



## Newsletter of the Blue Mountains Woodturners Inc.

*Mission Statement: "Promote woodturning as a creating skill for all ages"*

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### The Origins of Blue Mountains Woodturners Inc. – 25 Years On.

By Tom Fox

The origins of Blue Mountains Woodturners Inc. go back to a public meeting catalysed by Ross Dando and held on 26th Feb 2000 at 50 Plateau Rd Springwood – (at the time that was the home of David Laird and Mrs Laird). Attendance was 35 people and the proposal to form a wood turning club in the Blue Mountains was discussed. Another meeting was held a fortnight later (at the home of Des Lane) with 16 people attending.



*Display at the Symposium, 2005*

Following some negotiations with the Sydney Woodturning Guild (SWG), the first meeting of Blue Mountains City Region of the SWG was held on 1st April 2000 at Springwood with 37 attendees. Several of those people are still prominently involved today, including Allan Game, Des Lane, Ernie Newman, Brian Smith and Darrell Smith.

Later in 2000 the regular meeting venue changed from the Laird's home in Springwood to Don Booth's very large garage in Hazelbrook. This continued for some years until Don moved to the Central Coast.

The Club held various events including a 'Design Workshop' at Springwood High School in September 2002 and a well-attended inter-Club Challenge Day at Springwood on 5th April 2003. With these events being successfully promoted by the Club, it had become painfully apparent that the staging of such events would have been very much easier without the obsessive oversight of the Committee of SWG.

It was accordingly decided by the members to bypass the SWG Committee by our forming an independent, Incorporated Association to be called 'Blue Mountains Woodturners Inc.' (In consequence, the Committee of SWG promptly advised that the Guild's Blue Mountains City Region had been abolished with effect from 2nd July 2003. This entailed some difficult problems but the financial implications of the Committees' decision were eventually circumvented, thanks to the strong support of the rank and file membership of the SWG).

As will be noted, in a few weeks' time it will be 25 years since the formation of a Blue Mountains Woodturning Club was first promoted.



*Making bits of wood smaller at a working bee in Lawson, 2007. Lots of fun for all involved.*



### Renovations celebrated with End-of-year Shenanigans.

We used the renovated premises for the last Saturday meeting in December 2024 as we head to 25 years of active Woodturning membership activities. February 2025. Our final meeting for the year was a symbolic presentation of all our toys to the Gateway Christmas Charity organisation, followed by a scrumptious luncheon in the renovated premises completed by the Blue Mountains Council just in time for our breakup.

Steve Ward and John Mulquin went up against Klaus ... and

John Cossey in a fun competition at our party. They had ten minutes to turn a leg and another ten to turn an eggcup. The leg was hidden in a bag and the shape and dimensions could only be felt and communicated via charades. Despite valiant efforts and consummate skills, the results were not quite stellar. The eggcup was also bagged but verbal communication was allowed. John Mulquin and Steve produced the versions at left, John Cossey and Klaus those on the right. The hidden samples are shown in the middle. Thanks to Phillip Brien for the idea - a lot of shavings, significant embarrassment and heaps of fun.



### 2024-2025 Christmas Tree Project

The Woodies are proposing to make Christmas Trees a part of our toy making programme for 2025.

Phillip Brien has made these samples and we are proposing that you save a 300mm length of your 2024 Christmas tree trunk, paint both ends with water based paint to reduce moisture loss and then sometime in 2025 start making Christmas Trees that we can include in our toy gifts hamper or sell them at the proposed seniors market run by Blue Mountains Council at the Springwood Hub. The funds can be used on your own behalf or as part of Woodies fund raising.



The Christmas Tree design is not restricted to these examples but we are offering to teach you how to make these trees or other design trees at our Thursday Mt Riverview workshops. You will become confident with the product you produce and can sell as gifts or fill the Christmas Community Hamper for distribution in the area.

There is a dedicated section in the BMWT web site on seasoning of wood however you can just contact John Mulquin, Clive Lyle, John Turner or Phil to ask how to get started.

PS alternative timbers you may have are also acceptable, depending the design.



## CAN YOU CREATE A MIGHTY PEN? ANNOUNCING

### *THE BLUE MOUNTAINS WOODTURNERS PEN MAKING COMPETITION*

Win a \$100 Timberbits gift voucher

We are holding a competition for the:-

Best, Most creative Pen

The "PEN" "figuratively. "The pen regarded as the instrument of authorship"

Any device used to record in any way could be considered as "a pen"

SO:-let's put on our thinking caps, think outside the square and start turning

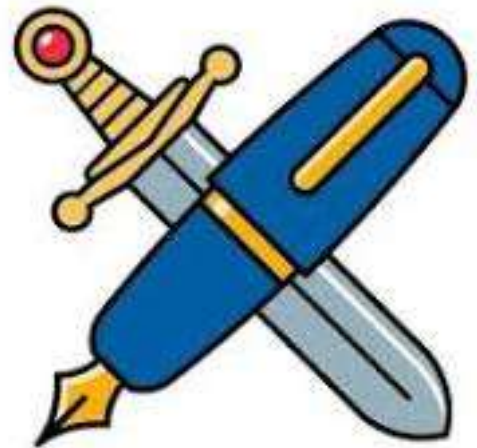
A few rules:-

Must be partially made of wood.

Must be partially turned.

Collaborations are allowed (share the prize 50/50)

**Entries close June meeting 2025**



If anyone knows of any members that are unwell or in difficulties until a new welfare offer is appointed please contact John H Mulquin. 0407709351

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## MEMBER CREATIONS AND EXPERIENCES.

This month Mark Lenic has discovered the joy of turning Salt and Pepper grinders. These are his words and pictures. Thank you for taking the time and effort to put this together for us Mark. If anyone has anything they would like to share, ask or gaze in awe at, please email me at [turningchatter@gmail.com](mailto:turningchatter@gmail.com).

### My experience at turning salt and pepper grinders

Several months ago (May 2024 to be exact) I started my journey learning the art of wood turning with Ernie and his tribe of followers and I must say they are a wonderful bunch of people. Thursday mornings was my day of the week to attend the small gathering of like-minded people who simply want to learn and improve their skill level and to be able to demonstrate their artistic flair.

Having turned several spinning tops and miniature baseball bats and rows and rows of beads, I felt I was ready for something much more challenging and with Christmas fast approaching, what better present could you give than something home-made. So, with my partner in crime (insert wife here) we came up with the idea of making salt and pepper grinders for the family.

Now this project was not going ahead without discussing the idea with Ernie and a few fellow turners so that I could gauge the degree of difficulty I faced. Whilst all the people I spoke to were supportive, their response was basically the same and that was to keep going with my learning process and maybe try salt and pepper grinders in the future. I was fine with that response, after all others had been turning for a lot longer than myself. Several months later and now in the month of October I am starting to think what if.....What if I had a go at turning a demo piece and see what I end up with.



Excited as I was, there was still a little hesitation and lack of confidence in my thinking however I decided to move on the idea and so, off to Trend Timbers I go in search of the kits. I met up with a young man in the shop who was more than helpful in explaining the turning process....he even gave me a discount because I was taking the Thursday class with Ernie. Unfortunately for me, when I got home, I realised I did not have all the required equipment and so a trip to Mc jing's was in order. Forstner bits and long stem drill bits was what I needed and once I had them, my excitement to begin the project took over.

Without going in to all the details I can tell you that the best part of 4 hours was spent in the man cave turning a softwood (red cedar I think) demo of the finished product....and that was just the body. I still needed the top to have a successful grinder. Well, the shape of my demo piece was OK however the top I turned was a tad sloppy and the top was very loose.

*Grinder  
Photo 1*

Not to worry, I will turn another one, this time out of hardwood that a mate gave me. The hardwood (Tallowwood) was from a cross member on a telegraph pole and judging by the density I would say it was many years old. Now this piece started to take shape and was different in design to my original one. Needless to say, my experience in turning hardwood was much less than that of my softwood turning and I had a few catches. The outcome was catastrophic and can be seen in photo number 2.

To say my confidence took a hit is an understatement and had I put the idea back on the shelf for a while I would have been content however, the desire to succeed was burning and I wanted to succeed. Now during the several months of my deliberating this project, I drove up to Ernie's house to do my usual Thursday lesson and I happened to park in front of his neighbour's house. Sitting out the front was a pile of discarded items including four dining table legs. The opportunity was too good to pass and so in the boot they went. I had no idea what type of timber they are, but I was impressed by the grain. Fast track to November and my itch to turn the grinders was there again and after watching several videos I realised that perhaps my design needed a rethink. I completely changed my approach and decided on a set of slim line grinders is a much easier project and so back to the drawing board I went.



1Grinder Photo 2

Being a little nervous from my first two samples I approached this third attempt with everything in mind that I had been shown. Stance, grip, correct chisel and more importantly design. I wanted something simple but effective. I started on the first grinder

and surprised myself with the ease of how it turned out. Following the process and talking my way through the project (along with many cups of coffee my wife made me) I finished the first grinder in 2 hrs. Somewhat of an achievement in more ways than one. Now for the second grinder and within an hour I had the second grinder finished. With my confidence running at an all-time high I decided a second set of grinders was needed and so a couple of hours later I had managed to turn four unwanted dining room table legs into four salt and pepper grinders for the family. This project made me realise several things including the benefit of turning tops and bats in my earlier months, understanding the process and making sure you stick to it is important and of course, self-belief. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of turning the grinders and better still I am thrilled with the outcome. Photo three shows the completed grinders with their Tung oil finish.....Hopefully my kids will be happy too.



Grinder Photo 3

Mark Lenic, a happy turner.....

**Note from the editor:** It is fabulous to be having such amazing input from members for Turning Chatter. I am thrilled to be able to include stories and pictures to include in the newsletter. Having people take the time to create a document with pictures and works formatted looks wonderful however... it is difficult to make the formatting done by members fit the formatting of the newsletter. I am a simple gal and am just using word to put this together. If you send me a completed document with as a printed item or a link to a published website I cannot get the pictures across. There may be – and most likely is – a way to do it that I am unaware of. Until such time as I learn things (it may be a long wait) please send your stories as an email with photos labelled but not embedded in the story. I had 2 wonderful items I have included in this edition of TC without the photo's accompanying them. I will, of course, include the photos in the next edition. If I can access them. Bec

As you may have picked up in recent editions of TC, I enjoy making spheres, especially natural edge spheres. I have some ideas about including spheres in other forms – lamps for example. I have also been encouraged to enter into some competitions with them but have not clue how to name them. Ernie wrote an article about creating the right name or title for your art. Here is a photo of one of my unnamed spheres (just because I can.)



### **CREATING TITLES**

Ernie Newman

A title can add another dimension to an art piece – and increase its dollar value. It is worth collecting possible titles in advance and playing around with a number before making a choice. It must be art if it is called, *Subterranean Sunset 3*.

#### **Collect phrases that sound good**

- 1/ warp and weft
- 2/ bibbity, bobbity, boo
- 3/ bone, steel and stone
- 4/ shilly shally

#### **Phrases that suggest something interesting or ambiguous**

- 1/ serene monkey
- 2/ at the crossroads
- 3/ water, wind, earth and fire
- 4/ fear of north

#### **Quotes that suggest meaning or intent**

- 1/ “In the beginning...” - The Gospel of John
- 2/ “Both sides now” – Joni Mitchell
- 3/ “Yesterday” - Paul McCartney
- 4/ “I have a dream” Martin Luther King
- 4/ “We can only learn to love by loving” – Iris Murdoch

#### **Quotes that suggest humorous possibilities**

- 1/ “You put your left foot in” - Anon
- 2/ “Boil, boil, toil and trouble” - Shakespeare
- 3/ “If you go down to the woods today” - Henry Hall
- 4/ “The secret policemen’s ball” - Monty Python

## **Play around with words and phrases by right clicking on words to find synonyms, opposites, translations or rhymes**

*Shilly shally* could become *dilly dally* or *hither and thither*

*Serene monkey* could become *anxious ape*, *peaceful parrot* or *scaredy cat*

*"In the beginning..."* could become, *"The end is nigh"*

*"The secret policemen's ball"* could become *"The torturer's banquet"*

*"I have a dream"* = *"Ich habe einen traum"* [German] and *"Tengo un sueño"* [Spanish]

## **Open-ended titles can be better than those that lock in one interpretation**

A title such as *War is Evil* may control how we see a piece. *What is War?* might allow us to see it in a number of ways. *With God On Our Side?* [Bob Dylan] And *Battle Hymn* [Battle Hymn of the Republic] suggest religious interpretations. Other options include: *Iron and Blood* [Bismarck], *I have not yet begun to fight!* [John Paul Jones], *End war or it will end us* [HG Wells], *Lamps Out* [an allusion to Edward Grey's quote "The lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our life-time".]

## **I considered a number of titles for my collection of found animals**

While the Woodcutter Slept

The Logic of Dreams

Dreams of Beasts

Sepia Dreams

After Enchantment

Silent Spectators

Silent Spectres

The Witness of Beasts

What the Owl Saw

Watching, Waiting

Watching, Waiting, Wanting

Someone Is Watching

Lurking and Loitering

"Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live." Ezekiel 37:9

In the Woods, At Night, Alone

Forest Phantoms


Ghosts in the Gloaming

It Was the Wolf [Es war der wolf – German], Era el lobo [Spanish] Yr oedd y blaidd [Welsh]

Bewitched and Bewildered

## **Exercise**

Make a list of words or phrases that could become titles for a piece you have made or might make. Play around with them and come up with 5 titles.



The Blue Mountains Presidents report, event diary and fun quizzes will return in the February edition of Turning Chatter. My apologies. Christmas, New Year and Life got in the way this month so I am not as prepared or timely as I normally am. The next edition of Turning Chatter will be out in the last week of January. Please send your stories, pictures and ideas as you feel inspired to do.

Happy New Year!