



**Hamilton
Woodturners
Club**
www.hwoodturners.org



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Remember, if I cannot break it, no-one can!

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THIS WEEK'S TOP TURNING - No 1



Yes, there are three "TOP TURNINGS" this week. Keep reading to discover the other two.

This year the club has enrolled several new members who have completed or almost completed their induction programme. It's a great thrill to note that all of our keen turners in the newbie group continue to make excellent progress with basic turning skills. This week's top turning is a cherry bowl with matching scoop skillfully turned by mustard keen **RIKIHANA SMALLMAN**.

Riki has an eye for shape and cheerfully applies our NEAGE approach to finishing his turning projects. Goodonya Riki - a useful addition to a chef's kitchen tools.

The TT's Information section

Purchasing a Woodworking Lathe



Buying your first lathe is a mighty big decision to make.

- Which model should I buy?
- Should I buy second hand or brand new?
- What size motor should it have?
- What features are the most important?
- Are spare parts readily available?

I am often asked about which lathe would be best to buy? My answer would always be any one of several excellent quality lathes for woodturning. There's the Teknatool DVR, Vicmarc, Powermatic, and Oneway brands for a start. But if I could afford it I would probably go for the German-engineered VB36 Master Bowlturner Lathe. It's all a matter of what you want the lathe to do and, of course, how much you can afford. Then your new lathe has to fit into what workshop space you have available (if you have a workshop).

Really important features for me are that the lathe **MUST have a swivel head** and an easy-to-operate variable speed function. Not long ago I traded my Teknatool DVR XP for the new "Saturn" model simply because the variable speed facility is now **quicker and easier** to operate. I don't have any rich uncles but if I did and was left a legacy of loot then I would buy the VB36 for its ultra-reliable German engineering. Dreams are free, however we need to be realistic and buy an affordable, solid performing, reliable lathe. It's really a personal choice! Shop around. Ask questions of current lathe owners. Don't buy in a hurry.

I found the following article on the internet and acknowledge **Paul Koch as the author** of this dissertation about woodworking lathes.

If you are in the market for a new lathe you would be well advised to check out Paul's advice on the next few pages before you take the plunge. **Cheers Clive**

A woodworking lathe is a specialized woodworking machine, they are not for everyone, but they can be extremely rewarding.

Lathe woodworking is the most fluid form of woodworking and once started can be addictive. Whether you turn pens, bowls, sculpt or make legs and parts for furniture it can be very satisfying to see the material change as you engage the cutters. Capacity is the first thing you look at on a wood lathe; it controls what you can make and how you make it. If a lathe has a length capacity of 36" that is the longest you can turn in one piece. You can go longer but you must do it in separate sections and join them afterwards.

If a woodworking lathe is rated having a 12" swing over the bed it means the distance from the bed to the center of the drive is 6". So, the largest diameter of bowl you can turn is 12". Keep in mind the swing over the tool rest will be less. Some lathes have an out board spindle or the drive head itself swivels 180 degrees. This means there is no bed limitation and you can turn a much larger bowl. If all you want to do is pen, pencil, fob, etc turning you do not need a full size lathe. Almost any bench top model will be fine with capacities from 8" to 15". If you want to turn other things as well you need to go to a full size lathe and the most common is a 12" x 36". For bowl turning you will want one that has a swiveling head or out board spindle. Speed is the next thing to consider.

Generally speaking, the more speeds the better. If you are turning large diameter stock or roughing out you need to use a slower speed and the smaller the diameter & as you finish the piece, the faster you can go. Choose a lathe with at least four speeds with the slowest being about 600 rpm (slower if possible) and the fastest being 3200 to 4000 rpm. Some variable speed models can go from zero upwards. The bed of a lathe is important. Small lathes can have an aluminum bed but more commonly they are cast iron, steel bars or steel plates. Whichever the material a bed must be strong and rigid so that there is no flexing as pressure is added and vibration is not increased. Single piece construction is better than a two-piece bed. I have an older (cheaper) lathe and the bed is made of two shorter steel pipes joined end to end to give a 36" capacity. For the most part it is fine for my needs, but there is movement so I have to check the alignment whenever I go to use it and also during use. If I did more wood lathe work it would become quite annoying. If you do purchase a lathe with a two-piece bed, bolt it securely to eliminate as much play as possible.

Some accessories will only fit on certain types of beds. If you think you may want to use a certain accessory such as a duplicator, make sure you are not limiting yourself by getting a lathe, which will not accept one. The most common are the cast iron or steel plate beds. These lathes have two flat sides running parallel to each other. Check any cast housings such as the headstock & tail-stock. Make sure the quality of casting is good and there are no cracks hidden by paint. Also, see if there are any obvious weaknesses in the design where you tighten clamps to hold the tail-stock onto the bed. This is constantly moved and clamped, so if something is going to break it will be here.

Motor sizes range from the tiny 1/8HP up to 2HP and larger. The most common size for home use will be between 1/2HP and 1HP. Industrial use would be from 3/4HP and up depending on the need. I find the 1/2HP is just a little light when turning anything larger than a 2" spindle or small bowl, but it can still do the job, you just need to take your time. Most lathes come with some basic accessories such as drive center, live center and a faceplate. If your lathe does not come with a live center you should buy this. If you are doing bowl, cup, plate, etc. turning you

will need a 4-jawed chuck. **For turning tools get as good as you can afford.** Poor quality turning tools are very discouraging because they dull quickly and you are forever sharpening. You can get sets specifically for pen, or small turning, but for general work a basic 6-piece set is fine and will cover the majority of your needs. You can always add to it over time.

Woodworking Lathe Check List

1. **Size.** 8” to 43” long by 3” to 20” **swing.** Some of the industrial are longer or have extensions. Make sure it will have enough capacity to do what you want it to. Some newer bench top lathes have extensions available to double their length capacity.
2. **Motor.** Check the horsepower and amps. You’ll need both when comparing. Motors can range from 1/8HP up to 2HP. For small work 1/2HP or small is fine, for general-purpose use 1/2HP to 1HP and for industrial from 3/4HP and up.
3. **Speeds.** Avoid single speed lathes if you can. A basic range is from 600 to 4000rpm. General rules of thumb are the larger the piece the slower you go as well as slower when roughing it out and faster as you finish.
4. **Bench or floor model.** You need to take into account space and capacity. All small lathes are bench tops but you can make or buy a stand for them. Most full size lathes have a stand included or have one available.
5. The **bed** needs to be stable and solid. A single piece bed is better than two-piece, however extra bolts and support can secure a two-piece bed.
6. Does the **head stock swivel** or is there an **outboard spindle** for large bowl turning.
7. If the **bed** and housing are cast material, make sure the casting is of good quality and there are **no visible cracks.**
8. Check that there is **no design weakness where the tail-stock clamps** to the bed.
9. **Where is the power switch located and is it easy to reach?** Switches in awkward places can be a safety hazard.
10. **Where is it made and where do you get parts & service?** There are some excellent offshore machines out there but you have to be careful because there are also some bad ones. Check the brand and the company you are buying from and find out exactly where you can get servicing done.

You are the one paying for it and using it, so **find out as much as you can before you make the purchase** so you will not have any regrets. And remember, no loose clothing and no jewelry, wear short sleeves, safety glasses and hearing protection. **written by [Paul Koch](#)**



One project to go and **ROBERT PENDERGRAST** will have completed his basic skills programme. Superb Dibber!



A Bud Vase: Junior member **CAELAN HARRIS** made a top job of his second only spindle project. Well done here!

THIS WEEK'S TOP TURNING - No 2



OSCAR'S TOP TURNING: A very large bowl with koru pattern rout-outs traversing the joints of pohutukawa and swamp kauri woods. An excellent project outcome.



MIKE BODEY's interesting multi-level black walnut bowl. Intrigue here!



RICHARD JACKSON's juniper wood bowl shows off its amazing colour contrast.



RICHARD used ginkgo wood to fashion this "double layer" bowl. Great finish too!



COLIN's favourite maire wood expresses itself well in this classic urn shape.

The WEEK'S TOP TURNING

If you are wondering about how a project is recognized as the week's "TOP TURNING" here's an explanation.

Criteria for selection can be one or a mix of several aspects: ***The turning...***

- may represent a quantum leap in the club member's quality output
- may have an outstanding enhancement
- is particularly well done and has an exceptional appearance
- may be considered among the best work for that club member
- represents notable success with a particular turning skill
- can be a combination of any/all of the above criteria – an outstanding achievement

I believe that credit, acknowledgement and celebration of success should be placed where it is due. **In Kiwi parlance it's a mighty big GOODONYA award. Clive**

This week's useful video clip



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PROJECTS

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**A
150mm
Cube
of
Wood**

The whole-club **CUBE CREATIONS** programme got under way this week with brains ticking over as to what can be made from a 150mm X 150mm X 150mm block of macro wood.

It was a sight to behold as keen turners made their own interpretations and had the club's lathes in full swing. Some outcomes will be a one-piece project, some two, some four etc pieces of turned wood.

Plenty of time has been allocated so there are still two full weeks to go. Really keen members may even start a second block. That's OK

While the one stipulation is that **no other wood can be added to the original cube of wood**, there are no restrictions on the use of dyes, string, bits and bobs and other paraphernalia for enhancements. **(Just no other wood)**

On Wednesday night a couple of keenos turned their blocks into shapes they had never worked on in any previous turning project.

Now that's creativity combined with courage and adventure.

Goodonya fellas!

THIS WEEK'S TOP TURNING – No 3



Picture above is a masterful turning by **COLIN MCKENZIE**.

The blackened rough edge makes a vivid contrast to the range of colours in the bowl. Colin has been experimenting with spray-on lacquer as a suitable finish for turning projects.

He has discovered a brand that performs better than any other so far.

Have a chat to Colin to find out where to buy this superior product.

A salute to this week's three
"TOP TURNERS" – Riki, Oscar
and Colin

*The summit of success is
not reached in a single
leap, but in a series of
determined steps.*

Cheers, Clive

The Friday Flashback



Two years ago – May 2016

A group of keen turners spent the weekend in the club's workshop under the guidance of Terry Scott who generated much enthusiasm by promoting the idea of enhancements to turning projects.

Photographer Scott captured a photo of a bunch of happy club members showing off what they had made during the weekend.

OK that's it for this week.

Go the Chiefs !

Clive