

The West Suffolk Woodturning Club was sad when we learnt that our dear friend and very active club member, Geoff Moss, sadly passed away in December 2021. Geoff, despite various recent health setbacks, continued to support the Club. He will be sorely missed. This is his story...

## Geoff's Story



I was born in Oldham, Lancashire. Following my education, I left school aged 15 years. I was fortunate to secure an apprenticeship as a wood patternmaker employed by a company named Kenworthy & Darwell, a small factory with two partner/bosses, 5 journeymen and two apprentices. A job I enjoyed.

I was well into soccer, rugby and swimming in my spare time. My apprenticeship ended when I was 21 and soon National Service beckoned. I had been deferred aged 18 to allow me to complete my qualification.

In September 1959 I was conscripted into the RAF. My postings were Bridgnorth for basic training (square-bashing – doing as I was ordered) then off to Netheravon for Police training and much more bull and discipline for another 8 weeks.

On Friday 24 January 1960 I arrived at RAF Bawdsey, at that time a radar station with about 450 personnel. I was fortunate enough to remain at Bawdsey until my demob in September 1961. This was a very happy time in my life. I had fallen in love with the area and I had managed to be accepted by East Suffolk Police which I joined in October 1961.

After police basic training I arrived at Felixstowe living in Single Quarters. This was now January 1962. I served for 5 years as a town officer. During this time, I met Maureen my wife whilst walking the streets. That's me walking the streets as we did in those days! Then I moved to Hollesley as the village bobby for 12 years. Then off to Woodbridge for 3 years and then into CID Drugs at Headquarters, CID Felixstowe, then returning to Headquarters. Also had a six months secondment to New Scotland Yard in an admin department but a very pleasant experience.

Retirement arrived in January 1992 and I managed to secure a job as a civilian with the police as a Firearms Enquiry Officer. Another lovely job but financial cutbacks were implemented and I was made redundant after 2 years.

Then another big development, Woodturning, entered my leisure time. I had started looking at lathes and equipment. Maureen came home one day having visited Bromeswell village fete and having seen Neil Frajbis, woodturner and a member of the Suffolk Mid-Coastal Woodturning club. I was quick off the mark meeting Neil the following day. Neil gave me some sound advice and also told me a day demo by Melvin Firmager was being held at their then venue, Marlesford village hall. I contacted Albert Lain who invited me to attend; Albert also mentioned a day workshop with Melvyn. All I needed was a lathe and some blanks. I jumped at the invite.

I entered the hall on the day of the demo. It was all set out with the lathe, seating, TV, etc. I thought to myself "this is what I am looking for". I was made very welcome and had an excellent 2 days. I joined the club at the first opportunity. This was in 1994 (I think). I soon became the Secretary, a position I held for 9 years. I have been to many shows around the country, many demos at other clubs, and I have done my best to promote woodturning.

In my early days I was a frequent visitor to Fox Woodworking's shop in Ipswich. I have recruited quite a number of members and have had them visit my workshop. I also became a founder member of the West Suffolk Woodturning Club.

Then misfortune, 22 years ago I learned that I had an eye condition, Glaucoma, which was controlled by eye drops. Then, further misfortune; I was told 9 years ago that I should give up driving. Then, 3 years ago, more troubles for me, which eventually meant I was registered as visually impaired. Couple this with my National Service I was eligible to become a member of Blind Veterans UK (BVUK).

Having worked in the police force for more than 30 years, I feared losing my independence along with my sight when I was diagnosed with glaucoma. I initially found it very difficult to accept I was going blind. I had to rely on my wife to drive me around and I lost confidence in going out alone.

Blind Veterans UK provided Geoff with specialist equipment to help him around the home such as a magnifier, an LED lamp and a talking watch. Geoff also regularly attended Blind Veterans UK lunch clubs in his local community, and visited the Blind Veterans UK centre in Brighton for IT training and an introduction week, where he learned to adapt to his sight loss.

Geoff says: "Blind Veterans UK has given me tremendous support. I've found the charity so willing to assist with the smallest things and the staff will go out of their way to help me out. If you're a veteran or did National Service get in touch with the charity, you won't regret it."

