

## **Southern Highlands Woodies – John Page Award 2009**

In November 2009, The Southern Highland Woodies Group made it's annual presentation of the John Page Award to one of our members.

But what is the John Page Award? And what is it for? What does it recognise?

John Page was not quite one of our founding members, he came along a few months after the Southern Highlands region was formed and very soon became our president. A position which he held until his untimely death in 2003. He was responsible for our getting Charlton Hall, he was the organiser of our two woodshows, he was a real organiser and manger of our club and well and truly made us what we are today.

But John's greatest attribute was that he was prepared to try anything. And try every thing!

Whenever we had a guest demonstrator show us some new technique or tool or both, John was always ready to try that technique. The month after the demonstrator was here, John would have at Show and Tell his attempts to make whatever it was the demonstrator showed us. He would bring in all his attempts, from the outright failure through to the one that worked. He had a go at every thing.

When he died quite suddenly at the beginning of 2003, the Committee decided that we wanted to have an ongoing memorial in his name. A number of different themes were discussed— best turner, best piece, etc etc. But finally we settled on John's 'have a go' attribute as that quality that we wanted remembered and acknowledged.

We asked Betty, John's wife, if we could have one of his tools, the Bruce Leadbetter parting tool , to use in his memorial shield. It was a tool he cursed but kept using, he was determined that one day he would conquer it.

So the John Page Award recognises the member who consistently throughout the year steps outside their comfort zone and tries some new technique. We do not look for perfection or even success, we look for the turner who is trying something new. At each Committee Meeting, each member of the Committee has a single vote to apply to someone who exhibited at the previous meeting. If any Committee member believes that there was nothing that warrants a vote, then can withhold their vote. But generally we look for some work that has appeared which is a clear indication of attempting some new style or skill etc. Showing a fancy bit of timber does not win any points, only what you do with it.

At year end, following the September meeting, the votes for the whole year are tallied and the member with the most votes is awarded the John Page Award for a year of consistently trying to push themselves in their woodturning world.

By definition, it tends to be our newer members who are nominated each month rather than our more established turners.

But the John Page Award is about trying. And more trying. And then going back and having another go. Or having succeeded, then taken on a different challenge.

Those of you who never met John, missed one of life's gentlemen. A person who made others better and richer by his presence and his effort.

The Award for 2008-09 was made to Graeme Webb. Following are photos of his presentation by John Powell, our President, plus some of the works that were the cause of his various nominations throughout the year. It takes more than 1 piece to win this award, it takes a whole year of consistently pushing your own envelope, and Graeme certainly did that.

Bill Shean







