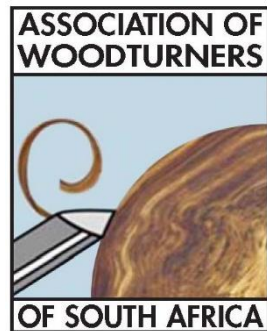


Association of Woodturners of South Africa
Symposium 2025 Programme



VISION: Not just seeing what is - but seeing what can be!
(Roger Chandler)

WELCOME TO THE AWSA SYMPOSIUM 2025

Welcome to the Association of Woodturners of South Africa (AWSA) Woodturning Symposium of 2025, an important annual event in the calendar of enthusiastic woodturners from various Associations across South Africa.

It is a pleasure to extend our warm greetings to you and wish you a pleasant stay in Cape Town, the Mother City.

Our theme for the 2025 symposium is

Vision: Not just seeing what is - but seeing what can be! (Roger Chandler)

We present an action-packed programme of 20 demonstrations presented by some of our local experts and from across the country. We are privileged to have Helen Bailey as our international demonstrator from the UK. There will be a curating panel discussion moderated by Dr Ralph Johnson (Internationally recognised Master Potter), Hennie Meyer (Internationally known Master Potter and Curator), Sarah Walters (Well-known Master Potter and Boutique gallery Owner) and Marc Stanes ("Ebony" Gallery owner , Franschhoek).

In addition, we will have two breakaway rooms with some interesting and informative presentations.

You will have an opportunity to interact with some of our suppliers of specialized tools, equipment, wood blanks and finishing products.

We encourage you, the delegates, to actively participate during the demonstrations, support our suppliers, and network with old and new friends.

Best wishes
AWSA Organising Committee

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME – Main Hall

(Subject to change)

Friday 3 October 2025	
<i>TIME</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>
14h00 - 17h30	Registration and Admin
17h30 - 18h00	Informal Meet and Greet
18h00 - 22h00	Welcome and Cocktail Event – Encore restaurant

Saturday 4 October 2025		
<i>TIME</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>DEMONSTRATOR</i>
08h30 - 10h00	Thin wall turning and piercing techniques	Helen Bailey
10h00 - 10h30	Tea / Coffee break	
10h30 - 11h30	All things Chainsaw – Service, Safety, Maintenance and Cutting	Ron Clark
11h30 - 12h00	Tea / Coffee break	
12h00 - 13h00	Off-centre turning	Carel van der Merwe
13h00 - 14h00	Lunch	
14h00 - 15h30	Turning pewter	John Wessels
15h30 - 16h00	Tea / Coffee break	
16h00 - 17h30	Crafting the void with resin - Inspired by mosaic art	Gerrit van Niekerk
17h30	AGM	Main hall

Sunday 5 October 2025		
<i>TIME</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>DEMONSTRATOR</i>
08h30 - 10h00	Square platter with embellishing techniques	Helen Bailey
10h00 - 10h30	Tea / Coffee break	
10h30 - 12h00	The revolutionary skew.....and spheres too	Andrew Stevens
12h00 - 13h00	Lunch	
13h00 - 14h30	Carving & decorating	Andrew Bourke
14h30 - 15h00	Tea / Coffee break	
15h00 - 16h30	Gallery Perspectives for Curated Artworks Panel Discussion	Ralph Johnson, Hennie Meyer, Sarah Walters, Marc Stanes
18h00 - 23h00	GALA Function – Encore Restaurant	AWSA

Monday 6 October 2025		
<i>TIME</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>DEMONSTRATOR</i>
08h30 - 10h00	Three-legged pot with texture	Helen Bailey
10h00 - 10h30	Tea / Coffee break	
10h30 - 12h00	Gadgets & Gizmos galore	Ashwin Ramhith
12h00	Closing & Raffle	AWSA – Main Hall

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME

(Subject to change)

Breakaway room 1 Demonstrations

Saturday 4 October 2025		
<i>TIME</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Demonstrator</i>
08h30 - 10h00	<i>Thin wall turning and piercing techniques</i>	<i>Helen Bailey (Main Hall)</i>
10h00 - 10h30	<i>Tea / Coffee break</i>	
10h30 – 11h30	<i>Turning BIC pens</i>	<i>Jan Richter</i>
11h30 – 13h00	<i>Turning a bud vase in resin</i>	<i>Gert Ferreira</i>
13h00 - 14h00	<i>Lunch</i>	
14h00 - 15h30	<i>Safe & accurate drilling methods for pepper grinders</i>	<i>Braam Burger</i>
15h30 - 16h00	<i>Tea / Coffee break</i>	
16h00 - 17h30	<i>Pendants</i>	<i>Jurie van den Heever</i>
17h30	<i>AGM</i>	

Sunday 5 October 2025		
<i>TIME</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>DEMONSTRATOR</i>
08h30 - 10h00	<i>Square platter with embellishing techniques</i>	<i>Helen Bailey (Main Hall)</i>
10h00 - 10h30	<i>Tea / Coffee break</i>	
10h30- 12h00	<i>Turning a bud vase in resin</i>	<i>Gert Ferreira</i>
12h00- 13h00	<i>Lunch</i>	
13h00 – 14h30	<i>Pendants</i>	<i>Jurie van den Heever</i>
14h30- 15h00	<i>Tea / Coffee break</i>	
15h00 – 16h30	<i>Safe & accurate drilling methods for pepper grinders</i>	<i>Braam Burger</i>
18h00 - 22h00	<i>Gala evening</i>	<i>Encore restaurant</i>

Monday 6 October 2025		
<i>TIME</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>DEMONSTRATOR</i>
08h30 - 10h00	<i>Three-legged pot with texture</i>	<i>Helen Bailey (Main Hall)</i>
10h00 - 10h30	<i>Tea / Coffee break</i>	
10h30 – 11h30	<i>Turning BIC pens</i>	<i>Jan Richter</i>
12h00	<i>Closing & Raffle</i>	<i>AWSA</i>

SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMME

(Subject to change)

Breakaway room 2 Demonstrations

Saturday 4 October 2025		
TIME	DESCRIPTION	DEMONSTRATOR
08h30 - 10h00	Thin wall turning and piercing techniques	Helen Bailey (Main Hall)
10h00 - 10h30	Tea / Coffee break	
10h30 - 12h00	Polishing	Heinz Pospech
12h00 - 13h00	Sharpening	Brandon Winks
13h00 - 14h00	Lunch	
14h00 - 15h30	Resin talk	Shane Swiegers
15h30 - 16h00	Tea / Coffee break	
16h00 - 17h30	Caddy spoons	Mervin Walsh
17h30	AGM	

Sunday 5 October 2025		
TIME	DESCRIPTION	DEMONSTRATOR
08h30 - 10h00	Square platter with embellishing techniques	Helen Bailey (Main Hall)
10h00 - 10h30	Tea / Coffee break	
10h30 - 12h00	Polishing	Heinz Pospech
12h00 - 13h00	Lunch	
13h00 - 14h30	Turning small hollow forms	Dave Stephenson
14h30 - 15h00	Tea / Coffee break	
15h00 - 16h30	Caddy spoons	Mervin Walsh
18h00 - 22h00	Gala evening	Encore restaurant

Monday 6 October 2025		
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12h00	Closing & Raffle	AWSA

OVERVIEW OF DEMONSTRATORS

Helen Bailey

Helen is a woodturner from Newcastle Upon Tyne in the Northeast of England. Although she has only been turning for a few years, Helen states that woodturning was not a hobby that she had ever thought about trying. It was visiting her local club with her dad, Neville, that the seed was sown. Neville invited Helen along to watch a demonstration on turning pens. Enthralled by what she had seen, Helen had purchased her first lathe within days of watching the demonstration.



Helen's work has already received many accolades in her short career. One of her first pierced pieces was selected with other prestigious works for a touring exhibit in the UK. The American association of woodturners has also featured Helen's work in its magazine.

Helen believes the quality seen in her work is down to meticulous planning, from the first design which she sketches out to the symmetry of the shapes. Most of Helen's pierced work is made from part seasoned wood, as this, in her opinion, suits the projects she strives to create. Turning the bowls to a consistent and exact wall thickness, gives Helen the perfect canvas to create her masterful work. Helen has recently been accepted onto the register of professional turners in the UK and as her career has catapulted her into the limelight in a very short time, the demand for Helen to demonstrate is very high. And with worldwide attention being gained for her amazing creations, Helen's work is sought after by individuals and collectors all over the world.

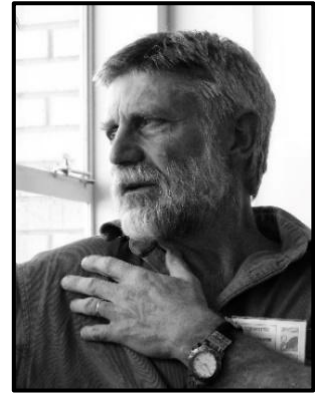
Andrew Bourke

Andre was born in the Eastern Cape but lived in Pretoria. He has been a member of the Pretoria Woodworking Association for many years. He was exposed to the school curriculum of woodwork/metalwork which helped him a lot from a confidence point of view. He trained as a mechanical draughtsman but after eight years naturally progressed to IT which is his current occupation. Woodturning is therefore his main part-time activity, but he also enjoys photography, birding, music and more. Hollow forms grabbed his attention early on in his woodturning journey. Using turned forms as a starting point for enhancement became his next challenge and the possibilities are endless. He uses a multitude of techniques and tools to get to the final product and they are completely unique each time. His workshop is small, but he realized he can still achieve so much within that space. I am often asked "Where do you find the time?" but I have learnt that small bites of consistent effort go a long way!



Andrew Stevens

Andrew is a founding member of the AWSA and has been turning wood for over 30 years. He has been typecast as a spindle turner by the AWSA (mainly because no-one else has wanted the gig) but sees himself as an allrounder, enjoying all aspects of turning. He has recently completed the re-engineering of an old Union Jubilee as a big bowl lathe. He also uses a refurbished Rockwell Delta on which he produces large volumes of spindle ware for local markets.



Ashwin Ramhith

Ashwin was born and educated in the sugar town of Stanger located in KwaZulu Natal where he worked with wood in one way or another. After graduate school, he was an educator and then embarked on a business career in Alice before settling down in Port Elizabeth. Ashwin prefers to focus on unique “One of a Kind” wood-turned art utilizing different materials to allow him to express his ideas and expose the mystery beneath the bark.



The creative process started slowly in 2002 and sped up with time as new ideas, experiences and technology have always challenged the choice of material and technical ability required in each piece. He has exhibited his wood-turned art in South Africa, Portugal, Brazil, South Korea and Germany. He is currently a member of the Port Elizabeth Woodturners guild. He actively demonstrates various aspects of Woodturning because he firmly believes that the art of Woodturning must be preserved in present times.

Braam Burger

Braam became involved in woodworking at the age of nine, a legacy passed on by his grandfather, Great Uncle and father. He also received professional woodworking training at secondary and tertiary levels. More than 40 years later he is still actively involved in the woodworking industry. His focus is on the turning of small utility items and high-volume production, using high quality materials and a mixture of select indigenous and exotic woods, that are aimed at the corporate gift market.



He recently started experimenting with different turning techniques and developing his turning skills into creating unique artistic pieces. He is also involved in the supply of rare woods to the African and European market, sourced from sustainable forests, responsible wood merchants and reclaimed or recycled processed woods. This covers a wide market, from solid wooden flooring, blanks for all turning applications, toy making, knife making and furniture manufacture. He sources wood according to the guidelines set out in the Global Forest and Trade Network (GTFN). Braam is a member of the Woodworking Association of Pretoria.

Brandon Winks

Brandon Winks trained as a piano tuner-technician as a Saturday job and full-time during school holidays from standard 7 through to matric. He was also taught French polishing and spray finishing methods. He learned to sharpen knives to slice felts and leather in piano action renovations and was coached in metal turning from an early age by his father. He was shown the rudiments of wood turning but used his father's services for turning castor cups, piano legs or tool handles until his father's sudden death in 1998. He inherited the Boxford lathe and took over the wood turning himself.



As metal lathes don't reach the speeds required for decent wood turning, Brandon managed to buy a medium-sized wood lathe from a friend. Realising he needed more coaching; he joined the WCWA in 2009. Learning rapidly, he soon took on turning commissions to turn table legs, replacement chair legs and rungs, and production runs of handles, the latter earning him the nickname of "handle man." Using methods for sharpening knives and chisels, he applied these to sharpening his turning gouges. He takes on sharpening commissions on turning sets and wood carving sets. He also enjoys playing piano.

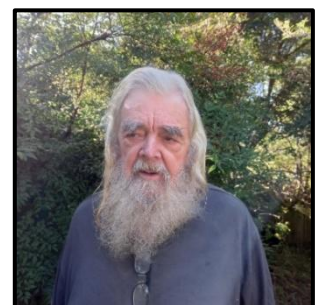
Carel van der Merwe

Carel is a qualified Electronics Engineer and became involved with woodworking at school level. He was introduced to the art of woodturning by At Smit, who is one of the pioneers of South African woodturning. Carel's passion is hollow forms and natural edge bowls. Since 2018, he does woodturning on a full-time basis, provides training in woodturning, sells specialised woodturning tools and equipment, as well as continuing to create new gallery pieces.



Dave Stephenson

It all started many years ago when his dad started teaching him to turn on his Rockwell Delta Lathe. My dad insisted on making me follow the projects in a book on turning that he had. Turning cylinders made him realise that the skew was not just to be used for opening paint tins! He still has that Rockwell lathe, and it is still being used. Many years later he met up with a few people who were also enjoying their lathes, and he had a request in the Cape Argus for like-minded turners to make contact.



As a result, he had the first gathering at Hardware Centre. The response was overwhelming, and the shop was filled. Eric Thornton suggested that Dave join the Hobbies Club in Pinelands and use their premises. The rest is history, as they say. Fast forward to the present set up, with workshops, training and meetings and much enjoyment. Some years later Strand Hardware were doing a show in Walmer which attracted turners from all over the country. That was when and how AWSA came into being. As a result, more clubs joined up and this is where we are today.

He decided to abandon the IT industry and turn his hobby into a small business with attendances and demos at Craft Markets in Cape Town and surrounds. After moving to the Garden Route, Craft

markets grew up to become "The Natural Edge," in Scarab Village in Sedgefield. Richard Henley joined us in the venture and Anne is part of the business as a ceramicist. Dave has a lathe in the shop to demonstrate and a rare Britannia treadle lathe! These days he turns mostly pepper and salt grinders and vessels and of course miniatures.

Gerrit van Niekerk

Gerrit is a chartered accountant from Paarl and has worked for a construction company for the past 20 years. He has been turning for about 16 years and joined the Western Cape Woodturners Association in April 2023. Being part of this woodturning community has proven to be very inspiring and a wonderful source of knowledge and guidance. He enjoys turning decorative pieces like natural edge bowls as well as mosaic vases using wood and resin.



Gert Ferreira

Gert has always enjoyed working with wood and his love for woodturning dates to 1986. He joined the Western Cape Woodturners Association in 1995 and due to their encouraging advice, grew from strength to strength. He is a member of the Association of Woodturners of South Africa as well as the American Association of Woodturners. He belongs to a group of woodturners that have an outlet at the V&A Waterfront called Waterfront Woodturners.

He enjoys working with any piece of wood that has a natural flaw to it. He tries to create something out of the natural elements to give back to mother nature and showcase the beauty of what lies beneath the bark.



Heinz Pospech

Heinz has spent most of his career in packaging and after he sold his business in 2018, he took over the family business which involves distributing the Autosol range of products in southern Africa. As polishing products are some of the key products that Autosol manufactures, Heinz was fortunate enough to be trained in polishing in Germany at the Autosol head office. Although the polishing techniques learnt were relevant to the automotive industry, Heinz has implemented and applied these criteria to the polishing and finishing in woodturning. Although Heinz has only been turning for four years and considers himself a newbie, he will share his knowledge in achieving the ultimate finish, especially on CA and Polyurethane finishes.



Jan Richter

Jan was born in Bloemfontein where he spent his school years. After school, he studied engineering at the university of Stellenbosch. He retired after 40 years of service at Telkom (initially the department of Posts and Telecommunications) at the end of 2014.



Jan's first experience in woodturning was as a primary school kid on a pedal powered lathe (like the one in the photo below) but he did not do any turning until the middle 90's. His farewell gift from Telkom was a set of turning tools and he became seriously involved in turning. He joined the Woodworking Association of Pretoria in 2015 and is an active member of the turners group.



Jan likes turning small items and is always saying that he will never turn anything bigger than a medium-sized peppermill. He turns mainly utilities that can be used in and around the house and his range includes serviette rings, salt and peppershakers and mills, wooden covers for bottle lids, pens, etc.

John Wessels

John took up woodturning in 2005 after retiring from a successful 30-year career as a pilot for South African Airways. He holds a university degree in Aeronautical Engineering. John was influenced at any early age (10) by his mother who took him to pewter lessons in the 50s.



John applied his knowledge of pewter enhancement to his woodturning and exhibits several of his pieces at the Association of Woodturners of South Africa Symposium in 2006. Simon Hope and Christophe Nancey have been inspirational to Wessels who introduced him to cast pewter and roof solder (a mixture of tin and lead). John has continued to experiment and advance new ideas using other forms of solder and silver rods to enhance his art.

Today, John is putting this all together to create pieces with a difference. "My aim is to teach others this type of enhancement, so this art form can be taken to new heights."

Juri van den Heever

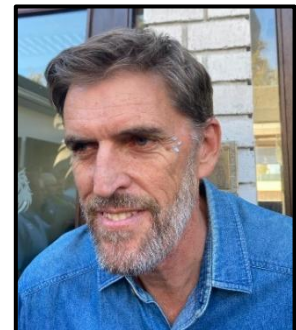
Juri is a retired lecturer and vertebrate palaeontologist. After his retirement his interest in woodturning had a shaky start until he joined The Western Cape Woodturners Association and through the years received valuable tuition and tips from Izak Cronje, Bert Parker, Peter Nicolle and Gert Ferreira - not to mention Master classes from Phil Irons! He currently turns pendants, pencils, ball point pens, fountain pens and a variety of bowls and hollow forms, preferably from indigenous African species.



Juri has exhibited at the Grand Provence Gallery in Franschhoek with Gert Ferreira, The ArtB Gallery in Bellville with Peter Nicolle and Gert Ferreira, the Tina Skukan Gallery in Pretoria with At Smit and Carel van der Merwe as well as smaller galleries in Stellenbosch. He is a member of the Western Cape Woodturners Association as well as the Association of Woodturners of South Africa.

Mervin Walsh

Mervin is married, has two sons and lives in Cape Town where he heads up the Technology Department at the Diocesan College (Bishops) in Rondebosch. He taught woodwork for several years before this subject was sadly removed from the school curriculum. Whilst woodturning has always interested him, it was not until about 10 years ago that he seriously started pursuing woodturning as a hobby. He embraces technical challenges and likes to make pieces that have usage value versus only ornamental value. In this context, he has lost count of the number of pens, caddy spoons and coffee scoops he has made for various Christmas markets!



Ron Clark

Ron Clark grew up in Wellington in the Boland and worked on various farms where he learnt about tree felling. He then ran outdoor adventure camps for many years. He currently operates as a professional tree feller (arborist) collaborating with Krige Tree Services.



Shane Swiegers

Shane is from Cape Town, a textile technologist by trade who worked in the industry until 2005. He then bought an embroidery business and has been running it since then. He is an avid cyclist and completed 16 tours and is a cancer survivor. He started turning in August 2020, following an inspirational visit to the Waterfront woodturning store. He enjoys utilizing resin in his woodturning projects.

