

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

George Kieliger

Woodturning has become a very important part of my life since my retirement and I am absolutely delighted that I have 'found' WAWA, an association whose very purpose and goal it is to promote and teach the art of Woodturning. Since joining my progress has been in leaps and bounds.

I was a guest when I came to my first weekend workshop in Wandi in January last year and I was so impressed that I left as a financial member. Therefore, this year's January weekend workshop with Jack de Vos was a celebratory event for me, the culmination of a fantastic year.

This contribution to the newsletter contains my own reflections and ideas on promoting WAWA, on demonstrating, on paying for workshops, on keeping 'old' members happy, and on attracting interstate and international celebrity turners to Western Australia.

I find it amazing that we have a small band of wood turners in WA who go out of their way to share their knowledge and skills at our weekend workshops. I am also concerned that this band is so small. Although it must be pleasing to be in constant demand it could become a burden to some.

Viv Paust's recent retirement from demonstrating comes to my mind here. I think that the number of expert wood turners capable, willing and fit to demonstrate and teach is bound to be small in WA. We live in the most remote capital of Australia and Perth is a small city by world standards. Since woodturning is a specialised field, WAWA is bound to be a relatively small association, with limited manpower resources.

Nevertheless, we all strive for excellence. So, we may have to look outside to attract and or employ and pay professionals and visiting turners from interstate and overseas. We may have to try master classes for the experienced turners and one or two-day hands-on workshops with the cost paid by the participants. The ultimate goal has to be for WAWA to become so attractive to turners visiting the East Coast that they will 'flock' to Perth of their own accord.

The idea to fly in and/or employ interstate or international turners is probably going to take some fellow members out of their comfort zone, but if we want to excel in whatever field, we have to change and adapt constantly. I am convinced it would not cost an arm and a leg if we would liaise with the Wood turners in the Eastern States.

I believe WAWA should raise its profile to attract attention interstate and overseas. WAWA's website on the internet is very attractive, but more groups should be encouraged to have their own galleries, a description of wood species native to WA such as Jarrah could be useful, and an expansion of *Workshop Hints* would be great.

We also need to have our events published and reported in 'our press', The Australian Woodworker and Woodturning.

I am convinced that the association will better meet the needs of all turners, beginners, advanced and experienced if we support those members who are willing to try new formats or organise new events. Not everything will work but there is only one way to find out and it's well worth it.

By no means do I suggest abandoning the proven concept of the weekend workshops nor do I propose to work on an entirely new one, but nothing is perfect, as Jack DeVos said in the

workshop. I suggest we take his advice not to re-invent the wheel, but to continually modify and improve the format of a good concept.

George Kieliger 1963

Extract from WAWA Newsletter 116 dated February/March 2005

My Learning Curve:

With great interest I read the article titled: "What makes an effective and enjoyable workshop session???", on page 6 of WAWA Newsletter Number 115.

I wholeheartedly agree with the points the Editors make.

May I add some of my own thoughts and also a recent experience on this subject? I think it is also essential that everybody enjoys what they are doing on such an occasion. This includes the demonstrator, (or you may choose to call him supervisor, instructor, facilitator or even the dreaded T-word).

The Gosnells Group was fortunate to be able to secure the good services of Viv Paust, for a full day, hands-on workshop in November 2004 and I was lucky to participate. I had seen Viv at WAWA Weekend Workshops and I had become familiar with the high quality of his demonstrations and with his particular sense of humour.

When I took up woodturning, I promised myself to learn from the best and I am happy to say that WAWA continues to give me the opportunity to keep this promise, as on this occasion. So, when the opportunity to experience Viv at close quarters came up, I jumped at it. Unfortunately, the size of the premises of the Gosnells Group and the number of lathes available restricted the number of participants. But for those present it was a blessing, as our supervisor for the day was able to give more of his time and attention to the individual turners.

The topic for the day was lidded boxes, one turned by hollowing end grain, the other by using two sections of a plank with the grain running across. The emphasis was not so much on the design but on the sequence of operations to achieve a box and a lid with closely matching grain and the lid meeting the requirements of boxes with different purpose (i.e., loosely or tightly fitting lids).

An added bonus was that Viv introduced us to the very efficient method of end grain hollowing, where the gouge is used on its side in the 2 o'clock position, supported by the tool rest as well as the rim of the opening. I had read about this but seeing is believing and trying it out has committed it to the memory. At the end of the day, I did not go home with two completed, lidded boxes, but I did go home equipped with the knowledge of how to make them and I did go home with my tool skills considerably improved.

This workshop certainly met all parameters in the above-mentioned article of our Editors.

Thank you, Viv, for sharing your knowledge and skills so generously and for supervising us on that day.

George Kieliger 1963

THE DAGGER (PART 1)

THIS IS YOUR WOODTURNERS CONSCIENCE SPEAKING

Recently I went to see Gerald Young to talk to him about my thoughts, my problems and my experimenting with the competition item. The Dagger.

This visit was a truly fantastic experience. It was absolutely great to see Gerald's zest for life, to experience his clear and sharp mind and to see his great turnings including a work in progress for the competition at the Wood Show. My visit prompted me to write what went through my mind afterwards. The monthly Competition is a great way to learn wood turning, to progress and improve our skills and to attain excellence.

I know we all agree on this. The snags are that we have to think about a project, make a plan, look for a suitable piece of timber and then we actually have to turn on the lathe and do it. In my case as a learner, I usually even have to do a practice run or two. On reflection these snags are not real problems.

The real problem is that in retirement we have a tendency (and I include myself) to think that we have done our best during our working life and that we now want to sit on our laurels and enjoy.

I agree that we should enjoy but I don't think we should sit and wait. If we continue to go forward and continue to progress, the rewards will be immeasurably greater and we will be happy and content with ourselves.

When I joined WAWA, I joined a large group of people with the same hobby, interest, fascination or disease, you name it.

I am going to the monthly WEWS not only for social interaction or entertainment but to learn new aspects of woodturning, new techniques and new approaches to old problems.

I am going for encouragement when I am a bit low, and I am going for networking and problem solving with more experienced turners or with people with more interest in special aspects of turning.

My writing is really a plug for the Monthly Competition. I say it again: our competition is a great way to learn.

If a novice resolves to take part in it on a regular basis the learning curve will be steep, and the progress will be fast.

If you are an "old Hand" you have not missed the boat. Because of your experience you will rise through the divisions rapidly. However, it may also highlight some shortcomings and thus encourage you to learn things which you always wanted to but somehow never did.

I am convinced there is a stigma attached for an "old turner" to submit an item in the Novice Category. By the way the competition rules offer the option of self-promotion into the next category anyway.

In the past I usually entered only when I liked the item and wanted to own one. But during the conversation with Gerald, it became quite clear that that is wrong, and I shall mend my ways. We are more likely to learn by doing things we otherwise wouldn't.

Happy turning - George Kieliger



THE DAGGER (PART 2)

The competition specifications say: fully turned i.e., handle, guard and blade. Anybody can shape a blade with a bandsaw, rasp and sandpaper but is it a challenge? The Purpose of this item is really to tickle our grey matter and to practice our skills in off-centre turning.

Here is the summary of my thoughts and research for this project. I will give you some hints on how I think it can be done and I will slightly modify the specifications.

A dagger consists of a blade a grip and very often but not always it has a guard or hilt.

The blade has a taper and is symmetrical with two equal edges similar to a sword.

The cross section of the blade in a metal dagger varies greatly.

By using wood and by turning only I think we can only achieve an elongated oval cross section with pointed ends.

The grip of the dagger should fit your hand. For me this would be about 110mm long. It could include a pommel. For a letter opener you have to work out the proportions.

The shape of the guard or hilt i.e., the bit between the blade and the grip varies greatly. It can curve backwards or forward, or it can be straight and in a Scottish dirk or a Roman dagger for instance, it is absent.

If you choose to make a dagger without a hilt it will probably be made in one piece, otherwise it will be three pieces of timber: the blade with a tang (a spigot), the guard with a central opening for the tang to pass through and the grip with a recess to receive the tang.

I think there are two options to achieve the curve of the blade by turning: inside-out turning or mounting the billets on a square barrel. Both are off-centre turning methods.

In each case you will make four blades. No matter which method you use precision cutting of the barrel and the billets as well as precision drilling for the screws is essential.

The choice of timber is critical. For a blade it needs to be very dense. Your tools need to be very sharp.

The dagger blade needs to be supported during manufacture to eliminate the springiness when it gets thinner, and it needs to be secured to counteract the centrifugal force.

The most critical and difficult part will be to make the tip of the dagger blade. This is unlikely to be achieved by turning only. So, a small amount of shaping by hand is required and acceptable. Of course, any amount of hand work is accepted to embellish any part of the dagger.

If we take along our jigs as well as the finished item or the failure to the WEWS we will probably have an interesting "Show and Tell" session.

George Kieliger

Extract from WAWA Newsletter issue 128 dated February/March 2007

GONE CRUISING

Travelling Australia, particularly the Outback with our Landcruiser and tent is a passion of ours. Last year Ursula and I had the good fortune to be able to go on a four-month trip to the Eastern States.

This year, we went to see places we always wanted to visit but somehow never did.

The trip took us via the Nullarbor to Broken Hill, Cameron Corner, Gulgong, Tenterfield, Proserpine and the Tablelands and from Birdsville via Simpson Desert to Ayers Rock, Warburton and Kalgoorlie back to Perth.

Apart from many beautiful towns with historic buildings we saw magnificent scenery, such as the Carnarvon Gorge National Park in Queensland, the 1100 sand dunes of the Simpson Desert in South Australia, the Olgas in the Northern Territory and much more.

We came across magnificent and rare trees such as the Desert Oak (*Allocasuarina decaisneana*) in the Red Centre, the Waddi Tree (*Acacia peuce*) near Birdsville, the Beefwood Tree (*Grevillea striata*) in the Mutawintji (Mootwingi) N.P. and a giant Red Gum (*E. camaldulensis*) near Mt. Isa with a circumference of 10.89 metres which was more than 500 years old. There are many galleries and museums all over Australia, some of them good, some of them not so good. Anyway, on our travels we visited lots and lots of them including State Art Galleries and Private Galleries exhibiting Paintings, Pottery, Glass, Furniture and Woodturnings.

In one of the craft galleries in the Rocks Area in Sydney I had an interesting experience.

After having a good look around all the pottery, jewellery, textile art and wood turnings we talked to the lady who minded the shop for the cooperative of makers.

The first thing she said to me was: are you a wood turner? When I said, "Yes, why?" she said, "I can always tell". Of course, I had steered straight towards the wood turnings, and this was a dead giveaway. She asked me would I be interested in joining the cooperative as they had lost a turner and had difficulties to find a replacement. To date I am still not sure what to make of this. Are there really not enough good turners in NSW? I declined of course. It would be too difficult to mind the shop once a week.

In another gallery I had the opportunity to see, handle and closely inspect turnings by some of the well-known turners of the Eastern States including Richard Raffan: very interesting indeed.

One of the highlights of our trip (in a woodturning sense) was our visit to the Museum in Proserpine in Queensland and what followed on from it.

I really think it is one of the finest country museums in Australia. It is in a purpose-built building on Highway No. 1 and has an excellent display of Australiana. The most surprising thing however was that in there we found the 3.5 m turned wooden pen which I had seen in the magazine *Woodturner* as well as the 2.6 m diameter bowl turned from laminated Mackay Cedar; both made by the Proserpine Woodturners Group.

I had read the article by George Hatfield about the Proserpine Turnout in *Woodturning* No. 161 with the photos of the pen as well as of two visiting Japanese woodturners and their intriguing lathes and tool rests. I had studied those photos with the magnifying lens for a long time trying to figure out how they work, and it was my plan to learn more about it one day. My turn had come now!

In the foyer of the museum was a display with items for sale, the pens with the phone number and the name of the maker: Con Jensen. So, I rang him, and he invited me to come and visit next morning. As it turned out he is the driving force of the Proserpine Woodturners Group, a group I think of about eight members. Con told me to drive up to his shed and meet him there. What a shed. A sugar cane farm shed about twice the size of my whole house.

It contains a woodturning room with more than a dozen lathes, a collection of motorcycle paraphernalia from a "previous life", a collection of artefacts from all over the world and a stack of timber for turning and I mean a STACK and there is still room for the cars of the family.

The Proserpine Woodturners Group put on their annual Turnout with attendees from all over Australia. During my visit I learned that to qualify for attendance you have to bring your own lathe and turn. It is not a spectator event but a very much "be in it and turn yourself affair". Even the celebrity turners who are invited don't demonstrate formally. This promotes a lot of interaction with looking over each other's shoulders and discussions.

Con and I talked all morning about turning, about the local timbers such as Mackay Cedar, Black Bean, Conker Berry and more, most of them unknown to me. He showed me the lathes the group

made for the Japanese turners already half dismantled, ready for a new project and he told me the story of how he found the two turners, how he organised their travel, interpreter etc. Con doesn't know the word impossible.

Further north in the Atherton Table lands we found another woodturner's delight. It is a beautiful new Gallery in the tiny place of Tolga. We were already halfway through the town when it caught Ursula's eye and I slammed on the brakes when I saw the new timber building. It houses a coffee shop and a great display of furniture, painting, woodturnings and pottery. A door connects it to the large workshop.

Luck would have it that the owner had to mind the shop that morning. When I spotted the corner where he had lots of bowl blanks for sale the conversation started to revolve around local rainforest timbers such as Black Bean, Red Lancewood, Northern Sassafras, Bloodwood etc.

Of course, and despite the fact that the Landcruiser was already packed to the top I could not stop myself from buying a fairly large quantity of blanks. When the owner saw my enthusiasm, he went and got a piece of the hard-to-get Crows Apple (*Owenia venosa*) to give me as a farewell present.

To top it all he gave me his card with his name on: Trevor Allwood.

Happy Turning – George Kieliger



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