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Sydney Northern Beaches Woodturners Inc



Newsletter September 2026

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Show & Tell
Pepper Grinder Demo
Xmas Luncheon
New OH&S Coordinator
Maintenance Matters
Toy Handover
Burl Heaven
Member Birthdays
Welcome New Members

Committee items

Catherine Ritter opened the day's proceedings with an update on a few items.
- Firstly a Bunnings Voucher was presented to Phil Drew for contributing the greatest $ amount to the Club in commission for the items he sold at the Open Day.
- Budget tightening - from 1 October no more chocolate biscuits.
- A process is being agreed for the Nova Lathe to be offered for sale to Club Members.
- In the WoodBank clean-up some Mulberry has been found on the floor. It is being cut into pieces and when ready will be offered to Members to turn for presentation at the Club Xmas Luncheon Show & Tell on Sunday 15 November.

Our next get-together is the 3rd Sunday of the month as usual - October 18. A short meeting will be followed by Show & Tell, a bowl turning demonstration by Ken, then the sausage sizzle.

Show & Tell

This month's challenge for Show & Tell was to replicate or adapt the box Ken demonstrated in August. We had two examples presented plus lots more really interesting work. A great

Show & Tell.



Paul Moore completed today's Show and Tell brief by making a lidded box to Ken's drawing, albeit a +40% diameter version. Uncertain of the species, Paul's wood came from the club WoodBank and was finished with 600 grit, natural oil and beeswax.

Jonathan Rabinovitz showed his Pepper grinder with 'Crushgrind' mechanism from Pop's Shed, Vic. Jonathan used Blackheart Sassafras (*Atherosperma moschatum*) a Tasmanian wood streaked with creamy-grey and dark brown. Finish is a DIY carnauba/bees wax blend. Acknowledging today's Trinket Box theme, Jonathan said he made 'a trinket box for pepper corns'.



Phil Drew’s lidded boxes cleverly took toothpick holders from his auto-ejecting first prototype through evolutionary steps requiring modified toothpick lengths, to the final phase of development. This MK-III version displays Phil's mastery of problem solving and design not to mention turning ability.



Tim MacGregor's American Oak piece was fitted with a copper dish with a fish-scale decoration. A challenging decision was whether or not to align the 'fish scales' with the grain. Tim found this copper dish cleaning out his brother’s estate. At first it looked like a grubby dish but after cleaning proved to be very pretty. Stamped 100% copper on the bottom. It was out of round so he had some difficulty making it fit in the dish he had turned and although Tim said, it is not 100% flush, you wouldn't notice.
Finished with 600 paper and fast-drying U-Beaut Aussie Oil friction polish gave a high-gloss result.





Ken Cooper as a complete aside, told us of his introduction to polarised over-glasses, sunnies that fit over his prescription specs.
Ken also presented a small lidded box of Indian Rosewood or Sheesham (*Dalbergia sissoo*), a hard, dense Indian wood that finished well under the master's hand with 240 grit paper and shellac.

The theme of **Jenny Talbot's** presentation was 'disappointed and mistakes'. Her selection of Cypress for the captive rings, baby mouse and a small bowl, which all sadly cracked after being turned, was a disappointment.





The small Casuarina plate Jenny showed had split along a flaw in the wood. The mistake in fixing it was failing to accurately prepare the timber before joining it to the white-coloured Perspex with CA glue. After re-turning the job, daylight could be seen along the glue line on the finished job. Thankfully the plate didn't split and fly off the lathe while being re-worked.



The two streptohedrons presented were made as glued paper joined split turnings. A glued paper join is used to temporarily hold two halves of wood for split-turning, then split again after turning.



This small streptohedron required no special tools and started as an equilateral cone. Unfortunately Jenny forgot to remove the paper before re-gluing.

The larger one started as a 3-D 6-sided form. Jenny made specific tools to undercut the channels in the blank to accommodate the ball bearings. Gravity annoyingly moves the balls to the back and out of sight.





Tools used in the second steptohedron (above). Below an explanation of split turning.
To prepare the glued paper joint, both surfaces need to be flat and smooth to make full contact. Porous paper such as printer paper is used rather than shiny, non-porous paper like a magazine. PVA glue is spread evenly on the wood and the paper sandwiched between before clamping. Dry overnight before mounting on the lathe.
To separate the join after turning Jenny's tool of choice is a large kitchen knife placed along the paper glue line and tapped gently to split the layers. The residual paper and glue can easily be cleaned up on a belt sander before re-gluing in the final position.

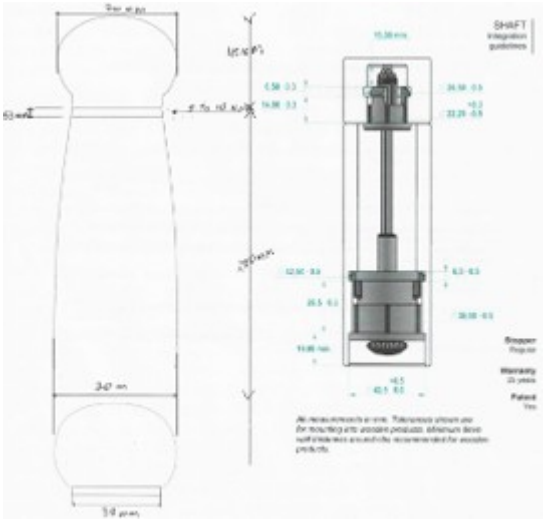
Next Month's Show & Tell Challenge is of course A Pepper Grinder

Might be a good idea to read Catherine's demo write-up below so you can make a pepper grinder for next month's Show & Tell Challenge. It doesn't have to be the same shape, just have a go at turning a pepper grinder. Catherine is more than happy to answer questions when you see her at the Club.

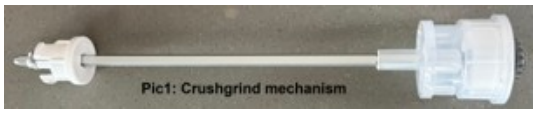
Pepper Grinder Demonstration by Catherine Ritter



Catherine explained she gets the timber for her pepper grinders from Tasmania (Huon Pine Tasmania). Timber comes in 75mm square. Blackwood is $14 per meter and Huon pine $61 per meter, plus freight.



The grinding mechanism used is Crushgrind (shown below left). It works for both salt and pepper but not for herbs or coffee. Catherine advised she uses Crushgrind mainly because there is no steel component and also because it has a 25 year warranty and the grind is adjustable.
Further using the woodcut mill drill (shown below right) simplifies the process.


Pic1: Crushgrind mechanism



The Crushgrind mechanisms come in 2 size. Mine is 26. So I cut the aluminium shaft to fit the length of the grinder with an angle grinder and round off the tip on a grinding wheel. It is easiest to cut the shaft before fitting it in the grinder. If you forget to do that, it will have to be cut with a handsaw.



For a pepper grinder of 19/20cm, I start with a section of timber slightly over 20cm.

Start turning between centres with a piece of timber to protect the top of the grinder. Cut a tenon on the bottom of the grinder body and tenon for the grinder head. Then cut the piece on the bandsaw. (all these enable me to make 5 grinders with a meter length). I use a 120 chuck as the tenons are quite large.
Using a woodcut mill drill, cut the hole for the bottom of the grinder. Once the mill drill is setup, the drilling is pretty much automatic as markings on the tool tell you when to stop. (You can also drill with forstner bits, using first a 45mm forstner bit, then a 38mm bit, then a 25 bit. I highly recommend using a forstner bit extension to turn the 25mm hole instead of turning the body and finishing the drilling from the other side.

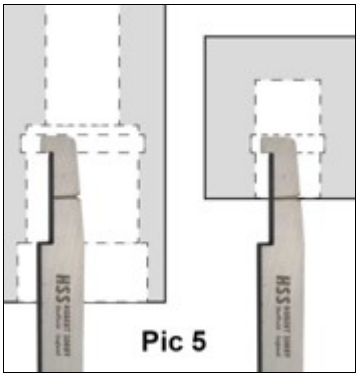
The advantage of this pepper mill, designed in partnership with a woodturner Brendan Stamp, is that the drilling will be true, as well as being faster.

Mount the body in a chuck and turn a tenon on the other side.
Reverse the body with the top end in a chuck.
Square the end of the grinder with a skew and sand with 180 grit as necessary.

Drill a 25mm all the way through with a forstner bit extension (the brand I have is the vermec which fits straight into the tail stock).


Pic 3: Vermec Forstner bit extension





Pic 5

Cut a groove with a special scraper. The groove is designed to hold the mechanism in place. Again, using a tool with markings means you do not need to measure. My tool is handmade but it can also be bought (Sorby).

Timberbits sell grinders kits.They also have a set of instructions available on their website. While these do not have the same dimension, a woodcut mill could be adjusted to do the hollowing.

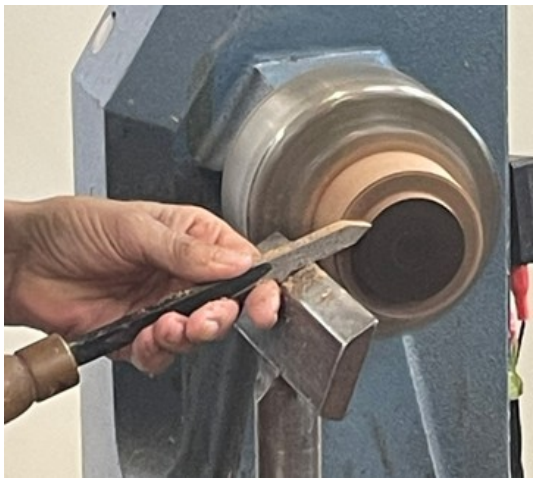
Next the body is turned (after adjusting the tenon) and you can now square the top of the body and ensure the body is the right dimension (20cm). Sand if necessary.
I drill the top of the body (38mm) using the woodcut tool. This step is not necessary but I like to allow more space to to hold more salt/ pepper in the grinder.



To shape the body mount it between a friction chuck and a cone live centre. First turn the body to 70mm at the bottom and 53mm at the top and mark the bead with a skew. I tend to use my bowl gouge to turn to size, but roughing gouge, spindle gouge, skew, beading tool, bedpan will all work.

You can shape the body according to your design (in this case according to my template) using a skew and a small detail gouge to turn a bead at the top. I use a template so I can produce a matching pair of pepper and salt grinders.

Now to turn the grinder top, put the top in a chuck and turn a small tenon. You now reverse it and turn a spiggot for the body (38mm). Use s skew or detail gouge to square the spiggot. Shape the lower half of the top, making sure that you match with the width of the top (in this case 53mm).





Using a 22mm forstner bit drill a hole of approximately 40mm length.

Using the same ‘sorby Crushgrind’ tool, cut a groove in the hole. The tool will also be marked so you do not have to measure. Then reverse the top and put it in a friction chuck. Holding between centres (using a piece of wood to avoid marking the top) and turn the top according to the template with a detail gouge or a small bowl gouge. To finish the top use a couple of spots of hot glue or some tape to hold it in position and finish the top with a detail gouge.

Sand to 180. I sand to 180 or 220 because I use hard wax oil finish and it works best this way.

You can also finish your grinder with a variety with other finishes to your preference. The only consideration to apply is that the grinder will likely be used every day and the finish

must be reasonably resistant and tough.

Demonstration on Sunday 18 October will be by Ken Cooper - a bowl



Without a doubt the majority of people who are new to woodturning want to turn a bowl. Ken has taught many newbies at the Timberbits classes, and at SNBW, and will show you how to go about turning a simple bowl. Once you get the fundamentals you can branch out into different shapes, make them thinner, trial a few different edges and feet/no feet. Come along and learn from the expert and stay and chat with him afterwards over one of Nick's perfectly cooked sausages.

Woodies Christmas Luncheon Sunday 15 November



Our Christmas luncheon this year will be in the COURTYARD located within the recently renovated Dee Why RSL. The venue offers multiple dining options, including its Bistro, Aqua, Tastes of Asia and the Courtyard. These options are all accessible from the Courtyard.
Undercover parking is available, with access via Clarence Avenue.
Further details about the venue available from its website.

Please add your name to the sheet in the Club to ensure you have a seat.

In addition the Club is offering all Members a free Christmas gift from the WoodBank.

Most members will be aware that a huge effort is being undertaken to clean up the area under the Clubhouse which houses our WoodBank. Catherine Ritter & Chris Falvey has been doing an outstanding job sorting out the timber best for woodturning and the aim is to get all timber up off the floor. To assist in that a large amount of Mulberry has been set aside with blanks being turned to make the timber useful for Members. It is still work in progress but if you want a piece it will be available soon. We will have a Show & Tell as part of our Christmas Luncheon and everyone is encouraged to bring along their piece of turned Mulberry to 'Show'.

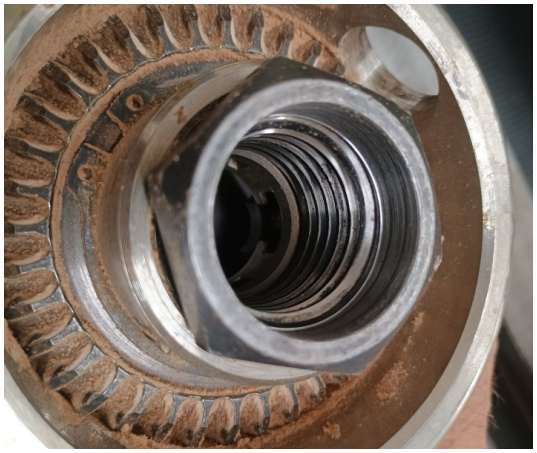
Announcement - appointment of

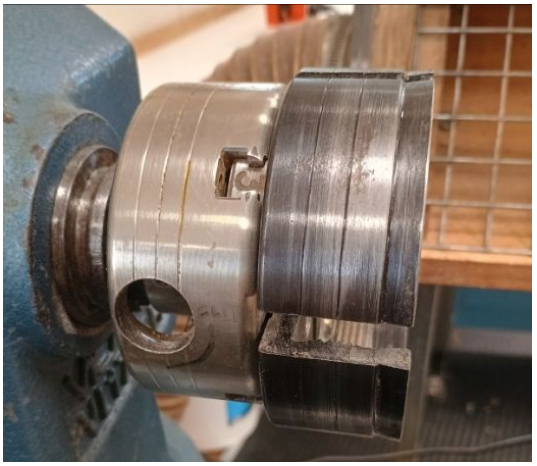
OH&S Coordinator



Your Committee wish to announce Sandra Geraghty has kindly agreed to take on the role of OH&S Coordinator. Please welcome Sandra to her new role.

Maintenance of Chucks Conducted





Ken Cooper has been at work behind the scenes again. He has worked on the stiff 120 chuck to give it a clean and service.

He has also worked on all of the Nova chucks, 7 in total. He has re-machined the thread inserts so that they will all screw completely onto all of the lathes without the need of the spacer ring/washer anymore.

Life for Club Members using Nova Chucks just got easier. Enjoy. And don't forget to thank Ken next time you see him.

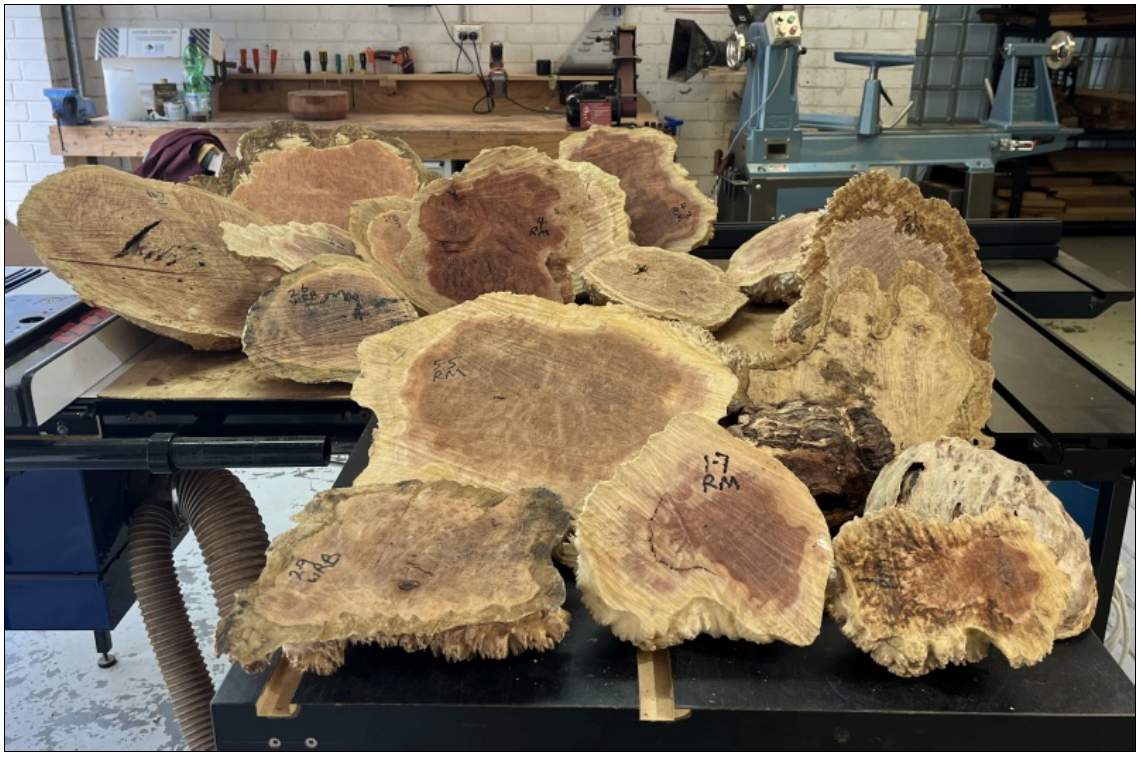
Toys Presented to two Churches

The Club is very proud of the beautiful Toys some of our members make under Lloyd's strict supervision. The quality is fabulous, not to mention the quantity produced, and as you can see from the smiles on these two ladies faces, very happily received on behalf of their Churches.





Visit to 'Burl Heaven'



Chris Falvey and Club President Catherine Ritter recently ‘headed west’ on a day-long road trip to Bogan Gate for a spectacular haul of native burls.

Their destination was Sparkys Burl and Timber near Bogan Gate (west of Parkes, home of the famous “Dish” radio telescope observatory, and the more-recently-famous Elvis

Festival). You can get there and back in a day but it’s quite the hike.

Chris has been sourcing his burls from Sparkys, who wholesales them to Chris through his Good in Wood ABN. Sparkys was also the burl source for renowned turner Simon Begg for his ‘Best in Show' hollow form and spectacular bowl at this year’s Royal Easter Show.

“Burl is the opal of Australian timbers: unique, raw beauty, stunning grain patterns,” says Chris.

“Raw burl always hides its secrets. You can never be quite sure what lies beneath that hard exterior. Every burl is different, each is unique with unexpected voids, swirling grain patterns and ‘bird’s eye’ figuring.”

“They are hugely popular among tourists and Australian burls are rightly regarded as among the best in the world and can command a price premium. But they are a challenge to turn. Definitely face shield on.”

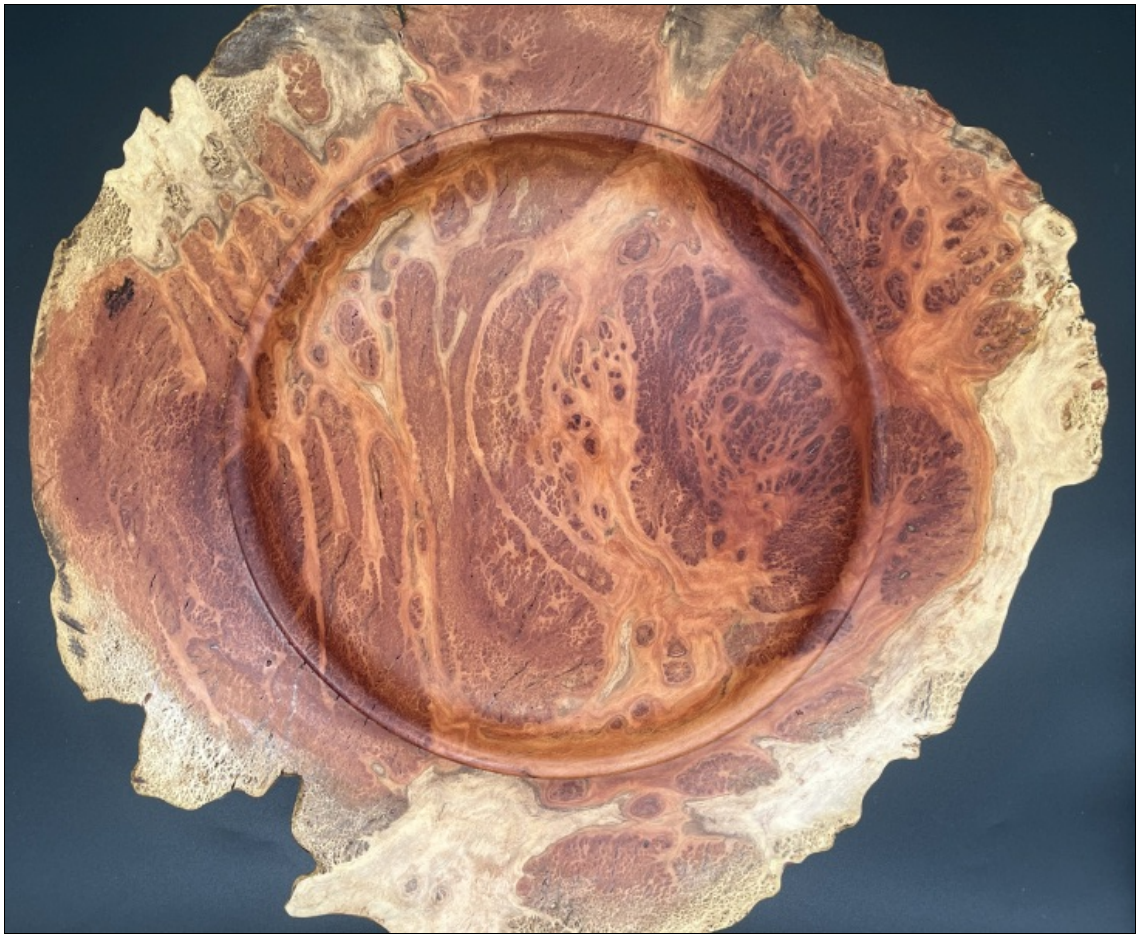
Sparkys has the most amazing range of burls including Red Mallee, Brown Mallee, Western Red Box, Yellow Box, Bimble Box, Red Gum, Belah, Coolibah. The smaller ones are around one kilogram – to two-to-three kilograms and you can keep going up from there to a tonne or more; and there are monster slabs which are exported to the United States and Europe.

Burls typically appear as rounded, knobbly growths on the side or base of a tree. They are a natural growth and are thought to occur as a result of damage or stress to the tree.

Burls are a sustainable resource as the bark ‘heals over’ and the tree continues growing as normal.

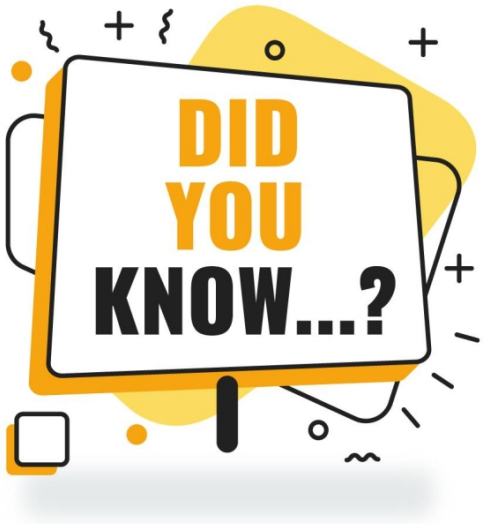
Chris and Catherine brought back between them around 180kg of burls on this road trip, mainly Red Mallee, Coolibah and Western Red Box.

Following the trip Catherine said "I had some doubts about the wisdom of undertaking a 5-hour trip to pick up ‘a few burls’. These doubt were quickly put to rest when we landed in ‘burl heaven’."



Within a day Chris started work on one of the Western Red Box burls. Nice work Chris!

Did You Know?

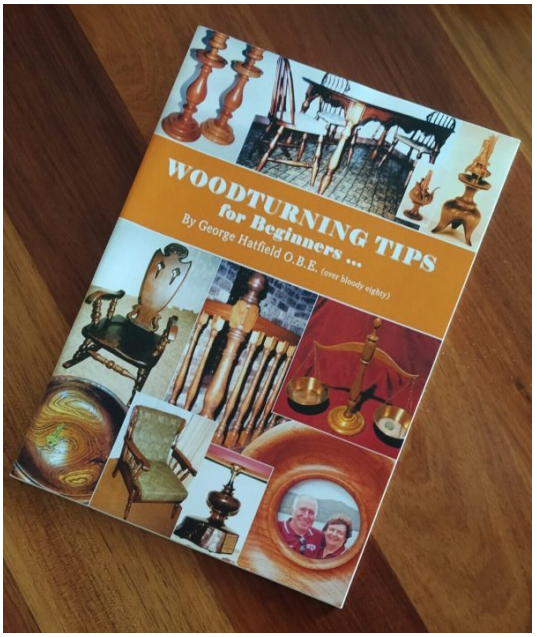


This is our segment to introduce new members, and remind existing members, on information about our Club that we might not otherwise think of mentioning to them.
If you have any suggestions on items we could include, please send them to the editor.

Did You Know?... Your Club has a Library. It is a great resource and you can borrow any of the books for a two week period. You'll find it in the office in the white bookshelf on the left. The book to record what you borrow is pink and sits on top of the books on one of the shelves. If you're new to woodturning head for one of Mike Darlow's books such as

'Woodturning Fundamentals'.

Did You Know?... Your Club has available a small supply of the book "Woodturning Tips for Beginners" by George Hatfield. They're only $7. A very worthwhile investment as George was a TAFE teacher and knows how to explain something really clearly. Please ask the Supervisor to show you this little gem of a book next time you're at the Club.



Did You Know?... Your Club has a Shop. It is a treasure trove of goodies. You'll find what you need if you're into turning pens, cheese knives, bud vases, pot pourri lids, letter openers, clock parts, cake slices or just need some sandpaper. Simply ask the Supervisor to assist you. We have a special at the moment, *buy one get one free*. The second one is for you to turn for the Club and we'll put it up for sale at the next market opportunity.

Get Well Soon

We wish John Donnelly all the best with his rehabilitation from his hip replacement operation. Word has it he's not a good patient!
See you back in the Club at a lathe soon John.





Happy Birthday in September to

Gary Munns, Nick Vertes, Jody Williams, George Zhu & Brad Miles

We hope you have a great day!

Welcome to our new members

Lisa McHarg, Dean Tams, Nicola Yakich & Nuala Coogan

We hope you enjoy making shavings with us.



Club T-Shirts

If you are representing the Club at any event, including a Bunnings Sausage Sizzle we would be very pleased to see you wearing a Club T-Shirt to promote the Club.
Or if you need a comfortable shirt you can get dusty without worrying, we have one for you.
There's plenty of stock in all sizes - just $25. Ask a Supervisor to get one for you.



Tuesdays & Fridays 9.30am - 1pm
Saturday mornings 8.30am - 1pm
2nd & 4th Friday each month
9:30am - 3:30pm





Your Committee

President:	Catherine Ritter
Vice President:	Alex Bendeli
Secretary:	Julie Jarvis
Treasurer:	Ian Blume
Ordinary Members;	Andrew Black
	Johnathan Livesey
	Ken Cooper

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