



# Turnaround

SEPTEMBER 2005

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## Newsletter of the Association of Woodturners of South Africa

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### From the Editor

First and foremost, many thanks for all the encouraging comments I have received from readers. Then a VERY Big Thank You! to everyone who has so willingly sent me articles for this newsletter (or promised something for December!). I really appreciate your support, and it makes my task as editor so much easier. Anyone is welcome to send in articles for *Turnaround*, and the deadline for the next edition is 15<sup>th</sup> December 2005.

Also many thanks to everyone who followed up with corrected email addresses, helping me to update my database. For those unfortunate souls who only receive the printed, non colour hard copy of the newsletter, please do yourself a favour and consider getting “hooked up to the email” or ask a family member or someone close by, who would be willing to receive an email copy of the newsletter and print it in colour for you, so you can enjoy all the photos in colour – monochrome just can’t do justice to the pictures included, especially after subjected to photocopying.

In this newsletter we have a couple of interesting and entertaining stories about the lathes owned by our members, as well as an article on deep hollow turning by Wally Rossini, production turning of large columns by Schalk van Niekerk, and Gavin Knowles shares a “burning” experience that could have ended in disaster. Now, does anyone have a story on turning miniatures for the next newsletter... ?

Keep those curly shavings streaming,

*Gigi Laidler*

### From the Chair

Firstly I must apologise for not contributing to the previous *Turnaround*. Although it may be a bit late, the new Committee wants to thank Chris and his team for leading the AWSA and organizing a wonderful conference. We, the new committee, will have to work hard to better, or even to match the standard set.

The new committee wants to thank everyone for the trust in us, and the Cape Town team is committed to furthering the goals of the AWSA.

I wish to appeal to all members to continue contributing your great articles to our Newsletter. In many cases, it is the only communication we have with other members. Share your experiences with the rest of the country’s woodturning fraternity. Tell us what is happening at your Club – we can all learn from the experiences of others and build on these, and by doing so, we promote woodturning and can use it as a means to increase our membership. Gigi is looking forward to publishing your contribution.

The planning for the 2006 conference is all coming together. If you have any suggestions regarding the conference program, please feel free to forward them to us. Have you started with the arrangements to attend?

Let’s enjoy woodturning and have fun!

*The Cape Town Team  
Louis van Niekerk*

### From the Members



The advent of a new “baby” (pictured here in its “cradle”) in our household when Dennis’ Stubby 1000 was added to our workshop inventory, prompted me to wondering about what happened in other households when lathes need to “grow up”. So I asked a couple of the guys to share their experiences with *Turnaround* readers and have had a great response. If you would like to share your experience of lathes and turning, or offer advice on how to choose an upgrade, please send your articles to me, either electronically to my email address (see

header), or by snailmail for my attention to PO Box 308, Plumstead, 7801.

### The lathe in my life

Not much of a lead-in to this story. I'm still using my first lathe, now some three years old. It's a Toolmate. Badge-engineered look-alike of the Martlett, distant cousin of ones offered by Jet and Axminster as well as a number of other companies. Manufactured I think from a photocopied fax of an artists impression of the original plan.

When I started to turn at WCWA I rapidly realized that lathes were a bit like kittens - either offered virtually free to a good home or very, very expensive with an impressive pedigree, sold only to approved buyers. There was at that time very little in-between, and second-hand lathes in the appropriate price bracket just weren't happening.

I persevered at the club for as long as I could, benefiting enormously from advice from Gert, Tom, Ruben, Dennis, Graeme and others. But my Big Chance came when I lined up a simple disc-turning job. The numbers were sufficiently convincing to be able to persuade even Jane that The Time Had Come and a basic lathe wouldn't result in instant brokedom. So a free kitten it was, and at long last I was turning in my own workshop. That's when the learning curve began to steepen!

I don't believe that any future lathe will be more important than the one I've teethed on. It's certainly done an enormous amount more work than I could have anticipated. I can give you chapter and verse about over 200 pieces that I've turned on it in the last two years, largely as a result of being invited to join the Waterfront Woodturners. The vast majority have sold and now live overseas. Meanwhile that learning curve just carries on going up.

But I'm afraid it was the old story of "good, cheap, fast, pick any two". This had to be cheap and fast, so I paid for it in the time and effort an engineering pal of mine and I have invested in repairing it and keeping it on the road.

The list of things that had to be repaired or replaced include a new capacitor for the motor when it wouldn't start without a push (and had insufficient power to pull the skin off of a rice pudding once it was running); three broken clamp handles; very poorly adjusted tailstock; Replacement live centre, replacement spur drive, numerous drive belts, a collapsed bearing in the variable speed drive mechanism plus its housing, a broken casting in the head clamping mechanism and a new no-volt-release switch.

Other things which were improved and refined were a toolpost "spacer" to fit directly into the banjo; replacing a number of the philips screws with cap screws and modifying the head clamping mechanism.

To give Strand Hardware (the importers) their due, Brian Jolly always did his best to supply parts when needed as soon as he could. Without that service it would have landed on the scrap heap ages ago.

Again, to put things into perspective, I bought the machine with my eyes open, largely because it had enough swing to be useful, as well as plenty of bed length; I liked the massive cast iron bed; the variable speed was a bonus; and it came with a stand. But most of all it was affordable at under R2500 (and didn't include a divorce!)

I think that probably the fairest comment was from Brian the last time I had to order a part. As he diplomatically remarked, "I don't think it was designed to cope with the amount of work you're putting through it". At the time I chose it my crystal ball may have been a tadd cloudy.

Bottom line? Was it worth it? Undeniably Yes!

Have I had fun with it? Indeed

Should I have waited longer for a better one? Probably not.

Would I recommend it to other beginners? I doubt it, now that Jet Mini-lathe is on the market. What a little gem by comparison. That is, not unless you have a passion (or a good friend with a passion) for fixing tools and tinkering with someone else's poor design....

My next lathe? Heaven alone knows as I've yet to master the art of turning Rands (let alone Dollars) rapidly enough.

Features I'd certainly look for would include -

- Electronic variable speed (ie 3 phase motor operated via inverter)

- Greater swing.

- More Power

- Greater speed range, especially at the slow end.

- Cast iron bed.

- Swivelling headstock.

- Quality of build.

- Silent running.

- Compact size relative to its capacity.

- #2 morse taper minimum, #3 better.

- Hollow tail and head stock.

- Availability of spares and accessories will be a major point.

- Ease of adjustment of things like toolrest and headstock rotation a big consideration.

I should mention that with my relatively low powered lathe, I reckon I have had to learn to turn reasonably sympathetically. I probably value my Tormek even more than I might have done with a more powerful lathe. And lastly, a chainsaw (and at last a bandsaw) save an enormous amount of wear and tear on any lathe. Knocking corners off unbalanced lumps of wood with blunt or inappropriate tools doesn't bring in much cash!

*Ken Turner*

## The Story of a Lathe

Now where do I start? It is close to 40 years since I got interested in turning wood for the first time. It might cross your mind that my first lathe was a pole lathe? Wrong, I am not that ancient!

I started off with a small Rockwell Delta, driven by a Millers Falls electric drill. I can remember sitting on the floor – Japanese like – and ‘laat waai’. I still have the drill and it is still working.

My son, Beyers, was 2 years old when I bought a combination machine, Emcostar made in Austria, brand new for R450. The lathe attachment and accessories consisted of a tool rest, faceplate, tailstock and spur drive. Only two speeds! Well, the motor had to drive a band saw and a circular saw as well. I had my fun with this machine but, with hindsight it was obviously not designed to be a lathe only.

By now the itch was getting worse. I had to have a proper lathe. We moved from Johannesburg to Cape Town and I met Hardware Centre; Stephen Sachs and Henry. After a fair Christmas bonus from work, in moves another Rockwell Delta. But, this time complete with motor and the usual accessories. The machine served well as a hobby toy and I even had a number of extra faceplates made by a friend. However, turning now became a serious hobby and my eyes started to wander.

And, there she was all clad in blue. Not brand new though, but, a thoroughbred from the shores of England, a Coronet Major. What a joy to work on this machine! It has a swivel headstock with a ¾ x 16tpi spindle and very sound brass bearings. You might notice that I am using the present tense? This machine is now with Beyers and he is still using it. It went in payment for shelves and cupboards he fitted for me in my workshop.

Roughly the same time I bought a Coronet Minor and had the bed shortened to 600mm. This was a good investment since the chucks and faceplates were interchangeable. This machine was used mainly for turning bobbins for my late wife and other lace makers. I sold the machine about three years ago.

After a visit to England and some tuition and demonstrations by Bonnie Klein I bought one of the lovely lady’s machines. The main reason for buying the machine was the convenience of moving it around and using it inside the TV room when turning bobbins and other small items. The machine is of a very simple design, but excellent for the purpose at ¾” x 16tpi. A fantastic range of accessories is available. It is such a joy to use since it does not have the intimidating appearance bigger machines have. She is still my old faithful and willing slave in the workshop.

At the same time that I bought the Klein Design, I was looking at buying a Union Graduate and actually ordered one. The gentleman who took the order made a mistake and never told me that the machines were

only manufactured on order. That meant a wait for 6 to 8 months! I was then introduced to the Australian Woodfast machine, which incidentally, I saw at the same seminar where I met Bonnie Klein for the first time. Richard Raffan and Vic Wood were familiar with the machine, having demonstrated at length on the machine. I then changed my mind and had a short bed Woodfast shipped to me in a container of whisky – I was then working for a liquor company. What a machine and still is!!

In today’s world maybe the spindle size is a bit odd being 30mm x 3.5pitch. However, they now come at 33mm x 3.5pitch which seems to become the standard for England and Europe. Four speeds and a swing of close to 400mm, cam locks on the tool rest and tailstock (hollow) and 2 Morse taper on both sides. What more can you ask for? I soon found the bed a tad too short. At that stage Beyers was already the proud owner of the Coronet Major.

Soon an order was placed directly to Oz for a Woodfast with a long bed. R350 for shipping to get it to Cape Town, all I had to do was to unpack it and let it work. I then thought I was in the Woodturners’ heaven.

Then came 1997, I went on a two week course with Melvyn Firmager. An experience in itself, but that is a story for another day. He had two VB36 machines in his workshop, together with all the extras. Initially, I found the machine somewhat intimidating but, eventually the power of the motor and gentle humming noise as it worked, stole my heart. At the seminar that followed I met the gentleman V and B and then made up my mind: I will let Beyers have the long bed Woodfast and then I will have space in my workshop for the VB36. So towards the end of 1997 she moved in and I am still a happy chappie. En route to South Africa the one oil seal was hurt but Hegner was so helpful that a replacement was very easy. Last year the electronic inverter had to be replaced and a lot of help by two very kind friends saw the crisis through with me and made it possible for the green lady to sing once again.

The accessories for the VB36 are of the same superb quality as the machine itself. The machine was originally designed as a bowl turning lathe. The tailstock is an extra and using it as such the machine is maybe not that user friendly. However, compare apples with apples, as I said to Dennis the other day, I am happy for him with his Stubby, but I love my VB.

If I should be asked now “which one do you recommend?”, I would look at it at the same way as when you want to buy a car. Look at the basics and a little extra, but stick to the tried and tested and buy a little more than something that can just only do the job. What can you afford? Choices could be:

VB36	Stubby	Appollo	Hegner
Vicmarc	Woodfast – now also made under licence by Axminster		
Nova	Myford	Jet	

These are all tried and tested machines – trying Master woodturners and testing many a bank account. At the end of the day it comes down to what will you feel at home with.

Go for it and enjoy the shavings.

*Izak Cronje*

### Lathy Days

*(or The Great Marklin Riddle)*

Here are four shots of a little lathe that I got after hearing about it from a friend, who was tidying out the workshop of a lady whose husband had died. After much cross referencing, I eventually visited the source and found this little lathe and bought it off the widow lady. She couldn't tell me if it had belonged to her late husband, or his father.



*Truly a little lathe, "knee-high to a grasshopper"*

The lathe intrigued me; why build a lathe this size on a cast iron stand? There was a stamp on it, "Made in Germany". The bright work was all nickel plated, my experience of rebuilding Vintage cars told me that nickel plating was superseded by chrome plating AFTER 1928! Dead end? Not quite! Another clue was the "M" cast into the frame, as well as the spiral grooves in the headstock pulley V's!

Now, I also own a Mamod steam engine, and began to suspect that this little lathe was a toy, made by the Marklin Company in Germany - makers of steam driven toys and model railway engines. My suspicion was that this little lathe had been part of a Machine Shop, driven from a Marklin steam engine, as Mamod had done in England, at about the same time.

After much research, I made contact with a collector, in Florida USA (after the Marklin

Collectors' Club had denied the existence of this little lathe), who forwarded the attached pictures of my little lathe to me. It would appear that the factory records were destroyed during the war, as enquiries to the Marklin Factory elicited denials of "no such equipment was made!"



I am enclosing pictures from the gent in Florida, re the origin of my "Baby", dated about, 1926, and measuring in, according to the drawings, as Model 4260 1/1/2! YEEHA! Success, a last! In Conclusion, despite all the offers, this Baby, is living on my mantelpiece, along with my miniature turnings! One Day, I might be prepared, or persuaded, to part with my "Baby"! Until then, I plan to enjoy his exquisite sample of craftsmanship.

*Dave Stephenson*

### (Another) Story of a lathe

Herewith my story of my experiences on the lathes I worked on, and in-between.

I have always enjoyed woodwork and can remember while still at school, we had a lathe in the classroom which nobody used, or most probably did not know how to use, including the teacher.

I bought my first Taiwanese lathe in the early eighties with a set of Marple Tools.

This was stored on the farm and as with most of us in those days, I had to teach myself how to turn. A twin-bed lathe with a rectangular piece of metal for a headstock. I managed to play around with the odd piece of wood about three times a year.

I purchased my Record CL3 in 1997 and could not believe that a piece of equipment of that nature could exist! Heavy, solid bed twin bars, and five different speeds made it an absolute pleasure to work with. The swivel headstock was also a nice feature which helped when pieces larger than 300 mm diameter had to be turned.

Some points to ponder: (depending on what you want to do)

- Changing of the belt for different speeds takes time.
- The handles at the bottom of the twin bars tend to get in the way of each other.

- Shaft of headstock might not be strong enough if you want to put a heavy chuck on it, i.e. Axminster chuck.

Having said this, the Record gave me good service and lots of therapeutic sessions, and I had some nice sales form it too!

By contrast to modern lathes, here is a photograph of a treadle lathe, taken by Ruben du Plessis at the Genadendal Museum near Greyton, Western Cape. It looks very interesting! If you are in the area, do stop by and have a look at it



In November 2004, I thought it was time to move on again and started looking around for a new lathe. Let me first say that at our annual Hobby X show, I worked on a Nova 3000 lathe for the first time. For some unknown reason I have never really liked it. Maybe it is because it is manufactured in New Zealand – the rugby issue, I suppose. What a surprise when I started working on it. – An absolute pleasure.

Back to November 2004 – I now purchased my NOVA DVR variable speed (DVR stands for Digital variable Reluctance drive).

Never mind “King of the Castle”, I thought I was “King of the Therapists”. What a lovely machine to work with! The two things I enjoy the most are the variable speeds and the cam locks on the tool rest and tailstock. All I can say is if you have these capabilities on your machine – appreciate them.

The change in speed is done by pushing a button and the digital display then tells you what speed you are working at. Not as fast as turning knobs on an inverter but you get used to it. It has also got a reverse action and you can buy bed extensions to add on, if you want to increase the length. The headstock swivels with the possibility of adding on an outboard turning attachment. The headstock is heavy and solid and therefore takes an Axminster chuck with ease.

Priced at R17 000, it is not cheap by South Africa standards, but I certainly believe it is good quality, and money well spent if you want to upgrade to a variable speed. If you need more info you are welcome to phone me on 083 297 3755 or email gskc@mweb.co.za

The saying goes...

*“How long is a piece of string?”*

Up to now I have had no problems with the Nova DVR, and I must add that it also runs very quietly.

*Gert Ferreira*

### Deep Hollow Vessels

*“Woodturning as an art form, is reaching new heights”.*

This is borne out by the work of local wood turner Wally Rossini. Inspired by an article by John Jordan in a *Fine Woodworking* magazine in 1995, Wally thought he'd like to turn his hand to producing a similar product. The challenges that lay ahead though, were not immediately obvious.

The technique took time and effort to perfect. After a number of initial disasters, Rossini succeeded most admirably, which resulted in him receiving a prize at his local Club exhibition.

This small beginning led to further experimentation.

One of the main stumbling blocks to this technique was the availability of suitable tools. Long-shaft deep hollowing tools were not locally made, so these had to be designed and manufactured. The lathe, he found, also needed special adaptation to accommodate removing the tailstock. A fitter and turner was consulted, and between them they produced the necessary equipment.

Wanting to take the art a step further and produce deeper vessels, still more equipment was necessary. This came in the form of a 360-degree revolving steady which, with the help of a friend, Lionel Soekoe, he developed.

A visit by New Zealander, Rolly Munro led to the purchase of a new hollowing tool which has made the task a great deal easier.

The vases Rossini produces are between 550 and 650 mm in length and some 80mm in diameter. Rough texturing is obtained with the use of coarse, 30 grit sand paper and a wire brush. By vinetting the stain, an impression of extra height is obtained. The final touch, inspired by Ndebele ornamentation, is the addition of a wire collar. This resulted in an award for “Best on Show” at the yearly Woodworkers Conference in 2005.

Not satisfied with perfecting the art, Rossini continues to experiment and expand his horizons.

*Wally Rossini*



## The Production of Architectural columns

At various times in my life I have deliberately made changes to my career. Whether it's the challenge of new opportunities, or just plain cussedness, I'll leave others to decide. I've been a jeweller, second hand goods dealer, furniture manufacturer and retailer, and since March last year, full time production turner.

Since then, my work has been varied to say the least, as many of you will have seen from my presentation at congress. The design of wooden bangles is still evolving (with an order just delivered to the V&A Museum in London), as is my interior design work. In addition to the stools turned from the log, I have also produced armchairs cut from a turned log. These and many other items have helped me exceed the targets that I set out with.

Recently, I was asked if I could produce 24 wooden columns to be installed in a bush lodge to be built for a wealthy industrialist. The lengths varied from 900mm to 1 800mm with an average diameter of 350mm. The capitals were 620mm long by 410mm square. The 600mm high octagonal bases were to be made by the main contractor, giving a final height for the columns of between 2 100mm to 3 meters.

How do I estimate a quotation for this? How long is it going to take me to rough down logs of this size? Questions that gave me a few sleepless nights. My timber supplier assured me that pine logs of 400-500mm diameter were available for the quantity that I required, so I felt safe enough with the deadline and accompanying penalties, to tender.

To my delight the order was placed. I contacted the timber supplier who sheepishly announced that he could no longer get logs of the required diameter. I could have larger ones though! I pictured the additional turning that would result and considered the benefits of a world cruise, and perhaps throwing myself



overboard just before the end. Instead, I gave the timber supplier a berating, such as I hope he has never encountered before in his life, and instructed him to scour the country for the correct logs. Fortunately, this had the desired effect, although I was now 2 weeks late starting.

The first log in the lathe, let's start at 100rpm and see how stable she runs - OK, the windows seem to

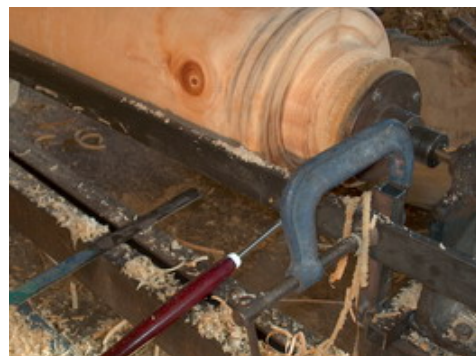
be holding, lets wind it up a bit. Eventually most logs were started at 250-300 rpm and finished at 500-600 rpm. Some logs, which had been lying for some time, had the sap concentrated on one side, so they were never balanced throughout production.

While we've all experienced the pleasures of being sprayed with sap when turning freshly cut timber, how many of you have worn foul weather gear at the lathe! I had pools of water flowing that made me think that Mick O'Donnell should use a hosepipe rather than a spray bottle. Pine also has the delightful characteristic of forming gum pockets. It's rather like being a Rugby referee, pelted with chewing gum instead of naartjies. Vaseline and thinners became my best friends. The sap was rather acidic and my hands started to crack badly.



*Storm warning!*

There is a mind-numbing process when roughing large pieces of timber. The only way to counteract the effect of the clunk, clunk, clunk on the brain, is to think of other things, some of which I had better not commit to paper. The most productive was to measure various ways of wood removal. How best to present the tools and constantly striving to better the time it took me to turn a column or capital. One day I'll share my secrets... although there were no surprises. As Andrew Stevens would say - the best way to cut wood is the way it likes to be cut.



Eventually, the end came in sight, not without a few long evenings and weekends devoted to getting back on schedule. For the technically minded, the tools I used were, a large bedan and 50mm roughing gouge, a 25mm deep fluted gouge, sheer scraper and a

6mm gouge for detailing. And of course lots and lots of sharpening practice.



*The final line-up*

Inspection of the finished product by the customer resulted in approval, and the columns completed, 33 days after I started, 3 days before deadline nogal.

Now what about that cruise.....

*Schalk*

### Combustion in the Workshop - A story by Gavin Knowles.

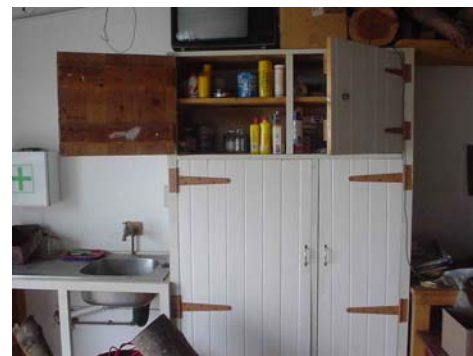
I would like to tell you about what happened in my workshops one afternoon. On the Thursday I had finished turning a bowl and the following day at about 10am I applied a coat of Woodoc antique wax to the bowl with a piece of 0000 steel wool. I put the remaining almost new roll of steel wool back in the paint cupboard where I store all my paints, polishes, waxes etc. As I had a consignment of fishing rod butt feet to complete by Monday, I decided to get on with turning them. My finishing and assembly workshop, which is attached to my house, is separate from my machine workshop where my lathes are situated, and which is down a short ramp to the existing (old) garage. At about 11:30am I went to the assembly workshop to get a piece of cloth and on the way back to the machine shop, I caught the smell of a grass fire burning somewhere. I thought nothing of it and went on working.

As I needed a fresh sheet of sand paper at about 1.30pm, I went to the assembly shop where I store sand papers. The burning smell was very much stronger, and when I looked towards the roll-up garage door, I noticed that smoke was billowing out of the workshop. Now I was getting really worried, so looked around to see where it was coming from. I looked towards the paint cupboard and saw smoke coming from where I had put the steel wool. I opened the small top door of the cupboard and the whole roll of steel wool was red hot and about to burst into flames. I pulled everything off the shelf onto the concrete floor and doused the lot with water, as I have sink unit fitted next to the paint cupboard. I had inadvertently put the roll of steel wool on top of a paint brush which I use to coat my turning blanks with Hydrowax. This brush, which was clean, was lying on

a piece of cloth that I use for polishing. Spontaneous combustion must have caused the brush, which had no air, to heat up and set the steel wool alight. This in turn set the cloth alight and also caused a plastic tin of Spackle to melt. Also lost was a length of nylon washing line and a bottle of linseed oil.

It is my usual practice to have a sleep on a Friday afternoon and I can thank my lucky stars that I had the fishing rod butt feet job to do, otherwise I would have lost a lot more than a few items. The morale of this article is that one must be careful of how things are stored especially combustible items and polish cloths. My cloths are now hanging from the rafters of my workshops and I have discontinued the use of steel wool.

The pictures show the paint cupboard in the assembly shop and the shelf in the cupboard where the fire occurred.



*This is the Paints cupboard.*



*This is the shelf where the fire occurred. Note the singed underside of the next shelf.*

*Gavin Knowles*

### **From the Regions**

The response to "From the Regions" has been really encouraging. Thank you to everyone who has contributed, and for all the encouraging emails and comments I have received.

For those whose region or club is still not represented (or absent) in this newsletter – I apologise for the omission – please send me your news for the December *Turnaround* by mid December (15<sup>th</sup>), for inclusion in the next newsletter.

It is great to be able to share the following:

### A brief history of the East London Woodturners Guild.

The East London Woodturners Guild was formed in about 1994 at a Sawdust meeting in Servistar (one of our hardware stores) under the chair of Dr Elliot Murray and committee members B. Sahd, D. Engler, J. Hugo and others. In 1997 the meetings were held in the garage of one of the members a Mr Krull in Beacon Bay. It was then that I transferred down to East London from Johannesburg and joined the guild. Before I came down I was a member of the Johannesburg Woodturners under the chair of Chris O'Connell (sounds familiar!!). I actually started turning in 1992.

We enjoyed quite a few interesting meets at Beacon Bay and it was then time to move again. The guild moved to Des Engler's garage in Nahoon Mouth. We stayed there for quite a while until Des sold his house and moved to Gonubie. We moved to our present home, which is the woodwork room at the Hudson Park High School (also sounds familiar) in Deveraux avenue. In 2000 I became librarian of our club which has about 100 woodworking/turning mags, 13 videos, 13 books. As you well know the 2000 and 2001 congresses were held at the H.P.H.S. and were very successful. I started to give club and public demos at various venues around town. My recent purchase is a JET mini lathe which is very portable and is a big help at public demos. In November 2002 our guild put on its first exhibition in the Ann Bryant Art Gallery where about 270 items were displayed some of which were offered for sale. I was very chuffed when one of my pieces, a hollow form with diagonal slots from outside to inside made from London Plane and Red Ivory was bought by a visiting art collector from Devon in the U.K.!!

We enjoyed quite a few professional turners at our club namely Phil Irons (2001 Congress), Reg Sherwin (Nov 2002), Mick (my favourite turner) and Liz O'Donnell (after 2004 Congress) and Stuart King earlier this year. And I am now the scribe of our newsletter *EL WOODTURNERS NEWS*.

*Gavin Knowles*

### Turners of the Natal Midlands Woodworkers Guild

The Woodturners have once again been very active within the woodworkers guild. At our September guild meeting Winston French treated the guild members to an outstanding presentation on the turning of a David Springett type spiked star, encapsulated within a sphere. The presentation included information on, and a display of the special tools that he had made together with progressive samples of the star at each stage of the process. It was backed up with a PowerPoint presentation of the work being done on the lathe. Those that attended the last

AWSA congress might remember seeing one of the finished articles. Two photos of the completed spiked star are attached together with the chuck that was used to hold the ball as each point of the star was turned.



Based on information gleaned from the last *Turnaround* magazine on how the Pretoria Woodturners operate the woodturners' interest group, that meets on the third Saturday of each month decided to follow suit. For our first meeting everyone had to turn a spoon or scoop, a lamp or a free choice.

The free choice was interesting in that Gavin Scholfield arrived with a Knobkerrie that he had turned from a crotch piece and branch of Camphor tree. He turned most of the ball before repositioning the centre and turning the stem.

The 12 members who attended all brought at least one item, with some bringing up to 5 items. Constructive criticism was made on all these items and all who attended indicated that they enjoyed the day and wanted to continue the process.



*Clyde Neumann*

### Witwatersrand

We are still looking for an alternative venue for our club house. Visitors are welcome, but due to the uncertainty of the venue after October, they should phone to confirm arrangements beforehand. The web

site (<http://mysite.mweb.co.za/residents/tpope/homepage.html>) will be kept up-to-date with any developments. For the main club meetings, our secretary Roger Matthews can be contacted on: (011) 465 9009(h), 082 893 0193 [rbmatthews@hixnet.co.za](mailto:rbmatthews@hixnet.co.za)

For the turning section, the chairman of the turner's section, Chris O'Connell, whom many of you have met at congress can be contacted on: [chrisoco@icon.co.za](mailto:chrisoco@icon.co.za) (011) 803-4198 082-900-5353

Butch Smuts visited the American Association of Woodturners Annual Congress. He spoke at our meeting last Monday (first Monday of September) and showed us some interesting slides of the instant gallery, as well as some work at the Del Mano gallery and the Wizard of Oz exhibition in Kansas, where he had items on show.

The last meeting also showed a few injuries, including one inflicted by a large piece of wood coming off the lathe at high speed. Schalk van Niekerk had just had the stitches out on the day of the meeting. The last thing he remembers of the incident was noting that the workpiece was turning rather fast and it had developed a wobble... He says he made two mistakes – he forgot to turn down the speed dial and he didn't stand out of the way as the lathe spun up to speed. No permanent damage done, but remember – it can happen to you, so be careful!

*Trevor Pope*

### Western Cape Woodturners Association

#### A brief history.

The Association was founded on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 1994 and at that time was the only such group dedicated specifically to woodturning.

With thanks to Ken Turner the editor of our monthly newsletter "*Turnings*" here is an article that Dave Stephenson wrote for inclusion in one of them.

For many years, I dreamed of starting a woodturning club for like-minded souls. When I discussed this desire with Steve Sacks of Hardware Centre in the Old Days at 2, Long Street, he admitted that he was keen on the same idea, but was not prepared to get involved in the running and establishing of the proposed club.

I finally managed to persuade Steve to keep a book on the counter in his shop and get anybody who came in to buy turning tools, supplies and or machines, to put his contact number and details in the book, where I would collect them and follow up with the aim of getting enough woodturners interested in starting a club.

Not much came from this idea! Then at the Durbanville Craft Market, I met Johan Van Zyl, also an enthusiastic woodturner from Durbanville. We discussed the idea of starting a

club. Johan, it turned out, knew Dave Biggs of the *Argus*. I knew that Dave Biggs was a wine fundi and did not know that he also was a woodturner. Dave wrote a short piece in his column in the *Argus*, and listed my name and number as well as Johan's as contacts for anybody who was interested in woodturning.

For at least a fortnight, my phone never stopped ringing, nor did Johan's!

Steve Sacks offered Hardware Centre as a venue for our meetings. At our first meeting, the Chairman of the Pinelands Hobbies Club was in attendance and he, Eric Thornton, suggested that we use the premises in Pinelands. The rest, as they say in the classics, is history!

It's good to look back on the last ten years. We have sadly had to say goodbye to quite a few of our members who have gone to that Great Workshop in the Sky where everybody turns on a VB36 lathe and all the tools are Robert Sorby and there is an Axminster chuck for each set of jaws that you need. Only Red Ivory, African Blackwood and Wild Olive wood is available in blanks of all, or any, sizes. I would like to think that there is a special corner of that Workshop set aside for a Carbatech for Brian George to use!

If the meeting of a few weeks ago, was anything to go by, then I am confident that this club has a tremendous future.

My vision for the future is to see far more youngsters and ladies turning to Woodturning!

There are too many Grey Heads and Bifocals at meetings. Where are the youngsters and the ladies?

Regards,  
Dave."

Thanks Dave for that bit of history.

The last of the founding members still associated with the WCWA - recorded for posterity in 2005



Back row: from left to right: Tony van Niekerk, Dave Stephenson, Thys Carstens, Eric Thornton and Wearne Draper.  
Front row : Mike Bester and Henry Carolissen of Hardware Centre, Cape Town.

The club came to be known as the Western Cape Woodturners Association (WCWA).

Today we still meet at the Pinelands Hobbies Club but not only once a month!

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday is our general monthly meeting which incorporates general business, an instant gallery and a demonstration or talk relating to our prime pastime. All other Wednesdays are open for hands-on workshops, allowing beginners or members not yet having their own lathes to come and practice or ask advice from the more experienced turners. These evenings are also, for those who wish, merely a social event where one is allowed to cradle a can of something cold, liquid and tasty.

A new venture started this month is the introduction of "classes" given by a senior turner for the benefit of the novices or those who wish polish their turning skills. This takes place from 9am on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of each month till mid-afternoon.

The Pinelands Hobbies Club, which the WCWA makes use of, has a large workshop which accommodates nine lathes permanently on site, in addition to the 2 circular saw tables, a router table, a band saw, a thicknesser planer, a drill press a couple of grinders plus a reasonable array of hand tools and turning chisels.

The Association currently owns four lathes (3 Record, 1 Martlett) and has the loan of a small JET courtesy of Brian Jolly of Stand Hardware, Port Elizabeth. Of the other 4 at our disposal 2 belong to the Pinelands Hobbies Club (Large EMCO and Large Eurasia) and the last two, both Record, are on loan from one of our members.

So there is no shortage of machinery and no one should find difficulty, or complain of not having access to a lathe. On a busy evening it is quite exhilarating to see most lathes being used all at once.

The aims of the WCWA are very diversified, amongst which could be listed that it strives to increase its membership and teach the art of woodturning.

- To learn and share knowledge.
- To create an environment for interaction between all levels of turning skills.
- To develop a better awareness, understanding and appreciation of this noble art amongst the South African public.

In the last 11 years I think we have gone a long way to reaching some of our goals. This was achieved with a great deal of effort, commitment and enthusiasm from a large portion of our members. One of the ways we promote turning is by accepting many invitations to show our skills by exhibiting

and/or demonstrating at various reasonably well-profiled events or venues.

A comment was overheard that the WCWA members are only bowl turners! What do you expect with boles likes these?



*Two of the many camphor trees on the farm Vergelegen in Somerset West, Cape Town.*

Our general meetings programme for the rest of the year, to which visitors from other areas are more than welcome, is as follows:

#### **Forthcoming Events:**

- 21<sup>st</sup> September : Hollow forms - Dennis Laidler  
 19<sup>th</sup> October : Techniques and Decorating -  
 Gert Ferreira, Dennis Laidler & Peter Nicolle.  
 16<sup>th</sup> November : Year end show case and braai.  
 18<sup>th</sup> January : Resin inlays - Thys Carstens.  
 15<sup>th</sup> February : Pepper mills & Pens - Bert Parker &  
 Ken Turner.  
 15<sup>th</sup> March : Collaboration evening.  
 19<sup>th</sup> April : Annual General Meeting.

#### **Committee contact numbers:**

- Chairman : Louis Van Niekerk - 021 -913 1470  
[louisvn@iafrica.com](mailto:louisvn@iafrica.com)  
 Vice Chairman : Graeme Hill - 021 -794 1639  
[graemehill@mweb.co.za](mailto:graemehill@mweb.co.za)  
 Secretary/PRO Eric Thornton -021 -531 1559  
[notnorth@mweb.co.za](mailto:notnorth@mweb.co.za)  
 Treasurer : Hugh Scholtz - 021 - 913 0417  
[hascholtz@worldonline.co.za](mailto:hascholtz@worldonline.co.za)  
 Newsletter Editor : Ken Turner - 021 -689 9251  
[kturner@iafrica.com](mailto:kturner@iafrica.com)

**Toys for Boys.**

We had barely recovered from the very successful Hobby X exhibition three weeks ago when the wheels were set in motion to organize another show.

This was at the Blue Shed at the V&A Waterfront between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of June. This event incorporated Fathers Day and was intended to get dads and sons to view various activities which are of the masculine type.

When viewing the stand allocated to us a few days before we were very restricted in terms of space 3x3 meters. So plans were made to suit the space.

When we arrived to set up at midday the day before the show we found out that we had to compete with the "n" gauge model railway club, a radio controlled racing car association and a radio controlled aircraft/helicopters business.

Much to our relief both the people who were supposed to occupy the stands to our right and left never pitched up, so we were more than happy to accept the extra space, as the organizers had originally only allowed for an aisle a meter and a half wide between the front of our stand and the model railways, a bit of a squash for spectators.

The extra room was put to good use. Half the stand was workshop the other half gallery and the use of some potted trees and some wrought iron furniture that was left by a non-participating exhibitor made our stand look very respectable and provided a good resting place for the tired and weary.

Our machinery consisted of two JET lathes, which, not only being a pleasure to turn with, attracted a lot of interest. Their size and quietness, not to mention affordability, were the main points of discussion. I am sure that these factors will entice more people to take up woodturning.

I am glad to say that of the few stands that formed the "Toys for Boys" exhibition, ours kept more spectators interested, and for a longer time. Making sawdust and shavings definitely had the edge on the competition.

I would like at this point apologise to the Model Railways for adding a bit of "snow" to their mountain scenery, although they did not complain. There is nothing that a good blower cannot do.

All in all it was worth the effort to participate in this event, that I am told by the organizers will take place again next year.

The members who took part thoroughly enjoyed themselves and will no doubt be there again in 2006.

As usual items turned during the exhibition were sold for charity and this event raised R730.

Thanks to all the avid volunteer turners for their cooperation and enthusiasm which made this event a success.

Cheers for now,

*Eric Thornton*

**AWSA Congress 2006, Cape Town**

The National Congress is planned for the weekend of 28 April to 1 May 2006, so diarise this weekend for a little mid-year break, and remember to let your "significant other" know as well, so they can accompany you.

A couple of top international turners have been approached about the possibility of demonstrating at the 2006 AWSA Congress, and the response has been enthusiastic. Within the next couple of weeks we will have confirmation which of the turners will be gracing our shores, so keep an eye on the SAwoodturning newsgroup (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SAwoodturning/>) site and the AWSA website ([www.awsa.org.za](http://www.awsa.org.za)) for updates and further news.

**From the AWSA Committee**

The North/South handover is progressing well, and our committee is formulating how best to serve the members and add more value to their membership. Any reasonable constructive suggestions forwarded to the committee will be considered. One of the proposals the committee is working on, is planning woodturning exhibitions in the major centres, followed by a "national" exhibition of the best pieces from each centre. More on this in our next newsletter.

At its recent committee meeting, it was decided that there would be nominal increase in membership fees for the 2005/2006 year to R80 per member.

From the 2005 Conference, we still have 18 shirts left (11 Large, 1 Xlarge, 3 XXlarge, 3 XXXlarge). These can be ordered from the Treasurer at R100 each.

**The 2005/6 AWSA Committee**

<b>Louis van Niekerk</b> – Chairman. <a href="mailto:louisvn@iafrica.com">louisvn@iafrica.com</a> (021) 913 1470(h)
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<b>Gert Ferreira</b> – Secretary. <a href="mailto:gskc@mweb.co.za">gskc@mweb.co.za</a> ; (021) 559 1409(h)
<b>Gigi Laidler</b> - Treasurer and <i>Turnaround</i> Newsletter Editor <a href="mailto:gigi.laidler@lando.co.za">gigi.laidler@lando.co.za</a> (021) 797-7755(h) 082 485 8399
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## Article of Interest

We've all suffered the irritation of someone else's cellphone ringing during a meeting, or at another inopportune moment, or gasped with dismay as a person of questionable dexterity picks up a delicate turning, and handles it with less than the respect it deserves – and a couple of us have suffered the inevitable heartache and dismay as a turning falls over and crashes to an unrelenting floor, converting hours of commitment to “designer firewood”.



Dennis brought the following article that appeared in the Summer 2005 edition of *American Woodturner* to my attention and suggested it might be useful to reprint it in *Turnaround*, so I emailed Cindy Drozda, who was very prompt to oblige and grant permission, and the editor, Carl Voss replied equally speedily that I was welcome to use the material on condition I acknowledge the source (which I do with gratitude): **“Reprinted by kind permission. American Association of Woodturners”.**

### Mind your turning manners

*By Cindy Drozda*

Cindy Drozda (cindy@cindydrozda.com) lives in Boulder, Colorado, and is a frequent demonstrator.

In the past 20 years as a woodturner, Cindy Drozda has been both in the audience and a demonstrator. With the help of other demonstrators, she's collected a list of audience and demonstrator guidelines. Cindy also knows of the heartbreak that occurs when a broken Instant Gallery piece is discovered. At the 2004 Utah Symposium, someone snapped the finial off a \$1,600 turned piece.

#### Audience etiquette

- Turn off your cell phone before entering the demonstration room. Even stumbling over folks to answer a vibrating cell phone is considered rude.
- If you know you'll leave before the end of the demonstration, find a seat on the edge of the room. Demonstrators are especially startled when front-row attendees suddenly stand up and leave. "Was

it something I said?"

- Mind your manners. During a recent Utah Symposium, an attendee interrupted Jacques Vessery to say, "That's not the way Richard Raffan would do it!"
- Ask before videotaping.
- "Save me a seat!" doesn't cut it with participants who have waited for months to watch a demonstrator. Be there or find a spot at the edge of the room.
- Keep your interruptions to a minimum and limited to on topic questions. Excessive interruptions will result in an entire topic not being covered as the presenter makes adjustments for the allotted time. There will be time for appropriate questions at the end of the demonstration.
- Don't interfere with a demonstrator trying to set up for the next session. Rooms are often scheduled to allow only 15 minutes for one person to clean up and the next to set up. This is not the time to shoot the breeze! (Would you interrupt Lance Armstrong while he was getting focused on his next race?)
- Let the demonstrator know if you can't hear or see, or the video camera is not capturing the demonstration.

#### In the Instant Gallery

- Bring your work to the Instant Gallery! You are among friends, and we all want to see what everyone else is doing. Don't be intimidated because your work is (in your own eyes) "not good enough." It is absolutely good enough—whether it's your first bowl or a new idea, whether you are a beginner or a pro. It's not about whether or not it's "good" or who thinks it is or isn't. There are no prizes for the "best work" This is the wood turning community's opportunity to share with our fellow members and need not be anything more.
- Obey "Don't Touch" signs.
- Handle a woodturner's piece as though you are prepared to buy it if you break it. If you are not willing to take that risk, don't touch! Be willing to take responsibility for your mistakes. The artist will understand that mistakes happen. If you break a piece, work out the payment details with the artist.
- Be careful and slow in your movements and be aware of your backpack, purse, or briefcase—especially when backing up.
- Be gentle with criticism. You never know if the artist is within earshot and if he or she might be a beginner with a fragile ego. It's not pleasant for anyone to hear loud negative comments.