



Cheam Woodturners Association

Associated with the Association of Woodturners of Great Britain

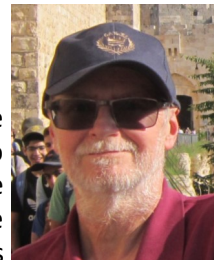
Twinned with Central Oklahoma Woodturners Association

Cheam Woodturners Association Newsletter Issue number 084

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News headlines

This will be my last effort at a club newsletter. At the AGM in January 2020 I offered to accept the role for one year, and as members will be aware, I am not planning on standing for re election to the Committee. This is because of a hoped for move out of the area, ideally within the next twelve months. This, in part, is driven by a desire for a bigger workshop. Maybe inspired by some of the pictures of members' workshops in the excellent "Turner in Focus" articles that Jamie Shears has been writing for us, but I've a feeling that I can do more if I had space for a bandsaw at least. The possibility of being able to easily prepare some bits for segmented turning, or simply to reduce the physical effort needed to saw logs by hand (20 minutes to make two cuts through a 2.75 inch piece of apple using my Japanese Ryoba saw!)



Speaking of workshops, we have a lovely article this month as a contrast to the one on workshop design last month by Gordon Cookson. This one is about using a borrowed workshop, which goes to show that the workshops we have can be as varied as we are, as we seek to create beautiful turnings in whatever space and with whatever tools and machinery we can fit in the available space or the credit card limits!



Looking to vary what sorts of things I can produce, and without adding a need for more than a few inches of shelf for storage, I have just invested in a Robert Sorby Wobble Chuck. At the time of writing I have not had the opportunity to try making anything. Just trying to get my head around how to use it I was delighted to see that the instructions include details of how to turn a spoon with an offset handle. I'll probably start with that. The central screw can be removed if one wishes to use the three faceplate screw holes instead.

I'm a Lucky Woodturner by Kenneth Sciacaluga

This is my lathe, a Record Power CL1-Cam – but the workshop is not mine. When I arrived in London from Gibraltar in 2010 I moved into a property with neither garden, garage nor patio. My newly found hobby, which gave me life, came to an abrupt end.



My wife knew that a hobby woodworker had, in the past, used a small workshop belonging to our church, which is very vibrant and community minded. Much to my surprise the facilities manager was all in favour of helping me out. He said he rarely used it but that another parishioner who does a lot of voluntary handiwork for the church, uses it. So, it is not my workshop.

The Woodturning Magazine a few years ago used to feature readers' workshops for a while. These were nothing like mine, they were palatial! They boasted lots of space with all the imaginable machinery with bells and whistles. Oh, for space to have a band saw, super-duper dust extraction, storage space, tools permanently racked, readily at hand. But I have a workshop where I can blissfully disappear to for a few hours. It is a three minute walk from home. I am retired and conveniently (but keep it under your hat) my wife works till about 6pm, sometimes later.



I can be a little OCD. I like things to be tidy, in order, at hand, or put away. The facilities manager hasn't got enough storage space for all the stuff that good people give him which others in need could one day possibly make use of. The workshop seems to be the dumping ground for old toasters, vacuum cleaners anything else that may be useful to someone in need. As a child, my mother very wisely, used to tell me, "A good workman always clears up after him." Well, I was the eldest of seven kids (and there was the dog)! Sadly, the handyman's mother was not also mine, or, perhaps, he's wisened up that others will clear up for him, well, I do want to be able to turn. I often arrive at the workshop and can't step inside with stuff lying around everywhere. But I am a lucky guy I have somewhere to turn! At times I have to go back home. Other times I spend longer clearing space than turning but this brings complaints that, much to my consternation, things can no longer be found!



December, January and even February are bitterly cold in the workshop. All the metal steel bed bars and gouges are freezing. As a green tuner I did use gloves at first - till I heard about 'degloving'. I value my hands too much. I already have enough problems with my sight. A retina detached 3 times and am now blind in one eye. I have another, I can see and I thank God every day - but I can't see as I used to. A pin hole on the surface of the macula gives me a blind spot. Whilst watching a football match on TV the ball suddenly disappears and re-appears a little further away! There is a lot of murkiness in my 'good' eye as a result of the gel in the eye partially liquefying. Thankfully, I can just see well enough to turn and it helps me realise that indeed, I am a lucky guy.

Summer in the workshop gets impossibly hot. I'd leave the door ajar. It opens out onto a garden and patio play area where parents can bring their children to play in after school, which is just when I am there. Stored in the workshop and directly in line of sight through the open door are all the nursery toys, prams, tricycles etc. which are privately owned - a magnet for the eagle eyed, gleeful kids. Close the door and sweat it out. Avoid upsetting them and their tantrums.

Fortunately, I was able to fit two shelves on the Record Power lathe stand. The top one is very convenient as a work surface. The next one down I keep covered with a plastic sheet to prevent shavings and sawdust getting in. There I keep tubs with sandpaper, waxes, sanding sealer, a small toolbox with chucks and jaws, tool rests, shower curtains, wood blanks and spindles. Under the shelf and on the floor I have five tool boxes where I keep most of my tools, drill bits, and a thousand and one items acquired over time. Some are rarely used and others constantly. So, when I arrive, I take out the tools I think I will be using but nevertheless, am continually bobbing up and down dragging cases out, invariably the wrong one and most times having to sweep up so that the cases don't push shavings in under the lathe stand.

Sharpening is a pain in the neck. There was a time when the short section of the work bench near the headstock was clear. My grinder is now buried behind essential rubbish, so every time I need to use it I have to clear the bench, pull the grinder out and after sharpening, Hoover up the grit and put it all back as it was. And it always seems that I need to sharpen tools when I am going 'great guns' and am creating a 'best on show' turning which shouldn't be interrupted! I try and continue coaxing shavings out of a dulled edge till, in exasperation, I have to stop.

Sharpening however, is not the only frustration when things are really coming on beautifully and I want to see it finished. I like to be home for when my wife returns from work. She texts me as she leaves, which gives me half an hour to start winding up, packing tools away and clearing up shavings and vacuuming dust. When the workshop is yours perhaps you don't realise just how far shavings can fly and get into every single nook and cranny let alone dust! I want to continue being allowed to use the workshop. I can't nip into the house and come back tomorrow without leaving it as clean as when I arrived, or at least, as I last left it. If I am roughing out a big green branch with its bark still on, that's when the chips really fly. I have had to resort to covering all the surrounding benches with shower curtains held in place by bulldog grips. More time wasted in starting to turn and packing up afterwards. Sure, if it were my workshop I would have roller blinds instead.

During a club demonstration Mark Baker (the late 'Woodturning' editor) asked how many of us produce more than about 15 items a year. Surprisingly, few of us do. Would I be producing more in an awesome workshop, possibly? Would I have a variable speed lathe and be doing segmented pieces and basket illusions with an indexing lathe, possibly? Would I be using a router in conjunction with it? But do you know what - I am a lucky guy, I have somewhere to turn. My CWA friend has a lathe but nowhere to use it. He has a detached garage with no power and too far away to connect with an extension lead from his house. He bought a generator but the neighbours complained about the noise. He has nowhere to turn. I count my blessings and am inspired by 'the blind woodturner', Chris Fisher.

Post Script.

I have moved on and replaced my lathe with Record Power's Coronet Herald. It was important to me that I had to keep the CL1- Cam, stand so that I could continue bobbing up and down for my tools and accessories. An old disused pew seat straddled the stand and served as a suitable mount for the lathe. I now have variable speed control and indexing. This has given me a little more storage space under the pew seat so I have been able to move my grinder out to another more easily accessible place which I can now place on the stand to the right of the lathe when needed.



Virtual Showtable—Intermediate



Towers of Hanoi puzzle by Peter Clark

The base is Oak, finished with melamine laquer. The pillars are Cherry (I think), finished with sanding sealer and the discs are from a piece of seven ply, coloured with Liberon Palette wood dye.

This would have been my entry for the Frank Clarke competition last month.

Best on Show—Intermediate

Virtual Showtable -Advanced



Mahogany off centre stepped ring. Finished with Gold Hampshire Sheen embellishing paste wax, then Microcrystalline wax.

Made by Max Hicks

Best on Show—Advanced

2020/2021 Programme

All meetings at the Elmcroft Hall are currently cancelled because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

So what does the future hold?

At the time of writing there are no further offers for the vacant Committee posts of Secretary, Events Organiser or Newsletter Editor. Effectively, this means that the club is now “mothballed” unless and until these posts are filled.

The report papers produced by the Chairman and Treasurer for the AGM will be circulated shortly, along with the minutes of the 2019 AGM. The AGM itself is postponed until we are able to return to the Elmcroft Hall.

As the calendar stands we have booked Richard Finlay for a demonstration in October; hopefully the club may be in a position to meet again at the Elmcroft Hall by then.

Keep turning!