

# TURNOUT

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF NORTHERN TURNERS INC.

VOL9 No.18  
mid Dec 2020

President's notes for December 2020

Dear Members

As we approach Christmas and the end of 2020, I want to thank all of you who have helped to keep Northern Turners functioning during the Covid pandemic, particularly all of the committee. Specifically I wish to thank the following. George Pastuch for his constant efforts with Turnout: Graham Reed who has been a major force in seeking out a container and arranging for it to be set up at TVCS very soon: Graham Reed and the Exhibition Committee who have at last been able to mount the exhibition at Burnside with 24 exhibitors: David Kleinig for keeping our financial records in good order: Ken Allen, Bob Bauze and Enzo Bronzi for their involvement in the decision to dissolve WoodgroupSA and the continuing complicated task of completing that dissolution, all those who attended the AGM and held our first real Show and Tell for many months: finally, all who have kept busy at their lathes at home.

A team has been organized to transfer the club's property from GGHS in the coming week and all keys will be handed over to Deb Goodwin when the transfer is complete. It will be the end of a long and happy association with the school. We now look forward to a new partnership with the people at TVCS who have been so co-operative. It is thanks to Tim Skilton's efforts that we have a new place to meet.

We will inform all members when we are having our first meeting at TVCS and how we will operate. Ron Allen has suggested that the teaching sessions which he and George Pastuch have been running for many years could be run over two Saturdays, giving us a possible four Saturdays each month for meetings. A decision on this will depend on how much room we have in our new premises, and how many members are allowed to attend with Covid-19 conditions.

It has been a difficult time for everyone, but we can hope for a better year in 2021, although we will still be operating under Covid-Safe conditions for the foreseeable future. If you are sufficiently "tech-savvy" to have the SAgov App on your phone and read QR codes, then you will be able to practice your art when attending meetings. If not, we will have membership lists for you to sign in.

I must apologise for misspelling Hans Noom's name in the last issue of Turnout. It was entirely my fault.

On behalf of the committee, I wish you all a safe and happy Christmas season and a prosperous New Year.

Tim Smeaton

President

## 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*

## FIDDLE BACKGRAIN and QUILTEDFIGURE

Last month (November) George and Franky hired a houseboat at Renmark to celebrate their Birthdays, to which Helen and I were guests. A most enjoyable few days.

While tied to the bank one afternoon the topic of fiddle-back grain and compression wood came up.

After some discussion and a lack of conviction on my part, I decided to do some research about it. What a mistake that was. The more I researched the greater was my frustration. I searched all of my reference books to no avail and then started on the internet. I had no idea that there were so many names for various types of figure in wood especially with American authors.

Therefore I have decided to stay with the knowledge that I have acquired over the years, especially through contact with members of the IWCS (Wood collectors). The terms that are mainly used in Australia about figure which is caused by wavy grain are compression wood, fiddle back, quilted and ringed figure.

**Compression wood.** This is most obvious with smooth barked gum trees. Where branches become large and heavy the underneath part develops wrinkles. When this is cut and machined it shows a series of wavy lines which are perpendicular to the grain. Sometimes incorrectly called fiddle back grain. Sometimes looking at the trunk of an old tree this is seen as wrinkles which often circle the tree. These create interesting wavy grain. If the wrinkles are large and broad it often produces **Quilted figure**, common in Red Gum. Some of Tim Skiltons platters illustrate this feature beautifully.

Wavy grain can often be seen on one surface looking much like corrugations. It is the distance apart of these corrugations which determines the amount of figure.

When the wood is machined you are continually cutting with and against the grain, causing many lustrous lines at 90 degrees to the normal grain.



Fiddle-back Western Myall



The two trees in discussion

**Fiddle back Grain** is caused by small corrugations forming a myriad of lustrous lines close together. This is the figure which is sought after for violins and string instruments.

**Ringed Figure** This is a term used widely in Queensland to describe highly fiddle back figured wood specifically Gidgee. Ringed Gidgee is probably the most prized wood for making knife handles, especially amongst American crafters. In fact one article refers to Ringed Gidgee as being a rare Australian Acacia species.



Quilted figure in old Red Gum

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)



Fine 'corugations in old red Gum and Western Myall

The reverse side polished showing fiddle-back grain

The definition I was once given that ringed figure was caused by compression by the weight of the tree, thus the fine fiddle back figure is evident throughout the trunk. I doubt this. A few years ago some of us had the opportunity to collect some Western Myall from a property on Eyre Peninsula. Western Myall has very similar qualities to Gidgee. We chose two trees, much the same size, growing close together, both thought to be about 350 years old. One produced plain figure. The other produced the qualities of so-called ring figure. All of the tree produced fine fiddle back grain right down to the small branches of 50 mm dia. Such special wood.

Common Disadvantage—Difficult to plane and turn

Ron Allen



Wavy figure in Silky Oak

Fiddle-back figure in three eggs

FROM THE EDITOR

This is the last Turnout newsletter for 2020. As our President said on page 1, we are moving into new premises and start dates will be forwarded to all members when things have been decided.

On behalf of the NT committee and myself, have a happy and safe Christmas and New Year. And lets see all your familiar faces next year.

George Pastuch



**WORK STARTED AT TORRENS VALLEY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE.**

The club has been allowed to place a 20 ft container next to the doors of their workshop to be used to store our equipment. The pictures below show the transport and placement of the container.

All our equipment has now been removed from Golden Grove and a team is preparing the container for our equipment.

