover at the end of the year.

Finally, Ken, like most of the other senior members of the club, is always happy to provide tips and guidance to anyone who needs them and does so freely to the benefit of all.