

TURNER PROFILE

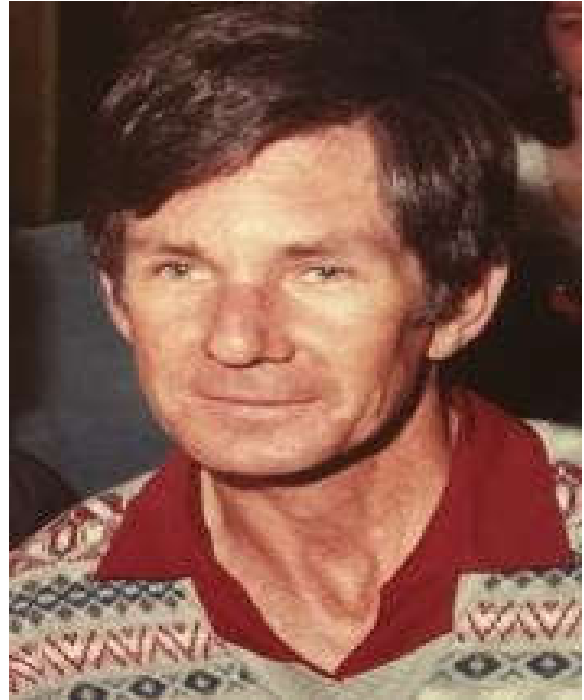
This month the spotlight shines on our good turning friend, Geoff Britton – 2126

I'm going to start with something we don't usually get to see, a photo of a younger man. Here's evidence that Geoff was once a handsome, young rooster!

So, let's start at the beginning and see how he got involved in woodturning.

Geoff went to a TAFE course in 1995 back in the days when they ran night courses in Adult Education. The course that appealed to him was making an American Chess table. It has 2 drawers under the Chess board top, all of which sits on a single post with supporting legs. This is a sophisticated piece of carpentry with a lot of different wood working skills involved! Geoff completed the project, but he tells me it needs some rehabilitation work at present.

Here's the nitty gritty; the central post was a turned piece! Geoff decided then and there that he would take up woodturning when he retired. Voila!



Until then, beady eyed Britton kept an eye out for wood. He came across a very large Banksia tree one day when he was on a job. He disappeared it! I don't know if the boss knew what he was doing!

Geoff retired in 2008 and sure enough he took up woodturning. He visited Liddelow Woodturners but things didn't work out there, so he moved on. When he saw an ad for the Gosnells group he rang up and spoke to the Coordinator, John Gardiner, no less. In those days the club was in the Manual Arts Room at Gosnells Senior High School as it was known then. The lathes and equipment had to be moved out from storage and moved back at the end of the session. That was a bit tedious and a far cry from our present, dedicated space at Southern River College.

So, Member Number 2126, joined WAWA and the wood turning world hasn't been the same since! It's been greatly enhanced is what I mean of course. I find it really intriguing that a bloke whose career has been in mechanical fitting and welding spontaneously finds something so different, so appealing! Geoff hadn't done wood working prior to the TAFE course but then we have chippies who are wood turners too! What is it that ignites this passion and becomes so obsessive?

It used to be a common thing back in the day for young people to take off from their family homes and either go overseas or do a 'lap' of Australia. Geoff was one of the many who did this, at least until he got to Sydney. He met Terry there and as they say, the rest is.... They moved back to Perth and after a relatively short time with Geoff's parents they moved to Roleystone where they have been since.

The other interesting question is what reward turners get out of the task and what it is that keeps them so deeply engaged in the activity. There's something of a commonality emerging as I talk to turners about this, and Geoff underlines these themes.

Like others, he finds it challenging but very satisfying, especially when it all comes together.

Geoff acknowledges a few individuals as being very helpful in his early days of learning the craft. Ian Eagles is foremost among them, but others include Chris Davis and Ivan Munro. Behind all this up-front business, Geoff also

includes his wife, Terry as his main support and his best critic. His advice to beginners is to be patient and have the belief that eventually it will all come together.

Geoff was on the Committee for 3 years, when John Gardiner was Coordinator and Peter Manchee and Kevin Cheetham were also members.

Geoff says he's always worked on one piece at a time. This has something to do with why his work is always finished so beautifully I suspect. He started off in his early days making large items, but he's gotten over that now. He does his turning on his own lathe at home in his newly replaced shed. His neighbour's tree took out his previous one and after a protracted, traumatic saga which I won't go into – I don't want you to cry – he has a new one. Geoff comes to Wednesday sessions and it's always good to have him around. He gets around to speak to everyone and he has a quietly encouraging manner and advice to offer beginners and others too.

Enjoy the talents of Geoff Britton.

