



Crosscut

Journal of the Wits Woodworking Association

◀ New WWA logo, thanks to Daniel Erasmus

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Woodturners - Monday, the 1st June 2026 from 18h00 at **Made in Workshop**. Richard Raffan video and discussion on how to distort wet turned bowls creatively.

Main Meeting – Wednesday, the 10th June 2026 from 18h00 at **Made in Workshop**.
To be advised....

Don't forget we have the members' free raffle for those attending meetings - prizes normally have a minimum value of R1, 000.00

News

Woodturners - Monday, the 4th May 2026 from 18h00 at **Made in Workshop**. A beginner's journey into woodturning by Dirk Potgieter. Dirk is Herman's son. He recently started woodturning under the direction of Herman, during a time of enforced rest, while recovering from a running injury. Dirk described the projects he completed and his journey towards becoming a competent turner.

A safety digression on lathe safety was held, following an incident at Hobby-X.

Before switching on the lathe, check:

S – Speed – What combination of belt ratios is selected? Is it appropriate for the size of the workpiece? If you have a variable speed lathe, make sure the speed control is set to minimum speed before switching on.

A – Aside – Stand aside in case the unthinkable happens. If something should fly off the lathe, you don't want to be part of the kinetic energy exchange between the workpiece and the surroundings.

F – Fixings – Is the workpiece secure on the lathe? Is the tool rest firmly locked in place? Is the chuck screwed firmly onto the headstock spindle?

E – Eye protection Safety glasses, preferably ANSI Z88 impact rated ones. A face shield may help too.

R – Rotate Turn the work piece by hand to make sure it doesn't foul the tool rest or the bed of the lathe. Position the tool rest so that you can keep your hands behind the tool rest as you work. Before you move your hands in front of the tool rest, stop and think what can happen if something goes wrong. Some chucks, when expanded, have jaws that stick out – these can be dangerous. Your workpiece may have sharp corners and bits that stick out – watch out for this



and if in doubt, keep your hands behind the tool rest. When sanding or polishing, be aware that the cloth can catch on the workpiece – where will your hands go if this happens?

You may see experienced turners breaking some of these rules, but until you consider yourself an expert too, keep to them. These rules are written in **blood**.



Main Meeting – Wednesday, the 13th May 2026 from 18h00 at **Made in Workshop**. Workbenches and work holding – a discussion. Trevor showed some pictures of different styles of woodworking workbenches. We discussed some issues around workbench design and work holding.

2026 WWA AGM – The 2026 Annual General Meeting of the Witwatersrand Woodworking Association was held at 18h00, on the 13th May 2026 at Made in Workshop, Strijdom Park, Randburg. Our chairman, Graham Swallow (in the red jacket) stood down as he feels unable to continue due to ill health. We are

grateful for Graham's contribution to date. He will continue as an ordinary member of the association.

Herman has served as the Turners section chairman and vice chairman for many years, and he is also standing down.

In accordance with the constitution, the committee will meet and assign roles to the committee members. They will co-opt additional members if needed. We welcome volunteers to serve on the committee – we always welcome new ideas, so if you would like to contribute, please contact any committee member.

The following people have agreed to continue to serve on the committee: Alistair Brande, Peter Middleton, Pierre Mouton, Anesh Polly, Trevor Pope, Rudi Strydom. Mike Harrington has volunteered to join the committee.

Please note that we have started a new financial year, so your 2026 – 2027 subs are due. These remain unchanged at R600- per annum for regular members, R100- for country members and spouses.

Calendar of Events for 2026

Woodex for Africa

Go to woodexforafrica.com to register



ASSOCIATION OF
WOODTURNERS



OF SOUTH AFRICA

AWSA Annual Symposium – 2026 – this will be held from 03-05 October 2026 at the New Hope School, Menlyn, Pretoria.

Visit www.awsa.org.za to see registration information when it becomes available later in the year.

Reminder – New WWA Account number with FNB – 63026931287 – please add this to your beneficiaries list. Please make sure that your payment can be identified by adding your **name**, perhaps cell number and **reason for payment**. Annotations such as “annual subs” or “WWA shirt” without your name are not helpful – Anesh will not be able to trace your payment. Please note that the **Nedbank account has been closed**.

Access times for **Made in Workshop** for WWA members :

MiW access control for WWA members – all current paid-up members who have attended a meeting have been issued with a bar code sticker to be used to gain access. Please remember to bring your bar code, so you aren't delayed at the entrance.

MiW times for WWA members are as follows

Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday 9AM to 12AM. However please take note of the following: WWA members CANNOT just arrive at **MiW** and use machines unless they have booked them with **MiW**. This refers to the bookable machines such as the panel saw, thicknesser/planer, drum sander, spindle moulder as well as CNC machines of any kind. This applies only to the woodworking machines. The other machines require the purchase of a membership at the monthly (30 day) rate – which is a good rate anyhow.

Machines such as the bandsaw and the Triton router table need no booking.

Henry also requires that all the major machines may only be used if the WWA member is familiar and fully understands the importance of the correct and safe use of these machines. Speak to Graham regarding training and qualification to use machines.

MiW is a **Maker Space**, which means that members are able access the machines which are included in the list above. Access to the other machines and facilities is subject to additional fees as mentioned above. While **MiW** will provide assistance and training where necessary, members are responsible for providing materials and performing the work themselves. Members need to be skilled and competent to use the facilities to do the work. For example, if you wish to use a CNC machine, you will need to manually program the tool path on the machine or import it from a design tool that generates the tool path for you. There may be a steep learning curve, but that is part of the challenge.

Bookings can be made during office hours of 8h00 to 17h00, weekdays by contacting one of these numbers:
Henry – 083-269 9505; Josh – 083-768 7853; or Trenton – 081-365 6039

Schedule for Regular Events

1. **Show & Tell** meetings are held at Hardware Centre every Friday Morning at 09:30. All WWA members welcome. Contact Eugene on 0824953394 or eugene@antlerfin.co.za

This list is subject to change, so please consult your *Crosscut* each month for any updates.



Creative Turning is one of the donors to the WWA Toys for Charity function. Founded eight years ago by Carel van der Merwe, who is an electronics engineer by profession, and also a talented woodturner. When you buy from Carel, you have access to expert advice on all aspects of woodturning and you know that he will support the tools and machines he sells. Carel also teaches woodturning, and his courses are booked up well in advance. Following the closure of Strand Hardware, Creative Turning now has the Nova agency

Go to www.creativeturning.co.za for more information.



Following a query from Ewald about problems with his dust collector choking, I shared this article with him and he built something similar. This is the original article from 2002 – I haven't updated the details, costs, and links, so these may not be correct now. Some of the businesses I mention went out of business many years ago. I replaced the top bag of the dust collector with a felt bag from SADAC (www.sadac.co.za) which flows more air, and clogs less.

A Poor-man's Cyclone

©Trevor Pope (tpope AT iafrica.com) – Sep 2002

A few years ago, soon after I bought my planer-thicknesser, I bought a dust collector to deal with the large volume of chips generated. However, this was not a satisfactory solution, as the grid covering the input would rapidly choke with shavings, and the suction would rapidly drop to zero. The shavings would then back up in the planer, which would then spew shavings from every orifice, with the dust collector humming away uselessly in the corner. This article discusses some of the local options available in the line of dust collection and my solution to the choking problem.

Vacuum cleaners provide low volume, high suction dust collection. They also make a lot of noise and can't deal with shavings and chips through their small hoses. The fan is driven by a high-revving universal motor that does a fair imitation of an air-raid siren. (Certainly, the old one I have in my workshop does.)

Dust collectors provide high volume, low suction dust extraction. The suction fan is driven by an induction motor, which is much quieter and probably longer lasting too. Strictly speaking, dust collectors should be rated in terms of airflow at a particular suction pressure, but this doesn't seem to be standardized. A cruder rating of motor power is commonly used, which seems to be good enough for most purposes. General consensus seems to be that one horsepower is a practical minimum to use with a planer, due to the volume of material that needs to be dealt with and the suction needed to keep adequate velocity to stop the chips settling out in the hose.

There are a number of dust collectors available locally. I looked at units with a 100 mm diameter inlet. I selected a one horsepower model on offer from SAM – at the time, it seemed to offer the best value. A dust collector is a fairly simple device, with not too much to go wrong, so I wasn't concerned about the limited spares availability for this model. The only moving parts are the motor and impeller, and these carried a one-year guarantee. The unit is quite heavy, so it has castors to help with moving it around the workshop. It assembled with no difficulty, and has worked well since. It comes with cloth bags, top and bottom, but with no indication of the filtering capability – I suspect the bottom size is probably greater than 25 microns. This could be better, but I haven't attempted to find bags that filter below one micron, which is apparently best for prolonged occupational exposure. As the bags clog up, apparently, they filter out more dust in the smaller size ranges.



The one problem I encountered was the hang up of shavings on the inlet grid of the fan. For safety, the 100mm inlet to the fan has a coarse grid, to keep fingers and large objects out. However, shavings quickly become entangled with the grid, and then rapidly accumulate to block off the inlet pipe. This is particularly a problem when collecting shavings from my planer – the pipe can back up within a minute or two and has to be cleared out by hand.

It occurred to me that I could cut out the grid, but I didn't because I was concerned about a large object finding its way into the fan. I spoke to somebody who had removed the grid, and it didn't solve the problem – the shavings wrapped themselves around the fan rotor and in the end still clogged up the fan. It took longer to clog up, but also longer to clear out.

The answer to the clogging problem is some sort of pre-filter to catch the larger shavings. Several different solutions have been described for this ranging from a simple drop box to a fancy cyclone.

There is a local product from Demoina Cyclones (you may have seen their advert) that contains a cyclone with a fan on the exhaust, followed by a large pleated paper filter. This is an excellent idea – the cyclone traps all of the large

material and most of the fine dust, leaving very little dust for the filter to deal with. The filter can trap even the finest dust, making the unit suitable for occupational use. The unit is quite tall, as a sealed bin needs to be placed beneath the cyclone, however the footprint is small. It comes in a variety of sizes, and the fan motors are generously rated to give good airflow. I think the unit is good value and if you don't already have a dust collector, is worth considering.

However, I already have a dust collector, so I started looking at cyclones. I found a couple of designs on the Internet that could be appropriately sized to deal with the approximately 600 cubic feet per minute (cfm) that my one horsepower dust collector was claimed to suck. To make one would have required some sheet metal work, which I thought I could cope with. However, a sealed dustbin is required for the underflow discharge to contain the oversize material (the chips and dust).

Another alternative is a special dustbin lid that can be fitted in place of a normal dustbin lid. The basic one shown on the left from Axminster in the UK serves as simple drop-box – the drop in airflow speed causes most of the shavings to fall to the bottom of the dustbin.

On more sophisticated models, the incoming pipe feeds shavings at the circumference of the lid tangentially to the circular edge of the bin, creating a swirl. The shavings spin outwards due to centrifugal force, slowing down due to friction against the side of the can. Also, the sudden increase in the cross section for the airflow reduces the velocity substantially, so the dust is no longer entrained in the air. The shavings and dust settle out in the can and the air is exhausted from the centre of the lid where the air is relatively still. Only the fine dust which has a long settling time will still be sucked out by the dust collector and dealt with in the filter bags. These lids are reasonably priced, but I hung up on the size – what is a standard sized lid? The chances were it wouldn't fit my dustbin.



I decided to make my own. The design is very much as I have described – see the sketch below. I used a 120-liter plastic dustbin and made a tight-fitting lid from 22mm thick MDF (which I had available – thinner will probably do as well). I painted the MDF lid, so that I could stick foam sealing-strip around the circumference to prevent leaks. I used 110 mm PVC sanitary fittings. A 90° bend on the inlet takes the incoming air and shavings and directs them tangentially to the inside wall of the bin. The outlet is another fitting that accepts a 100 mm flexible hose to the dust collector. The PVC sanitary fittings are designed to push together, so they have rubber ring seals between them. The rubber rings bridge the gap between the 110mm fittings and the 100 mm flexible hose, to make an airtight seal. The hoses are a push fit, so they can easily be removed when required. I was surprised how well the rubber seals seem to work, considering they weren't expressly designed to seal 100mm flexible hose.

I cut out the lid on my band saw, with the table set to an 8° tilt to match the taper on the dustbin. The inlet hole was cut with a circle cutter on my drill press. The outlet in the centre was cut with a jigsaw because the lid is too large to fit on my drill press. Both holes were adjusted with a half round file to form a close fit to the PVC fittings. I added two handles so the lid can be easily removed when required. The inlet fitting is a 90° bend with one end cut off, so that it will fit through the hole.

I bought my 100 mm flexible hose from Chick Henderson at 30 New Goch Road, Benrose (011) 624-1400 at R53-/m in 1999. There may be other sources. My hose is blue, but first prize would be clear hose, so any blockages can be seen - I wasn't able to find any. (Sources anybody?)

In use, the dustbin seems to collect all the larger stuff. I haven't actually measured how much of the fine material stays behind in the bin and how much goes to the dust collector to end up in the filter bag, but a lot does stay in the bin. I haven't found any shavings collected around the input grid, so it meets the main requirement. One limitation: the bin shouldn't be allowed to fill up; otherwise, there will be no space for the dust to settle before the air continues to the dust collector – shavings are then likely to go the dust collector fan and collect around the input grid. Even if the bin is kept below half full, 60 litres is a lot of material. Very little seems to stick in the pipe now – even long curly shavings from hand planing go straight through the pipe and collect in the bin.

If I recall correctly, the PVC fittings were about R100- and the dustbin about R110- from Dion, so with some effort, I guess one could put one together for R250-.

Although I haven't noticed any problems with static electricity, it can build up and give you a shock. Fire risks and dust explosions are also the subject of much speculation on the rec.woodworking Usenet news group. (See also

www.hsebooks.co.uk/index2.html and search for woodworking) If you wish to play safe, run a thin copper wire inside the hose and earth the end – this will prevent any significant build-up of charge on the surface of the plastic pipes.

