

# TURNOUT

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF NORTHERN TURNERS INC.

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President's notes for mid November 2020

Dear Members

It was terrific to see you all last Saturday at the Community Hub. Thank you for your support and I will do my best to do the job of President for another year. I have an excellent committee and I am grateful to all of them who stood for another year, and thanks to Glenn Kutchen for his many years service on the committee. We welcome Guido Guidi as a new member.

Show and Tell demonstrated how much excellent work members had been able to achieve in their workshops. Congratulation to Alan Burgess for winning the "Halo", and it was particularly good to see new members such as Ed Zahra and Rob Williams presenting their stories. Massive pieces from Lindsay Winen and Bob Bauze were quite impressive!

As proposed at the meeting, we are planning a move to Torrens Valley Christian School unless there is a complete change in policy of Golden Grove High School. It is a major shift for the club and will require a lot of work by some members to sort out all the details. However, TVCS has been most welcoming, and we see a future where we will have significant interaction with the school and some of its students. Tim Skilton has been the principal negotiator with the school, having had over 15 years collaborating with them, and we are most grateful to him for this work.

**Please note that the meeting proposed for November 21 at the Hub has been cancelled.**

It will be good to see many of you at the barbecue at the Stockade Botanical Park on November 28<sup>th</sup>.

I hope 2021 will be a successful year for the club in spite of that pesky virus.

Tim Smeaton

## Northern Turners Committee

President	Tim Smeaton
Secretary	Dale Starr
Treasurer	David Kleinig
Vice President	Bill Elliott
Member	George Pastuch
Member	Guido Guidi
Member	Fred McCann
Member	Nik Surikov,
Member	Graham Reed
Member	Flora Rumbelow

Send all articles to

[turnout@woodgroupsa.org.au](mailto:turnout@woodgroupsa.org.au)

## Your Northern Turners

- *Seeking Excellence*
- *Encouraging Individualism*
- *Fostering Creativity*
- *Teaching Skills*
- *Providing Support*

# **END OF YEAR PICNIC FOR NORTHERN TURNERS**

## **NORTHERN TURNERS FAMILY BARBECUE**

DATE: November 28<sup>th</sup>

TIME: 11.30-12noon

LOCATION: STOCKADE BOTANICAL PARK

DIRECTIONS: HOWARD ROAD, NORTHFIELD

(Turn east off Briens Road (Bridge Road) just south of South Terrace intersection)

**SUPPLIED BY CLUB:** Sausages, onion, bread, tomato sauce, paper plate.

**SUPPLIED BY YOU:** Everything else you need for a picnic, chairs, salads, fruit, drink, etc.

DUE TO COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS, WE CANNOT SHARE ANY OTHER FOOD OR DRINK.

PLEASE OBEY SOCIAL DISTANCING AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE.

(If weather is terrible, we will have to abandon the event! Will email if we have to make that decision)

Looking forward to seeing you all there with partners and/or family.

Tim Smeaton

(On behalf of the Committee)

**P.S. Please note that the meeting proposed for November 21 at the Community Hub has been cancelled.**

### President's Report for 2019-2020

Welcome to all of you after a long absence. At least we are meeting here today for the AGM, and I thank Paul Beebee for telling me about this room.

This has been a very strange year! At the beginning of 2020, the committee was working out a program of demonstrations and competitions for our general meetings.

Then Covid-19 hit, and suddenly we had nowhere to meet, and being an older and therefore vulnerable group, we spent several months in virtual lockdown. The only contact was by phone or email, and many families were separated because of severe travel restrictions. I have great sympathy for anyone who has been unable to see their children and/or grandchildren during this year.

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As a club we have certainly suffered. However, George Pastuch and I have been able to maintain regular communication through Turnout. The virtual Show and Tell has been supported by many of you, and I thank you all for your contributions. I hope that many of you have kept in touch with other members by phone, or perhaps shared a coffee. After all, the most important aspect of Northern Turners is its social interaction between people from all walks of life who share a common interest in wood-work, particularly wood-turning.

In March, after discussion with members, a proposal was put to the Board of WoodgroupSA that the organization should be dissolved. A sub-committee was formed, comprising Ted van Dijk, Tom Jung (later replaced by John Tillack) Trevor Molde, Graham Jones and me. Warrick Lee attended the first meeting, though not a member of the sub-committee, and he played a role in compiling a questionnaire circulated to all clubs in WoodgroupSA. This questionnaire was ambiguous in form, but overall showed a lot of support for dissolution. Accordingly, a meeting was called for October 31 and John Tillack, with input from Bob Bauze and others, provided an agenda for that meeting to vote on the proposal to dissolve WoodgroupSA. I am very pleased to report there was a vote of 81% in favour of dissolution. A committee of three, Ken Allen, John Tillack and Warrick Lee will oversee the process. In the meantime, Ken Allen has taken over the role of President of WoodgroupSA from Trevor Molde.

Because of the non-availability of Golden Grove High School Technical Centre for our meetings, at least until 2021, the committee, and in particular Graham Reed, Tim Skilton and I, have searched for alternative premises.

A privately leased shed at Salisbury was investigated by Graham and myself, at about \$240 per month, but had already been leased. No long-term lease was offered.

A shed at Parafield Airport was offered through Sue Trussell, but unfortunately was judged too small, partly because it was divided into 3 separate areas.

Land at Parafield could be leased so that a new shed could be built, but the costs are out of reach unless NT can obtain a very sizeable grant.

A shed at Greenwith offered by TTG Council through Felicity Birch was also a bit small but had very little parking.

Tim Skilton has approached Torrens Valley Christian School with whom he has collaborated for more than 15 years, in particular for our annual 2-day workshops. They are very keen for us to have our meetings there, and negotiations are in progress right now. A 20-metre container will need to be purchased by the club for storage. If this all comes to pass, we will have a new home!

Finally, I wish to thank the members of the committee, particularly David Kleinig for keeping financial records, Dale Starr for putting out notices, George Pastuch for Turnout, and Graham Reed for his enthusiastic support in many areas. In a difficult year, all of you have been helpful in keeping us on track, and for agreeing to nominate for the next year.

I hope that 2020-2021 will be a more normal year, but this virus has a nasty habit of surprising even the experts, so keep up your guard, wash your hands, keep your social distance, and stay well.

Best wishes

Tim Smeaton

President, Northern Turners Inc.

FROM THE EDITOR

A topic that continues to receive a lot of airing is the topic of grinding angles. Various wood turning books list generic grinding angles which may differ. Also some angles may differ between turning Australian hardwoods to UK softwoods. Some turners, myself included have grinded certain tools to slightly varying angles to personal preference. I hope the attached may help. George Pastuch

Suggested grinding angles for your turning chisels

TYPE	SECTION	PLAN	ELEVATION/GRINDING ANGLE	NOTES
ROUGHING GOUGES				SHALLOW AND DEEP FLUTE ROUGHING GOUGES ARE GROUND THE SAME AND DO THE SAME JOB.
SKREW CHISELS				A GOOD RULE OF THUMB TO ACHIEVE THE 25° SHARPENING ANGLE IS: BEVEL = 2x TOOL THICKNESS.
SPINDLE/DETAIL GOUGES				WHEN VIEWED IN ELEVATION IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE TOP EDGE IS SLIGHTLY CONVEX.
BOWL GOUGES				GRINDING ANGLE AND SHAPE VARY ACCORDING TO USAGE.
NARROW AND WIDE PARTING TOOLS				WIDTH VARIES ACCORDING TO USE SOME ARE RENEWED FORMING A DIAMOND SHAPE.
SCRAPERS				ONLY TOOL NOT HONED. SHAPED IN PLAN TO SUIT JOB BOTTOM. CAN BE BELIEVED TO HELP ACCESS.

from the newsletter of the Peninsula Woodturners Guild

EDITOR'S NOTE:-

One of the first turned pieces that a new turner makes while practicing their between centre turning is a spurtle. To better understand the origins and use of a spurtle, I have attached the following articles that may amuse and interest.  
George Pastuch

**The Tradition and Trivia of Scottish Porridge**

Do you make these mistakes when cooking porridge?

**Adding the salt too early** - this hardens the grain, preventing it from swelling, and results in a less creamy bowl of porridge.

**Stirring widdershins** - this is said to invoke the devil or bring bad luck. Always stir deiseal (sunwise / clockwise) with your right hand.

**Stirring with a spoon** - 'they' (the traditional Scottish way to refer to porridge) should be stirred with a spurtle.

**Eat it at the table** - 'they' should be eaten standing up. This I think originates from when oats were eaten as brose, which must have weighed heavy on the stomach.

**Scottish origins**

The spurtle, or porridge stick, was used before the advent of rolled oats. The oatmeal had to soften and become edible, so it had to be cooked for a long time. The spurtle was used to stir it frequently to prevent the formation of large lumps.

In Shetland, porridge is called milgruel, and is sometimes made with bere-meal which is a kind of barley. The Gaelic name is brochan.

Spurtle or Spatula?

In his book 'Treen and other Wooden Bygones', Edward Pinto tells us that "both spatulas and spurtles have their origins in Scotland. There is some confusion in terminology, but generally the drum-stick-like porridge stirrer is called a spurtle and a flat sided stirrer is a spatula. Both types of implement have a long history."

The Oxford English Dictionary records both uses of the word, dating back to 1572. The flat ones were used for turning oatcakes.

A glossary of words used in the wapentakes of Manley and Corringham, Lincolnshire, 1877, records: Spurtle, N. a thin piece of wood used for turning cakes on a girdle ; an implement used in thatching.

More recently two other factors have added to the confusion. First is the use by brewers of a long handled paddle which they call a Brewers Spurtle. Second is the popularization of a flat stirrer by Graham Kerr which he called a spurtle. He tells how he got the name: *"Ten years ago an elderly gentleman from New Zealand sent me a Spurtle. He claimed that the name came from the Scottish stirring stick, made of hard, close-grained wood, used to whip porridge."*

The Broughton Spurtle is a community newspaper for Broughton in North Edinburgh. They say they like to stir things up a bit, and remind us that *"A Scots spurtle is a wooden rod for stirring porridge. Some readers may be 'spurtle-leggit' – have thin, spindly legs."*

And if 'Spurtle' isn't a strange enough name...

.....in some areas it is spirtle or spurkle.

And an alternative name is theevil, though there are even more alternative spellings for this word: thivel, thible, thyvelle, thyvil, thyvel, thieval, thibel, thibble, thybel, thavel, thaivel, thabble and theedle.

The origins of the word are obscure, but those spelled with v are probably oldest and was used in Scotland and Northern England. Those spelled with b are used only in Northern England and appeared two centuries later.

A few quotes:

Alexander Ross, Helenore, 1768, "The thivel on the pottage pan, Shall strick my hour to rise."

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Elizabeth Moxon, English Housewifery, c1750's, "With a paste-pin or thible stir in your flour to the butter".

Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights, 1847, "The quicker the thible ran round..the faster the handfuls of meal fell into the water."

Reference:Oxford English Dictionary.

From *A dictionary of Lowland Scotch*, 1888:

Spurtle or parritch spurtle, a rounded stick or bar of hard wood, used in preference to a spoon or ladle for stirring oatmeal porridge in the process of cooking. Jamieson—who seldom dives deeper than the Teutonic—derives the word from spryten, the Latin assula. The Gaelic has sparr or sparran, a little wooden bar or bolt; and the Flemish has sport, with the same meaning; and also that of the rung of a ladder (a bar of wood which a Scottish house-wife, in default of any better spurtle, might conveniently use for the purpose). Good bairns in the olden times when oatmeal porridge was the customary food of the peasantry, were often rewarded by having the spurtle to lick in addition to their share of the breakfast.

## Poems and Stories of Oskar Douglas

### Porridge and the Spurtle

#### Early Scottish Staple Diet

Grinding the husks from oats produced clean ears of oats ready for making porridge or porage and after separating the chaff from the oats they were placed in a large iron pot. They were covered with water from the then clean uncontaminated streams or from the well and the pot hung over the open fire or the range and was brought to the boil, slowly simmering after the heat was reduced until the grain was soft. The porridge only required a little salt and it was ready to eat. Once it was ready it was generally poured into a container to set.

In the highlands and islands the porridge was poured into a drawer in the kitchen dresser or cabinet and left to set. In the morning, fresh porridge was made for breakfast and a slice or two of the now set porridge from the drawer was taken to the workplace, usually out in the fields attending to the crops or animals. Any babies born to these poorer families were put to "bed" in a drawer, usually above the porridge drawer, and the slow rising heat acted as a kind of central heating for the well-wrapped child. There was generally enough porridge in the drawer to last a whole week and weekends and holidays the workers had herring and mackerel as a treat

The evening meals for the people working for landowners and large estates were generally Salmon which was in great abundance in the clean Scottish streams. The Salmon was caught and sent to the large fish markets in the towns and cities and the excess, which was usually quite high, was fed to the poor workers. They were fed so much of the stuff that they rebelled against the landowners and eventually put so much pressure on them that they were forced to provide alternatives. Game such as venison and rabbit was given to the workers and their families and this along with the salmon was to be looked on as poor mans fare."

#### Spurtle

*The utensil used for stirring the oats in the porridge making process was called a spurtle or stirring stick and was made from a thin branch of a tree. The usual timber being beech which was plentiful in Scotland, after the Great Caledonian Forest was cleared giving hardwoods such as beech, oak chestnut and ash plenty of room to spread and grow.*

Local craftsmen turn modern spurtles from any of these hardwoods. No two spurtles are made the same, as the design is dependant on the individual turners mood and the characteristics of the wood on the lathe. Treating the timber with a natural vegetable oil or peanut oil after every wash keeps the spurtle in good condition and it will last for many years. The most common design for a spurtle has the thistle head on the handle, as this flower is the National Emblem of Scotland.

The spurtle is normally in the region of 12" in length and about 1" in diameter and is designed primarily for the stirring of porridge or milk puddings. In this age of continental breakfasts and fast food however, the making of porridge is not so common and the spurtle can be used for stirring paint or even mixing wallpaper paste